

Remembering the Porajmos*?!

*Porrajmos, Parajmos, Parrajmos, Pharrajimos

Introduction

This booklet is the beginning of an ongoing effort to trace and honor the memory of the Porajmos – the genocide of the Sinti and Roma under National Socialism. Despite the scale and brutality of this crime, it has long been relegated to the margins of public remembrance. With this project, we set out to collect and document key memorial sites across Germany, Poland, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary, to better understand how each country has remembered – or neglected – the Porajmos in its public memory culture.

Our goal is twofold: to offer a guide for those who wish to visit and engage with these places of memory, and to critically examine national approaches to commemoration, justice, and historical responsibility.

Each country chapter is organized in three parts: (1) a listing of major memorials, including both well-known and lesser-known sites; (2) a concluding analysis and reflection, summarizing the patterns, silences, and tensions observed in that country's memorial landscape; (3) set of short interviews exploring public knowledge of the Porajmos. These informal

conversations were conducted using a snowball sampling method. All participants are in their mid-twenties to early thirties and have higher education backgrounds. Their reflections provide insight into the level of common knowledge about this topic.

This booklet is not only a tour guide but also a document of gaps, gestures, and ongoing struggles. It seeks to keep the memory of Romani persecution present – not as a closed chapter, but as part of a living history that continues to demand recognition, resistance, and repair.

Germany

Berlin

The *Memorial for the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered Under National Socialism* was built in 2022 by the German Federal Government as a national memorial for the European Sinti and Roma persecuted as “gypsies.” The memorial featuring a sunken stone in a fountain – where a fresh flower is placed daily –, was designed by Dani Karavan, the son of Polish Jewish immigrants who immigrated to Israel.

An open-air exhibition was added in October 2022, highlighting the biographies of nine persecuted Roma and Sinti, and illustrating the Europe-wide scope of the genocide, acts of resistance, and the long struggle for recognition.



Fig. 1. Photo: Marko Priske, Memorial Foundation



Fig. 2. Ceremonial inauguration of the memorial. Photo: Jen Jeske

Hamburg

Since November 2023, a memorial at Diebsteich Cemetery in Hamburg commemorates the thousands of Sinti and Roma persecuted under National Socialism. Around 1,400 men, women, and children were deported from Hamburg to concentration and extermination camps. Several hundred more were brought from nearby regions to Hamburg for deportation. Many survivors are buried at Diebsteich Cemetery.

The memorial was initiated by the Sinti Association of Hamburg. It features a three-meter-high obelisk, surrounded by a circular area with benches and columns. It is both a site of remembrance and a space for present-day gathering, calling on visitors to stand against racism, anti-Roma racism, and exclusion in all forms.



Fig. 3. Memorial for Sinti and Roma at Diebsteich Cemetery. Photo: Casey Sennett

Buchenwald

The *Memorial for the Murdered Sinti and Roma* at Buchenwald was inaugurated in 1995 on the site of former Block 14, where Austrian Roma were imprisoned during the winter of 1939-1940. Designed by Daniel Plaas, the monument consists of 100 black basalt steles arranged alongside a gravel mound, with 18 of the steles bearing the names of camps where Roma and Sinti were murdered. Inscribed in English, German, and Romani, the memorial honors the thousands persecuted and at least 400 killed at Buchenwald.



Fig. 4. Close-up of the memorial, 2012. Photo: Claus Bach, Buchenwald Memorial



Fig. 5. "In memory of the Sinti and Roma who became victims of the Nazi genocide", 2012. Photo: Claus Bach, Buchenwald Memorial

Wiesbaden

The *Memorial to the Deported and Murdered Sinti and Roma*, located in Reisinger-Anlagen on Bahnhofstraße in Wiesbaden, was inaugurated on December 5, 1992. It was the first memorial in Germany dedicated to commemorating the persecution of the Sinti and Roma under National Socialism.

During the Nazi regime, around 26,000 Sinti and Roma – most of them German citizens – were targeted as a "non-European alien race." They were subjected to racial laws, forced sterilization, internment, and ultimately genocide. On March 8, 1943, 119 Sinti and Roma from Wiesbaden were arrested and deported via Bahnhofstraße to Auschwitz; over half, including about 40 children, were murdered.

Postwar persecution continued in the form of police surveillance and denial of compensation. The Wiesbaden memorial was established after political controversy and unveiled following a commemorative march retracing the victims' deportation route. Designed by Josef and Eugen Reinhardt, the monument features a sandstone sculpture depicting a group burdened and on their way to destruction. It was commissioned by the city's Cultural Office.



