



# International Conference on the Genocide of the Roma and Combating Antigypsyism – Research and Expert Conference

Summary Report

20–21 OCTOBER 2022, STOCKHOLM

**TOGETHER  
FOR IMPACT**  
Swedish IHRA Presidency

# Preface

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) plays an important role in the advancement of education, remembrance and research regarding the genocide of the Roma, and underlined this role in its 2020 IHRA Ministerial Declaration, where Member Countries pledged to remember the genocide of the Roma and, with concern, acknowledged that the neglect of this genocide has contributed to the prejudice and discrimination that many Roma communities still experience.

Against this background, the Swedish Presidency of the IHRA hosted an international conference on the genocide of the Roma and combating antigypsyism, in Stockholm on 20–21 October 2022.

Objectives of the conference included taking stock of existing research on the genocide of the Roma; identifying obstacles, gaps and needs; sharing IHRA knowledge and recommendations; stimulating cooperation and proactively working together for impact. The conference also aimed to highlight current research on how the genocide of the Roma feeds into the discrimination and prejudice that many Roma face today.

Topics for discussion included historical perspectives on antigypsyism and the genocide of the Roma in the Nordic region, issues concerning testimonies and recognition, and how education can contribute to combating antigypsyism today. In addition, the conference provided possibilities for researchers and Roma organisations to interact and discuss the themes of the conference, in line with the motto of the Swedish IHRA Presidency: *Together for Impact – Promoting Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism and antigypsyism through cooperation and dialogue.*

Approximately 60 people representing academic and research institutions, IHRA Member Countries, IHRA experts, Roma organisations and experts, as well as other civil society organisations, participated in the conference. The conference was also streamed online.



## Key takeaways

The following is a summary of the main messages, requests and recommendations put forward by participants at the conference:

**1.** There is a need to systematically and structurally enhance work on remembrance, research and education on the genocide of the Roma and antigypsyism. To contribute to this, the IHRA could – and should – continue to regularly organise conferences like the one in Stockholm, to allow for **continued exchange, stock-taking and networking** involving IHRA expertise, the Roma civil society and other relevant actors. A concrete suggestion was that the upcoming Croatian IHRA Presidency could arrange such a conference.

**2. Remembrance and memorialisation** of the genocide of the Roma should be further promoted. This could be done with the help of dedicated memorials that are strategically

placed and politically supported. A specific recommendation was that more IHRA Member Countries should commit, adopt and promote the 2nd of August as the ‘Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day’ in line with European Parliament Resolution adopted in 2015. A related recommendation was for the Chair of the IHRA to always make a statement on this date.

**3.** IHRA and its Member Countries should promote long-term and sustainable **research** on the crimes against humanity against Roma before, during and after the Holocaust. This should be done ensuring proper funding for specific academic programmes at academic institutions and universities through scholarships and/or fellowship programmes. It could also include the promotion and protection of knowledge and archival files, i.e. by promoting the digitisation of such material.

Research on the fate of Roma groups that haven't been given the same attention as others also needs to be ensured.

**4. Education** about the genocide of the Roma needs to be further promoted. For the IHRA, the main tools to ensure this would be to continue developing the foreseen IHRA Recommendations for Teaching and Learning on the Genocide of the Roma, include Roma experts in the process and ensure that the recommendations are translated and implemented by the IHRA Member Countries, in accordance with their national contexts. Training of teachers about the genocide of the Roma and antigypsyism should also be promoted.

**5.** Further steps to enhance the **recognition** of the genocide of the Roma need to be taken. One way of doing this would be to establish truth commissions or similar processes of recognition. Furthermore, in this context it would be important to continue the discussion on terminology and how it is linked to the recognition of the genocide of the Roma. Several Roma civil society actors stressed the importance of changing the terminology for the genocide of the Roma in order for the Roma to be recognised as victims in the same way as other groups.

**6.** Continued promotion of the work to **combat antigypsyism** is essential. This should be done through more explicit and targeted efforts against antigypsyism within the framework of the ongoing implementation of national strategies against racism. Countries were recommended to enact national legislation recognising antigypsyism as a specific form of racism in line with ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 13. Another, complementary, measure for IHRA Member Countries was to promote the IHRA working definition on antigypsyism/ anti-Roma discrimination in their respective countries, and at both the national and local level. Yet another recommendation, linked to the above-mentioned work for recognition, was for countries to establish independent commissions against antigypsyism and to enable Roma civil society to actively participate in the commissions' work, including by providing sufficient resources and time for the work.

