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# Roma Genocide: Overview of international organisations working on historical and contemporary issues

## Committee on the Genocide of the Roma

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The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Committee on the Genocide of the Roma would like to thank Prof. Slawomir Kapralski (Pedagogical University of Cracow) for the initial research that formed the basis for this publication.

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References to webpages are underlined and are available as hyperlinks in the online version of the report. See: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/focus/genocide-roma>

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## About the IHRA

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The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally.

IHRA (formerly the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, or ITF) was initiated in 1998 by former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson. Persson decided to establish an international organization that would expand Holocaust education worldwide, and asked then President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to join him in this effort. Persson also developed the idea of an international forum of governments interested in discussing Holocaust education, which took place in Stockholm between 27-29 January 2000. The Forum was attended by the representatives of 46 governments including; 23 Heads of State or Prime Ministers and 14 Deputy Prime Ministers or Ministers. The Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was the outcome of the Forum's deliberations and is the foundation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

IHRA currently has 31 member countries, ten observer countries and seven Permanent International Partners. Members must be committed to the Stockholm Declaration and to the implementation of national policies and programs in support of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. The national government of each member country appoints and sends a delegation to IHRA meetings that is composed of both government representatives and national experts, providing a unique link between the two levels.

In addition to the Academic, Education, Memorials and Museums, and Communication Working Groups, specialized committees have been established to address antisemitism and Holocaust denial, the genocide of the Roma, and comparative approaches to genocide studies. The IHRA is also in the process of implementing a Multi-Year Work Plan that focuses on killing sites, access to archives, educational research, and Holocaust Memorial Days.

One of IHRA's key roles is to contribute to the funding of relevant projects through its grant strategy. The purpose of the Grant Programme is to foster international dialogue and the exchange of expertise, increase government involvement in program creation, and target projects with strong multilateral elements in order to create sustainable structures for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research.

The IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma was initiated in 2007. It aims to raise awareness about the genocide of the Roma under National Socialism and to increase the commitment of IHRA member countries to educate, research and remember the genocide of the Roma.

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## Introduction

This publication offers a concise overview of the major international organisations that in the course of their work address the genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust as well as issues of contemporary discrimination. Commissioned by the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma, this overview aims to give insight into the work being done in this field, and to strengthen and increase the connections and cooperation between the organisations in the future. For a non-specialist audience it is not easy to get an overview of the many international organisations working on Roma issues, which all have their own background, audience and focus. To connect to a wider audience of policymakers and educators remains important in order to raise the general awareness of this genocide, and to increase the commitment to educate, research and remember the genocide of the Roma and to draw attention to the continuity of prejudices about Roma before, during and after the Second World War.

This overview has been compiled using existing literature, websites and documents, complemented with additional information gathered from representatives of the organisations. The choice was made to focus on those organisations, both governmental and NGO, that have an international orientation and outreach. We would gladly have included many other smaller, younger but fast-growing organisations, many of which are active in their own countries but also have or are developing international outreach and funding and multilingual projects, but at this stage we felt the need to take this first step with a limited focus. Research into these other organisations would be very welcome. Meanwhile, national museums with permanent exhibitions on the genocide of the Roma have been included, as their work is inspiring new educational and exhibition projects, of which more and more are emerging. A few organisations that do not include raising awareness of the genocide of the Roma in their work have also been included, because they are important in the field of human rights advocacy for Roma and in non-discrimination policies.

In the week in which this publication was finalised the initiative for a new body, the European Roma Institute, was endorsed by the member states of the Council of Europe. As this illustrates, it will be necessary to update the information in this overview.

Many of these organisations frequently cooperate among themselves, to strengthen their mutual efforts to make the history of the genocide of the Roma more widely known. But they also have their own distinctive projects and strategies to

raise awareness concerning the contemporary situation of the Roma and how this is connected to a long history of systematic exclusion, persecution and genocide. Education, research and remembrance are the topics addressed in this overview. By giving examples of each organisation's projects and initiatives the publication provides a tool, both for those already active in these fields and for all those just setting out to gain an overview of existing expertise and activities.

Commemorating the genocide of the Roma is not the key purpose of most of the organisations described here; it usually figures in the broader context of the advocacy of Roma rights, social inclusion and the improvement of the current economic situation of Roma communities.

However, the Roma civil rights movement has been intrinsically connected with the commemoration of the genocide since its very beginning. This is clearly reflected in the history of organisations such as the International Romani Union and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma<sup>1</sup>, which have both always included the issue of the genocide on their agendas and have devoted a large part of their activities to commemorating the fate of Roma and Sinti under National Socialism.

The intention of this publication is to present commemorative initiatives within this broader context, to assist those who are exploring the many functions of remembrance in the process of Roma empowerment and identity building.

The term "Roma" is used throughout, in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe descriptive [glossary of terms](#) relating to Roma issues, as referring "to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travelers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as 'Gypsies'." When describing activities targeting specific communities that use a different self-appellation, e.g. Sinti, the construction "Sinti and Roma" is used. Regarding the fate of Roma during the Second World War, the publication follows the IHRA convention of calling it "the genocide of the Roma", even if some of the institutions presented in the report prefer different terminology.

## The Importance of Commemoration

Activists involved in the commemorative activities generally agree that within the context of the problems faced by Roma communities today the commemoration of the genocide of Roma is of particular importance.

According to experts, the lack of commemoration in the past either resulted from a lack of knowledge, a general lack of education or, as in the cases of Bulgaria or Spain, the lack of national historical experience of the genocide. Therefore, the trend towards commemoration of the genocide needs to be interpreted in the context of rising educational standards among Roma populations and as a symptom of an emerging historical consciousness among them.

Such knowledge about the past may serve as a tool to better understand the current situation of Roma who still suffer discrimination and violation of their civil rights. At a time when xenophobic sentiments are exacerbated by the presence of far-right extremism across Europe, it becomes increasingly necessary to address these dangerous trends by mobilising all efforts to raise awareness about Europe's darkest period in order to avoid repetition. The denial of the genocide as a historical fact or the denial of the relevance of the genocide for society today are opinions that are not only voiced by extreme right-wing politicians but are common in the mainstream. More knowledge and awareness of the importance of remembering the past can serve to limit this trend.

For many young Roma students and Roma activists the recognition of the Roma suffering during the Second World War brings together, on the one hand, Roma history and identity, and, on the other hand, Roma dignity and justice. By campaigning for the official recognition of 2 August as the memorial day of the Roma genocide, young Roma and non-Roma around Europe assume responsibility for the acknowledgement of a memory largely forgotten for more than 70 years. A resolution to commemorate the Roma genocide passed by the European Parliament in April 2015 represents an important breakthrough at international level. Parliament called for 2 August to be recognised as Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. In 2011, the Polish parliament declared 2 August the Day of Remembrance of the Extermination of the Roma and Sinti, the first country to create an official national day of commemoration. Ukraine (2004), Hungary (2005) and Serbia (2007) have also acknowledged 2 August as their commemorative dates at state level, while Serbia marks 16 December.<sup>2</sup>

The lack of recognition of the Roma genocide for many decades also has a moral dimension: as long as stereotypes and prejudices, anti-Gypsyism, mechanisms of exclusion, hate speech and hate crime remain widespread in present day Europe, recognising the genocide of the Roma constitutes an important initial step towards restoring dignity and justice for Roma. The cooperation of non-Roma in these commemorations also serves as an important sign of solidarity and concern regarding the present-day situation of Roma communities.

In the case of Roma groups with different historical experiences, commemorative activities contribute to the development of a “prosthetic memory”, a concept that describes how members of particular groups incorporate into their cognitive structures memories of events they did not personally experience but which are for various reasons important for their community or their political representation. By participating in commemorative activities even those whose ancestors did not suffer in the genocide feel part of a universal Roma history they discover during their search for identity. Younger generations of Roma regard this memory of the genocide as an important building block of an emerging Roma identity, often suppressed during their parents' generation, which is resurfacing now and helps to mobilise

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<sup>2</sup> AD HOC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ROMA ISSUES (CAHROM), Overview on the recognition of the genocide of Roma and Sinti (Pharrajimos/Samudripen) and on the officialisation of the date of 2 August as a commemoration day for the victims of the Second World War in member states of the Council of Europe, May 2013.

young Roma against the growing anti-Roma racism in Europe. On a more general level commemorative activities, such as ceremonies, exhibitions, seminars and conferences, might be described as “zones of encounter” between different Roma groups, which facilitate social negotiations about a common past, opening up new possibilities to create hybrid memories within which the fate of the Roma is recognised by Roma and non-Roma alike.