Fig. 6. 'The memorial to the deported and murdered Sinti and Roma in the Reisinger grounds on Bahnhofstrasse with a dedication stone'. Photo: City of WI

Germany - Overview

In March 1982, the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was the first representative to recognise that the Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti was a result of racial persecution. Despite this notorious recognition, our research on Germany found less memorials than anticipated. While two memorials were built in the early-1990s, not much progress in the form of memorials was found until Berlin's 2022 memorial.

It is worth mentioning, however, that there are several memorials across the country that commemorate all victims of the Holocaust, which were excluded from this project due to focusing exclusively on Porajmos remembrance and specifically on Romani victims.

The lack of specific representation is of particular significance in Germany considering the investments and efforts the country has made in regards to Holocaust remembrance. Our research has not found a possible explanation for this phenomenon.

In contrast with the lesser visibility on memorials, Germany is the European country with the highest representation of Roma in school textbooks, including mentions of the Porajmos (Council of Europe, 2020). This data was not corroborated by the interview we conducted with J.D., who attended school in Germany. It is likely that mentions of the Porajmos are a more recent development.

INTERVIEWS

J.D. - Age: 30

Do you know what the porrajmos is? (Or Samudaripen?) 'No.'

Have you heard about the Roma Holocaust? 'Hmm. No.'

During the Holocaust, Romani people were also murdered on ethnics grounds. There are an estimated 600K (400-800K) people who were murdered during this period. Did you know about this? '600K?!! What?! I have not heard about this.'

I assume you have not learned about this in school then? 'No. I don't remember learning about this at all.'

Austria

Mauthausen

The first memorial plaque for victims of the Porajmos was unveiled in 1994 by Karl Stojka, son of one of the Mauthausen's camp survivors. It is estimated that at least 500 Roma and Sinti were killed in the Mauthausen concentration camp, although the real number could be much higher.

Since its establishment in 1938 and until its closure in 1945, around 190,000 people from over 40 different nations were taken to the Mauthausen camp in Upper Austria.

The plaque stands as one of Austria's first permanent memorials to commemorate the Porajmos.



Fig. 7. Unveiling of the first memorial for Roma and Sinti at Mauthausen, Photo: Documentation Centre of Austrian Roma, Vienna, Austria

Vienna

On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Vienna's Favoriten district, a red chestnut tree was planted and a memorial plaque unveiled on October 11, 1999 at the former main resting site Hellerwiese – now Barankapark-Hellerwiese – in remembrance of the Lovara, Sinti, and Roma who were deported from there in 1941. The memorial was created jointly with Mongo Stojka, father of Harri Stojka, by the association Kulturraum 10 with support from the District Museum and local authorities. In addition to the chestnut tree, the original memorial consisted of a glass plaque bearing a black-letter dedication. This plaque was repeatedly vandalized in racist attacks and was completely destroyed in 2002. In 2004, the destroyed plaque was replaced by a new memorial made of red stone and metal.

The inscription on the memorial:

"For decades, the 'Hellerwiese' served
as a main resting place for Lovara, Roma and Sinti
on their way south.
In 1941, all families—children,
women and men—were deported from this site
by the National Socialists.
Their trail vanishes into the gas...
Favoriten honors the Lovara, Roma and Sinti
with this red chestnut tree as a sign of remembrance.
A me gindinas pre du me
We will never forget them!"



Fig. 8. Memorial for the murdered Lovara, Sinti, and Roma, Barankapark, Vienna. Photo: [geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at](https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at)

Sulzriegel

In November 2018, a memorial plaque was unveiled at the Berger family grave in Sulzriegel to honor the Roma murdered during the Nazi era. The plaque was commissioned by the KUO Association (stands for Culture, Environmental Protection, and Village Beautification) in Bad Tatzmannsdorf and created in cooperation with the Roma Adult Education Center of Burgenland.

Before World War II, a Roma settlement with 12 small houses existed on the outskirts of Sulzriegel, inhabited by the extended Berger family. During the Nazi regime, the family members were deported and mostly murdered. Over 60 victims' names were read aloud during the ceremony, with candles lit in their memory.

Only two families survived the Holocaust and returned to Sulzriegel after the war, but the settlement had been destroyed by the Nazis. After some years, the survivors relocated to Spitzzicken and Wiener Neustadt, where their descendants still live today.



Fig. 9. 'In memory of the Roma from the Berger family who were displaced and murdered by the Nazi regime'. Photo: Gertrude Unger

Ritzing

In May 2019, the town of Ritzing unveiled a memorial sculpture to honor 21 victims of National Socialist persecution from the local community. These include 18 Roma and three people who were victims of the Nazi euthanasia program. The initiative was led by erinnern.at, with the artwork created by Christian Gmeiner and historical research conducted by Dr. Herbert Brettl.

