



Saturday, 16 May 2020

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH

*English only*

## Statement on Romani Resistance Day

On this Romani Resistance Day, we do not merely remember the victims, but also recall the acts of resistance of Roma and Travellers,<sup>1</sup> their resilience and persistence to fight for human dignity, and recognise the important role they have played in the national liberation movements of the 20th century.<sup>2</sup> In 2020, however, Roma communities must continue to combat antigypsyism with determined endurance to create a better future despite the seemingly hopeless present.

Romani Resistance Day is an initiative of Roma civil society that sprung out of the need to rise above the role of victim ascribed to Roma by society and instead to stand up against prejudice and actively shape their own future.<sup>3</sup> Today, we commemorate the uprising of Roma men, women and children in the “Gypsy Family Camp” of Auschwitz – Birkenau and celebrate their determination to demonstrate resistance against the Nazi regime. While the uprising provided a temporary escape from the gas chambers, numerous Roma fell victim to the Nazis. In 2015, the European Union recognised 2 August as European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, restoring the dignity of which victims had been deprived for years.

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Too often, the suffering of Roma and Travellers has been reduced to a small footnote in school history textbooks. Too often we have seen how the oppressors shape the history of the oppressed. The Advisory Council on Youth condemns any kind of ignorance that has rendered the struggle of Roma and Travellers invisible and supports Roma youth movements in the creation of their own story by changing the narrative from a history of oppression to one of resistance while remembering the most tragic pages in the past of Roma.

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Today, we commemorate the dreadful events that took place during the Nazi regime. The present, however, shows that the mechanisms that create and reinforce stereotypes, anti-Romani structural racism, and the enforced criminalisation of marginalised communities are just some of the continuing phenomena in contemporary society. As a result, Roma and Travellers are forced to engage in a daily combat to gain and maintain basic human rights.

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<sup>1</sup>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, Kale/Cale, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom, and Abdal); and, on the other hand, 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.

<sup>2</sup> <http://rromani-resistance.com/heroes>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://rromani-resistance.com/storify-of-resistance>.

The ongoing experience of stigmatisation and discrimination has profound effects on the development of one's identity, often manifesting itself in a form of social exclusion. The Advisory Council on Youth acknowledges the power of non-formal education as a significant tool that supports the mobilisation of young Roma by creating spaces where they can nurture and strengthen their Roma identity by learning about the causes and mechanisms of persecution, exploring the relevance of remembrance and Roma genocide, and developing a common sense of history and identity.

The Advisory Council on Youth supports the demands of Roma youth for more representation within their own communities and society. Furthermore, the Advisory Council on Youth remains a committed ally of Roma youth movements and supports the creation of spaces and opportunities that encourage young Roma to recognise their own voice and assert their positions in communities.

*The Advisory Council on Youth remains  
a committed ally of Roma youth movements*

We invite you to join the online Resistance Movement campaign of [Phiren Amenca- International Network](#) that aims to empower Roma youth to claim their role as active agents of change.

Read more here:

- [Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#)
- [Council of Europe Roma Youth Action Plan website](#)
- [Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe](#)
- [Other texts adopted by the Council of Europe](#)
- [Right to Remember - A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide \(2014\)](#)
- [Barabaripen - Young Roma speak about multiple discrimination \(2014\)](#)
- [Mirrors - Manual on combating antigypsyism through human rights education \(2015\)](#)

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