

**Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research**

**Washington, D.C.  
United States Department of State  
December 3, 2003**

**Report of the Task Force Plenary Session**

**I. Application for Task Force Membership: Norway, Romania**

- **Norway** was accepted as **full member of the Task Force**. It will pay its first contribution to the Task Force Fund in 2004.

Norway's delegation is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Norway. Representatives were appointed to the Task Force working groups.

- **Romania** was accepted as a formal **liaison country** and will participate directly in the activities of the Task Force, working closely with France and Israel. The Romanian application for full membership will be reconsidered at a future date.

**II. Reports of the Functional Working Groups**

**A. Education Working Group (EWG)**

The EWG Chair presented the results of its meeting in Budapest, October 26–28, 2003. Several decisions were submitted to Task Force national delegations for approval:

- The EWG proposed that instead of reviewing Project Proposal Applications forwarded to the Task Force Chair on an ongoing basis, **quarterly deadlines should be established for the submission of project proposals**. National delegations did not agree to implement such a procedure.
- The EWG proposed that an **archive be established on a secure page of the Web site** to facilitate communication between EWG members and to improve the follow-up of project proposals by the EWG sub-committees.

The Information Working Group advised that it would be possible to create a secure page to be made available to the Chair and EWG members that would be accessible through the Task Force Web site. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will create and manage the secure archive for the EWG.

- A proposal of the EWG and the Academic Working Group to meet to discuss a **special working group on Teaching the Shoah in multicultural societies** at the next Task Force plenary was approved. The special working group will be composed of members of the Education and Academic Working Groups.

The EWG emphasized the need for each member country to provide two representatives to participate in the work of the EWG. The Task Force Chair underscored the importance of participation by national delegations in the working groups and requested that each country provide the names of two participants to the EWG.

Furthermore, Paul Salmons (United Kingdom, Imperial War Museum) was elected Chair of the EWG. Mr. Salmons will assume his new position at the beginning of the Italian Chair.

## **B. Task Force Fund Working Group (Fund WG)**

The Task Force Fund Working Group reported on the financial situation of the Task Force.

- The Fund WG rejected a suggestion for quarterly deadlines for funding projects, arguing that the number of project proposals submitted and of experts available to review them does not indicate any need to change the current system.
- It was mentioned that the years 2002 and 2003 have been characterized by a sharp increase in the number of projects financed by the Task Force. If this increase continues, we can reasonably assume that the Fund will not be able to support such a high number of projects in the future. It was decided that this issue should be seriously considered during the Italian Chair.
- The Fund WG urged that those member countries who have not paid their Task Force dues do so as soon as possible.
- Reacting to a recommendation of the Strategic and Implementation Working Group from September 2003, to implement an audit system to improve the financial evaluation of projects, the Fund WG raised the technical and financial implications of such a procedure.

It was decided that informal discussions would be held between the U.S. Chair and the Swedish delegation in order to find a practical solution for an auditing system for prospective projects. A proposal will be presented by the Swedish delegation at the next plenary meeting in Rome.

### **C. Memorials Working Group**

- The Memorials Working Group presented a project proposal application for the **creation of a memorials database**. On the basis of the Strategic and Implementation Working Group's recommendation to support the project, **the national delegations accepted that the database project would be funded by the Task Force.**

The project will be managed jointly by the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin and the Memorials Working Group. A formal project proposal application will be posted on the general listserv of the Task Force with a detailed budget. According to the 30-day procedure, if the national delegations do not object to the project proposal, the Chair will order the transfer of funds.

It was requested that **all the national delegations participate in the implementation of the project** by replying to the questionnaire forwarded to the Memorials Working Group listserv on August 22, 2003. This questionnaire will provide the necessary information about the main Holocaust memorials, museums, and centers in Task Force member and liaison countries.

The Task Force Chair reinforced this statement and strongly underscored the importance of national delegations' involvement in this project.

- The Memorials Working Group presented a slight revision of its Terms of Reference/Guidelines on Projects Eligible for Task Force support and announced its intention to write guidelines on best practices for memorial sites.
- Ms. Teresa Swiebocka (Poland) and Ms. Heidemarie Uhl (Austria) will co-chair the Memorials Working Group in 2004.

#### **D. Academic Working Group (AWG)**

- The AWG requested that the Task Force Chair follow up on the decisions taken by the International Tracing Service (ITS) Committee at its meeting in Athens on October 10, 2003.

The U.S. delegation raised its concern regarding the conditions of openness of the ITS archives and the establishment of criteria for refusal of access to scholars. It was also suggested that the Task Force should endorse a proposal to make digitalized or

microfilmed copies of the ITS documents collection, which could then be made available on sites in interested ITS Council member countries.

Finally, it was requested that the Chair send a letter to Bad Arolsen in order to express its support for the decisions made in Athens and to urge quick resolution of the access issue.

