

# OVERVIEW OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY RESTITUTION/COMPENSATION REGIMES – LATVIA (AS OF 13 DECEMBER 2016)

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### A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During World War II, the independent Republic of Latvia was attacked first by the Soviet Union in 1940, then by Germany in 1941, and finally annexed again (along with Estonia and Lithuania) by the Soviet Union at the end of the war. Latvia became one of the 15 Soviet socialist constituent republics. Independence was restored to Latvia on 4 May 1990.

Jews have resided in Latvia since the late 16th century, with a significant influx taking place in the 19th century under the rule of the Russian czars. World War II effectively wiped out the Jewish population of Latvia. At the end of the war, only a few thousand of Latvia's pre-war Jewish population of 95,000 remained. Latvia's current Jewish population is approximately 10% of the size of the pre-war community, numbering around 10,000.

Shortly after independence in 1990, Latvia began enacting private property restitution laws. The goal was to undo over 50 years of nationalization and confiscation under Communism and to renew the property rights of former owners, Jews and non-Jews alike. Latvia was also quick to enact religious property legislation in 1992. However, restrictions in the law – which uniquely impacted the Jewish community – meant that only a few religious properties could be returned to the religious Jewish community in Latvia. A portfolio of legislation that returned five (5) additional communal properties was passed by the Parliament in early 2016. No legislation has been enacted dealing specifically with heirless property.

*Private Property.* Restitution of private property in Latvia began in 1990. Many laws were passed to carry out property restitution in the country. In general, the laws provided for restitution *in rem* but when that was not possible, former owners were given substitute property or compensation vouchers. Private property legislation was very liberal and

applied to citizens and non-citizens alike. The Government of Latvia has said about its laws that “properties were returned to all persons with a rightful claim, without any discrimination and without singling out any ethnic or social group.” (Government of Latvia Response to ESLI Immovable Property Questionnaire, 18 September 2015, p. 1.) The restitution process was completed in 2006. Limitations of the private property regime (applicable to all claimants and not just Jewish claimants) included reluctance by some claimants to accept substitute property because it was rarely of equivalent value to the claimed property and insufficient state funding for state-granted land surveys. There have also been differing perspectives on the efficacy of notice measures and whether the claims-filing window was open for a sufficient amount of time.

*Communal Property.* Latvia enacted the **Law of Restitution of Property to Religious Organizations** in 1992. Limitations written into the law made it difficult for the Jewish religious community to receive restitution or compensation for communal property. The main obstacle preventing return of religious properties was the law’s requirement that where the religious community had been wiped out by the Holocaust, the property would be returned to the “religious centre of faith in Latvia”. Historically, there was no such centre of faith for the Jewish religion in Latvia, and thus, no one to receive the property. In all, the Government of Latvia has stated that more than 30 properties have been returned to the Jewish religious community. In 2006, draft legislation, which had been agreed upon by the Jewish community and approved by the Council of Ministers and that would have addressed hundreds of unrestituted religious communal and heirless properties through a combination of restitution *in rem* and creation of a LATS 32 million (USD 60 million) fund, was voted down in the Saeima (Parliament). In 2008, a working group was established by the Ministry of Justice to ascertain the volume of unrestituted Jewish communal property but the group’s findings were never made official. Restitution of Jewish communal property became a sensitive topic in 2012 when the Justice Minister resigned after being asked to create a new communal property working group. In 2015, a portfolio of communal property legislation was introduced in the Parliament. In February 2016, the Parliament passed legislation that resulted in the return of five (5) additional pieces of communal property to the Jewish community as well as the removal of restrictions on one (1) property. However, most of the properties are in poor condition.

*Heirless Property.* The often-wholesale extermination of families in Latvia during the Holocaust had the effect of leaving substantial property without heirs. Principles enshrined in documents such as the 2009 Terezin Declaration, 2010 Guidelines and Best Practices, and 2015 Statement at the Conclusion of the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution, emphasize that heirless property should be used to provide for the material needs of Holocaust survivors most in need of assistance. Latvia has not made any special provisions for heirless property from the Shoah era.

Latvia endorsed the Terezin Declaration in 2009 and the Guidelines and Best Practices in 2010.