**7. Inclusion, participation and empowerment of Roma** – and not least Roma youth – in the work for remembrance, research and education on the genocide of the Roma and to combat antigypsyism, was mentioned as crucial – at the political, academic and civil society level. It was added that it is essential to secure both financial and political support for this.



# Summary of the conference



*Ann Bernes, Petra Mårseius and Soraya Post*

## Introduction of the conference

In the initial session, the Swedish IHRA Presidency introduced the conference, followed by speeches by representatives of the Roma civil society.

The Chair of the IHRA, **Ambassador Ann Bernes**, opened the conference with a welcome address where she highlighted the important role that the IHRA plays in the advancement of education, remembrance and research regarding the genocide of the Roma. She pointed to that this was being done in various ways: through the work of the IHRA Committee on the genocide of the Roma, through funding to help memorial sites and museums to develop adequate exhibits and spaces of remembrance, through a grant programme to help organisations safeguard the records and counter distortion of the

genocide of the Roma, as well as through raising awareness of antigypsyism. Moreover, the IHRA has developed a working definition to raise awareness of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination, and is also preparing Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Genocide of the Roma.

The audience was reminded that in the 2020 Ministerial Declaration, IHRA Member Countries pledged to “remember the genocide of the Roma” and “acknowledged with concern that the neglect of this genocide has contributed to the prejudice and discrimination that many Roma communities still experience today.” This was an important starting point for the Swedish IHRA Presidency when organising this international conference.

The Director-General of the Living History Forum, **Ms Petra Mårselius**, pointed out that the overall mission of its public agency is to promote democracy, tolerance and human rights, using the Holocaust as the starting point. The Living History Forum also has a responsibility for the Swedish Delegation to the IHRA. Since its establishment in 2003, the agency has worked to raise the level of awareness and knowledge about antigypsyism throughout history and today, the genocide of the Roma and crimes against the Roma committed by the Nazis during the Second World War.

A few examples of what the agency is currently doing were also presented: study trips for teachers to prepare them to bring their students to memorial sites of the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma, and a guidebook that will be launched later this year for schools and other actors that arrange study trips to sites in Poland relating to the genocide of the Roma. Recently, the Living History Forum has been carrying out a nationwide collection of testimonies about the genocide of the Roma that have been handed over to the new Swedish Holocaust Museum. Also mentioned was the ongoing work with the Government assignment to the agency to conduct a survey on the knowledge about antigypsyism in Swedish schools. Based on this study, the Living History Forum will make proposals to the Government on how to combat antigypsyism.

**Ms Soraya Post**, Swedish Roma expert and former Member of the European Parliament, encouraged the IHRA to continue the work with genocide of the Roma, which is of great importance for combating the rise of antigypsyism, antisemitism and all forms of racism. She emphasised the importance of the commissions' work against antigypsyism in Sweden and Germany, but at the same time expressed disappointment that it hasn't resulted in concrete action. A call was made to EU Member States to initiate similar

processes in their countries, in line with decisions of the European Parliament and the EU Commission.

The IHRA was urged to remove the term 'anti-Roma discrimination' from the non-legally binding working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination. Discrimination doesn't cover all the forms of racism, prejudice and hate directed towards the Roma. Ms Post also expressed that many Roma prefer the term 'Holocaust of the Roma' instead of 'the genocide of the Roma'. This is central for the Roma, and for the crimes against humanity in which they've been the victims, to be recognised. Memorial sites, work for remembrance, and awareness raising of this part of Roma history hasn't been prioritised since the end of the Second World War. This work is even more important in today's society, where extreme right-wing parties are gaining power in Sweden and other countries.



*Teodor Mutto*

The last speaker of the introductory session and the conference's guest of honour was the Roma survivor **Mr Teodor Mutto**. In his speech, he expressed gratitude for the initiatives Sweden has taken in this field, such as the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism – Remember ReAct in October 2021. He expressed disappointment that the genocide of the Roma and antigypsyism were not mentioned by the speakers at the Malmö Forum. He also mentioned that the Roma in other countries and parts of the world don't have the same rights as the majority population, which is unacceptable in a democratic society. Roma's human rights and

what happened to the Roma during the Holocaust, including issues regarding restitution, are always put aside by governments and international organisations. The Roma need to have resources equal to other groups to fight for their human rights. Mr Mutto also explained that for someone who hasn't experienced what he has lived through, it is very difficult to understand the atrocities, the killing of children, and the hunger and the sadness that the Roma suffered in the concentration camps. It is important to understand that the Roma are persecuted in a similar way today. He concluded by saying that the genocide of the Roma needs to have the same legitimacy as the Holocaust of the Jews.