The memorial consists of a concrete pillar surrounded by 21 concrete discs, each bearing paired footprints of current residents of Ritzing and members of the Burgenland Roma community. These footprints symbolize the 21 individuals deported and murdered during the Nazi era. A plaque on the pillar lists the victims' names. The footprints serve as a living testimony—witnesses of the present standing for those absent, inviting everyone to step into the footprints and take responsibility. When the sun shines, the shadow of the pillar moves across the discs, emphasizing the passage of time and memory.



Fig. 10. Unveiling ceremony in Ritzing. Photo: Yvonne Erdost



Fig. 11. Names of the victims inscribed in the pillar. Photo: Yvonne Erdost

Pinkafeld

In September 2020, the town of Pinkafeld dedicated the “Place of Remembrance” memorial in front of the town hall to honor 33 victims of National Socialist persecution from the local community. These included Jews, resistance fighters, victims of the Nazi euthanasia program, and Roma. The memorial also solemnly acknowledges the deportation of around 1,000 Roma and Romnja from the Oberwart region in 1941. Many of them perished in the Łódź Ghetto or were later murdered at the Chełmno extermination camp. It is believed that no one has survived.

The initiative to create this memorial was unanimously approved by Pinkafeld’s town council in June 2018. An independent working group, led by the local museum association, thoroughly researched the history of the victims and recommended establishing a memorial site with a monument and inscription. In November 2019, the council chose the design by Dr. Gottfried Reszner. The memorial is placed in line with the existing war memorial, facing the Catholic church.

At the inauguration, community leaders stressed the importance of openly confronting history. Emmerich Gärtner-Horvath, chairman of the Roma Ethnic Council, reminded attendees that only about 10% of Burgenland’s Roma survived the Holocaust, highlighting the deep and lasting impact on the community.



Fig. 12. Memorial for the Victims of National Socialist Tyranny in Pinkafeld. Photo: ORF

Oberpullendorf



Fig. 13. Unveiling ceremony of the memorial plaque in Oberpullendorf. Photo: ORF

On September 19, 2020, a memorial plaque was unveiled in the town center of Oberpullendorf to commemorate the victims of National Socialism. The plaque honors Romnija and Roma, Jews, political and religious dissidents, and individuals murdered under the Nazi euthanasia program. "To commemorate the women, men, and children from Oberpullendorf who fell victim to National Socialism between 1938 and 1945. These were Romnija and Roma, Jewish women and men, people who resisted for political or religious reasons, and individuals who were denied their right to life due to illness or disability and who fell victim to Nazi medical crimes." – the inscription on the memorial designed by Andreas Lehner, artist and chairman of the Roma Adult Education Center of Burgenland. Depicted is a Roma girl, based on an old photograph taken in the ghetto of Łódź. The monument is also intended to commemorate the 5,007 Roma and Sinti who were deported there between November 5 and 9, Lehner explains. Most of them were from Burgenland; all were murdered in the Chelmno extermination camp in 1942. The initiative was led by the Roma Volkshochschule Burgenland in cooperation with local Roma associations, supported by Mayor Rudolf Geiszler, Roma pastoral worker Matthias Platzer, and Roma Volksgruppenbeirat chairman Emmerich Gärtner-Horvath. The plaque includes a candle platform and a QR code linking to further historical information. The monument stands in front of the district administration building on Hauptstraße 56.

Neusiedl am See

In June 2023, the town of Neusiedl am See inaugurated its first Holocaust memorial explicitly honoring Roma and Romnja victims, alongside Jewish victims and those murdered under the Nazi euthanasia program. The memorial, located in the church park, was initiated by the Neusiedler Stadtarchiv. Its founder, Sepp Gmasz, described the project as a long-overdue act of historical accountability. Historian Martin Pieber, co-initiator and author of a book on the Jewish family Wallenstein-Benkö, emphasized that while several Roma and Romnja were born in Neusiedl, they were not permitted to settle in the town and were only tolerated as entertainers.

The illuminated glass plaque, installed in a niche of the parish garden wall, commemorates 41 known victims from Neusiedl: 24 Jews, 13 euthanasia victims, and 4 Roma. Its central placement in town symbolizes that these victims were once part of the local community. Artist Ferry Janoska, who played the music at the ceremony, highlighted the importance of such memorials for younger generations. The site stands as a public acknowledgment of historically marginalized victims and a call to remember the crimes of the National Socialist regime.



