

**Session 11: Preparing the commemoration ceremony**

**Session 12: The 2 August commemoration ceremony**

<p><b>Date/Time</b> <b>Place</b></p>	<p>02 August, The forest next to Crematorium V, close to B II e (where the commemoration ceremony takes place)</p>
<p><b>Thematic focus</b></p>	<p>Remembrance, 2 August commemoration ceremony, struggle for recognition</p>
<p><b>Main learning objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create space to reflect about the experiences with commemoration ceremonies in different countries;</li> <li>• Raise the awareness about the struggle for recognition of the Roma Genocide;</li> <li>• Raise the awareness about the context and history of the 2 August commemoration ceremony;</li> <li>• Prepare participants to understand the ceremony and to reflect about the meaning of the speeches.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Programme flow, timing</b></p>	<p><b>Step 1 (15-20 min): Sharing of experiences</b>  <u>Questions:</u> Have you ever participated in a remembrance event before? How does the “culture of remembrance” look like in your country?</p> <p><b>Step 2 (20-30 min): Why is this commemoration ceremony important?</b>  <u>Introduction:</u> Roma and Sinti survivors and their families came to the Auschwitz memorial site to commemorate long before the governments recognized the Roma Genocide. Since 1985 the 2 August commemoration ceremony takes place in Auschwitz-Birkenau in the section B II e (“Zigeunerlager”) and it was initiated by Sinti and Roma themselves. While it seems today just a very institutional ceremony (without meaning?), this commemoration ceremony played an important role in the struggle of Sinti and Roma for the recognition of the Roma Genocide.  <u>Activity:</u> Facilitators give different A4 images, which represent a moment in the struggle for recognition, to participants (in couples) and ask them to reflect about the context (what it shows, the year, the relevancy). <b>OPTIONAL:</b> On the back of the image there is a paragraph of text describing the image and the historical context. Participants have a few minutes to reflect in couples, and then everybody shares the story in the plenary.</p> <p><u>Stories / Moments in history:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1956: Racist judgement of the highest German federal court</li> <li>• 1973: Erection of the memorial for Roma and Sinti in B II e (“Zigeunerlager”)</li> <li>• 1979: Commemoration ceremony in Bergen-Belsen with EP President S. Veil</li> <li>• 1980: Hunger strike in former KZ Dachau</li> <li>• 1982: Recognition by German chancellor Helmut Schmidt</li> <li>• 1985: First commemoration ceremony in Auschwitz</li> <li>• 1997: Opening of the first permanent exhibition in Heidelberg, Germany</li> <li>• 2001: Opening of the exhibition Block 13 in the Auschwitz Museum</li> <li>• 2011: Speech of Zoni Weisz in the German Bundestag (alternative: in UN, year?)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012: Inauguration of the Berlin memorial</li> <li>• 2014: 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 2 August, DIKH HE NA BISTER with 1.000 young people</li> <li>• 2015: Resolution of the European Parliament to recognize the 2 August Roma Holocaust Memorial Day</li> </ul> <p><u>Follow-up questions</u> (optional, probably there is no time for this):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the future of this commemoration ceremony (without survivors)?</li> <li>• What role can/should young Roma take?</li> <li>• What is the state of recognition of the Roma Genocide in your country?</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3 (5 min): Introduce the speakers of the 2019 commemoration ceremony</b></p> <p><b>Step 4 (20 min): Reading and reflection of one speech of 2019</b> As the written speeches are available beforehand (translated in EN, DE, PL), the participants could read (individually, in small groups, in the big group) one of the speeches and reflect about it. During the commemoration ceremony it is often difficult for participants to follow the speeches, and the preparation could contribute to understand the meaning.</p> <p><b>Step 5: Reminder of code of conduct</b></p> <p><b>Session 12: The 2 August commemoration ceremony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10.00 Youth groups reading names of Holocaust victims</li> <li>• 11.00 Commemoration Ceremony</li> <li>• 12.30 Wreath and flower laying ceremony</li> </ul>
<p><b>Needed materials</b></p>	<p>Material for the activity about recognition of the Roma Genocide Speeches of the commemoration ceremony</p>
<p><b>Notes for facilitators</b></p>	<p><b>Briefing on facilitators regarding “Remembrance”</b> &gt;&gt;see <i>“Right to Remember” CoE Handbook pages 43-48, exercise page 82</i></p> <p><b>How should we ‘remember’?</b> Official remembrance – as organised by governments – can often be an empty event. Indeed, it can sometimes be worse than empty, serving only to shore up a false sense of benevolence or solidarity among those who display no solidarity on any other day towards the groups that matter. If there is a single message that remembering the Roma Genocide should send, it is that empathy and solidarity towards the Roma were sadly lacking while the Genocide was happening; and although the acts of anti-solidarity today are less extreme, they still exist. There is little to be gained for either Roma people or society if we ‘remember’ their suffering on 2 August every year, and then forget again for every other day. Remembrance of the Roma Genocide must be more than a single symbolic event.</p>