In view of all this, it appears important to organise commemorative ceremonies for groups of young Roma, not only in Auschwitz-Birkenau but in many different places across Europe, such as Lackenbach, Jasenovac, Lety u Písko and memorial sites in Ukraine, among others.

Commemoration not only demonstrates respect for the victims and their families but also contributes to the sensitisation of the general public and can thus assume extreme importance as the media coverage of commemorative events provides opportunities to reflect on the continuity of prejudice against Roma. Even organisations that do not prioritise remembrance activities agree about this instrumental role of commemoration.

In 2014, the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma commissioned two short-term research projects. This overview of international organisations accompanies an annotated bibliography of the genocide of the Roma, consisting of more than 1,400 titles. Both projects are first steps that will need further work. The committee aims to involve all the countries represented in the IHRA in further efforts to make the genocide of the Roma more widely known and to strengthen the cooperation between international organisations working in this field.

## International Governmental Organisations

### Council of Europe (CoE)

[www.coe.int/roma](http://www.coe.int/roma)

#### **Mission**

The Council of Europe (CoE) is a political organisation founded in 1949 to promote unity between European member countries, which now number 47. Its aims are to reinforce democracy, human rights and the rule of law and to develop common responses to political, social, cultural and legal challenges in its member states. It is responsible for the creation of the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the European Court of Human Rights (1959) and the European Social Charter – guaranteeing social and economic rights – adopted in 1961, and revised in 1996.

#### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted the first official text on the “situation of Gypsies and other Travellers in Europe” in 1969. In 1993 it declared the Roma population a “non-territorial” minority and in 1994 the Secretary General decided to appoint a coordinator for activities concerning Roma/Gypsies. MG-S-ROM, the forerunner of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM), was set up in 1995 – the first inter-governmental body dealing exclusively with issues related to Roma and Travellers in Europe. In 2000, the Committee of Ministers issued a recommendation to member countries to guarantee equality of opportunity in education for Roma children, followed up by a recommendation about the importance of history teaching in the 21st century. The project Education of Roma Children began in 2002.

An important part of the development of the CoE’s Roma-related activities was the creation of and support for an independent NGO in 2004, the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), which gave the Roma a voice in the European political arena.

In 2008 the White Paper *Living together as equals in dignity* set out orientations for intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding, which were welcomed as a “significant pan-European contribution to an international discussion gaining momentum”.

In 2010, following expulsions of Roma from some western European countries, member states confirmed the anti-discrimination agenda and issued the *Strasbourg declaration on Roma*. Priorities included promotion of citizenship, women's and children's rights; social inclusion including education, housing and healthcare; and empowerment and better access to justice. A Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) for Roma Issues was appointed.

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe has initiated activities with Roma young people since 1995. Its main Roma focus is the Roma Youth Action Plan, which helps Roma youth take part in the democratic process by promoting equality of opportunities and countering the effects of discrimination. Partners include the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP), and TernYpe – International Roma Youth Network, the European Youth Forum, the Open Society Foundations, the European Roma Rights Centre, the Roma Education Fund, and OSCE/ODIHR. In 2014 the Youth department published *Right to Remember, A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide*.

Other key initiatives of the Council of Europe promoting Roma and Sinti well-being and equality of opportunity include:

- ROMED and ROMACT. The ROMED programme aims to improve Roma participation by mobilising Roma communities and bringing them closer to local decision-making. ROMED uses processes of mediation and democratic participation, empowering Roma and local administrations for more effective civic dialogue and cooperation. ROMACT aims to facilitate capacities and resources for local development in areas with majority Roma populations. It provides support to local administrations to implement inclusive good governance practices and sustainable plans of development and links them to relevant resources, including better access to and use of EU funds
- European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, which aims to promote the exchange of know-how and good practices on Roma inclusion among participating cities and regions and to enable them to speak with one voice by providing a platform for advocating on issues concerning Roma inclusion at local and regional level
- Dosta! (Romani for “enough”), a campaign combating stereotypes and prejudice towards Roma;
- No Hate Speech movement and campaign;
- Speak Out Against Discrimination campaign; and
- Route of Roma culture and heritage

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

The Youth Department of the CoE does not have a dedicated section on commemorative activities but incorporates remembrance as an aspect of learning about human rights, funded by the CoE's European Youth Foundation and European Youth Centres.

*Factsheets on Roma History*, developed with a large number of experts, was published in 2009, in print and [online](#). The seven chapters cover 21 topics, from migration from India to Europe to post-war migration within Europe. The CoE also launched a website with the OSCE/ODIHR to provide information on the Roma genocide. It comprises a database on the Roma genocide, with a virtual library and an interactive map on which countries can indicate their special/distinctive features at national level, for example how the topic is covered in schools, available teaching materials, and places of remembrance. See: <http://www.roma-genocide.org>

In 2013 CAHROM prepared a report, *Overview on the recognition of the genocide of Roma and Sinti during World War II and on related remembrance days in member states of the Council of Europe*.

A full list of Roma-related CoE projects can be found at <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma-links>. Supported by the governments of Italy and Serbia, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) team recently started an initiative to integrate the history of Roma into the general history curriculum.

Since 2012 the CoE has taken part in the commemoration activities organised in Krakow, where the CoE teaching materials and tools were presented.

In 2015 one of the training seminars in the framework of the CoE Pestalozzi programme, organised in cooperation with Erinnern.at in Graz, Austria, was devoted to the Roma genocide.

## **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**

[www.fra.europa.eu/en](http://www.fra.europa.eu/en)

### **Mission**

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is a decentralised agency helping to make fundamental rights a reality for everyone in the EU. It provides evidence and advice to EU institutions and member states. Through the collection and analysis of data in the EU and raising awareness about fundamental rights, the FRA assists EU institutions and EU member states in understanding and tackling fundamental rights challenges.

Data collected systematically by FRA show many Roma still face deep poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, which often means limited access to education, jobs and services, sub-standard housing and poor health and lower life expectancy. These problems also present insurmountable barriers to Roma exercising their fundamental rights.

In April 2011, the European Commission published the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, focusing on improvements in: employment, education, healthcare and housing. Member states had to submit national Roma integration strategies by the end of 2011, specifying how they would contribute to overall EU level integration goals, and the funding to deliver them. After assessing the national strategies, in 2012 the European Commission called on member states to do more and asked the FRA to help develop monitoring systems.

See: *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework*, 2012.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The FRA set up a multi-annual Roma Programme (2010 to 2020), to allow it to report on progress made and provide evidence-based advice. In 2011, FRA, in close cooperation with the European Commission, the UN Development Programme and the World Bank, conducted a survey of Roma and non-Roma populations living in close proximity. The results were published in a booklet: *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States – Survey results at a glance* (2012). They are also available through FRA's online Roma data visualisation tool.

The FRA's Fundamental Rights conference in Lithuania in 2013 focused on combating hate crime in the EU, amid research evidence that Europe's socio-economic crisis has increased prejudice and violence against vulnerable groups including Roma, migrants, and ethnic and religious minorities. In 2014, the FRA and the Council of the European Union hosted the first meeting of the Hate Crime Working Party in Rome with participants from 25 member states, as well as the European Commission and the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, with the objective of encouraging victims to report hate crime incidents and improving recording mechanisms, enhancing multi-agency partnerships and training for public service providers. The FRA is now also offering paid one-year internships for young Roma students, to give them practical experience promoting European integration.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

Since 2006, FRA has observer status in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and has worked on the topic of learning from the past. The project on Holocaust and human rights education was created to inform policymakers and funding institutions about the role that visits to original sites and historical exhibitions play in school education. The project also developed practical guiding material for schools, commemoration sites, original sites and museums. The project brought together practitioners from a variety of fields.

The project emphasised the particular importance of the sites of Nazi crimes as the war generation dies out, but set out to build bridges between violations of human rights in the past and an integrated educational approach that provides pupils with the tools to recognise where and how these rights are being violated today. Awareness raising material on the Holocaust and human rights education was developed for teachers produced in cooperation with Yad Vashem.