Fig. 14. Holocaust Memorial in Kirchenpark, Neusiedl am See. Photo: ORF

Stegersbach

In Stegersbach, a new Roma memorial was inaugurated in Hinterforst to honor the Roma victims of the Holocaust. Adolf Horvath, the oldest Roma in the town, attended the ceremony and reflected on his grandparents who were murdered in Ravensbrück concentration camp. The memorial commemorates 69 known Roma victims, primarily from the Gussak and Horvath families, while recognizing that many more remain unnamed among thousands deported.

Local officials emphasized the importance of confronting this history, highlighting the unanimous municipal decision to erect the memorial. Before World War II, several hundred Roma lived in the area formerly known as “Zigeunergraben.” Today, only about 50 Roma live in Stegersbach, and despite the memorial’s recognition, discrimination and exclusion persist in the community.



Fig. 15. 'Representatives from churches, politicians, and the Roma community took part in the blessing of the newly erected memorial stone'. Photo: Martin Wurglits

Kemetten

After 20 years of discussions, the majority of Kemetten's population voted in favor of a memorial in a citizen survey. On April 3, 2022, a memorial stone was unveiled to honor all victims of National Socialism. The initiative was led by the Roma Adult Education Center in cooperation with Roma associations

The memorial's designer, Andreas Lehner, created the stone at a tilted angle to symbolize how the murder of about one-fifth of the community's population threw the village out of balance. Approximately 200 holes in the stone represent the missing people. The memorial commemorates all victims of the Nazi regime, including political prisoners, people with illnesses or disabilities, Jewish residents, and around 200 Roma from Kemetten.



Fig. 16. 'In memory of the women, men, and children from Kemetten who became victims of National Socialism between 1938 and 1945. These included Romnija and Roma, Jewish women and men, people who resisted politically, and those who were denied the right to life due to illnesses or disabilities and fell victim to Nazi medical policies'. Photo: OEAD erinnern:at

Langental

On April 18, 2022, a memorial site was inaugurated and blessed at the “Platz der Begegnung” in Langental, a district of Großwarasdorf. The site honors 69 Roma men, women, and children from the Großwarasdorf community who were murdered under Nazi terror between 1938 and 1945. Artist Peter Kedl created 73 steel-and-glass steles for the memorial, each representing an individual victim. These include 69 named Roma victims and 4 victims of euthanasia, who were killed due to political resistance or because the Nazi regime denied them their right to life based on illness or disability. Each stele bears the victim’s name and birth/death dates. The steles are arranged to roughly represent the family and kinship relations among the victims. The memorial also acknowledges the unknown fate of over 100 other Roma from Langental whose postwar whereabouts remain unknown.



Fig. 17. Memorial site in Langental. Photo: ORF

Holzschlag

On May 27, 2023, a new memorial stone honoring the Roma and Romnija victims of the Holocaust was unveiled at the cemetery of Holzschlag. In 1937, Holzschlag had 661 inhabitants, of whom 318 were registered as Roma. The deportation of the Roma from Holzschlag occurred in at least three phases. In 1939, able-bodied men were taken away. On the night of October 31, 1941, the undernourished Roma women and children living in Holzschlag at the time were deported to the “Gypsy camp” in Litzmannstadt, in the Polish city of Łódź, and shortly thereafter murdered in the extermination camp at Kulmhof. In April 1943, the last remaining Roma were deported to Auschwitz. Only 28 returned to the village after 1945.

The new memorial, created from Edelserpentin, was inaugurated with speeches, readings, and an ecumenical service. It replaces earlier commemorative efforts from 2016 and 2017, and symbolizes both remembrance and a warning for future generations.



*Fig. 18. 'Unveiling of the new Memorial Stone for the Roma and Romnija in Holzschlag'.
Photo: Gemeinde Unterkohlstätten*

Loipersdorf & Kitzladen

Ahead of the International Roma Day on April 8, 2024, two memorial markers were unveiled at the cemeteries in the municipalities of Loipersdorf and Kitzladen. These commemorate the Romnija and Roma murdered during the National Socialist era

Before 1938, 48 Romnija and Roma lived in Kitzladen and 115 in Loipersdorf. During the Nazi period, many of them were deported to various concentration camps and murdered. The two identical memorial markers were established by the municipalities of Loipersdorf and Kitzladen in cooperation with Roma associations in Burgenland, and funded by the province of Burgenland.



Fig. 19. Memorial in Kitzladen

Lackenbach, Eastern Austria

Lackenbach was the largest detention camp for Roma in Austria, set up in 1940 close to the Hungarian border, it held over 4,000 Roma, out of which more than half died in the camp (Foundation Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe, n/d).