## Perspectives on the genocide of the Roma in Europe and in the Nordic countries

The first session of the conference focused on new approaches in the field of research on the genocide of the Roma, highlighting the importance of collecting and sustaining Roma testimonies and taking into account the internationalisation of the discourse of remembrance.

*The first part* of this session on historical research began with an introduction on 'Connections to and effects of the National-Socialist Genocide of Roma and Sinti on Roma, Sinti and Traveller Communities in Scandinavia and the Baltics', by **Dr Gerhard Baumgartner** (IHRA expert, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Austria). This introduction showed different examples of how links can be found between the history of the genocide carried out in Europe and the experiences of Roma and Sinti in the Nordic countries. The introduction also covered the current state of research into central facts of the genocide of Roma and Sinti. This included a presentation on how Roma and Sinti were victims of discrimination, marginalisation, sterilisation, ghettoisation, forced labor, concentration camps, medical experiments, extermination camps and massacres, but also the lack of recognition or compensation after the war, as well as continuing discrimination of Roma and Sinti, leading to civil rights protests like the Dachau hunger strike in 1980. Another topic covered was historiographic misconceptions, for example that there would be a lack of sources, as documentation or testimonies, of the genocide. Dr Baumgartner also touched upon the number of victims and concluded that the ongoing research continues to provide more information and much-needed knowledge on the persecution and the genocide of the Roma and Sinti.

Among current research and documentation initiatives, the upcoming

2023 relaunch of the website 'the Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust' ([www.romasintigenocide.eu](http://www.romasintigenocide.eu)) was highlighted together with the IHRA's annotated bibliography of the genocide of Roma and Sinti from 2016, as well as the RomArchive and the ongoing project *Enzyklopädie des Völkermordes an den Sinti und Roma in Europa*.

Two specific presentations of current research on the genocide of the Roma followed the introduction. **Dr Hanna Abakunova** (Hugo Valentin Center, Uppsala University, Sweden) presented insights from her research on genocide of the Roma during the Second World War in Ukraine and underlined the need for critical approaches, including the need to address topics such as self-help and self-rescue among Roma, rescue attempts and helping Roma by non-Roma, memory regarding survival of Roma and Ukrainian-Romani relations before and after the Second World War. She also raised the importance of historical knowledge about how the Roma population consisted of many different groups and both nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary (settled) ways of living. Dr Abakunova stressed the need for interdisciplinary approaches in research (history, ethnography, anthropology and sociology) when it comes to mapping the genocide, archival search and research, as well as collection and analysis of testimonies, and concluded that there is a great need for networking for scholars, expanding the study field and inclusion of Romani scholars.

**Dr Milovan Pissarri** (Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory, Italy) presented his work with the IHRA-supported project *Mapping the Holocaust: Preservation of the Topovske Šupe (Cannon Sheeds) camp*. The project conducted a historiographical survey of the camp located



in Belgrade, Serbia, where it is estimated that about 5 000 Jews and about 1 500 Roma passed through. All were shot in execution sites near Belgrade. The project mapped the location and documented the current situation to permanently preserve the memory of the camp and the victims. Historiographical research consisted of collecting archival material in archives in Serbia and Germany, interviews, creating a database of camp victims and publishing the results on the project's website. In order to raise the domestic and international public's awareness, the project team launched a public campaign to protect the memory of the camp's victims as the first step towards the construction of a permanent memorial to the Topovske Šupe. All project results are available to the public in the form of a web platform ([www.topovskesupe.rs/en](http://www.topovskesupe.rs/en)).

