



European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: Statement by President von der Leyen, Vice-President Jourová and Commissioner Dalli

Brussels, 31 July 2020

Ahead of the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, on 2 August, Ursula **von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission, Věra **Jourová**, Vice-President for Values and Transparency, and Helena **Dalli**, Commissioner for Equality, said:

"Today, we pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of Roma victims of the Holocaust. We consider it a moral duty to acknowledge and remember all those who suffered under the Nazi regime: among those people were the Roma. Remembering their persecution reminds us of the need to tackle the challenges they still face today and which are too often overlooked.

As the number of survivors and witnesses of these atrocities is dwindling, it is our duty, now more than ever, to continue their work of memory and to pass on their testimonies. For this reason, we pay our respects today to the memory of Raymond Gurême, a historical figure of the French Gypsy community, who survived the Holocaust and passed away this year, on 24 May, aged 94. He will be remembered for fighting to the very end for the rights and dignity of Roma, for his combat against all forms of racism; and for his struggle for the recognition of the Romani Holocaust.

Europe has a duty to protect its minorities from racism and discrimination. We must replace anti-gypsyism with openness and acceptance, hate speech and hate crime with tolerance and respect for human dignity, and bullying with education about the Holocaust. Above all, we must promote diversity as a wonderful gift that makes Europe strong and resilient.

This is why the Commission calls on all Member States to join the pledge to end racism and discrimination, which blatantly affects our large ethnic Roma minorities. We urge Member States to commit to a new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation to bring social fairness and more equality in all senses of the word."

Background

In 2015, the European Parliament declared 2 August the annual "European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day" to commemorate the 500,000 Roma – representing at least a quarter of their total population at that time – murdered in Nazi-occupied Europe.

On 2 August 2019, Vice-President Věra **Jourová** joined the commemoration ceremony in Auschwitz-Birkenau to mark the 75th anniversary of the extermination of the last remaining Roma in the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

On 23 January 2020, President **von der Leyen** was in Jerusalem, where she joined world leaders at the 'World Holocaust Forum 2020: Remembering the Holocaust, fighting anti-Semitism'. The Forum was organised ahead of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January, which marked 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

This year on 2 August, Commissioner **Dalli** will be the main speaker at the official virtual Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony of the European Holocaust Memorial Day of Roma and Sinti, at the initiative of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma.

For More Information

[Roma integration in the EU](#)

[2019 report on the implementation of Roma inclusion measures in the Member States.](#)

Press contacts:

[Adalbert JAHNZ](#) (+ 32 2 295 31 56)

[Guillaume MERCIER](#) (+32 2 298 05 64)

[Katarzyna KOLANKO](#) (+ 32 2 296 34 44)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)