

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

2 August 2024

English only

Statement on European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day

Today we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the events that took place during the night of 2 August 1944, when over 4 000 Roma men, women, and children were brutally murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau. This date was chosen to commemorate the Roma Holocaust, known as the Porajmos or Murdaripen. This dark chapter in history witnessed the systematic persecution and extermination of more than 500 000 Roma by the Nazi regime. This day of remembrance serves as a moving reminder of the horrors our ancestors faced and their remarkable resilience in the face of these atrocities.

The suffering of Roma is too often reduced to a small footnote in history books, contributing to the invisibilisation of this episode. This marginalisation lacks respect for the memory of the victims but also perpetuates the discrimination and antigypsyism that Roma communities still face. It is essential that future generations understand the full extent of the atrocities committed against the Roma and recognise the rich cultural heritage and contribution of the Roma to society.

To address this historical neglect, we call for the implementation of **Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2** of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials, as well as **Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)4** on Roma youth participation and **Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)1** on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls.¹ These recommendations aim to ensure the meaningful participation, representation, and inclusion of young Roma individuals in public, political, and cultural spheres, leading to a more inclusive and equitable society.

We also commend the ongoing efforts and achievements of the Youth Department and other Council of Europe committees and bodies, such as the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), in supporting and promoting the participation and inclusion of Roma young people. The Council of Europe has been instrumental in these initiatives, striving to create a more inclusive environment for all.

¹ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

Currently, mechanisms of discrimination and structural racism against Roma and Travellers persist. Roma communities remain determined to fight antigypsyism and strive for a better future despite the challenges they face. It is our shared responsibility to support Roma youth movements, to create spaces for young Roma to cultivate their identity and to empower them to be active agents of change in their communities.

Today we remember the past with a commitment to shape a better future. We honour the memory of the victims of the Roma Holocaust.

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