As part of the European Shoah Legacy Institute's Immovable Property Restitution Study, a Questionnaire covering past and present restitution regimes for private, communal and heirless property was sent to all 47 Terezin Declaration governments in 2015. Latvia submitted a response in September 2015.

**B. POST-WAR ARMISTICES, TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS DEALING WITH RESTITUTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

During World War II, Latvia was occupied twice by the Soviet Union and once by Germany. In June 1940, the Soviet Union invaded Latvia and then occupied and annexed the country. All private businesses were nationalized. Religious organizations were partially suspended and more than 15,000 people – including at least 1,800 Jews – were deported to Siberia. Following the German invasion in the summer of 1941, Latvia was incorporated into the Reich Commissariat Ostland, a German civilian administration covering the Baltic States and western Belarus. Jews in German-occupied Latvia were subject to anti-Semitic legislation and most of them were murdered during the first year and a half of the occupation. Soviet troops re-entered the country in 1944. Latvia remained a Soviet republic until independence in 1990. (See [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – Holocaust Encyclopedia, “Latvia”](#).)

The Jewish population of Latvia before the war was approximately **95,000**. In late 1941 and early 1942, the Germans deported thousands of Austrian Jews and German Jews to the Riga Ghetto. It is estimated that by the end of the war, **only a few hundred Jews remained in Latvia**<sup>1</sup>. The current Jewish population of Latvia is approximately **10,000** – about 10% of what it was before the war.

The Roma in Latvia had a population of **4,000** in 1935. The Nazis killed approximately **2,000** Latvian Roma during the war.

At the end of World War II, as a country annexed by the Soviet Union, Latvia was not a party to an armistice agreement or any treaty of peace. Latvia was, however, affected by the tacit agreements of the other Allied Powers during the [February 1945 Yalta Conference](#) - between President Franklin D. Roosevelt (United States), Prime Minister Winston Churchill (United Kingdom) and Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars Joseph Stalin (Soviet Union) – and the [July 1945 Potsdam Conference](#) – between President Harry S. Truman (United States), Churchill (and later Prime Minister Clement Atlee) (United Kingdom) and Stalin (Soviet Union). The three (3) powers met at these two (2) conferences to negotiate terms for the end of the war. Afterwards the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic States.

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 1,000 also survived in concentration camps in Europe and another roughly 13,000 refugees fled to the Soviet Union – mostly to the Central Asian Republics.

Latvia was thereafter incorporated into the U.S.S.R. as the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. However, during the Cold War period, the United States continued its so-called Baltic non-recognition policy, whereby the United States did not recognize what it considered the unlawful incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union.

After, World War II, the Soviet Union entered into a number of settlement agreements with other countries, which pertained to raising claims related to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that existed at the time the three (3) Baltic countries were incorporated into the U.S.S.R. These included agreements with **Bulgaria** on 18 January 1958, **Hungary** on 14 March 1958, **Czechoslovakia** on 30 June 1958, **Denmark** on 27 February 1964, **United Kingdom** on 5 January 1968 and 15 July 1986, **Netherlands** on 20 October 1967, **Norway** on 30 September 1959, and **Sweden** on 11 May 1964.

In 1990, Latvia restored its independence, and became the Republic of Latvia. The country became a member of the Council of Europe in 1995 and ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in 1997. As a result, suits against Latvia claiming violations of the Convention are subject to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Latvia became a member of the European Union (EU) in 2004.

### C. PRIVATE PROPERTY RESTITUTION

Private immovable (real) property, as defined in the Terezin Declaration Guidelines and Best Practices (“Terezin Best Practices”) for the purpose of restitution, is:

property owned by private individuals or legal persons, who either themselves or through their families owned homes, buildings, apartments or land, or who had other legal property rights, recognized by national law as of the last date before the commencement of persecution by the Nazis, Fascists and their collaborators, in such properties.

(Terezin Best Practices, para. b.)

The property restitution and compensation process began in 1990, when Latvia regained its independence. Laws were passed addressing properties seized and nationalized during the Soviet occupation in 1940 and the subsequent Soviet annexation of Latvia beginning in 1944.

