

Session 13: Testimony session

Date/Time	Day 4, 02.08.2018, afternoon (120 minutes)
Place	International Youth Encounter Center
Thematic focus	Remembrance, testimonies, eye-witnesses
Main learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal meeting with an eye-witness of the Holocaust and of WWII • Build a dialogue and empathy between the older and younger generation • Engage young people through oral history and through a personal testimony <p>The event offers young people the possibility to meet survivors and listen to their stories. It is important for the younger generation not just to learn about historical facts, but also to hear the individual experiences of the Roma during the WW2. Through these personal encounters and histories, young people can gain a closer, emotional experience, and better understanding about the trauma of the Holocaust.</p> <p>This intergenerational dialogue creates the space to share the traumatic stories of the past, but as well to reflect on the current situation of the Roma community worldwide. It also comes to compensate a void created by historical research over the past seventy years and to ensure the presence in the collective memory of the Holocaust experience as told by those who have experienced it.</p> <p>Through these encounters, we give value and make justice to the survivors's experiences, as well as to those of the first activists for the Roma Genocide Recognition. They can share what happened with a larger community and give young people the chance to learn and keep the memory alive.</p> <p>With this event we aim to inspire young participants to become active in oral history research and to collect the memories of survivors in their own communities.</p>
Method	<p>Method in non-formal education - Narrativ café</p> <p>A dynamic and interactive method of autobiographical oriented storytelling is designated as narrative café. At a particular location or in a group an audience is listening to a storyteller. The method differs from the fact based discussion. Rather information are transmitted in a casual manner and atmosphere through a narrative witnesses and know-how are conveyed. In non-formal education this method is a popular tool to activate participant and bring them together while to sharing information on a particular subject.</p>
Programme flow, timing	<p>Step 1 (20 min): Opening of the event</p> <p><u>Setting:</u> big gathering in the central space of the youth center, micro/speakers prepared</p> <p>Welcome by ternYpe</p> <p>Welcome and introduction of the eye-witnesses</p> <p><u>Short speeches:</u></p> <p>EU Commissioner for Justice, Vera Jourova, Council of Europe, Jeroen Schokkenbroek (Director for Non-Discrimination)</p>



Step 2 (10 min): Move into the working rooms

Facilitators/moderators know beforehand the working rooms, and accompany the survivors into the rooms

Step 3 (90 minutes): Testimony session

Setting: narrative café, if possible not in a theatre style seating but in a circle

Roles: moderator, translator

Meetings:

- Raymond Gureme
- Rita Prigmore
- Nadir Dedic
- Ivan Bilaschenko
- Krystyna Gil
- Frida Larsen
- Else Baker

Step 4 (5 minutes): Closing of the session

- A group photo with the guest/the eye-witness
- Can we give any present / recognition?

Short biographies

Rita Prigmore

Rita Prigmore was born on 3 March 1943 in Würzburg, Germany, together with twin sister, Rolanda, to a Sinti family. Her parents, Gabriel and Theresia, worked at a theatre in Würzburg. In 1941 Rita's mother was taken by the Gestapo and forced to sign forms agreeing to be sterilized, under the threat of deportation. Theresia agreed, but tried to fall pregnant before her appointment. In summer 1942 the doctors discovered that she was expecting twins. Theresia was told she would be allowed to give birth if she agreed to give her children to the authorities once they were born. She agreed and after their birth Rita and Rolanda spent most of their time in a university clinic. In April 1943 Theresia headed to the university to see her children and found Rolanda dead after being experimented on. In panic she grabbed Rita and ran out of the clinic, but a few days later the authorities took Rita back. She remained there until April 1944. As a child and an adult Rita started to experience various health problems. She discovered that these was caused by the various brain experiments that had been conducted on her as a child by Nazi doctors. Rita is currently living in Würzburg, Germany and is actively in engaged in Roma Holocaust remembrance.

Else Baker

Else Baker was born in December 1935 in Hamburg as the daughter of a Sintiza. A foster family (Auguste and Emil Matulat) took her in as an infant. In March 1943, Else was arrested by two policemen and taken to a warehouse in the Port of Hamburg, which



served as a rallying point for deportations of Jews, Sinti and Roma from Hamburg to the concentration camps. The 7-year-old girl was to be taken to the concentration camp Auschwitz together with 328 other Sinti and Roma. Fortunately, her foster father, Emil Matulat, managed to get her released and she was allowed to return home. However, she was arrested again in April 1944. This time her foster father could not prevent her deportation to Auschwitz. All on her own, she survived the camp only through the protection and help of an older Sintiza. When the last Sinti and Roma remaining in the Blle camp were murdered in August 1944, Else was separated from her protector and transported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. In the meantime, Emil Matulat had never stopped trying to get her released. In September 1944 his pleas and letters to the Nazi-authorities finally payed off. He received permission to pick Else up from Ravensbrück. Today, Else Baker lives in the UK, where she emigrated in the 1960s. In the 1990s, she started to share the story of her incarceration and survival. For this commitment, she has received numerous awards. In 2005 she was the first Sintiza to be received in audience by the British Queen.