*The second part of the session focused on the historical experiences of Roma and Sinti in the Nordic region, starting with an introduction by Dr Andrej Kotljarchuk (Department of History, Uppsala University, Sweden) on *Experts and Roma – The radicalization of state-run antigypsyism in the Nordic countries during the Second World War*. Dr Kotljarchuk discussed how Sweden, like other Nordic countries, has its dark chapter of ignominious history involving discrimination targeting the Roma. However, less is known about the radicalisation of state-run antigypsyism in the Nordic countries during the Second World War: the genocidal plans regarding Roma people in Nazioccupied Norway as well as simultaneous state-run attempts to solve 'the problem' in other Nordic countries. The introduction highlighted both parallels and differences between different Nordic countries – as well as how the differences in democratic structures in the Nordic countries during the war resulted in varying possibilities for protests and objections to the adaption of anti-gypsy policy within the state. The presentation included examples from*

the results of the research project *Police, Experts and Race: Handling the 'Gypsy Plague' in Denmark, Sweden and Latvia, 1930–1945* focusing on the transnational perspective and dimensions for further research. Following the introduction, individual presentations were given by Nordic researchers and Roma and Sinti civil society representatives. **Dr Maria Rosvoll** (The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, Norway) presented results from her study on the Norwegian Holocaust victim Zolo Karoli, and his family's fate being forced to leave Norway (after having resided in the country for decades), as a result of persecution of the Roma population. Her study also covered the adopted Aliens Act of 1927, which established that foreign Roma did not have access to the Kingdom of Norway – legislation that already was in place in several other European countries including Denmark and Sweden, making it impossible for many Roma to get citizenship or protection.

**Dr Steffen Werther** (Södertörn University, Sweden) presented results from research on the Danish history concerning treatment of its Roma population, focusing on the Danish Institute of Human Heredity and Eugenics and the study *Gypsies in Denmark* from 1943. This investigation was deeply rooted in racist beliefs but resulted in less radical policy proposals than in other countries (for example, rejecting sterilisation and having a more tolerant approach to the Roma community). The goal was a racial and cultural assimilation of the respective families within three to four generations. However, these proposals were limited to those with Danish citizenship, while strict migration policies were suggested regarding foreign Roma.

**Dr Florence Fröhlig** (School of Contemporary and Historical Studies and Baltic and East European Graduate School, Södertörn University, Sweden) gave a presentation on 'the haunting legacy of the Second World War and its impact on the

Swedish Roma communities'. Dr Fröhlig, who has been involved in the development of Romani studies at Södertörn University, addressed the importance of engaging Roma in studies on the transmission of traumatic memories.

**Mr Robert Brisenstam** (Roma expert, Sweden) pointed out how remembrance of the Holocaust and its Romani victims must include what happened in the Nordic countries, especially Sweden. Here, the largest Roma group (*Resande*) before, during and after the Second World War became victims of antigypsyism through, inter alia, racial biology, eugenics, forced sterilisations, coercive care of children and expulsions from their homes, in order to annihilate them and their Romani language and culture. On top of that, their Roma identity was also questioned.

Lastly, **Ms Miranda Vuolasranta** (European Roma and Travellers Forum, Finland) highlighted that the Stockholm conference was the first of its kind to be organised by a

Nordic government, and underscored that the IHRA plays an essential role in promoting education, remembrance and research on the genocide of the Roma. She stressed that there is no better education for society than the constant reminder of the most significant human tragedy – the Holocaust – and that unfortunately, the systematic extermination of the Roma remained largely unnoticed and, to some extent, forgotten until the present day. Furthermore, Ms Vuolasranta presented facts about the long history of antigypsyism throughout Europe and gave specific examples of the experiences of containment in labour camps for the Finnish Roma during the Second World War, as well as severe antigypsyism after the war within state policies, including forced sterilisation. She also mentioned the annihilation of the Baltic Roma, as well as the long struggle to build a monument in memory of the region's Roma victims.



## Recognition, terminology and remembrance

In this session, a panel contributed with research and expert perspectives on the use of different terminology (such as *Samudaripén*, Genocide and Holocaust) as well as on the question of why recognition matters.

The panel discussion was moderated by **Mr Jonathan Mack** (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma) and included **Ms Alenka Janko Spreizer** (IHRA expert, University of Primorska, Slovenia), **Dr Andrej Kotljarchuk** (Uppsala University, Sweden), **Mr Saimir Mile** (La Voix des RoMs., France), **Mr Fred Taikon** (E Romani Glinda, Sweden), and **Dr Wichert ten Have** (Advisor to the IHRA).

The discussion reflected on various perspectives on the use of different terms for the fate of the Roma during the Second World War.

