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## Press Information: 80th anniversary on 2 August 2024 - European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti

### 80th anniversary on 2 August 2024 European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti

The children, ill and elderly people had no chance of survival: On the night of 2 August 1944, 4,300 Roma and Sinti were forced into the gas chambers and murdered by the SS at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp – despite fierce resistance. To mark the 80th anniversary of the liquidation of camp section B II e, the Central Council and the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, together with the Association of Roma in Poland and the Centre for Roma History and Culture in Oświęcim and in cooperation with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, invite you to the central international commemoration event at the site of this crime against humanity on 2 August 2024. It was not until 2015 that this day was recognised by the European Parliament as European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti.

This year's high-ranking guest is **Bärbel Bas**, President of the German Bundestag, will give a speech on the occasion of the commemoration. **Alma Klasing** from Germany and **Bolesław Rumanowski** from Poland will speak on behalf of the Holocaust survivors of the Roma and Sinti.

The official commemoration ceremony in memory of the 500,000 murdered Roma and Sinti in Nazi-occupied Europe will begin on **Friday, 2 August 2024, at 12 p.m. in Section B II e of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial** and will end at 1.45 p.m. after the wreaths have been laid at the memorial for Roma and Sinti.

The central commemoration in the camp section, where Roma and Sinti from all over Europe were crammed together under inhumane conditions, will be held alongside various other events to mark the 80th anniversary of the mass murder: a political act of remembrance on 2 August at 10 a.m., two concerts on 1 and 2 August, a scientific conference on 1 August, which will be formally opened on the evening of 31 July, as well as an encounter between survivors and young people at the educational event 'Dikh He Na Bister' (Romani for 'Look and don't forget'). Details can be found in the schedule below.

**We invite a member of your editorial staff to report on this important day of remembrance of the European Roma and Sinti and the supporting programme.**

In addition to members of the Roma and Sinti minority from many countries, representatives of the Polish state, churches and other international institutions and organisations, the ambassadors of various countries and other diplomatic representatives will also be present. Together with the International Roma Youth Network TernYpe, the Heidelberg Documentation and Cultural Centre is also organising an educational multi-day event in Krakow entitled 'Dikh He Na Bister' with over 350 young Roma and Sinti and non-minority youth from all over Europe, who will also take part in the commemorative act.

The commemorative event will be streamed live on the website <https://www.roma-sinti-holocaust-memorial-day.eu/>. The video will then be permanently available there with a wide range of information (DE/EN/PL/ Romani) on the Holocaust against the minority.

#### General information for media representatives:

For **accreditation** for the commemorative event on 2 August at 12 p.m. and the political act of remembrance on 2 August at 10 a.m. and for further questions, please contact the persons listed below as press contacts.

Accreditation by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is required for filming outside the memorial event on site. Please let us know your travel plans so that they can be coordinated with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

Please send requests for interviews with Romani Rose, German Holocaust survivors or participants in the youth education event (German or English) to [presse@sintiundroma.de](mailto:presse@sintiundroma.de) by **29 July**. For interviews with Bärbel Bas, please send an early request to the Press Office of the German Bundestag at [pressereferat@bundestag.de](mailto:pressereferat@bundestag.de).

#### Commemorative act by parliamentary and political representatives at 10.00 a.m.

Venue: *International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust (ICEAH)*

Simultaneous translation into German, English and Polish

#### Speeches:

- Dr Piotr Cywinski, Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum
- Marian Turski, Auschwitz survivor, member of the International Auschwitz Council
- Manuela Schwesig, President of the Federal Council, Germany
- Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, Deputy Speaker of the Lithuanian Seimas (Parliament), Representative of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- Claudia Roth, Minister of State for Culture and Media of the Federal Republic of Germany

- Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
- The Rt Hon. Lord Pickles, PC, Chairman of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, British IHRA Presidency
- Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