Networking events contributed to raising awareness of the need to learn from the past for fundamental rights today. The FRA, together with the European Commission and the Danish Institute for International Studies, held a conference on Remembering for the future in Copenhagen in April 2012, as part of its Holocaust

and human rights education project launched in 2006. The conference brought together organisations active in remembrance to:

- Discuss and develop practical concepts for applying interactive Holocaust and human rights education pedagogy at memorial sites; and
- Network, exchange ideas and build future cooperation among participants.

A training toolkit on fundamental rights and Holocaust remembrance was unveiled in Brussels in January 2015, developed by the FRA in partnership with the European Commission and the Wannsee Memorial. The objective of the toolkit is to reflect on remembrance and help EU officials addressing contemporary fundamental rights challenges in their daily work. Two introductory modules link the Holocaust and fundamental rights and reflect on human dignity in the past and present. Six case studies go deeper into the analysis of the scope of action and responsibility of civil servants.

FRA has regularly joined Holocaust commemorative events, including workshops and seminars organised in Cracow and Auschwitz in August 2014 by ternYpe International Roma Youth Network and the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, and a documentary film presentation and discussion in Austria on International Roma Day in April 2014. It also issues a statement each year marking International Roma Day on 8 April, as well as International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January.

## **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)**

[www.coe.int/ecri](http://www.coe.int/ecri)

### **Mission**

ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as “race”, national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member states.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

In the framework of its country monitoring work, ECRI examines the situation concerning manifestations of racism and intolerance in each of the Council of Europe member states. ECRI’s findings, along with recommendations as to how each country might deal with the problems identified, are published in country reports. These reports are drawn up after a contact visit to the country and confidential dialogue with the national authorities. The monitoring deals with all member states on an equal footing and takes place in five-year cycles, covering nine or 10 countries per year. ECRI’s fifth monitoring cycle began in 2013. It will last five years.

In general, ECRI has noted increasing awareness in most member states of the difficult situation faced by Roma, including Roma migrants, and increasing political will to tackle this, evidenced by the adoption of national plans and strategies. However, ECRI has also noted a deterioration in the situation of Roma, particularly as a result of the economic crisis, racist discourse in politics and the introduction of so-called “security” measures – not to mention violent attacks on individuals and property. ECRI has long noted the special vulnerability of both Roma and migrants to racism, racial discrimination<sup>3</sup>, xenophobia and intolerance and it systematically recommends member states to sign and ratify *Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights*.

ECRI has repeatedly drawn attention to the discrimination to which Roma migrants are subjected in education, housing, employment and health care. It has also denounced all stigmatisation and stereotyping in public discourse, including by opinion leaders and some media.

The second aspect of ECRI’s programme focuses on general themes that are particularly important in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. In this context, ECRI develops general policy recommendations (GPR) addressed to the governments of all member states. They provide detailed guidelines, which policymakers are invited to use when drawing up national strategies and policies.

ECRI has published two GPRs with specific focus on Roma: GPR No 3: on Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies and GPR No 13 on Combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma.

GPR No 13 defines anti-Gypsyism as a form of racism: an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination which should be vigorously combated in all European countries. It sets out that Europe derives from its history a duty of remembrance, vigilance and resistance to the rise of racist, xenophobic, antisemitic and intolerant phenomena. It outlines to member states 90 proposals applicable to all Roma individuals and groups, including Roma migrants. These measures include encouraging Roma victims of violence and other forms of crime or police misconduct to lodge complaints, and calling on the media to avoid inflammatory reporting. GPR No 13, like GPR No 11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing, invites member states to ensure fair, impartial and non-discriminatory policing practices.

GPR No 13 also noted that the European Court of Human Rights has for several years been developing case law concerning the Roma experience of discrimination in various areas and has regarded the Roma as a particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable minority requiring special attention;

The ECRI holds regular round table discussions following publication of its country monitoring reports, and thematic seminars designed to establish links

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<sup>3</sup> ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 defines racial discrimination as any differential treatment based on a ground such as “race”, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin, which has no objective and reasonable justification.

between national situations at the inter-governmental level and bring together specialised bodies or other international partners. To be effective in the fight against racism and intolerance, ECRI reaches out to society at large. NGOs are key partners, vital sources of information and major players in bringing about real change at national level.

In 2015 ECRI published reports on Greece and Norway as part of its fifth round of country monitoring, launched in 2013 and focusing on legislative issues, hate speech, violence and integration policies. Reports on Albania, Austria, Czech Republic Estonia, Hungary and Poland are also due to be published during 2015.

ECRI's fourth report on Romania, released in 2014, found some progress since the previous report in 2007, including the introduction of racism as an aggravating circumstance for all criminal offences, the employment of Roma mediators in schools and hospitals, and the development of education programmes tailored for Roma pupils. However, it found national inclusion strategies had been slow to take off and were still almost entirely supported by EU funds rather than appropriate national resources.

ECRI's annual report 2014 highlighted a surge in support for aggressive nationalist and populist xenophobic parties and the persistence of fascist Second World War nostalgia in several member states. It found EU and non-EU member states had adopted National Roma Integration Strategies, but still needed to set out concrete action plans, sufficient budgetary resources and involve regional and local authorities.

## **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)**

[www.holocaustremembrance.com](http://www.holocaustremembrance.com)

### **Mission**

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally. It is founded on the *2000 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust*, in which governments committed to "Uphold the terrible truth of the Holocaust against those who deny it, and strengthen the moral commitment of our peoples, and the political commitment of our governments, to ensure that future generations can understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences".

The main undertakings are to:

- promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust;
- commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and honour those who stood against it;
- throw light on the still obscured shadows of the Holocaust, by facilitating the opening of archives;

- plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a bitter past.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

IHRA currently has 31 member countries, eight observer countries and seven permanent international partners. Membership is open to all countries, and members must be committed to the Stockholm Declaration and to the implementation of national policies and programmes in support of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. One of IHRA's key roles is to contribute to the funding of relevant projects. The grant programme aims to foster international dialogue and the exchange of expertise, and increase government involvement

The IHRA comprises four core working groups made up of experts appointed by each country in the principal areas of activity – academic, education, museums & memorials – and three key committees that bring experts from all working groups together to address topics of contemporary interest: Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial; Holocaust, Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity; and the Genocide of the Roma.

### **The Committee on the Genocide of the Roma**

The IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma has worked to increase awareness about the genocide of the Roma under National Socialism, and to increase the commitment of the IHRA to educate, research and remember this largely forgotten aspect of European history, since it was set up in 2009. It encourages the inclusion of the Roma genocide into school curricula and reaches out to a network of educational institutions.

It tries to highlight the continuity of prejudice against the Roma before and since the Second World War and demonstrate the link between the history of discrimination and persecution and the present situation of the Roma. This calls for educational programmes that combat stereotyping, that include a focus on Roma resistance rather than on a victim status, and that emphasise the resilience of Roma culture.

The committee aims to:

- Encourage national delegations to provide the IHRA with expertise on the Roma genocide and the current situation of Roma in their countries;
- Draw Roma representatives into its working processes;
- Discuss within national delegations how the Roma genocide can be included in Holocaust education;
- Include Roma history and the contemporary situation of Roma into school curricula;
- Organise international events to raise awareness of the topic;
- Support an international network of experts – making local research available to educators;
- Further the exchange of best practices on an international level;

- Disseminate existing texts on the Roma genocide among member states and translate them into national languages.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

The IHRA first issued a statement on the genocide of the Roma in 2007. It does not organise commemorative events, but the IHRA chair and delegates from several countries attended the commemoration in Auschwitz-Birkenau 2 August 2011 and the conference organised by TernYpe – International Roma Youth Network in Kraków, and committee members have taken part in ternYpe conferences since. Many are organisers of Holocaust commemorations in their own countries. Several projects with a strong focus on commemoration and remembrance have received IHRA funding. For example, the *Requiem for Auschwitz* music project with the linked [educational digital exhibition](#) (2012) and ternYpe's *Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative* (2014).

In 2013 the chair of the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma addressed the Council of Europe's CAHROM, highlighting the importance of an official European day of remembrance for the genocide.

