

BACKGROUND

During and following World War II, many persons who owned land or businesses in Eastern Europe became the victims of state expropriations. Expropriations were most frequently carried out for political reasons, or in consequence of the owners fleeing the country in which their property was located.

Over the course of several years, External Affairs and International Trade Canada conducted negotiations with the governments of several states for the purpose of compensating Canadian citizens who were affected by confiscatory measures. Agreements were reached with Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania in the early 1970s, but, due to restrictions imposed by international law, the agreements covered only claimants who were Canadian citizens at the time their property were seized.

Since 1990, the governments of Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany (in respect of confiscatory measures taken by the former German Democratic Republic), Lithuania and Estonia have all passed legislation allowing for the reprivatization of property confiscated by previous regimes.