



Final Report ROMADAY 2019: »Roma for Europe and Europe for Roma!«

From April 4 to 8 2019, the Alliance for Solidarity with the Sinti and Roma of Europe celebrated the International Roma Day for the fourth time. ROMADAY is an annual commemoration of the first World Roma Congress on the 8th April 1971, marking the beginning of the worldwide Roma and Sinti emancipation movement.

ROMADAY 2019 focused on the perspectives of Sinti and Roma in Europe. The first event was the contemporary witness discussion with 94-year-old Zilli Reichmann at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Berlin on April 4. More than 220 guests, including many young people, listened to the story of her eventful life: Her father, with his travelling cinema, was the one who brought culture to German villages. »We had a wonderful time, we were very happy together and had a healthy family«, she described her childhood. Her father had long believed that only criminals would be taken away. »Until he ended up in Auschwitz« Zilli Reichmann added. Not only were her parents gassed there, but also her four-year-old daughter Gretel, her sister with her seven children, and numerous other relatives. This was her first time telling her story in front of a large audience. »So that it would not be forgotten« she explained.

The program continued on April 7 with the ROMADAY parade. The parade with about 200 participants went from the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime to the Maxim Gorki Theatre. The opening speech was given by Romeo Franz, Member of the European Parliament. The Vice-President of the German Parliament Petra Pau was giving the reminder in her speech that the formation of the European Union was an answer »to a deadly time of national narrow-mindedness and right-wing dominance. That is why I support the slogan of ROMADAY 2019: Roma for Europe! And I also want a Europe for Roma« she said.

Henny Engels, board member of the Lesbian and Gay Association, warned: »We have all experienced that the human dignity of so-called minorities only has a chance to be preserved if we stand up for each other«.



Zilli Reichmann in the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Photo: Foundation Memorial / Mike Schmidt



Romeo Franz MEP opens the ROMADAY-Parade 2019

Photo: RomaTrial / Nihad Nino Pušija



Ukrainian and Berlin Youth from the Forum Theater Workshop

Photo: RomaTrial / Nihad Nino Pušija



László Farkas and Henny Engels at the Brandenburg Gate

Photo: RomaTrial / Nihad Nino Pušija

Karen Taylor, member of the board of the European Network Against Racism and political advisor for human rights in the German Parliament, also expressed solidarity with all those affected by racism: »A violation based on racism does not only hurt the person affected, but all of us. It violates our basic democratic order and it violates everything we stand for in Europe. After all, we are united in diversity. That is Europe. And diversity - that is us!«

Afterwards, Ukrainian and German young people from the Forum Theater Workshop presented their final performance »Know. Act. Change.« at the Maxim Gorki Theater.

In the evening, the author and British Rom Damian James Le Bas read from his book »The Stopping Places. A Journey through Gypsy Britain« at the Maxim Gorki Theater | Studio Я, musically accompanied by the singer and British Romni Riah May Knight. With his book he succeeds in making the centuries-old history of British Roma visible on the map of the United Kingdom for the first time. In an interview with Prof. Dr. Iman Attia, the author pointed out that since the day of the Brexit referendum antiziganism and general hostility towards all people perceived as »foreign« has been on the rise - and that the framework conditions of the EU have so far been an important corrective in Great Britain against racism.

On the 8th of April the series of events ended with the play »Roma Army« by Yael Ronen and ensemble as well as a concert with Amos Band and DJ Maky »by Roma for all«.



Uwe Neumärker reading a greeting of the minister of state Annette Widmann-Mauz (Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration) | Photo: RomaTrial / Nihad Nino Pušija



Riah May Knight and Damian James Le Bas at the musical reading »Gypsy Reports And Songs From Brexitland«
Photo: RomaTrial / Nihad Nino Pušija



Isidora Randjelović (»RomaniPhen«), Damian James Le Bas and Prof. Dr. Iman Attia (Alice-Salomon-School)
Photo: RomaTrial / Nihad Nino Pušija

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