„I was only 8 years old and all on my own. It was like an inferno. I will never forget this situation.“

(Interview with Else Baker, 2007)

Raymond Gureme

Raymond Gurême was born to a French Roma family in 1925. His parents owned a travelling circus, where Raymond performed as clown and acrobat since he was 2 years old. In 1940 he and his family were arrested and transported to a camp for "nomads" in France. Raymond managed to escape, but the rest of his family was transported to Mulsane and Montreuil-Bellay, the biggest "camps for gypsies" in France. Later Raymond was arrested again and sent to work to camps in Germany, where he had to collect corpses after bombings. Once he was terribly beaten by a Nazi and lost one of his eyes in a bombing. Finally Raymond escaped again with the help of a French railwayman, who hid him on a train going back to France. He reunited with his family only in 1950. They never received any financial or moral reparations after the war. They all remained silent about what happened to them, until Raymond decided to speak about it in 2010, 70 years after his arrest. His story has been published in the book "Interdit aux nomades" written by a journalist and friend, Isabelle Ligner. He delivered the key speech as a survivor together with his granddaughter Marine Hagemann in the commemoration ceremony on 2 August 2016.

Frieda Larsen, born in 1933 in Rostock (Germany), is the daughter of a Sinto father and experienced as a child the racial persecution of the Nazis. As a child she witnessed discrimination of the Sinti and Roma from Hamburg. Her family lived in the constant fear of being deported as well. She is politically active, in particular as the vice-chair of the Auschwitz Committee Germany. (languages: German, English)



Ivan Bilaschenko

Ivan Bilaschenko was born in Dmitrovka Zolotonosha district in the region of Poltava, Ukraine in 1926. He firstly went to school in 1934. Before the war broke out in 1941 he finished his school days in the 7th grade because he joined the Komsomol (Communist Youth Organization). When the German occupiers started with Roma mass murder he was sure that he would be shot as well. One day the starosta (the head of the village) received an order from the Gestapo. His task was to cleanse ethnically the village from the „gypsies“ ment sending them to death.

But the starosta denied that order because he was a friend of Ivan's family. Instead he helped them to gather some valuables such as gold to convince the Gestapo commandant that he should not deport the Bilaschenkos. After that trial Ivan should be sent to Germany to do forced labor but he managed to escape on the journey to Germany. When he returned home he was drafted by the Red Army at the age of 17 years and he was engaged in several important battles. Therefore he received several awards for his military service.

Nadir Dedic

Nadir Dedic was born in 1930 in the municipality Bosanska Gradiska, today's Bosnia Herzegovina. In 1942 he was captured by German soldiers and then handed over to Ustase and imprisoned in the Jasenovac concentration camp. There took place mass murder of Roma from 1942 to 1945. Among others his father Alija and his mother Kada were murdered as well as other close and distant relatives. Most of the relatives (namely 34 people named Dedić) died in concentration camps; according to his own statement a total of 81 family members were murdered. A friend of the family (Enver Hatić), brought him from the concentration camp and took him as a child of his own. With him Mr. Dedic remained and worked as a shepherd until he joined the partisans in 1943 and participated in the People's Liberation War. In the 1970s he engaged to enlarge the public awareness about the Roma Holocaust. He also initiated the erection of the monument to Roma victims of the fascist terror in Žeravica, Bosnia Herzegovina. He was an active member of the Jasenovac Round Table in 1986. His wife Fata Dedic (*1926/1930 -2018) was also imprisoned in the Jasenovac concentration camp. Many of her relatives were murdered in concentration camps.

Peter Höllenreiner:

Peter Höllenreiner was born in Munich in 1939 as a son of a German Sinti family. Four years later the National Socialists deported him and his family to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Over two years he went through indignities, mistreatment and the murder of his relatives. After the liberation of the concentration camp in 1945 the discrimination against him and his family continued. For example the police made some raids without any reason and the authorities discriminated them systematically. Moreover they were licentiously punished by teachers. Even though he removed his tattoo after the war he decided to renew it because he wanted to symbolically set an example against the continuing discrimination experiences. When his brother, who was also an activist and a proactive witness, died in 2015, he returned in context of the „Katholischer



Weltjugendtag“ (Catholic World Youth Day) to Auschwitz-Birkenau for the first time in 2016. Thereby he accompanied the Pope Franziskus. Together they prayed at the Todeswand (deathwall) of the main camp. In the same year he occurred as witness during the „Día Internacional de Pueblo Gitano“ (International Roma Day) in Valencia. On the 2nd of August 2017 he spoke as a representative of the Survivors Delegation of the „Zentralrat des Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrums Deutscher Sinti und Roma“ (Central Council of Documentation- and Culturalcenter of German Sinti and Roma).

