



**UPDATE FOR PARTICIPANTS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WELFARE FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND OTHER
VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION**

1ST July 2015

We would like to take this opportunity to inform all the participants of the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution of the European Shoah Legacy Institute's **recent initiatives with the European Union** towards implementing the decisions reached as part of the Co-Chairmen's Statement that concluded the conference in Prague in May

On 23rd June 2015, the European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI), in cooperation with **MEP Bastiaan Belder** – Vice-Chairman of the EU Delegation for Relations with Israel – hosted a **seminar at the European Parliament in Brussels**, Belgium to highlight and publicize the achievements of the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution, held in Prague, Czech Republic on 26th and 27th May 2015.

The seminar was **attended by Members of the European Parliament**, officials from the **European Commission**, the Israeli **Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues**, **diplomats and ministerial delegates**, civil society representatives, **Holocaust survivors**, and members of the Jewish communities of Belgium and the Netherlands.

The purpose of the seminar was twofold: firstly, to **inform EU institutions of ESLI's recent achievements** - including the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution and the progress made towards improving welfare availability and accessibility for victims of Nazism – and secondly, to help garner support for the **creation of a European Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues within the European Commission**, who would coordinate with EU institutions currently monitoring, advocating for, and providing technical guidance on, the implementation of the Terezin Declaration.

In his opening remarks at the seminar, host MEP Mr. Bastiaan Belder – Vice Chair of the Delegation on Relations with Israel said at the seminar: **"There can be no dignified life for all, if this does not include a life in dignity for Holocaust survivors"** and Czech MEP Ms. Olga Sehnalova noted: **"There has to be better coordination between member states in bringing justice to the Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution. The EU has to play a key role in this regard. That is why I also support and join the voices calling for establishing an EU Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism."**

MEP Sehnalova's comments resonated with participants, who agreed that appointing a coordinator for post-Holocaust issues within the European Commission would be an excellent starting point for improving the state of welfare for victims of Nazi persecution. Also touched upon was the necessity to secure EU funding for civil society organisations involved in the provision of welfare services for survivors. The European Shoah Legacy Institute is intent on continuing its cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Commission, national



governments, and other civil society organisations to ensure the provision of adequate welfare for all Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution – as endorsed by thirty-nine governments and over 200 participants at the May conference in Prague.

To this end, the European Shoah Legacy Institute will be **hosting another seminar** - devoted to the **progress made by EU member states** - for MEPs at the European Parliament in Brussels in October 2015.

As Holocaust survivor and honoured guest Mr. Simon Gronowski so aptly pointed out, **it is impossible to truly remember the victims of the Holocaust whilst ignoring the needs of survivors.**

Following the seminar, the Israeli Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues - Mr. Tibor Shalev-Schlosser - and the Executive Director of the European Shoah Legacy Institute - Ms. Halyna Senyk - along with MEP Bastiaan Belder and representatives of the Israeli Mission to the European Union and the Israeli Ministry for Senior Citizens, met with representatives from the offices of **European Commission Vice President Mr. Frans Timmermans and EU Commissioner on Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Ms. Vera Jourova.**

The central theme of the meeting was the importance of appointing a **European Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues** at the European Commission, whose task would be to coordinate with EU institutions in monitoring, advocating for, and providing technical guidance on, the implementation of the Terezin Declaration. To this end, the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues of Israel submitted an *aide-mémoire* to help stimulate discussion within the European Commission on this matter.

In order to facilitate the process of **getting funding from the European Commission**, ESLI initiated a **Civil Society Platform** on its website. This online platform aims at being a source of information about non-governmental organizations providing care to Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution. The information will include the name of an organization, its objectives, major activities and an annual budget. This information will also have an added value for potential partnership between civil society organizations helping Nazi victims and for Nazi victims to get familiar with services available for them in different countries. The Platform will be used in negotiations with the European Commission in order to justify the role of civil society organizations as care takers of victims of Nazism and their needs.

The next “Living with Dignity” seminar to be hosted at the European Parliament will take place on Tuesday 13th October 2015 in Brussels, and will be co-hosted by MEP Ms. Olga Sehnalova and MEP Mr. Bastiaan Belder.

The preliminary agenda will include the following topics:

1. Progress made by national governments in implementing the points contained with the Conference Co-Chairmen’s Statement;
2. Creation of a database on civil society organisations providing welfare services to Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution;



3. Allocation of EU funds for civil society organisations providing welfare services for victims of Nazism; and
4. Appointment of a European Special Envoy for post-Holocaust Issues, who would coordinate with EU institutions in monitoring, advocating for, and providing technical guidance on, the implementation of the Terezin Declaration.

The European Shoah Legacy Institute will continue to keep you updated on the progress being made in implementing the decisions reached at the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution.

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