In 1994, a monument was unveiled in cemetery of the former camp. Today, some commemoration events take place by the memorial.



Fig. 20. Roma-Denkmal ("Roma Memorial") in the Lackenbach cemetery.

Across Austria (*Stolpersteine*)

Throughout Austrian towns and cities, *Stolpersteine* (stepping stones) indicate the houses where victims of the Holocaust lived. While there are hundreds of *Stolpersteine* across the country, very few are especially for Roma, Sinti and Lovara (noted as three groups). The exact number has not been found throughout our research.

The picture included shows the stones found in District 10, Vienna, especially commemorating Roma and Sinti victims of the Porajmos.



Fig. 21. *Stolpersteine* in District 10, Vienna. Photo: geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at

Austria - Overview

While the earliest memorials our research found in Austria date to 1994, a surge of memorials started unfolding in 2020, which aligns with the 2015 a European Parliament resolution (2015/2615(RSP)) and Austria's recognition of August 2 as a national Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2023.

In January 2024, the National Fund for Victims of National Socialism of Austria was asked to establish a central memorial in Vienna (likely located in Schmerlingplatz) for Roma and Sinti murdered in the Porajmos. While around 11,000 Austrian victims have been documented, the number of victims could be higher. The memorial form and its exact location will be co-decided with local Roma and Sinti.

Overall impressions from Austria show that memorials will built through both national and regional efforts and that, in the cases of regional initiatives, a link with religious associations or persons involvement was more likely.

Finally, while the Council of Europe's 2020 report "The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks" found that there was no mention of Roma in Austrian curricula, our interviewees recall learning about the Roma Holocaust in school.

INTERVIEWS

L.F. - Age: 32

Do you know what Porrajmos is? (Or Samudaripen) 'No. Never.'

Have you heard of the Holocaust against the Roma? 'Yes.'

Where did you learn about it and what exactly? 'At my school (high school). (A long time ago) while we were learning about World War II, the crimes, and its consequences. What we learned: mainly about the persecution and killing of the Jews, but also about the persecution of other population groups. We haven't learned much, let alone enough...'

According to estimates, around 600,000 (between 400,000 and 800,000) Roma were killed during this period. 'That's just absolutely insane. We learned more about what happened to children or people with disabilities... that was important too, but not everything.'

M.H. - Age: 30

Do you know what Porrajmos is? (Or Samudaripen) 'No. I just googled it 🤖 But I didn't know before.'

Have you heard of the Holocaust against the Roma? 'Yes.'

Where did you learn about it and what exactly? 'In school, and basically, that Gypsies, like Jews, were seen as inferior scum and were ultimately to be exterminated.'

It's estimated that around 600,000 (between 400,000 and 800,000) Roma were killed during this period. Did you know that? 'Wow. I didn't know exactly. But I knew it was a large proportion.'

Poland

Auschwitz-Birkenau

The central place of the Porjamos, Auschwitz, received thousands of deported Romani from across Europe. A separate camp within it was created in 1942, the *Zigeunerlager* (literally translated as "Gypsy camp"). The number of Romani deported and murdered in Auschwitz remains unknown, primarily due to many Romani did not have national or local documentation and inconsistent entires (i.e. labels as asocial, politcal, professional crimanals etc).

Today, a memorial stands in the camp commemorates the thousands of victims, guided tours are conducted, and conmorations take place on August 2, International Day of Remembrance of the Roma and Sinti Holocaust.



Fig. 22. Information plaque at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Personal photograph.



Fig. 23: Memorial at former Zigeunerlager. Photo: Wojciech Grabowski, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.



Fig. 24. Monument to the Memory of the Holocaust of the Roma and Sinti, Borzecin, Brzesko County, Poland. Photo: Jakub Halun

Borzecin

The above monument was established in 2011 and designed by Polish Roma artist Małgorzata Mirga-Tas. It was violently destroyed in 2016. No one was ever found responsible for its destruction.