Instead of enacting a single restitution law that covered a wide variety of property, Latvia enacted a multitude of privatization and denationalization laws – more than 20 between 1990 and 1992. (See Frances H. Foster, “Restitution of Expropriated Property: Post-Soviet Lessons for Cuba”, 34 Colum. J. Transnat’l. L. 539, 627 (1996) (“Foster”) (valuable 20-page discussion of Baltic restitution legislation).)

Latvia's restitution laws included:

- The 21 November 1990 **Law on the Land Reform in Rural Regions** – relating to “gradual privatization in order to promote the renewal of the traditional rural lifestyle of Latvia” (**Chapter 1, Section 1**). Privatization would occur in two (2) phases, requests had to be submitted between 1990-1996, and property restitution would occur for the next 10 to 15 years after 1993 (**Chapter 1, Section 4**);
- The 30 October 1991 **Law on the Denationalisation of Building Properties** – relating to return of buildings to previous owners (**Chapter 1, Section 1**). Claims had to be submitted to the city or district council by 1 June 1994 (**Chapter 1, Section 4**) and then a commission formed by the city or district council would determine the composition, value and ownership rights of the property (**Chapter 1, Section 5**). If the Commission did not review within three (3) months, the claimant could request restoration of rights by court process;
- The 30 October 1991 **Law on Restitution of House Ownership to Rightful Owners (Law on the Return of Real Estate to Legitimate Owners)** – relating to the restitution of house ownership. Claims had to be submitted to a court or local government by 1 June 1994;
- The 20 November 1991 **Law on the Land Reform in Cities** – relating to restitution of land ownership in cities (**Article 6**) with particular rules for natural and legal persons (**Article 9**);
- The 12 December 1991 **Law on Denationalisation of House Ownership** – relating to the restoration of nationalized or expropriated property to former owners (**Article 2, Section 2**). Claims had to be submitted to a city or district council by 1 June 1994;
- The 1 September 1992 **Law on Privatization in Rural Regions** – relating to the restitution of ownership rights to rural land, with different rules based upon whether the land request was submitted before or after 20 June 1991;
- The 22 April 1993 **Law on Renewal of Property Rights to Undertakings and Other Property Objects** (also known as Law on Restoration of Ownership Rights on Enterprises and Other Property Objects) – relating to the renewal of property rights for natural and legal persons (**Chapter 1, Section 2**) in nationalised undertakings (companies), cinemas, hospitals, pharmacies, but *not* building properties or land (**Chapter 1, Section 1**). Claims had to be submitted by 3 December 1994 (**Chapter 1, Section 4**);
- The 29 October 1998 [Law on the Completion of Land Reform in Cities](#) – relating to completion of restitution of property in cities, the adjustment of rights of use of land, and examination of disputes related to urban land reform. Claims had to be submitted by 1 March 1999; and
- The 30 October 1998 [Law on the Completion of Land Reform in Rural Areas](#) – relating to the procedures for completing land reform in rural areas including the survey of available land and the priority of persons (natural and legal) when

multiple requests are made for the same land, winding up the activities of local land commissions, and what will be done with land not requested by 1 June 2006.

The overall Latvian property restitution scheme focused on returning property to former owners (those persons who owned land at the time of the Soviet occupation or their heirs (according records in the State archives or Land Registry records)). (See [Laila Medina \(Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Justice of Latvia\), “The Process of Land Property Restitution of in \[sic\] Latvia”, Round-Table: Property Restitution/Compensation: General Measures to Comply with European Court’s Judgments, 17 February 2011 \(“Medina”\).](#)) According to the government of Latvia, “properties were returned to all persons with a rightful claim, without any discrimination and without singling out any ethnic or social group.” (Government of Latvia Response to ESLI Immovable Property Questionnaire, 18 September 2015 (“Latvia Government Response”), p. 1.)