The panel discussion began with an overview of different terms used, including pointing out that the IHRA uses the term

‘the genocide of the Roma’ while the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, for example, use the term ‘Holocaust’. Roma experts on the panel and in parts of the conference audience argued that it is important to use the term ‘Holocaust of the Roma’ to make it immediately clear when and by whom the genocide was committed, and to gain the same recognition as victims as other groups. It was also referred to the distinction that is made in Sweden, where the term *Förintelsen* (the annihilation) is used for the genocide of the Jews and the term *folkmordet på romer* (the genocide of the Roma) is used for the Roma – and the fact that this distinction causes a feeling of exclusion amongst many Roma in Sweden.

How the term ‘genocide’ is used in this context was also discussed. On the one hand, it was argued that the term is too vague, since several Roma communities have been exposed

to several genocides and several examples of persecution and atrocities throughout history. On the other hand, it was argued that the term 'genocide' is more precise than others in clarifying what happened to the Roma, and that it also has the strength of being based on an international legal definition. Another argument that was raised was that the term 'genocide of the Roma' specifically addresses the antigypsyism behind the crimes against humanity committed against this group during the Second World War, which is important for understanding the particular motives behind these crimes, which still exist today. Furthermore, Roma experts proposed that the term in Romani language, *Samudaripé(n)* (killing of all), should be used when speaking in Romani to expose the existence of this word in Romani, but it was added that this shouldn't be introduced as a new 'brand'.

The discussion's conclusions include the following. Opinions vary on which terminology to use, both within academia and the Roma civil society. The distinction between the terms 'Holocaust' and 'the genocide of the Roma' can be found in several countries, in Europe and other parts of the world, and also in international organisations. The proper use of specific terms can vary depending on the diverse historical contexts in different countries, but also depending on the actor that uses the definition (academic, politician or activist). There is a need to continue the discussion on how the terminology is linked to recognition of the genocide of the Roma, within and outside the IHRA, but also in academia and civil society, and between these two spheres.

## Antigypsyism in Europe today

The second day of the conference began with two speeches. **Mr Lars Arrhenius**, the Equality Ombudsman of Sweden, opened with remarks that touched upon the importance to remember that genocides cannot occur without being preceded by a long period of discrimination and dehumanisation of a specific group in society, referring to his personal experience of growing up in Rwanda. He affirmed that discrimination is not only devastating for the individual who suffers it, but also for society as a whole. For these reasons, society should never permit, accept or tolerate discrimination. The Ombudsman's focus on securing redress for the individual not only supports that single person, but also influences structures in organisations and society. To tackle the complexity of antigypsyism and discrimination of Roma, there is a need to work with a long-term focus and use all the tools available in our toolbox.

Mr Arrhenius referred to the public debate in Sweden and all over Europe, increasingly characterised by voices advocating for ideas that stand in opposition to the principle of equal value of all people. He said that it can be difficult to fully understand the harmful consequences this may have for the society, since it often starts with a fear of something that is different, followed by rumours that spread easily, turning into prejudices that eventually turn into truths. In the end, certain people and groups are suspected, and there are many examples of this ending in tragic results. In this context, the IHRA's work of strengthening, advancing and promoting Holocaust education, research and remembrance is very important. The Ombudsman expressed deep concern about the situation of Roma in Europe, including Sweden, and gave his full support to the work to ensure equal rights and opportunities.

**Mr Bernard Rorke** (European Roma Rights Center, ERRC) presented an overview on the

situation of Roma in Europe today. He spoke initially of how monitoring of Roma refugees in the countries bordering Ukraine, since the Russian invasion and the outbreak of war, shows that they are subject to discrimination and racism. This was described as the latest example of antigypsyism in Europe, and a continuation of a brutal and largely unknown history of repression of Roma going back several hundreds of years.

Mr Rorke also addressed the problem of police brutality against Roma, making reference to an ERRC report on police violence against Roma in six EU Member States, which shows examples of impunity for law enforcement in crimes committed against Roma. In addition, ERRC research has shown that Roma are more likely to be ethnically profiled and drawn into the criminal justice system than non-Roma. He also described recent examples of anti-Roma hate speech and unequal treatment of Roma children in state care, referred to in ERRC reports.

Mr Rorke argued that mobilisation and activism in the broader political and social context, and fighting against all forms of injustice, are more critical than ever, and that this needs to include Roma's fundamental rights. Against this background, he stressed that one of the best ways to honour the memory of those who perished in, and those who survived, the Holocaust is to ensure that this generation of Roma children and young people enjoy equal rights and opportunities.



