

Holocaust insurance claims and the Accountability Act

The Dutch insurance sector continues to take the issue of Holocaust-era insurance claims seriously; it remains committed to just and timely adjudication and compensation of such claims.

Two decades ago, the Dutch Association of Insurers (DAI) reached a landmark agreement with the Dutch Central Jewish Board on claims handling and compensation, one of the first of its kind. The agreement established the independent Sjoa Foundation with funds for the investigation and settlement of any remaining unpaid life insurance policies. The Sjoa Foundation is readily accessible to claimants and employs less-stringent standards of proof than would apply in judicial courts. The Sjoa Foundation has paid €8.5 million (US \$9.4 million) to over 14.000 rightful claimants in- and outside the Netherlands. In addition Dutch insurers have paid € 18.1 million (US \$20 million) for Jewish community purposes. The Sjoa Foundation's independent board recently decided to continue operations until 2025 and DAI will continue to underwrite the Foundation's administrative support through that date. The continuing of claims handling by the Sjoa Foundation is fully supported by the Dutch Central Jewish Board.

The recently-introduced Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act (S. 2621), while well-intentioned by its sponsors, would give potential claimants no greater likelihood of success and create false hope. The DAI is concerned it would undermine existing claims handling agreements and processes such as provided by the Sjoa Foundation. It is for these reasons that many of the major Jewish organizations in the United States oppose the legislation, and the DAI agrees with their assessment.