The inscription reads:

*“There was no life for Gypsies in the city.
And in the countryside they killed, they killed us.
What to do? With children, Gypsies in the forest,
far into the forest so that German dogs don't find
us.’ (Papusa)*

*Memorial to 29 Roma: 3 men, 5 women, and 21
children, shot here by the Germans in 1943.”*

Szczurowa

In July 1996, the *Tabór Pamięci* (Caravan of Memory) started its trajectory through the Polish villages of Żabno, Bielcza and Szczurowa, where participants would stop to visit cementaries and mass graves (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, 2017). Szczurowa, is where 93 people of Romani origin were shot in the local cemetery. One of the only survivors was Krystyna Gil (née Cioroń). The movable and ephemeral memorial, The Caravan (Figure 4) goes beyond the static sense of memory that plaques and most memorials convey, allowing us to see that memory is not fixed and that memory-in-action can be a powerful approach to remembrance. The now International Roma Memorial Caravan takes place annually (Database of Roma Genocide Memorial Sites – Samudaripeń/Porrajmos, 2020)

Figure 5 shows the memorial located in the Szczurowa Cemetery, where the Mass Grave for Roma villagers lies. Referred to as the first memorial of the world to commemorate the victims of the Porrajmos, it was erected by the local community in 1956 (Database of Roma Genocide Memorial Sites – Samudaripeń/Porrajmos, 2020). Pilgrimages to the memorial have been carried out since the 1960s, and it has been a point of the International Roma Memorial Caravan journey since 1996 (id.).



Fig. 25. The Caravan of Memory. Source: RomArchive: Adam Bartosz | photograph | Poland | July 13, 1996



Fig. 26. Szczurowa Mass Graves Memorial. Photo: Database of Roma Genocide Memorial Sites – Samudaripeń/Porrajmos.

Poland - Overview

The Roma Movement in Poland presented two trends: community-organised and grass-roots initiatives (Borzecin at the start and Szczurowa's memorial) and institutional initiatives, often involving other states, primarily Germany, Israel, and United States.

The foundation of *Stowarzyszenie Romów w Polsce* (the Association of Roma in Poland) in the early 1990s played an important role in commemorating the Porajmos. In recent years, Roma youth organising through ternYpe, the International Roma Youth Network, have been an important force in Roma Holocaust Remembrance (RomArchiv, n/d), leading to the creation of more memory sites and experiences, including publications, exhibitions and memorials.

This research found that in Poland, while Romani victims are mentioned in school textbooks alongside other victims of the Holocaust, there is no explicit acknowledgment of the Porajmos—Roma appear simply among other victims, without any details as to number of fatalities.

The rise of anti-Roma racism has manifested in the remembrance of the Porajmos, such as through the destruction of the Borzecin's memorial.

INTERVIEW

J.M. - Age: 25

Do you know what the porrajmos/samudaripen stand for? 'Nope'

Have you heard about the Roma-Holocaust? 'Yes but I'd say pretty late. Like I knew that it was happening but it's sort of always mentioned as an addition like o btw there was also Roma sinti or lesbians'

Did it ever come up in the school curriculum? 'I doubt it'

Last question, do you know the estimate of the casualties? 'Yes. But I feel like it's because I was in Israel once. Not from school. Like in Poland it's really bad taught'

Slovakia

Dubnica nad Váhom

On 1 August 2016, a memorial was unveiled to commemorate the 26 Romani victims killed in the Slovak village of Dubnica nad Váhom in 1944. The camp in the village functioned as an internment camp, created towards the end of WWII to gather prisoners who were going to be deported to concentration camps outside of Slovakia (The Slovak Spectator, 2016). Around 700 people were detained in the camp, greatly exceeding its planned capacity.

The memorial and the commemoration building up to August 2 was led by civic association, Minorita, as part of *Ma Bisteren!* (“Never Forget!”), a nation-wide initiative dedicated to preserving the memory of the Holocaust.



Fig. 27. Memorial at Dubnica nad Váhom. Photo: TASR.

Banská Bystrica

An important event when understanding this period of Slovak history is the Slovak National Uprising (SNU), an armed insurrection launched on 29 August 1944 in Banská Bystrica by the Resistance Movement against the Nazis and their Slovak collaborators. In retaliation, many executions of Romani and Jewish Slovaks, who had avoided deportation, followed.



Fig. 28. Roma memorial at the Museum of Slovak National Uprising (2006), Banská Bystrica.

The Museum of the SNU was founded in 1969 but only mentioned Jewish victims. It was only in a guidebooks from 2000 that Roma start being mentioned (Radonić, 2015: 67). The above memorial was unveiled on 2 August 2005 in collaboration with the *Ma bisteren!* initiative, and was also followed by a temporary exhibition on the persecution of Roma.

Slatina

On 23 December 1944, around 60 Romani were killed by German soldiers occupying the village.

At the local cemetery, a plaque was put in 2007 with the inscription “Ma bisteren!“, phrase that will be used all across Slovakia in response to the atrocities of the Porajmos.



Fig. 29. Porajmos memorial to Romani victims in Slatina, Slovakia, Photo: Zuzana Kumanová.

