30 Years After the Washington Principles: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead

Deadline: Oct 15, 2026

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The year 2028 is the 30th anniversary of the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated art, agreed at the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets in December 1998. This summer, the interdisciplinary Research Centre for Provenance Research, Art and Cultural Property Law – based between the Art History and Law Departments at the University of Bonn – will begin work to mark this anniversary. Alongside an update of the 'Restatement of Restitution Rules for Nazi-Confiscated Art' (the 'Restatement Update' Project, for which a second call will follow, see below), the Research Centre is planning an Open Access publication to provide a broad, analytical overview of how the Washington Principles have been implemented in the 42 signatory nations states, under the title 'Taking Stock, Looking Ahead'.

As a first stage, the Research Centre invites expressions of interest to contribute to the 'Taking Stock, Looking Ahead' volume. The planned publication aims to provide a comprehensive, comparative, and critical assessment of the implementation and impact of the Washington Principles across these signatory nation states. While the publication seeks to bring together surveys of the various national developments, it also intends to move beyond purely descriptive accounts by offering analytically grounded country-based studies that evaluate institutional, policy and legal, developments in the fields of provenance research and restitution since 1998. It will also address the broader question of how the Washington Principles have functioned as a form of soft law in different national contexts.

Key questions include:
– To what extent and how have the Principles been implemented in the 42 signatory nation states, and what developments have taken place as a result in the years since 1998?
– Where do significant gaps, desiderata or structural limitations persist?
– Where do we stand today, three decades later?

We seek expressions of interest from researchers willing to prepare contributions of up to 30.000 characters (including footnotes and spaces) on the following countries, i.e. the signatories of the Washington Conference Principles in 1998:
1. Albania
2. Argentina
3. Australia
4. Austria
5. Belarus
6. Belgium

7. Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Brazil
9. Bulgaria
10. Canada
11. Croatia
12. Cyprus
13. Czech Republic
14. Denmark
15. Estonia
16. Finland
17. France
18. Germany
19. Greece
20. Hungary
21. Israel
22. Italy
23. Latvia
24. Lithuania
25. Luxembourg
26. Macedonia
27. Netherlands
28. Norway
29. Poland
30. Portugal
31. Romania
32. Russia
33. Slovak Republic
34. Slovenia
35. Spain
36. Sweden
37. Switzerland
38. Turkey
39. Ukraine
40. United Kingdom
41. United States
42. Uruguay

We welcome expressions of interest by 15 October 2026, for full contributions to be submitted in the summer of 2027 (see timeline below). The publication of these contributions is planned for December 2028.

Structure of Contributions:
We invite country-based studies that are analytically comparative. While authors may adapt their focus to national specificities, contributions should ideally address:
– the implementation of the Washington Principles, for example via legal and policy frameworks, and institutional structures and practices

– developments in Nazi-era provenance research more broadly since 1998
– key restitution cases relating to Nazi-confiscated art
– current challenges and unresolved issues in relation to Nazi-confiscated art

Each contribution should not exceed 30,000 characters (including footnotes and spaces). They should include a short literature list.

Submission of Expression of Interest:
We invite expressions of interest from scholars and experienced practitioners in provenance research, art and cultural property law and related fields.
We particularly welcome contributions that offer an independent, critical view of the respective nati-onal developments.
Applicants should submit a motivation letter of approximately 500 words, clearly outlining:
– the country their contribution will relate to;
– their relevant professional and/or academic experience;
– specific expertise and interest in the country proposed;
– linguistic competence in the relevant national/regional languages; and
– a brief indication of key thematic focal points for the intended contribution.

A royalty of 250 euros will be provided for each contribution.

Editorial Process:
After the submission of expressions of interest, selected authors will be invited to submit full contributions, and be provided with a detailed style sheet. All contributions will be subject to editorial review by the project team. Submissions must be written in English.

Timeline:
– Submission of expressions of interest: deadline 15 October 2026 (please submit as a PDF file via email to: washingtonprinciples30@uni-bonn.de)
– Notification of acceptance: by December 2026
– Submission of final contributions: end of July 2027
– Publication of contributions: December 2028

Contact:
For further information or in case of any questions, please contact washingtonprinciples30@uni-bonn.de, or individual members of the project team listed below.

Team:
Nora Jaeger
Florian Schönfuß
Lucy Wasensteiner
Matthias Weller (for the ‘Restatement Update’ Project)
Christoph Zuschlag

The Research Centre in Bonn:
The ‘Research Centre for Provenance Research, Art and Cultural Property Law’ was founded at the University of Bonn in 2018. It combines the activities of three professorships: the two Alfried

Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Endowed Professorships for Modern and Contemporary Art History with a focus on Provenance Research / History of Collecting (Christoph Zuschlag) and for Civil Law, Art and Cultural Property Law (Matthias Weller) and the Junior Professorship for Art Historical Provenance Research (Lucy Wasensteiner). These three professorships anchor the areas of provenance research and art and cultural property law in research and teaching at the University of Bonn through an in-terdisciplinary cooperation.
Further information about the Research Centre can be found on the website: https://www.khi.uni-bonn.de/fpk/en/

Reference:
CFP: 30 Years After the Washington Principles: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 18, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54259>.