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## NEWS RELEASE

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### LATVIAN-CANADIANS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR RETURN OF PROPERTIES CONFISCATED UNDER SOVIET RULE

External Affairs and International Trade Canada announced today that the Republic of Latvia has passed legislation that allows Canadians of Latvian origin to apply for the return of properties confiscated for political reasons while Latvia was under the control of the former Soviet Union.

Where restitution is impossible or impracticable, owners will be compensated for the losses suffered. While the form or extent of such compensation have not yet been determined, compensation in the form of state securities is likely.

Claims may be filed by the owners of confiscated properties or their legal heirs, regardless of the claimant's current citizenship status. The deadline for applications is July 20, 1992. In order to ensure that an application meets the deadline, a preliminary copy may be filed with the Office of the Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Latvia or with any lawyer in Latvia.

Claimants must provide proof of ownership or, where the property belonged to a deceased relative, proof of inheritance or of their relationship to the previous owner. Claims must be filed with the council of the district in which the property is located.

Affaires extérieures et  
Commerce extérieur Canada

External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada

Canada

Application forms and further information may be obtained from the Office of the Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Latvia at the following address:

Dr. Guntis Silins  
Honorary Consul General for the Republic of Latvia  
700 Bay Street, 19th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 1Z6

Tel: (416) 408-2540  
Fax: (416) 289-3857

A background information sheet is attached.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office  
External Affairs and International Trade Canada  
(613) 995-1874

## 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.