Latvian private property restitution laws applied to former owners regardless of their current citizenship or residence. (See [Green Paper on the Immovable Property Review Conference 2012 \(Latvia, p. 58\).](#))

There were, however, certain general limitations on the return of property. In general, the restitution laws were meant to offer restitution *in rem* **or** compensation (via substitute property of equivalent value or vouchers) when *in rem* restitution was not possible. Land property rights would not be restored if the municipality or the state owned residential buildings on the property. (See *Medina*, p. 7.) Property rights were also not restored if the land contained natural objects of national importance. (*Id.*)

For rural property, when restitution *in rem* was not possible, substitute lands (restitution in kind) could be located anywhere within Latvia. For urban property, substitute property had to be located within the same city limits as the claimed property. (*Id.*, p. 11.) In rural areas, former owners were entitled to receive substitute property of a size equivalent to the size of the original property. (*Id.*, p. 13.) In urban areas, the former owners were entitled to receive substitute property of a value equal the value of the original property on 21 July 1940. (*Id.*) Where the 1940 value was low for urban property, a former owner had the right to acquire one land unit and to cover any balance owed by vouchers or LATS. (*Id.*)

Compensation vouchers received in lieu of restitution *in rem* could be used: for the privatization of land, buildings, and apartments; for sale; for investing in pension funds; for investing in public stock companies in Latvia; and for privatization of former state companies. Moreover, the vouchers could be inherited. (*Id.*, p. 16.)

Certain problems arose from the Latvian restitution scheme. Many claimants were hesitant to accept substitute property because it was rarely of equivalent value to the claimed property. There was also insufficient state funding to survey land possibly subject to restitution (as of 2011, 7,500 land units had not been surveyed) and fragmented land ownership did not favor economic development in rural areas. (*Medina*, p. 17.) Notwithstanding the fact that the Central Bureau of Statistics in Latvia recorded that

under the denationalization process, private property was returned to heirs in 23 countries (and of those 15% were from the United States, 5% were from Canada, and 4% were from Israel), there have been differing perspectives on the efficacy of notice measures and whether the claims-filing window was open for a sufficient amount of time. (See, e.g., World Jewish Restitution Organization, “Summary: Property Restitution in Latvia”, 27 August 2013, p. 2 (“[T]he short claims period and limited notification about the program prevented many former property owners from submitting claims.”))

According to the Government of Latvia, the restitution processes under existing legislation were completed in 2006. (See Latvia Government Response, p.1.) Owing to the non-discriminatory nature of the restitution legislation, the Government of Latvia has stated it is impossible to determine the exact numbers of property returned to private claimants, but the Government has assert that “it is a credible assumption that a significant part of the private property claims and decisions on the return of property involved claimants of Jewish origin from all around the world.” (*Id.*)

Since endorsing the Terezin Declaration in 2009, Latvia has not passed any laws dealing with restitution of private property.

#### 1. Notable European Court of Human Rights Decision Relating to Latvia’s Restitution Regime

When Latvia ratified **Protocol No. 1** to the **European Convention on Human Rights** in 1997, it included a reservation to **Article 1**, which relates to the peaceful enjoyment of one’s possessions. Latvia’s reservation states: “The provisions of Article 1 of the First Protocol shall not apply to the laws on property reform which regulate the restoration or compensation to the former owners or their legal heirs of property nationalised, confiscated, collectivized or otherwise unlawfully expropriated during the period of Soviet annexation; and privatization of agricultural enterprises, collective fisheries and of State and local self-government owned property.” ([Council of Europe Conventions, “Reservations and Declarations for Treaty No.009 – Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms – Latvia”](#).) The reservation also lists 11 specifically exempted property laws, including the **Law on Land Reform in Rural Regions**; the **Law on Land Reform in Cities**; and the **Law on Privatisation in Rural Regions**.

In *Kozlova and Smirnova v. Latvia*, the **European Court of Human Rights** examined Latvia’s reservation to **Protocol No. 1**. ([Kozlova and Smirnova v. Latvia, ECHR, Application No. 57381/00, Decision of 23 October 2001](#).) The applicant claimed that his right to peaceful enjoyment of his possessions had been interfered with because the property he currently owned had been restituted to a former owner under the terms of the **Law on Restitution of House Ownership to Rightful Owners (Law on the Return of Real Estate to Legitimate Owners)**. The **ECHR** found Latvia’s reservation to **Protocol No. 1** was not so general as to be prohibited. Further, the domestic decisions the applicant was appealing from were based upon one of the specifically-exempted property laws in Latvia’s reservation. As a result, the **ECHR** determined it lacked *ratione materiae*

(subject matter jurisdiction) to hear the case. Thus, the **ECHR** is not competent to hear Latvian property restitution cases alleging a violation of **Article 1 of Protocol No. 1**, where the claims are based upon any of the laws specifically named in Latvia's reservation.