As part of its educational focus, the committee initiated an international project to develop educational materials, which resulted in the [online teaching resource](#) *The Fate of European Roma and Sinti*, and a two-year project to implement the materials internationally. In 2014 the first IHRA conference on the Genocide of the Roma was held in London in cooperation with the Centre of Holocaust Education at the Institute of Education, University of London.

### **OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (ODIHR/CPRSI)**

[www.osce.org/odihr/roma](http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma)

#### **Mission**

The OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) monitors and supports implementation of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's key policy instrument for promoting Roma and Sinti inclusion, the *2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti*. This action plan sets out comprehensive commitments to combat racism and discrimination and promote equal access and opportunities in education, employment, housing and health services, and to enhancing public and political participation for Roma and Sinti across the 57 OSCE member states. Particular attention is given to the situation of Roma in crisis and post-crisis situations.

The CPRSI works with national and local governments, civil society and international organisations, assessing progress, identifying challenges and defining priority areas for action. A strategic objective is the teaching about and commemorating of the genocide of the Roma and Sinti, to promote tolerance and understanding to counter current racism and discrimination.

The OSCE was created as a security organisation, but with a broad concept of security, dealing equally with human rights and democracy issues. The OSCE ODIHR is one of the world's principal regional human rights bodies, active throughout Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and North America, promoting democratic elections, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the rule of law. As part of its work in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination, ODIHR provides assistance to participating states in addressing antisemitism and promoting Holocaust remembrance. The ODIHR is funded through a core budget, approved annually by participating states, and voluntary contributions.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The CPRSI was established in 1994 within the OSCE ODIHR in Warsaw. It was the first such office set up to promote Roma and Sinti human rights and integration, and remains key to addressing the historic discrimination and persecution of Roma and Sinti, and in promoting their inclusion in the OSCE region. The work of the ODIHR CPRSI is based on the principle "For Roma, With Roma" and ensures active participation of Roma and Sinti throughout its work. It is responsible for drafting ODIHR status reports on the implementation of the 2003 Action Plan – providing a vital resource for states in their efforts to achieve the objectives.

The CPRSI works to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti through assisting the OSCE participating states with policy design, building capacity of Roma and Sinti civil society, monitoring reports and field assessment visits, thematic workshops and review conferences. Particular activities focus on improving relations between the Roma and Sinti and the police and enhancing public and political participation.

In 2014, the CPRSI visited Ukraine to evaluate the situation of Roma in conflict situations, and found that the lack of civil registration documents and poor public perceptions of Roma make them particularly vulnerable in the displacement context.

The CPRSI also works on the empowerment of Roma and Sinti women and girls, who are often subject to multiple forms of discrimination, and young people through consultations and youth forums.

In 2010, ODIHR launched a website dedicated to the genocide of the Roma and Sinti ([www.roma-genocide.org](http://www.roma-genocide.org)), in cooperation with the Council of Europe, to serve as a knowledge database for both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

In 2011 the CPRSI contributed to an expert meeting on the development of online teaching materials, The Fate of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust, organised in Amsterdam during the Dutch chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), and has since participated in the IHRA committee on the genocide of the Roma, to raise awareness on the need to teach about and commemorate the genocide.

In 2014, the ODIHR organised an expert meeting, Teaching about the Roma and Sinti Genocide – Experiences and Good Practices within the OSCE Area,

which brought together participants from Roma and Sinti civil society organisations and academia to discuss experiences and practices within the OSCE area on teaching about the Roma and Sinti genocide during the Second World War. An overview of activities in participating states will be available in at the end of 2015.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

Since 2010, CPRSI has provided support to Roma and Sinti youth initiatives that commemorate the Roma and Sinti genocide. The OSCE ODIHR also publishes a bi-annual online overview of Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE region. Based on a questionnaire completed by OSCE participating states, the online overview also provides information about remembrance days dedicated to the commemoration of the Roma and Sinti genocide.

## International Civil Society Organisations

### Amnesty International

<https://www.amnesty.org/>

#### **Mission**

Amnesty International is the world's largest grassroots human rights organisation, with more than 7 million supporters working to protect men, women and children wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied. Its vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. Its mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Amnesty is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and is funded mainly by members and public donations. It was set up in 1961 and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

#### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

Amnesty International investigates and exposes abuses, mobilises public support and lobbies governments and big companies to make sure they keep their promises and respect international law.

In recent years Amnesty has broadened its mission in recognition that there are many more prisoners of poverty than prisoners of conscience. Engaging with economic, social and cultural rights has enabled Amnesty to address complex human rights problems in a more holistic and comprehensive manner.

Amnesty International documents how human rights violations drive and deepen poverty.

The Fight Discrimination in Europe (FDE) campaign tackles the marginalisation of the European Roma population as one of its three key themes: Roma rights, LGBTI rights and hate crime.

The website hosts Amnesty International's news, research outputs and campaigning activities under the FDE campaign.

Amnesty also produces a wide range of human rights education resources that can be adapted by teachers to foster knowledge, skills and attitudes consistent with

human rights principles. These include a schools resource pack on Travellers' Rights in English, and Roms et discriminations in French, with exercises and teacher notes.

Amnesty's current campaigns for Europe's Roma population mostly focus on discrimination in education and housing, and hate-motivated violence.

There's a dedicated [website](#) for the ongoing campaign Learn the lesson, highlighting segregation of Roma children in 'special' schools in the Czech Republic as well as in Roma-only schools and classes; research, news reports and campaigning on forced evictions, segregation in settlements and discrimination in access to housing across Europe; and the Stand Together Against Hate campaign, which highlights attacks on discriminated groups including Roma, LGBTI people, migrants/asylum-seekers, religious minorities etc, through personal stories and work on individual cases.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

Amnesty does not organise any specific remembrance activities but it has participated in events such as the one organised in Poland by TernYpe for the Roma Holocaust remembrance day in 2013, and it welcomes any initiative to make 2 August an official remembrance day of the Roma and Sinti Genocide, such as the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in April 2015 to recognise the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day.

### **Equinet – the European Network of Equality Bodies<sup>4</sup>**

<http://www.equineteurope.org>

#### **Mission**

Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, promotes equality in Europe by supporting and enabling the work of national equality bodies. It serves as a professional platform for cooperation, capacity building and peer support around the legal interpretation and implementation of EU equal treatment directives and the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination. In its activities it promotes:

- Respect for and recognition of the diversity of individuals and groups in society.
- Equality on all grounds including gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and age.
- The potential of equality bodies to contribute to positive change for individuals, organisations and institutions, and society as a whole.

#### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

Equinet brings together 42 independent organisations from 32 European countries empowered to counteract discrimination as "national equality bodies". These are established on the basis of EU equal treatment directives and are

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<sup>4</sup> Although not really a civil society organisation, Equinet is also not an intergovernmental organisation and they therefore suggested to be listed within this section.

mandated to provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination, conduct independent surveys concerning discrimination and publish independent reports and make recommendations on any issue relating to discrimination in their country.

Equinet builds upon the 2002-04 project Strengthening the Cooperation between Specialised Bodies for the Implementation of Equal Treatment Legislation and is funded by the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-20.

It holds seminars, conferences and specialised training sessions for exchange of information and to enhance the capacity of equality bodies to tackle issues of inequality and discrimination. Equinet also operates platforms for ongoing collaboration, exchange and research within its working groups, structured around thematic work areas of relevance to national equality bodies, namely:

- Equality law
- Communication strategies and practices
- Policy formation
- Gender equality

When focusing on specific grounds of discrimination, Equinet applies an intersectional approach in its activities, addressing multiple discrimination issues as well as horizontal issues. A number of Equinet events and publications have been relevant for ensuring equality for Roma, including a publication on racial equality and a conference addressing school segregation of Roma children.

### **Ad Hoc Initiative on Roma Equality**

In 2009 the Equinet work plan outlined the need to focus attention on the discrimination and inequality faced by Roma communities. A steering group was set up to coordinate the initiative, and a survey was held among the equality bodies – which found high levels of unequal treatment and exclusion of Roma and Traveller people across the EU. Housing, education and social services were particularly problematic areas in the public sector, and access to insurance, shops and recreation and leisure services in the private sector. Underreporting of discrimination was found to be widespread, possibly due to poor awareness of rights within the Roma and Traveller communities, time limits on the presentation of cases and issues of trust between the communities and authorities.

