

April 10, 2018

Member of the European Parliament

Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis
European Commission
Vice-President, Euro and Social Dialogue
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Dear Vice President Dombrovskis,

As the Chair of the European Alliance for Holocaust Survivors (EAHS), a coalition of Members of the European Parliament committed to matters affecting Holocaust Survivors, I am writing to request your assistance in urging the Latvian government to move forward quickly to resolve outstanding Holocaust property restitution issues in Latvia.

On behalf of the EAHS, I had the honor to chair the international conference “Unfinished Justice: Restitution and Remembrance” at the European Parliament on April 26, 2017. The conference, hosted by President Antonio Tajani, focused on the urgent need for countries in Europe to address remaining restitution issues while Holocaust survivors are alive to benefit.

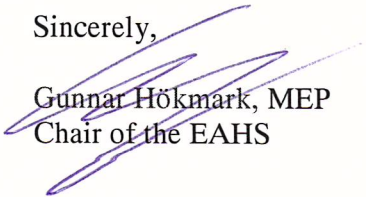
Over 70 Members of the European Parliament signed the enclosed Declaration that called upon Member States of the European Union to reaffirm their commitment to resolve remaining issues on restitution and compensation of looted property, in accordance with the principles of the Terezin Declaration, and to address the growing social welfare needs of Holocaust survivors.

The European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI) presented a comprehensive study assessing the progress of the countries that endorsed the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues in 2009. The ESLI report identified important steps taken by Latvia on restitution since gaining its independence and recognized areas of further progress that are needed for Latvia to meet the standards of the Terezin Declaration and complete the restitution process. This includes remaining Jewish communal and religious property, as well as heirless property.

This was also highlighted by Dmitry Krupnikov, Chairman of the Latvian Jewish Community Restitution Fund and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia.

The Nazi and Soviet occupations of Latvia decimated Latvia’s centuries-old Jewish communities. The growth of Latvia’s Jewish communities is an important milestone in Latvia’s emergence as a strong democracy. The restitution of Jewish properties will assist these communities’ ability to sustain themselves and continue develop Jewish life in Latvia. The restitution will provide the aid that Latvian Holocaust survivors need to live their remaining days with the dignity they deserve.

Sincerely,



Gunnar Hökmark, MEP
Chair of the EAHS