#### **D. COMMUNAL PROPERTY RESTITUTION**

Communal immovable (real) property, as defined in the Terezin Best Practices for the purpose of restitution, is:

property owned by religious or communal organizations and includes buildings and land used for religious purposes, e.g. synagogues, churches[,] cemeteries, and other immovable religious sites which should be restituted in proper order and protected from desecration or misuse, as well as buildings and land used for communal purposes, e.g. schools, hospitals, social institutions and youth camps, or for income generating purposes.

(Terezin Best Practices, para. b.)

The umbrella organization for the Jewish community in Latvia, founded in 2003, is the [Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia](#).

##### **1. 12 May 1992 Law on the Restitution of Property to Religious Organizations**

At the same time Latvia enacted private property restitution legislation, it also passed a law relating to restitution of communal property. This was the **12 May 1992 Law on the Restitution of Property to Religious Organizations (“1992 Religious Organizations Law”)**.

Under the law, religious property (mainly synagogues and houses of worship) confiscated between 1940 and 1992 would be returned to registered religious organizations (**Article 2**). Compensation would be paid for property that could not be physically returned (**Article 3**). Religious organizations would not, however, be compensated for property “destroyed during World War II” (**Article 4**).

Religious organizations registered in 1940 with the Latvian Ministry of the Interior or Ministry of Public Affairs, who had renewed their status as a legal entity with the Ministry of Justice, were permitted to seek restitution of communal property. Legal successors of the religious organizations from 1940 were also permitted to claim property. A court would determine legal succession to property rights after “a conclusion is made by the respective religious centre” (i.e., central religious authority) or, if no such centre existed, the Consultative Council for Religious Matters and the Department for Religious Matters (**Article 6**).

The successorship requirement was an insurmountable hurdle for reclaiming most Jewish communal property, partly because the Jewish community in Latvia has never had a



“religious centre” to authorize a successor for the purpose of bringing claims under **Article 6**. Moreover, because of the almost total destruction of the Jewish population during the war, it was nearly impossible to prove that post-war Jewish communal entities were the legal successors of the pre-war entities.

Claimants had until **31 March 1994** to submit claims under the **1992 Religious Organizations Law (Article 7)**.

The ultimate effect of the successorship requirement from the **1992 Religious Organizations Law** was that only the Jewish religious communities located in cities where such communities had been restored – less than 200 people in total – were able to apply for the restitution of communal property owned and used by Latvia’s pre-war Jewish population.<sup>2</sup> ([Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, “Property Restitution in Central and Eastern Europe: The State of Affairs for American Claimants” 16 July 2002](#), p. 58.) By contrast, in cities where Jewish communities were wiped out during the Holocaust, neither religious nor communal property could be reclaimed under the law.

According to the Government of Latvia, since 1991, ownership of more than 30 communal and religious real properties has been returned to the Latvian Jewish community. (*See* Latvia Government Response, p. 2.) However, a number of cemeteries and 263 parcels of property have been identified in total as belonging to Latvian Jewish communities before the Soviet occupation. (World Jewish Restitution Organization, “Holocaust-Era Confiscated Communal and Private Immovable Property: Central and East Europe”, June 2009, (Latvia, p.16).)

## **2. Working Groups and New Draft Communal Property Legislation**

Between 2003 and 2006 the **Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia** and the Latvian government formed a working group that prepared draft legislation for the restitution of religious, communal, and heirless property. The draft law would have addressed hundreds of unrestituted religious communal and heirless properties through a combination of restitution *in rem* and creation of a LATS 32 million (USD 60 million) fund for property that could not be physically returned. (*See* WJRO, “Summary: Property Restitution in Latvia”, 27 August 2013; [“Jewish groups push for compensation for lost properties”, Public Broadcasting of Latvia \(LSM.LV\), 25 March 2015](#).) The draft law was approved by the Council of Ministers but was voted down by the Saeima (Parliament) in November 2006.

In 2008, another working group was established by the Ministry of Justice. No members of the Jewish community were included. In October 2010, the working group presented a report regarding approximately 80 religious and communal properties.

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<sup>2</sup> Religious property was restituted to religious communities in Riga, Liepaja, Daugavpils, and Jekabpils.