Čierny Balog

In November 1944, German soldiers captured 65 Romani who had been hiding in the woods of Čierny Balog. Despite the help of local Roma, who took them food and try to free some of them, they were all killed.

A memorial, restored in 2024 by Minorita, stands in the Jergov Valley, where the captured women and children were taken and killed.



Fig. 30. Porajmos Memorial to the Romani Victims in Čierny Balog, Slovakia. (PHOTO: Arne Mann)

Dubnica nad Váhom

In 1944 in the forst of Dubnica nad Váhom, 26 Romani women and men were murdered and buried on the site. They had been interned at the Dubnica nad Vahom camp, where in the same year a typhus epidemic broke out in the camp. Prisoners infected were murdered instead of taken to the hospital. Since 2007, a memorial stands in the forest commemorating the Roma killed on that spot and in the nearby camp.



Fig. 31. "Ma bisteren!" Memorial in Dubnica nad Váhom.
Photo: Monuments of Remembrance 1918-2018.

Lutila

In December 1944 over 40 local Roma were deported from the village of Lutila and later executed. The memorial was unveiled in 2005 and was designed by Ladislav Čisárik and Alexander Reind.



Fig. 32. Memorial commemorating local Romani victims in Lutila.
Photo: In Minorita

Nemecká

Throughout the war, several Roma were deported from Nemecká.

A memorial was unveiled in 2005, built by sculptors Jaroslav and Ján Šicko to commemorate all Roma victims of the Porajmos from the city.



Fig. 33. Monument in Nemecká.

Hanušovce nad Topľou

Throughout 1941 and 1943 in Hanušovce nad Topľou the East Slovak labour camps were located, with mostly Roma men detained in the camps.

Since 2006, a memorial stands where the former camp was located, designed by Ladislav Čisárik ml. and Alexander Reindl.



Fig. 34. The memorial reads:

NEVER FORGET!

*IN 1942-1943 ON THE RAILWAY STAGE,
THE PRESOV-STRAŽSKE LINE, THERE
WERE ALSO INTERNED ROMA MEN
FROM EASTERN SLOVAKIA.*

*IN MEMORY OF THE LABOR UNITS'
CONTRIBUTORS IN HANUSOVCE NAD
TOPLA, BYSTRO, NIZNY HRABOVCE
AND POD PETICO*

Image: In Minorita

Zvolen

In December 2015, a special memorial was unveiled in the Jewish Cemetery of Zvolen commemorating the Roma victims, who were buried in mass graves.

The monument was created by Jaroslav and Ján Šicko, and includes a plaque with the names of the victims.



Fig. 35.

Slovakia - Overview

It is worth noting that, in Slovakia, almost all memorials refer to events from 1944, potentially indicating a rise in anti-Roma racism towards the end of WWII, and almost all memorials emerged after 2005. The latter date can be explained due to the fact that Roma-specific remembrance work in Slovakia is tightly connected to the country's EU accession efforts—hence most memorials appearing in the early 2000s—which is part of the process that Marek Kucia described as the “Europeanisation of Holocaust Memory,” defined as

“the process of construction, institutionalization, and diffusion of beliefs regarding the Holocaust as well as formal and informal norms and rules regarding Holocaust remembrance and education first defined and consolidated at a European level and then incorporated in the practices of European countries” (2015: 112).

The main initiatives in the country, as evidenced by the memorials, resulted from the *Ma bisteren!* (Do not forget! - translated from Romanés) Project, set up in 2005 by the Ministry of Culture, which tasked the Slovak National Museum and In Minorita, a civil associate, to execute the project.

Our research has not been able to identify a link between the rise in memorials and other initiatives from *Ma bisteren!* and

education. Following Council of Europe's 2020 report on "The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks," and two interviews carried out, we concluded that no explicit mention of the Porajmos was present in secondary education in the last decade.

INTERVIEWS

Both participants were familiar with the Porajmos.

L.C. - Age: 26

Did you guys learn about the porajmos in the school? ‘Never mentioned in school, first time I learnt about it was when I was studying for an extracurricular thing in high school. Human rights competition’

N.H. - Age: 24

Do you remember learning about it in school? ‘Like the Roma holocaust? If yes then we learned about the holocaust and who was going there including political prisoners, Slavs and Roma. But we did not look at one specific group only the Jewish people.’