## Processes on recognition of antigypsyism

A panel presented and discussed experiences from processes of recognition carried out in Europe, including in the Nordic region.

Roma expert **Ms Diana Nyman** and the former Chair of the Commission against Antigypsyism **Mr Thomas Hammarberg** presented the work of the White Paper on abuses and rights violations against Roma in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Sweden, published in 2014, and the Commission Against Antigypsyism in Sweden, subsequently appointed by the Government and operational from 2014–2016. Both stressed that these processes represented official recognitions that were important, that the independent status of both entities was critical, and that broad participation of Roma representatives was crucial for the success of both projects. They indicated that many of the Commission's recommendations haven't been addressed by responsible politicians, which has led to disappointment in the Roma community, and also risks weakening these processes' legitimacy and consequently the community's trust in the institutions.

Two other examples that were presented in the session were the concluded German Commission on Antigypsyism, represented by **Mr Silas Kropf**, and the ongoing Chachipen project, represented by **Ms Anabel Carballo**.

The independent German Commission on Antigypsyism, comprised by scholars and Roma experts, worked for two years and filed an extensive report with key findings that reflect antigypsyism in German society in a historical context, and in relation to the situation today. In general terms, the commission's recommendations indicate that there is a need for: recognition of antigypsyism within public institutions, a policy of catch-up justice that compensates for the injustices committed against survivors and their descendants since 1945, and targeted and long-term promotion of social

participation in this work. The results so far are the appointment of a Commissioner against Antigypsyism in March 2022, and the establishment and funding of a civil society reporting and information centre for nationwide monitoring of antigypsyism.

The objectives of the Chachipen project are: 1) to investigate truth by analysing and understanding what happened to Roma across the EU and how Roma have contributed to the history of Europe, 2) to map the states of play in acknowledging the dark chapters of antigypsyism across the EU, 3) to learn from promising experiences of setting up independent expert commissions on antigypsyism (Sweden and Germany), 4) to empower Roma activists to advocate for truth and reconciliation processes and ensure their co-ownership of the process through capacity building, and 5) to raise awareness about antigypsyism in society. Details on the current process in Spain were also presented. Key measures that have been implemented so far are the establishment of a sub-commission for the study of a State Pact against Antigypsyism, the inclusion of 'antigypsyism' as a term in the Spanish Penal Code and a New Democratic Memory Law, including a Working Commission on Memory and Reconciliation with the Roma People in Spain.



*Izabela Tiberiade*

## Education to prevent antigypsyism

This session focused on the latest developments within the educational field to prevent antigypsyism, highlighting some good examples.

The ongoing work with the IHRA recommendations for teaching and learning on the genocide of the Roma was presented by **Mr Misko Stanisic** (IHRA expert, Terraforming, Serbia), responsible for coordinating this work. The recommendations will be directed to policy makers in the field of education and consist of different sections on why teaching and learning is important, what to teach and how to teach, as well as proposing a layer on including Roma voices, to make sure that education is connected to the memories of Roma victims and to the experience of Roma in post-war Europe.

Mr Stanisic also presented the work of the Serbian civil society organisation

Terraforming. He put forward three new approaches on how to promote educational work concerning the persecutions and genocides of the Roma during the Nazi era: 1) empowering new multipliers through cooperation with libraries and librarians who, with proper guidance, could use existing literature, resources, library facilities and networks for portraying the Holocaust, the genocide of the Roma, and also Jewish and Roma life before the war as means of education; 2) supporting local archives and archivists to identify and safeguard historical records about the life of local Roma communities before and after the Second World War; and 3) creating new educational opportunities, for example by producing interactive graphic novels and educational material that can provide youth with knowledge and possibilities to interact and

deepen their understanding of the history, culture and individual stories.

Following the introduction to the session, **Ms Ana Rozanova** presented the ERGO Network's work as another good example. ERGO Network brings together around 30 Roma and pro-Roma organisations from all over Europe. Founded on the philosophy of active citizenship, shared responsibility and grassroots empowerment, ERGO Network members aim to convince policymakers that positive change for Roma is possible when antigypsyism is recognised and tackled as the root cause for inequality and exclusion, and when Roma can take part in civic life as equal stakeholders.