- The AWG requested that the Chair urge national delegations to appoint a representative to the working group. This representative would be an academic and would fully participate in the activities of the group, notably creating a list of priority scholarly books to be translated and published in Task Force member states or liaison countries.

It was decided that the **Chair would ask national delegations to provide the name of their academic appointee.** Moreover, the Chair stressed the importance of delegations being in touch with the AWG Chair in order to establish the list of possible translations and publications.

- The AWG circulated new Guidelines for the Preparation of Project Proposals. These guidelines will be made available on the Web site.
- The AWG and the Austrian delegation raised the possibility of organizing an international conference in Vienna on Holocaust research, education, and remembrance methodology.

A committee composed of the AWG, and of members from other Task Force working groups willing to participate, will be created before the next Plenary Session in Rome in order to set up the conference. The conference would be financed from Austrian and German resources, and an application could possibly be submitted to the Academic Working Group for Task Force support.

#### **E. Information Working Group (IWG)**

In addition to presenting the Web site report and the working group's current and future activities, the IWG Chair formulated recommendations to be followed by the national delegations and their IWG editors.

The following actions were requested:

- Each member country should appoint a representative to the working group.
- The Mission Statement, Fact Sheet, Membership criteria, Stockholm Declaration, and all EWG documents should be translated into all Task Force countries' languages.
- Member countries (except Germany, Sweden, and the United States) should submit links to Web sites listing the educational efforts of their countries.
- Member countries should submit links to Web sites describing their remembrance activities.
- Nongovernmental organizations and governmental agencies in member and liaison countries should add to their own Web sites links to the Task Force Web site.

### **III. Report of the Strategic and Implementation Working Group (SIWG) on Its Meeting in Washington, D.C., September 11, 2003**

Special comments were made by the delegations on the membership issue.

**The revised *Membership Options* document was not accepted by the delegations as such.** It was requested that all mention of "democratic values" and of countries "with an important Jewish past or an important Jewish population" be removed from the document.

A revised version of the document will be proposed by the German delegation and sent over the general listserv for approval.

If accepted, this document will be for internal purposes only.

#### IV. Contacts with Liaison and Other Countries

- The Task Force Chair presented the results of the **trips made by the U.S. delegates** in Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Croatia, and Romania.
- **Denmark announced its intention to apply for membership** in the Task Force in 2004.
- **Estonia intends to remain an observer** within the Task Force, but it will actively participate in programs jointly implemented with Sweden.
- **The U.K. delegation announced the dissolution of the Lithuanian Working Group**, launched in 2000, considering that much had been accomplished and that this partnership could be now implemented on an informal basis.
- The U.K. delegation also announced its intention to reinforce its presence within the Ukraine Working Group. **The Ukraine Working Group will therefore be co-chaired by Austria and the United Kingdom.** A joint trip is planned to Ukraine in 2004 to hold meetings at both the diplomatic and the educational levels.
- The Task Force Chair will continue to strengthen **cooperation between the Task Force and European Institutions.** U.S. Department of State representatives traveled to Strasbourg and Brussels in December 2003 for this purpose.

The Chair followed up on the **Belgian application for membership** on the same occasion.

- Moreover, the Chair sent letters to the Ambassadors **of Chile, Mexico, Uruguay, and Canada** in order to inform them about the activities of the Task Force.

**Comment:** Ambassadors from these countries to what or where?

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## **V. Task Force Chair**

- It was decided that the handover of Chair from the United States to Italy will take place in Washington, D.C., at the beginning of March 2004.

It was not decided whether a meeting of the SIWG should take place on the same occasion. The Chair will conduct informal consultations with the other delegations on this issue.

- The first Plenary Session under the Chairmanship of Italy will take place in Rome, in early June 2004.
- It was agreed that **Poland will hold the Chair for the year 2004–2005.**

## **VI. Update of Task Force Documentation.**

The national delegations approved the modifications made by the U.S. Chair and the German delegation on the *Project Proposal Application*, the *Annex A*, the *Guidance Note on How to Apply for Task Force Endorsement of Financial Help*, and the *Task Force Fund Terms of Reference*.

The above-mentioned documents had previously been made available on the Task Force General Listserv.

The *Project Proposal Application* and the *Guidance Note* will be posted on the Web site in addition to the *Guidelines on Projects Eligible for Task Force Financial Support* (already available on numerous U.S. Embassy Web sites as well).

## **VII. Task Force Academic Adviser**

It was decided that a special working group would be set up in order to find a successor to Prof. Yehuda Bauer by the time the Italian Chair comes to an end. Suggested participants for this working group are founding member of the Task Force, Sweden, the present and future Chair (United States and Italy), the Chair of the AWG, and the Academic adviser himself.

#### **VIII. Plenary Addresses**

Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman delivered the keynote address to the plenary. Rabbi Andrew Baker of the American Jewish Committee spoke to the gathering as well.