



## Together against Antigypsyism

### Declaration of the Federal Criminal Police Office and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma on Future Collaboration

To mark the International Remembrance Day for the Victims of the Holocaust and the 78th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau on 27 January 1945 - where over 23,000 Sinti and Roma from Germany and occupied Europe were deported to from 1943 onwards - the Federal Criminal Police Office adopts the working definition of Antigypsyism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

#### **The central passage of the definition states:**

"Antigypsyism manifests itself in individual statements and actions, in institutional policies and practices of marginalisation, in exclusion, in physical violence, in the degradation of cultures and ways of life of Sinti and Roma, in the hate speech directed against Sinti and Roma and other individuals or groups who were perceived, stigmatised or persecuted as 'Gypsies' at the time of National Socialism, and, respectively, are still perceived, stigmatised or persecuted as such to this day. This results in Sinti and Roma being treated as a group of "others" and being assigned a number of negative stereotypes and distorted representations that constitute a certain form of racism."

Antigypsyist resentments have been handed down for centuries. It was a central element of the Nazi persecution and extermination policy against Sinti and Roma, which culminated in the systematically planned genocide of an estimated 500,000 members of the minority in Nazi-occupied Europe. The criminal police was responsible for the registration, exclusion, and deportation of Sinti and Roma. Members of the police were also involved in other aspects of crimes committed against Sinti and Roma, especially shootings by the "Einsatzgruppen" of the Reich Security Main Office.

Antigypsyism was not invented during the Nazi era nor did it cease to exist afterwards. It continues to be a central element of discriminatory practices directed against Sinti and Roma. Together with the Central Council, the BKA is committed to counteracting any discrimination and exclusion of Sinti and Roma and to raising awareness of and outlawing antigypsyism in society. This also applies to discrimination in the everyday life of the authorities.

This requires dealing with the guilt and responsibility that reaches into the present, which was only dealt with in the Federal Criminal Police Office through the history project in 2011.

Because the devaluation and exclusion of members of the Sinti and Roma has a history that goes back a very long time. Security authorities were involved in placing members of the

minority under blanket suspicion and thus handing them over to exclusion and persecution not only during the era of National Socialism and the genocide of Sinti and Roma.

This history of guilt also extends to the decades following the end of the war: injustices committed and the suffering of the victims and their descendants were not recognised, and discrimination was actively continued by "Gypsy specialists" in the Federal Criminal Police Office during the 1950s and 1960s.

Many perpetrators from the Nazi era continued to be employed in the German security authorities – including the BKA – after the war, which allowed antigypsyist thought patterns to survive for many decades. The officials systematically shielded themselves from democratic control and continued the criminalisation of the entire minority. Sinti and Roma were thus not only continually violated in their dignity, but in their rights as equal citizens of this country. This was also confirmed by the findings of the "Independent Commission on Antigypsyism" set up by the Federal Government in 2019, which showed in a detailed study that there are multiple indications of continued and systematic discrimination against Sinti and Roma by the police to this day.

We are all the more grateful that our ties have grown and strengthened since 2011. The extensive reappraisal of the BKA's history was an important, trust-building signal for a new beginning. Visits by BKA presidents and BKA staff to the Central Council and the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, and the participation of BKA's academy students in the seminars held by the Educational Forum against Antigypsyism and by the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma in the last two years have consolidated the positive path we have taken.

This agreement is intended to lay a new foundation for the already close and trusting collaboration. With the aim of counteracting any discrimination against members of the minority, both inside and outside of police work, and effectively combating antigypsyism in society,

the collaboration partners state

- that the "citizenship of every citizen must not be called into question by making ancestry a criterion for police work" (Joint Declaration by Dr Dieter Romann, President of the Federal Police, with the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma in August 2017)

and they agree

- that in the course of reducing discrimination, academic research on the topic of antigypsyism is supported by the BKA and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. Assured academic findings are an important basis for further collaboration.

and they decide to adopt the following specific measures:

- To continue the collaboration with the Federal Criminal Police Office's academy within the framework of their studies, all students will take part in a full-day event on the topic of antigypsyism before their national internship. After their national internship, there is another event in which the experiences from the internship regarding racism, such as antigypsyism, but also anti-Semitism, are reflected upon.
- The Antigypsyism Educational Forum supports or supervises Bachelor's theses written by students at the BKA's academy. As a rule, there can be up to five Bachelor's theses per training group.
- In addition to the events for students, the Educational Forum against Antigypsyism offers two full-day training courses, which are initially aimed at managers or disseminators, but are then openly advertised for all existing employees of the Federal Criminal Police Office. The focus will be on antigypsyism as a specific form of racism as well as the present and history of Sinti and Roma.

Berlin, 27 January 2023

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