

## Common Statement

In accordance with the requirements of the Allied restitution provisions, the Federal Act on Restitution and the Federal Indemnification Act, the Federal Republic of Germany has fulfilled merited claims on grounds the confiscation of works of art by the Nazi regime after WW II, and set up the necessary procedures and institutions for enabling persons entitled to such indemnification to enforce their claims vis-à-vis other parties liable to restitution. The claims primarily arose to those who immediately suffered damage and their legal successors or, in case of Jewish assets without heirs or Jewish assets that were not claimed, to the successor organisations established in the Western zones and Berlin. The material restitution was effected either on a case-to-case basis or by global settlement. The restitution law and the general civil law of the Federal Republic of Germany thus finally and comprehensively provide for issues of restitution and indemnification of Nazi-confiscated art, especially from Jewish property. In the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the compensation pursuant to Allied law of wrongs perpetrated under National Socialism did not go beyond a rudimentary stage. In the course of German reunification, the Federal Republic of Germany has undertaken to apply the principles of the restitution and indemnification law. Nazi-confiscated art was returned or indemnified in accordance with the provisions of the Vermögensgesetz (Property settlement Act) and the NS-Verfolgtenentschädigungsgesetz (Federal Indemnification Act concerning persons who suffered damage at the hands of the National Socialist regime). Thanks to the global filing of claims on the part of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany Inc. (JCC) in its capacity as today's association of successor organisations claims situated in the accession area with regard to cultural property of Jewish parties having suffered loss. As formerly in the West German Laender, material indemnification on a case-to-case basis was sought; where this was not possible, compensation was effected by global settlement.

I.

Irrespective of such material compensation, the Federal Republic of Germany declared its readiness at the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets on 3 December 1998 to look for and identify further Nazi-confiscated cultural property in so far as the legal and factual possibilities allow and, if necessary, take the necessary steps in order to find an equitable and fair solution. Against this background, the decision by the Foundation Board of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation of 4 June 1999 is welcomed.

The Federal Government, the Laender and the national associations of local authorities will bring their influence to bear in the responsible bodies of the relevant statutory institutions that works of art that have been identified as Nazi-confiscated property and can be attributed to specific claimants are returned, upon individual examination, to the legitimate former owners or their heirs, respectively. This examination includes a match with material compensation already provided. Such a procedure allows to identify the legitimate owners and avoid duplicate compensation (e. g. by repayment of compensations already paid).

The relevant institutions are recommended to negotiate the extent and procedure of return or other material indemnification (e. g. in the form of permanent loans, financial or material equalisation) with the clearly identified legitimate former owners or their heirs, respectively.

II.

The German public institutions such as museums, archives and libraries have supported the tracing of Nazi-confiscated art already in the past by means of

1. exploitation of and access to the data research findings and records available to them
2. investigations in case of concrete inquiries and research, on their own initiative, in case of new acquisitions,
3. search activities in the framework of the institutions' tasks
4. providing information on the history of Nazi-confiscated art in collections, exhibitions and publications.

These efforts shall be carried on wherever there is sufficient reason.

### III.

Furthermore, the Federal Government, the Laender and the national associations of local authorities consider in accordance with the principles of the Washington Conference to provide a website on the Internet with information on the following:

1. What the institutions involved can do for publicising art of unclear origin to the extent that is presumed to have been confiscated by the Nazis.
2. A search list in which every claimant may enter the items he is looking for and thus report for investigation by the relevant institutions and the interested public.
3. Information on the transfer abroad of Nazi-confiscated art during or immediately after the war.
4. Establishing a virtual information platform where the interested public institutions and third parties may enter their findings relating to the tracing of Nazi-confiscated art in order to avoid duplicate work on the same subjects (e. g. at which auction was Jewish cultural property of which collection sold?) and make such information available by way of fulltext retrieval.

### IV.

This statement refers to archives maintained by public institutions, museums, libraries and their inventory. The public bodies funding these institutions are called upon to ensure the implementation of these principles by taking decisions to this effect. Institutions under private law and individuals are called upon also to apply the principles and procedures laid down at the Washington Conference