Following round table discussions in Athens and Paris, Equinet published an opinion document, *Making Equality Legislation work for Roma and Travellers*, which was presented at the EU Roma summit in Cordoba in 2010. It outlines approaches that equality bodies, national and local authorities, civil society and the European Union could usefully take in the future to provide a safe space for Roma and Travellers and empower them. A subsequent round table continued the successful networking, with the aim of following up the recommendations and identifying further initiatives.

Together with members experienced in work on Roma issues Equinet produced a factsheet in 2011 to help national equality bodies with the development, implementation and monitoring of their countries' National Roma Integration Strategies. It outlines Equinet supported activity in Slovakia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Northern Ireland.

Under Equinet's Work Plan for 2015, the working group on policy formation will be reviewing the contribution of equality bodies to the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. It says: "This topic has gained more relevance in the context of austerity measures aggravating violations of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly with respect to groups that are more vulnerable to discrimination (migrants, older persons, disabled persons, Roma etc)."

The overview will take account of the work done by equality bodies in the field and their use of international instruments such as the European Social Charter or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

## **European Roma Information Office (ERIO)**

[www.erionet.eu](http://www.erionet.eu)

### **Mission**

ERIO is a European advocacy and information NGO that promotes political and public discussion on Roma issues. Through its wide network, it aims to combat racist discrimination and social exclusion of Roma through awareness raising, lobbying and policy development. Since its creation in 2003, ERIO has been actively involved in shaping European policies for Roma inclusion. Its activities, educational and commemorative, are linked to the integration and promotion of the rights of Roma. It does not seek to replace other Roma organisations but to provide a platform to ensure the voices of all European Roma are heard by EU and national officials.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

ERIO contributes to EU Roma-related policies, organises and attends events related to Roma issues, lobbies EU institutions and disseminates news and updates to Roma activists and advocates. It works as a network, sharing information and coordinating actions of different Roma organisations, and promoting political and public discussion of Roma issues by providing in-depth information on a range of policy issues to EU institutions, Roma civil organisations, government authorities and intergovernmental bodies.

ERIO offers advocacy training and practical templates for Roma activists, workshops with equality bodies and conferences with local/regional authorities. Other initiatives include Arts for Roma children, promoting inclusion in schools.

In 2014 it was the leading partner in From Words to Practice: Acting for Roma Equality and Integration, an EU project to improve implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies; promote participation of Roma representatives,

especially the young and women; and raise awareness about the needs and concerns of Roma communities and the existence of the appropriate tools to address these issues.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

ERIO works on campaigns to raise awareness about the Holocaust and Roma, emphasising the relevance of the historical experience to the contemporary struggle of Roma communities for empowerment and against violence and discrimination. It has been involved in commemorative events dedicated to the Roma and Sinti genocide and has produced educational resources.

In 2012, as part of the EC's Europe for Citizens programme, ERIO organised two European high level conferences on Remembering the forgotten Roma Holocaust, and national seminars with young people in Belgium, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Germany, and released an eight-minute video, *The Untold Story: Roma Holocaust*.

Since 2013 it has been the leading partner in the EC-funded MemoROM project, which included creating the International Roma and Sinti Remembrance Network, an online platform fostering learning and understanding of the Roma genocide in a way that combats enduring discrimination and stereotypes. As well as educating, MemoROM aims to collect historical evidence, including oral testimony, achieve official recognition of the genocide – particularly through local commemorations – and build cross-border alliances.

ERIO has organised visits to Auschwitz and other Nazi camps for young people, and collaborates with Jewish organisations to research the fate of Roma during the Holocaust, creating a network to challenge stereotypes and avoid a 'competition of suffering'.

## **European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)**

[www.errc.org](http://www.errc.org)

### **Mission**

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation working to combat anti-Romani racism and discrimination against Roma across Europe through strategic litigation, advocacy, research, human rights education, and the media. It strives to provide Roma with the tools to challenge discrimination and achieve equal access to justice, education, housing, health care and public services.

ERRC is a leading NGO working on Roma rights issues in Europe. It was founded in 1996, and is funded by private foundations, international organisations and governments and governed by a multinational board of directors consisting of Romani and non-Romani lawyers, human rights activists and business professionals.

ERRC has consultative status with the Council of Europe and the UN Economic and Social Council, and has received numerous awards.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

Its programme strategy for 2013-17 will address:

- State response to violence and hate speech
- Access to education (patterns of segregation of Roma children)
- Access to housing (segregated settlements)
- Freedom of movement
- Identity documents (securing documentation from authorities)
- Women's rights (ethnic and gender discrimination)
- Children's rights (overrepresentation of Roma children in state care)
- Disaggregated data collection

ERRC has launched more than 500 court cases in 15 countries against state and non-state actors who have discriminated or committed violence against Roma. It has secured compensation for Roma individuals for the infringement of their human rights and in certain cases also for the subsequent failure of their respective governments to ensure justice.

ERRC maintains an extensive archive of Roma rights-related information on its website and publishes human rights reports/submissions, press releases, the journal *Roma Rights*, pamphlets, position papers, blog and educational materials. It works closely with various media through outreach, education and information sharing, to improve coverage of Roma rights-related issues and ensure balanced reporting concerning Roma.

Its human rights education portfolio includes: internships for Romani activists; Roma rights workshops for Romani activists; thematic or country specific training initiatives targeting legal professionals (Roma and non-Roma); legal traineeships for Roma lawyers; and gender equality research fellowships for Roma activists.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

Commemorative activities are not a core element of ERRC's work, however the Roma genocide is seen as an important historical event in the context of human rights. In 2013, ERRC produced a factsheet, *Porajmos: The Roma Holocaust*, where the impact of the genocide is summarised as follows: '[T]he Roma have never fully recovered from Porajmos; family, social structures and the transmission of culture and history were all lost in concentration camps through the murder of hundreds of thousands of Roma.'

## **European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)**

[www.ertf.org](http://www.ertf.org)

### **Mission**

The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) is the largest of Europe's Roma organisations representing more than 20 ethnic Roma groups. Its aims are to:

- Combat anti-Gypsyism in all its forms;

- Act as a key political partner of and interlocutor between national governments and international organisations on any issues affecting Roma;
- Ensure respect and recognition of the 12-15 million Roma in Europe;
- Fight against discrimination and for equal rights and equal opportunities for Roma in Europe;
- Increase social inclusion and Roma participation in the decision-making process;
- Achieve official recognition of Roma as a European people and of Romanes as a European language; and
- Promote the recognition of the Roma genocide.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The ERTF was created over three years of talks with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe as a functional body to voice concerns about Roma issues at European level, prompted by mounting Roma nationalism. It was registered as an association under French law and a partnership agreement was signed with the Council of Europe in 2004, under which the ERTF receives support in financial and human resources, including a secretariat in Strasbourg, and has 'privileged access to Council of Europe bodies on matters concerning Roma and Travellers.

Elections were organised in 40 countries and 67 delegates from 33 countries attended the first plenary assembly to vote in an executive committee and directorates. In 2006, three working groups were set up to focus on human rights, social issues and civil society. The genocide of the Roma was discussed, together with education, culture, financing, and enlargement.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

The ERTF considers the recognition of the Roma genocide a means to combat anti-Gypsyism today and to assert Roma identity. Commemorative activities at the Holocaust memorial stone at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg every 2 August help keep Roma issues on the political agenda. Since 2013, the ERTF has also represented the Roma community at the Council of Europe's international Holocaust commemoration on 27 January.

The ERTF [website](#), offers press commentaries, links to documentaries and photographs, and educational resources including *Right to Remember – A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide and Mirrors: Manual on combating anti-Gypsyism through human rights education*, published by the Council of Europe in 2014-15, which ERTF helped to prepare.

In 2014, ERTF published a limited edition postage stamp commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Roma genocide, and staged a concert by Roma artists, an art exhibition and the presentation of documentaries.

When EU intergovernmental work on Roma issues was upgraded in 2011 and a new Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) was appointed, answerable directly to the Council of Europe committee of ministers. ERTF was granted observer status. In 2013-14 the ERTF lobbied within the Council of Europe for recognition of the genocide of the Roma.