Roma activist **Ms Izabela Tiberiade** (Romania) introduced the youth initiative *Dikh He Na Bister* (meaning 'Look and don't forget' in Romani). *Dikh He Na Bister* is a Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, annually mobilising thousands of young Roma and non-Roma all over Europe on the occasion of 2 August – the European Holocaust Memorial Day for Sinti and Roma – to advance remembrance, recognition and education about the Genocide of the Roma and Sinti. The initiative creates a dialogue and personal

encounters between young people and Holocaust survivors. Their testimonies inspire the participants to address and resist current challenges around antigypsyism and other forms of racism in Europe today.

At the governmental level, the Romanian government presented their work with education and remembrance in this field. **Mr Iulian Paraschiv** (President of the National Agency for the Roma, Government of Romania) presented, among other topics, measures aiming at reconciliation with the past, recognition of Slavery, Holocaust and the policy of forced assimilation of Roma consisting of: 1) revision of the school curriculum for teaching history – while highlighting the historic traumas for Roma minority; 2) training for teachers on topics such as slavery, the Holocaust and forced assimilation during communism; 3) school camps on the above-mentioned topics; 4) arts camps for artists: visual arts, literature, documentaries, etc.; 5) scholarships for study/research for Roma researchers and on Roma-related topics; and 6) promotion in public discourse of the Roma history and erecting the Monument of Roma Slavery.



*Timea Junghaus, Mirjam Karoly  
and Stephane Laederich*

## **Moving forward to promote research, education and remembrance**

The last panel of the conference consisted of the following IHRA experts and Roma experts: **Ms Mirjam Karoly** (IHRA expert, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute, Austria), **Mr Stephane Laederich** (IHRA expert, Roma Foundation in Zurich, Switzerland), **Ms Miranda Vuolasranta** (European Roma and Travellers Forum) and **Ms Timea Junghaus** (European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture). The panel discussion focused on possible key

takeaways of the conference and pointed out steps that relevant stakeholders (regional actors, countries, international organisations such as the IHRA, research institutions, civil society, etc.) should consider in order to further promote research, education and remembrance of the genocide of the Roma going forward. The conference's key takeaways are summarised in the beginning of this report.





## Closing of the conference

The conference concluded with two speeches, the first by **Mr Stefano Kuzhikov**, Chair of the Swedish Roma organisation Riksförbundet Romer i Europa and one of the conference's initiators. He argued that research results, testimonies of Roma and Jewish survivors, researchers and experts show that Roma were annihilated based on their ethnicity in a way similar to the Jews. He stated that it is therefore important to continue discussions and to change the terminology from 'the genocide of the Roma' to 'the Holocaust of the Roma', and to recognise the Roma as part of the Holocaust through an update of the Stockholm Declaration.

Furthermore, Mr Kuzhikov underlined the importance of preventing antigypsyism and acting on and reacting to the vulnerable situation of the Roma in Europe, and not least to what is happening in Sweden. He expressed great concern for an increase in open discrimination, prejudice and intolerance, and an increasing trend of generalisations

about Roma culture, customs and traditions in the mass media, among the public, by politicians, and in workplaces, schools and several municipalities. To conclude, an appeal was made to the next coming Presidencies of the IHRA to continue pursuing the important work of combating antigypsyism and further learning of the 'Holocaust of the Roma'.

In her closing remarks, **Ambassador Ann Bernes**, Chair of the IHRA, thanked all speakers, panellists and participants, both in Stockholm and online. Participants were encouraged to join forces to promote this work even further. She conveyed that the Swedish IHRA Presidency's next step will be to present this summary report with key takeaways from the conference at IHRA plenary in Gothenburg in late November 2022, and subsequently distribute it within the IHRA network and share it with all the conference participants. By doing this, the hope is that the conference will continue to have an impact and serve as a resource for more cooperation and future work.



# Programme of the International Conference on the Genocide of the Roma and Combating Antigypsyism – Research and Expert Conference

20–21 October 2022, Stockholm

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## Day 1

20 October (half day 13.00–18.00)

### 13.00–13.30 Introduction

- *Welcome address by Ambassador Ann Bernes, Chair of the IHRA*
- *Speech by Petra Mårselius, Director-General, Living History Forum, Sweden*
- *Speech by Soraya Post, Roma Expert, ex-Member of the European Parliament, Sweden*
- *Speech by Teodor Mutto, Roma survivor, Sweden*

### 13.30–14.30 Session I, Part 1:

#### The Genocide of the Roma in Europe – Research perspectives and new approaches

The first part of the session covers an introduction to new approaches in the field of research on the genocide of the Roma, highlighting the importance of collecting and sustaining Roma testimonies and taking into account the internationalisation of the discourse of remembrance. The session also includes presentations of current research.

