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## Press release

### Bundestag denies Bild report on looted art works

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The report that appeared today on page 9 of the *Bild* newspaper under the heading *Nazi-Raubkunst im Bundestag entdeckt* (“Nazi art loot discovered in the Bundestag”) contains numerous false allegations, in response to which the Bundestag Administration has issued the following statement:

- The spokesman for the President (Speaker) of the Bundestag did not provide journalist Nikolaus Harbusch with confirmation of the presence of plundered art in the Bundestag. Mr Harbusch was informed that the Bundestag hoped to complete the current investigations by March or April 2014. He was assured that the findings would then be published as a matter of course.
- Contrary to the assertions made by the journalist in the heading and text of his article, there has, in fact, been no discovery of art works looted by the Nazis but only two suspected cases, which are currently being scrupulously investigated by an art historian. This information was communicated to Mr Harbusch on 20 December.
- The investigating art historian, indeed, has not yet found any indications of a link between either of the paintings in question and the Gurlitt collection, a link that is imputed in the Harbusch article. This, too, was stated to the journalist by the Bundestag on 20 December.
- In his report, Mr Harbusch jumps to another wrong conclusion. The Bundestag Administration informed him on 4 December that an estimated number of up to 700 works in the art collection could have been created in the period prior to 1945 and then sent him an updated list on 20 December of 592 works that had so far been definitively identified as dating from before 1945. This review of the collection has not yet been completed. Accordingly, additions may well be made to this list in the coming weeks. From the estimated figure of 700, the journalist deducted the 592 verified paintings and wrongly concluded that 108 works of unidentified origin that were open to suspicion of being Nazi loot were on display in the Bundestag and stated that the Bundestag had declined to name them when asked.
- Through these false allegations, moreover, the article creates the impression that the Bundestag is obstructing attempts to clarify the matter. On the contrary, the German Bundestag welcomes the efforts made to identify the origin of the art works in question, which is why it launched the provenance research in 2012, since when the Bundestag art collection has been undergoing a full examination with a view to identifying any possible looted works and initiating proper restitution, as was done back in 2009 with a portrait of Bismarck by Franz von Lenbach.