## **International Romani Union**

[www.internationalromaniunion.org](http://www.internationalromaniunion.org)

### **Mission statement**

- To establish the Roma as a non-territorial nation with the same rights as other nations, including representation in intergovernmental organisations;
- To lobby and negotiate with and within the international community on Romani issues;
- To promote the cultural traditions, customs and language of the Roma; and
- To cooperate with the authorities to solve the social, economic and cultural problems of the Roma in all countries where they live.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The focus on the recognition of the Roma as a nation has included establishing national symbols, such as an anthem and a flag, and attempts to standardise the Romani language, and promoting interest in Roma history in general and the Roma genocide in particular.

The first International Roma Congress in London in 1971 looked at Nazi crimes against the Roma, and in 1981 the Congress focused on compensation for Roma survivors of Nazi persecution and strategies to push the German government to improve their situation. A working group on Holocaust restitution was set up in Prague in 2000, and the IRU subsequently gained partial access to the savings of Holocaust victims deposited in Swiss banks.

The IRU is based in Romania, was founded as the executive body of the International Roma Congress organised in 1971 by the Comité International Rom and the Gypsy Council, and was formally established in 1977. Delegates from the then 14 countries resolved to raise awareness of Roma issues and fight for their human rights. The IRU is the oldest organisation representing the international Romani community, and now includes more than 30 member states.

The IRU's programme is set and approved by the Congress of delegates from member organisations and states, in proportion to the Romani population in that country. The IRU Parliament considers reports on the situation of the Roma population in each country, and oversees the budget. The IRU has had consultative status to the United Nations since 1993.

## **Open Society Institute (OSI)**

[www.opensocietyfoundations.org](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org)

### **Mission**

The Open Society Foundations' mission is to build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people.. They focus on respect for human rights, minorities and diversity of opinions; shaping public policy; and building international alliances on issues such as corruption

and freedom of information, with initiatives to advance justice, education, public health and independent media. Working in every part of the world, the Open Society Foundations place a high priority on protecting and improving the lives of people in marginalised communities.

Since the early 1990s, the Open Society Foundations have provided support to improve the lives of the Roma, Europe's largest and most marginalised ethnic minority, through the Roma Initiatives Office, based in Budapest.

The Open Society Foundations were founded in 1979 by the investor and philanthropist George Soros and have offices around the world, including 14 in Europe. In 2005, together with the World Bank, they launched the Decade of Roma Inclusion. In 2015 they support the initiative to found the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture, which was endorsed by the 47 member states of the Council of Europe on September 15.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The Roma Initiatives Office works with Roma advocates, organizations, and communities to achieve Roma rights at European, national, and local levels. It works to achieve equal opportunities, combat segregation, and challenge all forms of discrimination faced by Roma. In addition, it facilitates dialogue, exchange, and collaboration across the Open Society Foundations to coordinate efforts, increase knowledge, and enhance the impact of Roma-related grant-making and advocacy.

The program builds on the Open Society Foundations' many years of support for Roma and pro-Roma civil society organizations to promote active citizenship and grassroots community participation. Substantive participation of Roma communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policies is essential for meaningful progress on Roma rights. Effective and democratic Roma leadership is central to this process.

The Roma Initiatives Office invests in building the capacity of an emerging generation of young women and men to take a leadership role by involving them in voter education and community mobilization campaigns, and providing training that gives Roma activists the skills and confidence to be a force for social change. In partnership with the Roma Education Fund and other donors, it provides opportunities for postgraduate study in the Roma Access Programs run by the Central European University in Budapest.

### **Roma Education Fund (REF)**

[www.romaeducationfund.hu](http://www.romaeducationfund.hu)

#### **Mission**

The Roma Education Fund (REF) aims to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma through the design and implementation of policies and programmes that support quality education for the Roma, including the desegregation of school systems, and contribute to the integration of Roma in Europe.

REF initiatives cover four regions and 16 European countries:

- Balkans – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey
- Central Europe – Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia
- South Eastern Europe – Bulgaria, Romania
- Eastern Europe – Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

Its activities are pursued through three legally separate foundations in Switzerland (2005), Hungary (2006) and Romania (2009), and three project-based branch offices in Serbia, Slovakia and Montenegro. All work together, consistent with a memorandum of understanding signed by each entity, to ensure effective delivery of services in a transparent and accountable manner. Each country foundation has a separate board with independent members. Projects are coordinated at REF's headquarters in Budapest.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

REF acts as a project facilitator, donor and thinktank and runs five major types of programmes:

- Project Support finances projects and programmes. REF has so far supported 451 projects in 13 European countries;
- REF Scholarships, the largest tertiary scholarship programme for Roma students, grants around 1,500 scholarships per semester to students in 16 countries;
- Policy Development and Capacity Building, supports activities that help create a framework for dialogue with governments and civil society on education reform and Roma inclusion;
- Communication and Cross-Country Learning, includes activities to promote the exchange of knowledge on education reforms and Roma inclusion;
- Reimbursable Grants, to help Roma NGOs and local governments access EU funds for Roma education.

Since 2005, REF has gained substantial experience in making use of EU structural and IPA funds for Roma education, working in cooperation with Roma NGOs and governments. As most EU funding is available only at the national level through programmes run by national governments, REF has begun opening small offices in its focus countries to steer these funds toward worthwhile projects.

In addition to developing and documenting best practice models, REF continuously provides policy analysis highlighting critical education and inclusion issues (including analyses of participation of Romani children in the education system, good practices that reduce segregation, effective funding policies etc), thus helping policymakers develop efficient policies to boost Roma integration.

REF's outreach has grown from 5,000 beneficiaries to more than 100,000 in 10 years.

- More than 60,600 children have been supported with direct enrolment in early childhood development programs.

- Early School Leaving programs have reached over 113,000 Romani children in 13 countries in the SEE and CE region.
- Parents are key to the educational success of their children. Through their activities, REF partners have reached out to over 300,000 Romani parents.
- Since 2005 REF has trained more than 30,000 teachers in making school environments more welcoming and inclusive for Romani children.
- Over 4,000 scholarships have been granted annually to Romani students to complete their upper secondary education through the provision of school-based mentoring and tutoring
- REF university scholarship schemes support around 1,500 students in 15 countries annually.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

Although REF does not have a focus on commemoration of the genocide of the Roma, in 2014 a REF research intern travelled to Kraków, Poland, to attend the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative convened by the international Roma youth organisation ternYpe. He made a [filmed report](#) on the commemoration and educational events.

### **TernYpe – International Roma Youth Network**

<http://www.ternype.eu>

[www.2august.eu](http://www.2august.eu)

#### **Mission**

TernYpe, the International Roma Youth Network, is a network of European youth associations helping young people to become active citizens. One of its main goals is to bring Roma and non-Roma young people together to strengthen the intercultural dialogue between them, promote trust and mutual respect, and fight against prejudice, racism and discrimination.

Key priorities include empowering and mobilising young Roma to organise themselves, strengthening their sense of identity, overcoming the burden of anti-Gypsy stereotypes and helping them participate in society to realise their aspirations. TernYpe wants to create space for young people to learn to speak out, unrestricted by social class, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, and be included in the dialogue with policy-makers for a properly democratic society.

#### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

TernYpe explores new ways to boost youth participation and encourage and enable young people to influence their communities and society; harnessing community-based groups, networks and social media platforms. It was founded in 2010 and unites Roma youth organisations from Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Slovakia, Spain and Poland, plus associate members in Romania and Poland.

The network is active in youth campaigns, such as the All in One Society, fighting anti-Gypsyism, and helping young Roma organise their own exchanges, seminars and round tables with stakeholders. Links to other networks are being developed, including the European Union of Jewish Students, the Youth of European Nationalities, the Youth Express Network, Armenian Youth Network and the European Youth Forum.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

In 2010, ternYpe launched the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, to raise awareness about the fate of Roma in the Second World War and honour the victims – as the topic is still not part of the educational curriculum and the history of Roma is still not seen as an integral part of European and national histories (<http://2august.eu/>)

TernYpe now organises annual commemorations in Kraków and Auschwitz-Birkenau called *Dikh he na bister* (Look and don't forget), and educational seminars and expert conferences, and was a consultant on the Council of Europe's *Education for Remembrance* toolkit. In 2014, it organised the largest youth commemoration ceremony in history, attracting more than 1,000 young Roma and non-Roma from 25 countries. The same year, ternYpe addressed the UN in Geneva on the importance of remembering the Roma genocide.

