

WJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION
'OPTIONS FOR ACTION'
- DRAFT-

ISSUE	Legacy of the Holocaust
STAFF COORDINATOR	Michael Thaidigsmann
MEMBERS OF WORKING GROUP	{ <i>Tomas Kraus t.b.c.</i> }; Michael Schneider
BACKGROUND	Restitution The WJC has led a number of restitution efforts over the past decades and was a founding member of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO). However, there are still some countries that have not yet adequately addressed the issue of property restitution. At the end of 2008 out of an estimated 21,000 properties once held by Jewish institutions across the former Communist countries in central and eastern Europe only a quarter had been restituted. Restitution and compensation are primarily about justice and not only about money. Holocaust Commemoration and Education Some countries do not adequately commemorate WWII and Holocaust related events. In many countries, especially in the Muslim world, Holocaust education is insufficient or inaccurate. Initiatives by international organizations, governments, NGOs and private individuals to organize commemorative events on Holocaust related anniversaries are important and should be welcomed. Political leaders and well-known personalities should be encouraged to participate in such events, as they serve as an important reminder for today's

	generation. Holocaust education should be included in every school curriculum, in all countries. Providing good education and information about the Holocaust becomes even more important as Shoah survivors will soon no longer be alive to tell their story. Holocaust Denial Despite efforts by governments and civil society, the denial, questioning or trivialization of the Holocaust is becoming increasingly fashionable. The Shoah is often used as a tool in questioning Israel's behavior. Denial of the Holocaust has become a political weapon by anti-Semites, especially in Europe. EU-wide legislation bringing a unified approach to legal action against Holocaust deniers is imperative.
OBJECTIVES	Restitution All countries that benefited from Jewish property looted during or after World War II and that have not yet enacted restitution and compensation laws should be persuaded to do so immediately. Negotiations should be conducted in the framework of the WJRO in coordination with the Israeli government and with the support of the US government and the European Union. Holocaust Commemoration and Education Political leaders and well-known personalities should be encouraged to participate in events commemorating the Shoah, as they serve as an important reminder for today's generation. Holocaust education should be included in every school curriculum, in all countries. Providing good education and information about the Holocaust becomes even more important as Shoah survivors will soon no longer be alive to tell their story. The establishment of memorials should be encouraged. Holocaust Denial Holocaust denial must be dealt with by parliaments, governments and the courts, where appropriate. Its Bringing a unified approach with respect to dealing with Holocaust deniers is imperative everywhere, especially in Europe. The objective is to effectively condemn any such expressions when made by well-known

	personalities.
OPTIONS FOR ACTION	Restitution • Together with the WJRO and the respective local Jewish communities, lobby the governments of those countries that have not yet adopted adequate legislation providing for property restitution, in particular Poland and Lithuania. In parallel, elected WJC officials should speak out publicly about the need to bring closure to these negotiations as long as there are still Holocaust survivors alive; • Through media articles and opinion pieces authored by WJC officers and local Jewish community leaders, attempt to keep the issue alive in public domain; • Call on the European Union, the OSCE, other supranational bodies and third-country governments to support the efforts for restitution of properties and compensation in favor of Shoah survivors, and their heirs, especially through parliamentary resolutions and diplomatic channels; • Ensure that surplus funds held by the Claims Conference and other bodies are used in such a way as to support the renaissance of Jewish communities in central and eastern Europe, and in Israel; • Establish a documented record, in collaboration with the Claims Conference and the WRJO, of already achieved settlements on Holocaust-era property restitution and compensation, and showcase successful restoration projects of Jewish sites that were restituted, or benefitted from funding out of restitution funds; • Raise with the German government and others the plight of poor survivors of the Shoah to enable them to have access to adequate medical and social services, and to receive a decent pension.

	Holocaust commemoration and education • Commission a study by the WJC Institute or another body on the current situation concerning Holocaust education in secondary schools in key countries, in collaboration with UNESCO, OSCE and the EU. • Meet with education and culture ministers in key countries where Holocaust education is insufficient. • Organize an annual WJC event on International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January) in countries where knowledge about the Holocaust is insufficient. Holocaust Denial • Adopt as WJC policy that the denial of the Holocaust should be banned by law in every country, and encourage governments and lawmakers to adopt such laws and implement them to the full.
DATE	20 April 2010