In 2012, the Justice Minister resigned after being asked by the Prime Minister to create a new working group with the government and the Jewish community to decide which communal properties should be restituted *in rem* and which should be compensated for. At this point, the Prime Minister declared that Parliament would have to refer the restitution issue to the government. Unless and until it did, no action would be taken. (WJRO, “Summary: Property Restitution in Latvia”, 27 August 2013.)

On 29 January 2015, draft laws for restitution of communal and religious property were introduced in the Saeima (Parliament) and submitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee for further consideration. (See Latvia Government Response, p. 1.) On 16 September 2015, the Committee voted to submit the draft laws for the first reading. (See *id.*, p. 2.) The draft legislation provided for the return five (5) properties currently owned by the states or local municipalities to the **Latvian Council of Jewish Communities**. The properties include two (2) former schools in Riga (religious and vocational), a nursing home in Riga, and two (2) synagogues (one in Jurmala and one in Kandava). The Parliament was also considering removing certain limitations imposed on the ownership of the Jewish Community building in Riga by the **Latvian Council of Jewish Communities**, including addressing its ability to mortgage or alienate the building located in Riga, as well as removing the obligation to return the property to the Republic of Latvia if the Jewish community ceased to exist. (See “[Latvian FM State Secretary: five properties should be returned to Jewish community](#)”, *The Baltic Times*, 18 March 2015.) The purpose of the legislation was to address and mitigate the injustice suffered by the Latvian Jewish community during World War II.

During discussions with government officials about the draft law, leaders from the **Latvian Council of Jewish Communities** urged officials to initiate wider restitution legislation for the remaining 270 pieces of property that are on the list compiled by the **Council**. Jewish community leaders proposed setting up a fund to manage properties that could not be restituted *in rem*, similar to what was proposed in the failed 2006 draft legislation. (See “[Jewish groups push for compensation for lost properties](#)”, *Public Broadcasting of Latvia (LSM.LV)*, 25 March 2015.)

### 3. 2016 Communal Property Law

On 25 February 2016, the Saeima (Parliament) passed the package of restitution laws providing for the return of five (5) communal properties as well as the removal of restrictions on one (1) property.<sup>3</sup> (See “[Latvia to return 5 buildings to Jewish community](#)”, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA.org)*, 25 February 2016.)

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<sup>3</sup> Instead of the 5 separate laws that were passed, there could have been just one law, or a maximum of two laws (one for the return of state-owned property, and one for the return of municipal-owned property). It is the understanding of the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia that in order to overcome opposition from National Alliance in the Saeima (Parliament), the legislation was broken down into one law per restituted property in case a longer list of properties might eventually be presented.

In May 2016, **Latvian Council of Jewish Communities** established a special foundation to manage the restituted properties called the [Latvian Jewish Community Restitution Fund \(LEKOREF\)](#). Most of the returned properties are in poor condition. (*Id.*) More than 270 Jewish communal properties have yet to be returned.

#### **E. HEIRLESS PROPERTY RESTITUTION**

The Terezin Declaration states “that in some states heirless property could serve as a basis for addressing the material necessities of needy Holocaust (Shoah) survivors and to ensure ongoing education about the Holocaust (Shoah), its causes and consequences.” (Terezin Declaration, Immovable (Real) Property, para. 3.) The Terezin Best Practices “encourage[s] [states] to create solutions for the restitution and compensation of heirless or unclaimed property from victims of persecution by Nazis, Fascists and their collaborators.”<sup>[L1]</sup> Heirless immovable (real) property, as defined in the Terezin Best Practices for the purpose of restitution, is:

property which was confiscated or otherwise taken from the original owners by the Nazis, Fascists and their collaborators and where the former owner died or dies intestate without leaving a spouse or relative entitled to his inheritances. . . . From these properties, special funds may be allocated for the benefit of needy Holocaust (Shoah) survivors from the local community, irrespective of their country of residence. From such funds, down payments should be allocated at once for needy Holocaust (Shoah) survivors. Such funds, among others, may also be allocated for purposes of commemoration of destroyed communities and Holocaust (Shoah) education.  
(Terezin Best Practices, para. j.)

Since endorsing the Terezin Declaration in 2009, Latvia has not passed any laws dealing with restitution of heirless property.

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