- *Introduction by Dr Gerhard Baumgartner (Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Austria)*
- *Presentations by Dr Hanna Abakunova (Uppsala University, Sweden/Ukraine), Dr Milovan Pissari (Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory, Italy/Serbia)*

### 15.00–16.30 Session I, Part 2:

#### Experiences of Roma in the Nordic region – Historical research

The second part of the session covers research presentations on the experiences of Roma in the Nordic region in connection to the genocide of the Roma and historical accounts of antigypsyism.

- *Introduction by Dr Andrej Kotljarchuk (Uppsala University, Sweden)*
- *Presentations by Dr Maria Rosvoll (HL Senteret, Norway), Dr Steffen Werther (Södertörn University, Sweden/Denmark), Dr Florence Fröhlig (Södertörn University, Sweden), Robert Brisenstam (Frantzwagner Sällskapet, Sweden), Miranda Vuolasranta (ERTF, Finland)*

### 16.45–18.00 Session II:

#### Recognition, terminology and remembrance – Panel discussion

Forty years after Germany's recognition of the genocide of the Roma, the question of recognising the fate of the European Roma is still being discussed. In 2015 the European Parliament established 2 August as the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. The session covers research and expert perspectives on the use of terminology such as *Samudaripén*, 'Genocide' and 'Holocaust' as well as the question of why recognition matters.

- *Introduction by Jonathan Mack (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Germany)*
- *Panel discussion with Alenka Janko Spreizer (IHRA-expert, University of Primorska, Slovenia), Dr Andrej Kotljarchuk (Uppsala University, Sweden), Saimir Mile (La Voix des Roms, France), Fred Taikon (E Romani Glinda, Sweden), Dr Wichert ten Have (Advisor to the IHRA)*

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## Day 2

21 October (half day 09.00–13.00)

### 09.00–9.15 Introduction Day 2 – Antigypsyism in Europe today

- *Speech by Lars Arrhenius (Equality Ombudsman, Sweden)*
- *Presentation by Bernard Rorke (European Roma Rights Center)*

### 09.15-10.15 Session III:

#### Processes on recognition of antigypsyism

The session covers experiences from processes of recognition and white paper reports carried out in Europe, including in the Nordic region.

- *Presentations by Diana Nyman (Roma expert, White Paper, Sweden), Thomas Hammarberg (former Chair of the Commission Against Antigypsyism, Sweden), Silas Kropf (German Commission on Antigypsyism), Anabel Carballo (Chachipen project, Spain)*

### 10.45–11.45 Session IV:

#### Education to prevent antigypsyism

Several initiatives and organisations throughout Europe are focusing on educational work to prevent antigypsyism, and the IHRA is preparing recommendations for teaching and learning on the genocide of the Roma to support such efforts. The session looks at the development within the educational field, with good examples.

- *Introduction by Misko Stanisic (IHRA-expert, Terraforming, Serbia)*
- *Presentations by Ana Rozanova (ERGO Network), Izabela Tiberiade (Dikh He Na Bister, Romania), Iulian Paraschiv (President of the National Agency for the Roma, Government of Romania)*

### 11.45–12.45 Session V:

#### Moving forward to promote research, education and remembrance

The session covers the key takeaways of the conference and points to steps that relevant stakeholders (regional actors, countries, international organisations such as the IHRA, research institutions, civil society, etc.) should consider in order to further promote research, education and remembrance of the genocide of the Roma going forward.

- *Panel discussion with Mirjam Karoly (IHRA-Expert, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute, Austria), Stephane Laederich (IHRA-Expert, Rroma Foundation in Zurich, Switzerland), Miranda Vuolasranta (European Roma and Travellers Forum), Timea Junghaus (European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture)*

#### 12.45–13.00 Closing of the conference

- *Speech by Stefano Kuzhikov, Riksförbundet Romer i Europa, Sweden*
- *Closing remarks by Ambassador Ann Bernes, Chair of the IHRA*





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