In 2014, its Roma Genocide Remembrance initiative was supported by the Europe for Citizens programme of the European Commission and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and the Polish government has expressed an interest in cooperating on producing educational materials.

## Museums and Memorials

### Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma / Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

[www.sintiundroma.de](http://www.sintiundroma.de)

#### **Mission**

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma (Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma) is an umbrella organisation founded in Germany in 1982, representing various regional Sinti and Roma associations. Its mission is both commemorative and political: to raise awareness about the fate of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust and improve conditions for this minority population group today. It has been at the forefront of German commemoration and compensation for the victims, and supports research and education through the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma (Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma / DKDSR) in Heidelberg, which provides a museum of contemporary history and a memorial. The Central Council and the Documentation Centre both work to combat anti-Gypsyism and to reduce prejudice and stereotypes against the Roma minority.

#### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma consists of four departments (dialogue, documentation, education and consultation) and a library with more than 10,000 items. Together with the Central Council (ZDSR), a legally separate organisation, the Documentation Centre is the central institution for the Roma and Sinti minority in Germany, supported by the German federal and regional governments. In 1997, it opened the world's first permanent exhibition on the Sinti and Roma genocide.

Its current activities include:

- Tailored programmes for schools, including meetings with survivors, courses on the genocide of Roma, and visits to memorial sites;
- An archive of historical and cultural documents for international researchers, including painting and music, from which it presents lectures, exhibitions, film screenings and concerts; and

- A college for young Roma and Sinti, offering projects and academic scholarships to boost the educational prospects of minority groups and help them participate in social and political life.

In 2001, a permanent exhibition on the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust was opened in Auschwitz, initiated by the Central Council and other Roma organisations. The exhibition in block 13 in Auschwitz was modelled on the exhibition in Heidelberg, with a focus on the European dimension of the genocide and the extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

- The Documentation Centre also supports a travelling exhibition, *The Holocaust against the Roma and Sinti and Present Day Racism in Europe* that was first shown in the European Parliament in Strasbourg in January 2006.
- In 2012, after a 20-year campaign by the Central Council, the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe murdered under the National Socialist Regime was unveiled in Berlin near the federal German parliament, providing an important official focus for commemorative events.
- School and teachers' programmes, for various year groups.
- *Taking part, not watching* – an educational initiative for young Roma and Sinti.
- Workshops for students focusing on the present, rather than the past, tackling anti-Gypsyism, prejudices and stereotypes, and raising awareness of racism and discrimination in today's society.
- Nominations for 10 scholarships a year to support German minority group students into higher education.
- Central Council: preservation of the burial sites of Sinti and Roma persecuted by the Nazis as sites of collective family conscience.

Both the Documentation and Cultural Centre the Central Council are funded by the federal government, currently from the budget of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media. In 1995, the Central Council achieved legal recognition for German Sinti and Roma as a national minority in accordance with the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

German Sinti activists erected the first dedicated memorial to Roma and Sinti victims of the Holocaust at the former Zigeunerlager in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1973, and the Central Council has organised annual commemorations at the site together with the Roma People Association in Poland ever since both were founded. The extermination of the remaining 3,000 Sinti and Roma during the liquidation of the Zigeunerlager on 2 August 1944 is commemorated, raising awareness of the genocide across Europe and around the world.

### **Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris**

<http://www.memorialdelashoah.org>

### **Mission**

The Mémorial de la Shoah museum and archive in Paris, which opened in 2005, is housed around Europe's first tomb to the victims of the Holocaust, the 1956 Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr. The complex, which has been extended over the years, now includes permanent and temporary exhibitions, a research and education centre, and the Wall of Names – honouring the 76,000 French Jews deported from France to Nazi concentration camps, of whom only 2,500 survived. The enlarged memorial contains ashes from the extermination camps and from the Warsaw ghetto. The Mémorial de la Shoah provides the official focus of France's national commemoration of the Second World War on 16 July, the anniversary of the mass round-up of Jews in the Vélodrome d'Hiver cycle stadium in Paris in 1942. Nowadays, the official ceremonies also mark the deportation of Roma and homosexuals.

The museum's mission is to commemorate and educate. In 2012, a linked memorial site was opened at the former transit camp in Drancy.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

Papers documenting the persecution of the Jews in France were collected by the Jewish community with the help of resistance groups from as early as 1943, becoming the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC), the largest Holocaust information and research centre in Europe. The centre now offers a searchable online archive of victims' names, and hosts seminars on the Holocaust and related topics. The Mémorial de la Shoah is an Associated NGO with the UN Department of Public Information and organises joint events around International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January. A travelling exhibition, *The Holocaust in Europe*, launched in 2011, tours UN information centres worldwide. UNESCO and the Mémorial de la Shoah also hold regular exhibitions, videoconferences, seminars and expert meetings in Paris on a range of related topics, including the genocide of the Roma and other victims of the Holocaust.

Together with the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, the museum supports fellowships for historical, sociological and literary research.

The pedagogical department works together with the FNASAT (Fédération nationale des associations solidaires d'action avec les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage), a federation of 80 organisations in France.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

The Mémorial de la Shoah currently hosts:

- The French edition of the [online exhibition](#) *The Fate of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust*, with partners from Germany and Austria;
- International symposiums, including in 2014, The Ustaša's Mass Violence against the Serbs, Jews, and Roma in Croatia, as part of the one-day conference The Holocaust in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1941-45); and in 2015 Le génocide des Sinti et Rom – histoire et mémoire, as part of the programme of events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the camps; and

- Educational workshops, teaching programmes and trips, including Destins Tsiganes, for secondary school pupils.

## **Museum of Romani Culture, Brno**

<http://www.rommuz.cz/en>

### **Mission**

The Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, in the Czech Republic, aims to map the history of the Roma minority in the Czech lands up to the present day, in national and international context, and gather together an expert collection of records and documents on the material and spiritual culture of the Roma and their coexistence with the majority population.

It also provides educational and social activities to a socially disadvantaged minority, and enhances the inclusion of Roma children into the Czech education system.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The museum has a permanent exhibition dedicated to the Romani victims of the Holocaust, which addresses the gas chambers and conditions in the concentration camps in commentaries, historical documents and photographs, and a travelling exhibition, *Genocide of the Roma during WWII*, in Czech and English for schools, museums and other institutions.

The museum was founded by Czech Roma activists in 1991, after the Velvet Revolution. It opened its first permanent exhibition in 2005 and is now financed by the Czech ministry of culture. It provides a hub of Romani research in Central Europe, currently comprising up to 3,000 books and a special archive on Roma art and music. The museum is represented in the Czech delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), and expert meetings were held in the museum in 2007 and 2013 in cooperation with IHRA.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

The museum holds two annual Holocaust commemorations – to mark the first mass transportation of the Czech Roma and Sinti to Auschwitz-Birkenau and the first mass transportation of Roma prisoners from the so-called Gypsy camp in Hodonín near Kunštát to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 7 March and 21 August 1943, respectively. It also maintains the memorial at the mass grave in Hodonín.

A Holocaust memorial day was held in January 2015, featuring educational programmes for schools about the Romani victims of the Holocaust, the Second World War, and its continuing impact today. A documentary film produced by the museum in 2009 titled *To Live! Ceija Stojka (Žít! Ceija Stojka)* was shown, allowing students see the events through the eyes of a young girl – the famous Austrian-Romani artist and writer Ceija Stojka (1933-2013) – who was interned in several concentration camps.

## **State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau**

<http://www.auschwitz.org/>

### **Mission**

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland stands on the site of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp where more than 1.1 million people are estimated to have been murdered, including at least 960,000 Jews, 70,000 Poles, 23,000 Roma and 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war. It is called the world's largest ever cemetery without graves, and is dedicated to remembrance, awareness and responsibility – which includes education, research and preservation.

