

PREPARATION OF THE “INDEMNIFICATION” FILES

The Indemnification Commission, which has been active for several months now, wants to make up a state of affairs. The purpose of the Commission is to answer the frequent questions the staff is being asked concerning its activities, its attitude with respect to the submitted requests and the timing it needs to settle the first indemnification payments.

The services of the Commission are first of all confronted with the priority task of managing the flow of new claims which are submitted day after day and have now almost reached the number of 4.000. According to the rule, every applicant receives an acknowledgement of receipt mentioning his file number.

This file number has nothing to do with the sequence in which the file will be examined. Indeed, the Commission has always adopted the principle *of examining in priority the claims of either persons who were plundered personally and are still alive today or claimants who have reached an advanced age*. (mainly “hidden children”).

A. Priorities:

The services are currently examining about 500 claims matching the above-mentioned criteria. The results of this examination should allow the Commission to take a number of fundamental decisions concerning the nature and the scale of the indemnification.

As an example, we should point out the “indemnification for stolen furniture”, an issue that has been thoroughly debated by the Commission. Obvious reasons of equity plead in favour of indemnifying the furniture stolen during the so-called “Möbelaktion”. However, it is not clear what *the amount of the indemnification* should be, since there is no official information concerning the value of the stolen furniture.

In this case, and perhaps in others as well, the Commission must use a fixed basis for the indemnification *of that part* of the plundering for which there is no further data. The budgetary evaluation of a first series of files is thus indispensable if accurate parameters are to be defined.

B. Timing:

The Commission aims at completing the budgetary evaluation by the summer holidays, so that it might start taking decisions concerning a first series of specific files from autumn on.

C. Further information:

Because the Commission senses there are misunderstandings about this matter, it wishes to point out that, under the law of December 2001, the indemnification can only be granted if plundered goods *have not yet lead to any indemnification, compensation or reparation*. Concretely, no additional indemnification can be expected for the elements of the property that were already indemnified under the Belgian laws on War Damage or, most of the time, under the German legislation (in particular, the “BrüG”-legislation).

Indemnification claims can be submitted until *September 9th at the latest* to the Secretariat of the Indemnification Commission, Wetstraat 16 in 1000 Brussels.