

## International Conference

# IS “AUSCHWITZ ONLY SLEEPING”? SINTI AND ROMA NARRATIVES AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of 2 August 1944  
European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day

31<sup>st</sup> of July – 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2019



75<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
2 August 2019

European  
Roma  
Holocaust  
Memorial  
Day

*“I’m afraid that Europe is forgetting its past  
and that Auschwitz is only sleeping.  
Antigypsyist threats, policies and actions  
worry me greatly and make me very sad.”*

Ceija Stojka, Roma Holocaust survivor (1933 - 2013)

International Conference

## **IS “AUSCHWITZ ONLY SLEEPING”?**

### **SINTI AND ROMA NARRATIVES AFTER THE HOLOCAUST**

On August 2, 2019, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder of the remaining Sinti and Roma in the so called “gypsy family camp” will be commemorated at the former German concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. This day was officially declared by the European Parliament in 2015 as the “European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day” commemorating 500,000 Sinti and Roma murdered in Nazi-occupied Europe.

#### **Main organizers of the conference:**

Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAN) and ternYpe International Roma Youth Network

#### **Main issues of the conference**

##### **1. Representation of Roma memory in arts and culture**

This panel addresses key questions of the representation of the Roma memory in arts and culture. The arts are a powerful vehicle that can communicate passionately the subjective Roma experiences of the past. In particular, the Holocaust is a common reference point of inspiration and a relevant theme in Roma cultural productions. The arts can also serve as a premise to deal with individual and collective trauma of the past. These cultural productions and artefacts are important in shaping a collective culture of remembrance among Roma throughout Europe and beyond.

##### **2. Roma historical narratives about the Holocaust**

This panel looks into historical narratives of Roma about the Holocaust, the recognition of subjective narrations, historical interpretations and testimonies, as well as the existing structures and forms to archive and transmit the memory: What are the Roma historical interpretations of the past and its implications in the present? What are the forms and objects which can transmit the Roma historical memory? What are the Roma historical artifacts and do we have access to them? How are the Roma experiences of the past communicated and transmitted – internally, within the communities – and externally, to the broader non-Roma society.

##### **3. Spaces of memory and representation of the Romani experience**

Collective memory requires institutions, spaces and rituals to promote and disseminate a Roma historical narratives of the Holocaust experiences. Currently, there are important initiatives focused on erecting memorials and/or building Roma museums that are taking place in a few places around Europe (Lety, Jasenovac). How can we reinforce networking and exchange of experiences between existing and future institutions representing Roma collective memory, to establish a joined, negotiated and consolidated interpretation of the Roma collective history, including in mainstream institutions?

##### **4. Romani civil rights struggle for recognition and against antigypsyism**

Four decades after the hunger strike of Sinti and Roma Holocaust survivors and activists in the former concentration camp in Dachau in 1980, the Romani resistance and civil rights struggle continues against Holocaust denial, for the recognition and fight against antigypsyism, as well as for political, cultural and social rights. This panel creates a space to negotiate current strategies and future perspectives of the Romani struggle, both to strengthen Romani mobilization, as well as to advance processes of uncovering the truth about deeply structural racism, and advancing recognition and remedy for antigypsyism in mainstream institutions.

## Conference Program

### 31 July 2019

Venue: *Auditorium Maximum, Jagiellonian University (UJ), Krakow*

- 19.30-21.00 **Panel 1: Representation of Roma memory in arts and culture**  
Moderation by Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
- Valerie Leray, artist
  - Ricardo M. Sahiti, conductor of the Roma and Sinti Philharmonic Orchestra
  - Andre Raatzsch, Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma
  - Krzysztof Gil, artist and scholar, Department of Painting, Drawing and Sculpture, Pedagogical University in Krakow
- 21.00 – 22.00 **Exhibition Opening: “Tears of gold/ Sownakune Jasfa”**  
Curated by Krzysztof Gil and Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka
- Exhibiting artists:  
Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Valerie Leray, Emilia Rigova, Marcin Tas, Kalman Varady  
with performance by Bogusia Delimata
- 22.00 **Concert: Romano Ifo (Nowa Huta, Krakow)**  
In the framework of the “Dikh He Na Bister” youth event  
*Zaczek Student Klub, aleja 3 Maja 5, Krakow*