Common words do not describe this site properly. Nowadays it is called a graveyard, a monument, a memorial site, a museum. But those words cannot express the full meaning of Auschwitz. It is the best preserved evidence of the greatest fall of mankind and an enormous tragedy in the history of Europe; it is a symbol of the whole history of the Holocaust, the system of concentration camps and an unrecorded crisis of evil.

Taking care of the site is not just a duty we owe to the victims and survivors; to a great extent, it is also an obligation we bear to the generations to come. It will be their responsibility to carry on our post-war endeavours for a better, united, supportive and safe world.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The museum & memorial:

The first permanent exhibition at Auschwitz was opened in the former prisoners' blocks of Auschwitz I in 1947, prompted by survivors who came back to the site to ensure that what had been done there was not forgotten. Because most Auschwitz victims were murdered in Birkenau, it was decided not to create a museum exhibition there but to leave the area – which included the ruins of gas chambers and crematoria as well as the site of the camp, including the so-called Gypsy camp. More than 44 million people worldwide have since visited the museum and memorial, which in 1979 was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Research at the memorial began in the mid-1950s and the first of the “national exhibitions” was set up in 1960, initially by former prisoners, to spread knowledge about the Nazi occupation of the countries from which people were deported to Auschwitz and the fate of their citizens.

The education centre:

In 2005, during the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, several hundred former prisoners signed the founding act of the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust (ICEAH), to fulfil the educational mission of the museum. This was backed in 2009 by the creation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, which guarantees resources for the conservation of the authenticity of the memorial to ensure future generations can continue to visit the remains of Auschwitz, and learn from it.

The mission of ICEAH is to provide a learning experience dedicated to the tragedy of the victims as well as the history of the vast extermination centre. The authenticity of the Auschwitz-Birkenau site and the testimony of survivors deepen understanding of the origins of intolerance, racism and antisemitism. Education at the memorial aims to foster reflection about the meaning of personal responsibility today, in Europe and beyond.

The centre conducts postgraduate research, seminars, study visits for teachers and young people, educational workshops, and thematic as well as academic conferences.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

From the winter of 1943 to the summer of 1944, nearly 23,000 Sinti and Roma from many European countries were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. They were the third largest group of deportees to Auschwitz. Most died due to the inhumane living conditions, starvation and medical experiments. On the night of 2 August 1944, the so-called Zigeunerlager in Birkenau was “liquidated”. Some 3,000 people there – men, woman and children – were murdered in the gas chambers. Another 3,000 were transferred to different camps in Germany. Some of these prisoners survived the war.

In 1973 a memorial to the Sinti and Roma victims was erected at the former Zigeunerlager. For many years, the Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma in Heidelberg and the Roma People Association in Poland have held commemorations at the monument every 2 August.

In 2001 a permanent exhibition entitled the Extermination of the European Roma was opened in Block 13, in the former Auschwitz I. It was initiated by the Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma in Heidelberg, the Roma People Association in Poland, and other Roma organisations.

An [online lesson](#) about the history of Sinti and Roma at Auschwitz is available on the website of the Auschwitz memorial.

Publications include:

- *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau*. Two record books from the Gypsy family camp, containing the camp numbers, nationality, date and place of birth, date of death, and other information about almost 21,000 people was smuggled out of the camp in July 1944 and buried. After the war the books were retrieved and conserved. Their contents were published in 1993.
- *Voices of Memory 7. Roma in Auschwitz* by Sławomir Kaprański, Maria Martyniak, Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska (2011).

Since 2010, ternYpe – International Roma Youth Network has organised a commemoration week called Dikh he na bister (Look and Don't Forget) about 2 August in Kraków and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In 2011, Poland the parliament officially recognised 2 August as the Day of Remembrance of the Extermination of the Roma and Sinti and the commemoration is now organised with the national government.

“Our duty is to fully restore these events in the collective memory of Europeans and the transfer of knowledge to future generations,” said Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz in 2011, the Polish minister for equal treatment of minorities. “Memory is a bridge between the past, the present and the future. Understanding history helps us all to seek solutions to contemporary problems.”

## **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)**

<http://www.ushmm.org/>

### **Mission**

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC is a living memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, inspiring citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity.

It is America’s national institution for the documentation, study and interpretation of Holocaust history. Its mission is to:

- Advance and disseminate knowledge about the Holocaust;
- Preserve the memory of those who suffered; and
- Encourage its visitors to think about the moral and spiritual questions raised, and their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.

### **Programmes/projects/campaigns/activities**

The museum strives to broaden public understanding through:

- Onsite and travelling exhibitions;
- Research, academic programming, and publication;
- Collecting and preserving material evidence, art and artefacts related to the Holocaust;
- Educational outreach, including distribution of education materials and teacher resources;
- Holocaust commemorations, including the annual observance of the Days of Remembrance in the US Capitol; and
- Public programming designed to enhance understanding of the Holocaust and related issues, including those of contemporary significance.

US federal support guarantees the museum’s permanent place on the National Mall, and its far-reaching educational programmes and global impact are made possible by generous donors.

Since it opened in 1993, the museum has welcomed more than 38 million visitors, including 96 heads of state and more than 10 million schoolchildren. Its website, a leading online authority on the Holocaust, is available in 15 languages and was visited in 2014 by more than 9 million people from 236 countries and territories.

### **Roma genocide & commemoration**

The genocide of the Roma and Sinti is featured in the museum's permanent exhibition, which displays artefacts, photos, and video from its collections, footage and explanatory text.

The museum's collections contain extensive documentation on Roma and their persecution by Nazi Germany, its allies and collaborators, and constitute the largest archive of Roma-related material in the United States. The collection includes more than 80 million pages of archival documentation from more than 50 countries, and 135 million digitised images from the International Tracing Service Digital Archives; photographs; artefacts; films; music; art; books; and testimonies from Holocaust survivors, perpetrators and witnesses. There is material related to Roma in all these forms. The photo archives and the Steven Spielberg film and video archive contain more than 1,000 images and extensive film footage of Roma life before, during and after the Holocaust. Much of this material can be streamed from the museum's website, as can select video testimonies.

Highlights from the collection include:

- Records relating to Roma from the National Archives in Prague, the Třeboň Archives, and the Czech Ministry of Interior Archive;
- Records relating to Roma and Sinti in Austria from the Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes;
- Criminal Police Control Centre (*Kripoleitstelle*) records on Jews, Roma, and Sinti, 1936-1945 from the State Archive Berlin and various city archives in Germany;
- Records from various archives of Romania concerning Roma, 1940-44 from the National Archives of Romania;
- Records from the St Josefspflege at Mulfingen, Germany, 1938-1984;
- *Gross-Stadt Zigeuner* (City Gypsies): film of a Romani group in Berlin by László Moholy-Nagy, 1932, from George Eastman House; and
- Oral history interviews of the Czech Roma Documentation Project and the Romanian Roma Documentation Project undertaken by the museum.

### **The Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust studies**

Within the museum, the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies is the primary venue for research and programming on Roma and the Holocaust. It promotes networking and cooperative projects among Holocaust scholars around the world through its visiting scholar programmes, research initiatives, archival collection programme, seminars, research workshops, publications, symposia, and campus outreach lectures. Over the past decade, the visiting fellows programme has funded a variety of researchers studying topics related to Roma, including pre-war persecution, deportation and internment, resistance, reparations, memory, and commemoration in various European countries. Romani topics are regularly included in the Mandel centre's conferences and workshops, and two symposia and a research workshop have been devoted to the Roma and the Holocaust,

most recently in 2014. The Mandel Center journal, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, has published multiple articles on the Roma and the Holocaust.

Roma are also included in the museum's various online materials geared for public audiences, including in such online features as *Music and the Holocaust*, the *Holocaust Encyclopaedia*, and the thematic overview geared for middle- and secondary-level students and teachers, *The Holocaust: A Learning Site*.

USHMM has commented on recent anti-Roma violence in Europe, with reference to the persecution of Roma in the Holocaust. In 2011, it called upon European authorities to be "mindful of the danger that is unleashed when an ethnic group is singled out and targeted for discrimination and the need to uphold the rights and freedoms of Roma in accordance with international and regional obligations".

## References

These are just a few of the recent publications on Roma issues, policies and international organisations working in this field. Many of the organisations listed in this overview also refer to relevant literature on their websites.

See for example the [virtual library](#) hosted by the CoE and OSCE/ODIHR.

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