

PRESS RELEASE, 27 MARCH 2006

The Commission handed its progress report relating to the year 2005 to the Prime Minister on 28 February 2006.

1. In that document the Commission sets out once again the exact scope of its activities. Misunderstandings do still remain.

These explanations are to be found in full detail in the press releases dated 20 September 2004, 4 November 2004 and 21 February 2005 (cf. website <http://premier.fgov.be>; Click on “Welkom”, “Diensten”, “Administratie en andere diensten”, “Commissie voor de Schadeloosstelling” and “Indemnification Commission”).

2. The 2005 Annual Report further takes stock of the situation at the end of the period concerned.

The Secretariat groups the claims *for each despoiled person* and refers them as such to the Commission for decision. This analysis is therefore based on the number of “**despoilment dossiers**” already treated and not on the number of claims. In actual fact, a same person may be a claimant in several despoilment dossiers (grandparents, parents, in a personal capacity, brother or sister, uncle or aunt ...), and inversely, one same “despoilment dossier” may concern several claimants.

All in all, the Secretariat has recorded **6,008 despoilment dossiers**, submitted by 5,645 claimants.

Number of despoilment dossiers closed as to 31 December 2005

Period	At 1 st reading closed	Decision		Currently being examined
		Positive	Negative	
2003	256	195	61	-
1/2004	544	453	89	2
2/2004	525	449	74	2
1/2005	853	763	87	3
2/2005	851	777	69	5
TOTAL	3029	2637	380	12

All in all, the Commission therefore **closed** 3,017 despoilment dossiers. The decision was a positive one in 87.4% of cases. In the remaining 12.6%, the claim was rejected for reasons such as no residence in Belgium from 10 May 1940 to 8 May 1945, no looted assets identified in Belgium, all the identified assets had already been indemnified or degree of kinship did not conform to legal requirements.

As of 31 December 2005, the total indemnification amounts awarded by the Commission came to 17.2 million euro.

The FPS Finance implementation department is informed of the awarded amount at the time when the notification is sent, provided that the account to which the money should be transferred has been communicated by telephone in the meantime. The time between the decision, notification and payment is as short as it possibly can. International transfers take longer since it is firstly required to ask in writing for the details of the foreign bank account that should be credited.

The amount determined for each meeting shows an upward trend. At the outset, the investigation team was deliberately oriented towards dossiers without major complications, so as to encourage faster processing of a number of simple dossiers. Now, dossiers requiring a considerable investment of investigators' time are put on the agenda, at regular intervals. In fact, the indemnification amounts of dossiers dealing with the despoilment of firms placed under German management at that time, with asset portfolios that were not restored to their owners or with property that was sold under a compulsory sale order during the war may prove to be relatively high.

During the months of **January-February 2006**, 270 despoilment dossiers (among which 26 ended with an answer in the negative) were processed.

At the end of February 2006, with a few exceptions, the dossiers of claimants born before 1930 had all been processed. The claims of those persons born between 1930 and 1935 will be examined in the coming months.

The dossiers of claimants born after 1935 will already be submitted during the second half of 2006.

3. **The Act of 20 December 2001 and the decrees providing for its enforcement oblige the Commission (and the Secretariat) to process the dossiers correctly and thoroughly.**

Furthermore, the Commission is bound, in pursuance of the law relating to the formal requirement to state the reason for administrative acts, to state clearly the grounds on which its decisions are based.

In other words, the processing of the dossiers requires considerable administrative, financial and judicial tasks, in addition to consulting the records, which makes it impossible to adopt a fast procedure.

The Commission and the Secretariat continue their activities in this way.