### 1 August 2019

Venue: *Auditorium Maximum, Jagiellonian University (UJ), Krakow*

- 09.15 **Opening of the Conference**
- Romani Rose, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma
  - Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
  - Rita Prigmore, Holocaust survivor
- 09.40 **Panel 2: Roma historical narratives about the Holocaust**  
Moderation: Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum/  
Jagiellonian University
- Gerhard Baumgartner, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance:  
RomArchive: “Voices of victims”
  - Lise Foisneau, Aix-Marseille University, Marseille; Central European University:  
Romani Resistance in France
  - Marko Pecak, Roma Education Fund - Representation of Roma in European  
Curricula and Textbooks
  - Emran Elmazi, Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma
- 11.00 *Coffee break*

11.30 **Panel 3: Spaces of memory**

Moderation: Sławomir Kaprański, Pedagogical University

- Anna Vrtálová, Roma Museum Brno: the memorial site Lety u Pisku, Czech Republic
- Andrzej Kacorzyc, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
- Paul Shapiro, Director of International Affairs, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)
- Irina Spataru, Junior Expert OSCE-ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, Dikh He Na Bister initiative/ternYpe
- Paul Verschure, Future Memory Foundation

13.00 *Lunch break*

14.30 **Key note speech**

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr., PUSH/Rainbow Coalition

15.00 **Panel 4: Romani civil rights struggle for recognition and against antigypsyism**

Moderation: Iulius Rostas, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAN)/ Central European University

- Soraya Post, former Member of the European Parliament, Sweden
- Deborah Cieri, Movimento Khetane, Italy
- Zola Kondur, Council of Europe/ Chirikli Roma Foundation, Ukraine
- Ismael Cortés Gómez, Member of the Spanish Parliament

16.15 **Is “Auschwitz only sleeping”? Reflections from the conference**

Moderation: Vivian Isberg, Dikh He Na Bister initiative

- Thorsten Afflerbach, Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe
- Isabela Mihalache, ENAR/ Alliance against Antigypsyism
- Szabolcs Schmidt, DG Justice, European Commission
- Moritz Kilger, EVZ Foundation

17.00 *Minute's silence to commemorate the Warsaw Uprising*

## Official program of the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration

### 1 August 2019

*Auditorium Maximum of Jagiellonian University, Krakow*

- 19.00-20.00 Arrival and welcome of international delegations and representatives
- 20.00-22.00 **Concert in memory of the Sinti and Roma murdered on 2 August 1944**  
Roma and Sinti Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Riccardo M Sahiti  
**Recognition of Dr. Piotr Cywinski**, Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum,  
with the special award of the European Civil Rights Prize of Sinti and Roma
- 22.00 Reception

### 2 August 2019

*Birkenau, camp section B II e*

- 09.45-10.30 Entrance and security-check, walk to the memorial
- 10.30 Arrival of survivors and VIP delegations
- 10.00 Reading of names of the victims at the memorial by Sinti and Roma youth**
- 11.00-12.15 Commemoration ceremony**
- 12.15-12.45 Wreath laying ceremony**
- 13.00 End of the commemoration ceremony
- 13.00 **Lunch and Reception in the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer**, *hosted by Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, and the Roma Association in Poland in cooperation with the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau*
- 14.30-15.30 **Commemoration ceremony: Speeches by international organizations, parliamentary and governmental representatives**
- 13.00 **Lunch and Youth Conference “Dikh He Na Bister“ in the International Youth Meeting Centre** in Oświęcim, hosted by the International Roma Youth Network ternYpe and the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma
- 15.00 Youth debate with international youth organizations
- 16.00 **Opening of the international youth event**
- 16.30 **Encounter of young people with Holocaust survivors**
- Until 20.00 Opportunity to visit the Roma Museum in Oświęcim
- Until 20.00 Opportunity to visit Auschwitz Museum, in particular the exhibition about the genocide of Sinti and Roma in Block 13