

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Lacio dzives Phralas he Phenias.

I would like to use this opportunity to address two crucial issues regarding the Roma community which our network is working with.

While currently many programs and policies are designed for children, the needs but also the potential of young Roma have not yet been adequately addressed. We are one of the youngest population of Europe with over 50 % of the Roma being under 25. Many young Roma struggle and fail in the formal educational systems due to different factors one of them - segregation in to the special schools being still wide spread especially in Czech Republic and Slovakia. Without proper education and without practical skills they are condemned to live in poverty. They face every day antigypsyism, and stigmatization. They often cannot even rely on the security of their own home like for example in Hungary with recent local government decree designed to expel Roma from Miskolc, forced eviction in France and Romania and walls around the Roma settlements in Slovakia. This has huge influence on the development of young people. They do not find access to other existing programs and opportunities and are at risk of further social marginalization.

At the same time the potential and contribution of many young Roma and young adults already educated and equipped with professional skills that can make effective change in the community given the opportunities is not adequately strengthened. There is a huge potential of the new generation.

As ternYpe we would like to recommend to the participating states to secure programs and funding opportunities for Roma youth organizations and structures in order to strengthen their active citizenship, development.

2nd issue is The lack of recognition of the Roma Genocide

After the war, hardly any attention has been paid to the fate of the Roma and Sinti during the WWII neither by scholars nor by governments. During the Nuremberg trials there was not a single Roma witness and the Roma mass murders were only mentioned marginally. It was not until 1982 that the government of West Germany has officially recognized the Roma Genocide:

Despite the official recognition of the Roma Genocide by the German Authorities, this chapter in European history still remains largely unrecognized. The Roma Genocide still has not entered the canon of modern history and is seldom taught or even mentioned in school curricula. It is only in recent years and thanks to common efforts of Roma and non-Roma organizations and individuals that the Roma Genocide is gradually gaining official recognition: In 2011 the Polish Government passed a resolution for the official recognition of the 2nd of August as a day of commemoration, and we urge other states to follow in this direction.

The lack of recognition of the Roma Genocide has a moral dimension as well. While recognizing the racial persecution of Roma under the Nazi regime, we need to acknowledge and address the fact that stereotypes and antigypsyism, mechanisms of exclusion, hate speech and hate crime, as well as the denial of the Holocaust are still widespread in Europe today. **Recognition of the Roma Genocide is an important step in the restoration of dignity and justice for Roma, and in the respect of human rights in Europe nowadays.**

Our network organizes the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative since 2010. This year we have gathered over 1000 young people from 25 countries, 8 survivors and over 70 experts and scholars for educational seminar and commemoration of the 2nd of August in Auschwitz. In the climate of growing antigypsyism, and extremism in Europe we young Roma and non Roma are Advocating for the official recognition of 2nd August as a Memorial Day of the Roma Genocide to pay homage to the victims, and strengthen the identity based on the deep knowledge of the past. It is a responsibility of all Europeans of all States to pay the due respect to the Roma victims of the Holocaust during World War

We would like to urge participating states to:

- **Include the history of the Roma in respected states as part of the school curriculum in history classes.**
- **Mainstreaming educational materials on Roma Genocide history and remembrance in schools and non-formal education and Invest in to the research on the Roma Genocide**
- **Formal establishment of the 2nd of August as the memorial day of the Roma Genocide.**