#### Information for media representatives:

- At around 8.30 a.m., the guests of honour (President of the Bundestag) will enter the main camp through the 'Arbeit macht frei' camp gate – opportunity for cutaway photos
- 8.30 to 9.00 a.m. Visit to Block 13 (exhibition on the genocide of Roma and Sinti)
- 9.30 a.m. Wreath-laying ceremony at Block 11
- 10.00 a.m. Political act of remembrance
- There will be an opportunity for interviews at the ICEAH both before and after the commemoration. Please send requests for interviews with Romani Rose to [presse@sintiundroma.de](mailto:presse@sintiundroma.de) by 29 July. For interviews with Bärbel Bas, please send an early request to the Press Office of the German Bundestag at [pressereferat@bundestag.de](mailto:pressereferat@bundestag.de).
- For filming permission outside the ICEAH, accreditation is required from the Auschwitz Museum at [press@auschwitz.org](mailto:press@auschwitz.org).

#### International commemoration ceremony and wreath-laying ceremony at 12.00 p.m.

*Venue: Roma and Sinti memorial in Birkenau, camp section B II e.*

With simultaneous translation into German, Polish, English and Romani.

**10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.:** Arrival and welcome of the guests, walk to the memorial of the murdered Roma and Sinti in the former camp section B II e, commemoration of the murdered by the participants of the youth education event 'Dikh He Na Bister'.

#### Speeches:

- Opening speech by the organisers: Roman Kwiatkowski (Association of Roma in Poland), Romani Rose, (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma)
- Alma Klasing, survivor of the Holocaust
- Bolesław Rumanowski, survivor of the Holocaust
- Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska, Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland
- Bärbel Bas, President of the German Bundestag
- Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- Dani Dayan, Chairman of Yad Vashem, International Holocaust Remembrance Centre
- Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (video message)
- Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission (tbc, video message)

#### 1.15 pm: Wreath-laying ceremony

#### Further events:

31 July 2024: Opening event 'Honouring the Resistance and Resilience of Holocaust survivors and passing on their testimonies to younger generations'

*Venue: Auditorium Maximum of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow*

**20:00 p.m.:** Opening event of the Days of Remembrance and opening of the exhibition

**20.30 p.m.:** Start of the stage programme

Exhibition opening and reception afterwards

#### 1 August 2024: International conference and commemorative concert in Krakow

**9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.:** International conference

*Venue: Auditorium Maximum of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow*

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of 2 August 1944, the European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti, this international conference will focus on the recognition, commemoration and awareness-raising of the Holocaust of Roma and Sinti. The focus is on the question of how the survivors' testimonies can be carried into the future and how their voices can be heard. The conference aims to help ensure that the experiences of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust are remembered, honoured and integrated into academic, commemorative and educational discourses in order to contribute to an inclusive, just and respectful society without antigypsyism.

**20:00 p.m. to 22:00 p.m.:** Concert to commemorate the Roma and Sinti murdered 80 years ago

*Venue: Krakow Philharmonic Hall*

'O Lungo Drom (The Long Road)' - an oratorio of Roma and Sinti

composed by Ralf Yusuf Gawlick, performed by Clara Meloni (soprano), Christoph Filler (baritone), László Rácz (cimbalom) and the Alban Berg Ensemble Vienna.

Followed by a reception in the Krakow Philharmonic Hall.

O Lungo Drom means 'The long way' in Romani. This large-scale work, composed for a chamber ensemble of soprano, baritone, flute, clarinet, cimbalom, piano and string quartet, integrates texts from all over the world into an oratorio of the scattered Roma and Sinti. O Lungo (D)rom sets the words of thirteen different Roma poets to music in ten languages and Romani dialects

**2 August 2024: Memorial concert in Oswiecim:**

Venue: *Parafia św. Józefa Church, Jana Kilińskiego 15, 32-600 Oświęcim*

19:00 p.m. to 21:00 p.m.: 'The Harps of Papusza', a symphonic poem by Jan Kanty Pawluśkiewicz based on the poems of Bronisława Waj's 'Papusza'

Accreditation at [presse@sintiundroma.de](mailto:presse@sintiundroma.de) is also required for participation in the individual events.

Press contact:

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