

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

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English only

Statement on the Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day 2021

*by Georgina Laboda, Member of the Board of Phiren Amenca International Network,
and Roma Rapporteur of the Council of Europe's Joint Council on Youth (CMJ)*

The 2nd of August is Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day. 77 years ago on this day, the Nazi soldiers exterminated more than 4,000 Romani people in Auschwitz-Birkenau's 'Zigeunerlager'. Many of the Romani families lost relatives, and entire families were abolished but our pain stayed undocumented. For a long time, the world seemingly forgot about the Romani victims of the Holocaust.

A great generation of Roma activists has pushed for a day of remembrance for Romani victims in Europe and we have regained the right to remember. To remember the hundreds of thousands of Romani people who had been murdered and buried in unmarked graves. Children and adults, old and young alike, have fallen victim to the cruel regime. We cannot allow extremist ideologies to re-emerge. That is why, as Rapporteur on Roma in the Joint Council on Youth I am concerned about the rising antigypsyism, anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against Roma in Europe.

Our generation is the last to meet personally with Holocaust survivors. Thus, a huge task rests on our shoulders to preserve their stories for posterity and to worthily pass on their resistance and bravery to future generations.

As a Rapporteur, I welcome the recent [Recommendation](#) of the Committee of Ministers to include the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials. This recommendation is in line with the needs expressed by Roma youth also during the conference [Roma Youth: Together for Emancipation and Empowerment](#) on 8 April 2021 the International Roma Day and the 50th anniversary of the 1st World Roma Congress. A statement was co-published by the participants of the conference and among many other needs, we shared how the lack of access to our history affects our life and creates a gap in society. Romani people's history has to be part of Europe's history.

We cannot ignore the fact that Roma communities in Europe are exposed to discrimination, antigypsyism; and our rights are violated on a daily basis. The image of the Roma continues to be based on stereotypes that have been ingrained for centuries is unacceptable in countries with European values. It is our common cause to remember and to prevent the spread of hatred.

Roma youth has to stay resilient. Our communities have to stay strong and we have to look into the future but we also have to remember the past and we should use the history to build a common future where an event like this cannot happen again.

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the CMJ Roma Youth Rapporteur and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.