



This article is provided  
courtesy of Polaron  
Language Services.

[www.polaron.net.au](http://www.polaron.net.au)

## Berlin agrees to open Nazi files

By Barry Schweid, Washington

April 20, 2006

After decades of reticence, Germany has taken a big step towards opening Nazi records on 17 million Jews, slave labourers and other Holocaust victims to historians and relatives long anxious for more information about their fate.

Germany has pledged to work with the US to ensure the opening of the archives, which are kept in the German town of Bad Arolsen. The 11 nations that oversee the 30 million to 50 million documents are to meet in Luxembourg next month to consider amending a 1955 treaty that has limited access and copying.

“We still have negotiations to do,” the American special envoy for Holocaust issues, Edward O’Donnell, said. “Our goal is to reach an agreement as soon as possible.”

Approval in Luxembourg would require agreement by all 11 countries. The parliaments of several of the countries would have to give their approval as well.

For 60 years, the International Red Cross has used the archived documents to trace victims of the Nazis, but they have been off-limits to historians and the public.

During a news conference on Tuesday at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries said her country would work with the US on opening the archives. Until now, Germany has resisted, citing privacy concerns.

In Jerusalem, Holocaust specialist Shlomo Aharonson, a historian at Hebrew University, said: “They have shown goodwill, but that doesn’t mean the problem has been solved.”

He said the archives were supposed to contain the names of all who died in World War II, Jews and non-Jews.

The announcement by Ms Zypries followed a 20-year effort by the Holocaust museum, the US, France, Poland and some other nations to prise open the archives.

AP