Hungary

Budapest

The *Memorial of the Gypsy Victims of the Holocaust* was inaugurated in 2006 in Nehru Park along the Danube River in Budapest. In 1944, Roma from the districts of Csepel, Erzsébet, and Lőrinc were taken through this park to the labor camps. The memorial was created by sculptor Tamás Szabó and industrial designer Ákos Maurer Klimes. The monument is a 3.2-meter-high black granite obelisk shaped like a triangle – a reference to the black triangle badge that marked Romani prisoners in Nazi camps. Inside, a gold-lined cavity reveals a bronze figure of a mutilated human form, visible through slits in the stone. The interior is illuminated by daylight and at night by a light bulb. Symbolizing the fiery core of a crematorium, the memorial commemorates the Roma who were persecuted and murdered under National Socialism.

Since its unveiling, the site has been repeatedly vandalized, reflecting the ongoing struggle against anti-Roma racism and the fight for recognition in public memory.



Fig. 36. *Memorial of the Gypsy Victims of the Holocaust in Nehru Park – the damage visible on the left side. Photo: Ferenc Hársch*



Fig. 37. *Close-up of the monument. Photo: Ferenc Hársch*

Pécs

The Roma Holocaust Memorial in Pécs, unveiled in 2004, commemorates the hundreds of thousands of Roma victims of the Nazi regime. Created by sculptor Zoltán Jenő Horváth, the limestone memorial incorporates survivor testimonies in four sculpted reliefs. Each side depicts moments of terror, separation, and death.

On the front, symbolizing the journey, a train wheel begins at the lower right corner, with a missing piece representing the tragic fate, persecution, and deportation of the Roma to death camps.

On the second side, a little boy hides behind a wall, fearfully watching with his hands shielding his eyes as his parents are taken to the crematorium.

The third side shows the terrified face of a woman looking upward under a showerhead in a gas chamber, her hands raised pleadingly. Below her, an emaciated, tormented man stands hopelessly between the railway tracks, on the threshold of death.

On the fourth side, two female figures appear with resigned, hopeless expressions, knowing there is no escape from destruction. The four edges of the block are lined with bricks symbolizing the chimneys of the crematorium. Brick motifs on the edges reference the chimneys of extermination camps, underscoring the destruction inflicted upon the Roma community during the Holocaust.



Fig. 38. Photo: Lajos Tibor Hőgye

Körmend

A Holocaust memorial dedicated to the Roma victims was inaugurated in the cemetery of Alsóberki, a district of Körmend, on International Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. The initiative was led by the Körmend Roma National Self-Government, recognizing that the town once hosted one of Hungary's largest Roma internment camps during the German occupation. From this location, many families were deported to Nazi concentration camps across Europe. Designed to honor the memory of thousands of Roma murdered during WWII, the statue was blessed by Bishop János Székely of Szombathely during the commemorative ceremony.



Fig. 39. Tamás Csuta Horváth and Ferenc Járóka playing the Romani anthem at the . Photo: Péter Szendi



Fig. 40. "For the memory of the victims of the Roma Holocaust". Photo: Péter Szendi

Bük

The *Bük Roma Holocaust Memorial* (2013), located in the town of Bük, Vas County, commemorates the Roma victims of the Holocaust. The memorial was erected at the initiative of the local Roma Minority Self-Government in 2013.

The monument, created by Csávás Csaba, is made of marble and concrete and it depicts a mother shielding her child from a vulture, with a crematorium chimney in the background.



Fig. 41. Close-up of the memorial. Photo: Róbert Orbán



Fig. 42. "In memory of the Roma and Jewish victims of the Holocaust during World War II. Erected by the Roma National Minority Self-Government of the town of Bük."

Zalaegerszeg

The memorial for the victims of the Roma Holocaust in Zalaegerszeg is displayed on the facade of the railway station. The artwork by Ferenc Farkas depicts a Roma woman protectively holding her child. The bronze background panel is divided into four parts, symbolizing how families were separated when deported to forced labor camps 59 years ago.

“Autumn 1944 brought great pain to the Roma community in Zalaegerszeg. One night, the gendarmes gathered them to be transported the next day in cattle cars to various labor camps. Some were sent to the ghetto of Komárom’s Star Fortress, others to Auschwitz, or the hell of Dachau,” the artist described.



Fig. 43. "In memory of the victims of the Roma Holocaust" – Zalaegerszeg. Photo: Cedrus

Nagykanizsa

The statue commemorating the Roma victims of the 20th century was designed and carved by Csaba Csávás in Nagykanizsa. The statue was commissioned in 1990 by the local Phralipe organization, which also founded the "Memorial for the Roma Victims of World War II" foundation. The statue, located in the Youth Park on Vár Street, was unveiled and consecrated on August 3, 1991. Every year on August 2, the Roma Minority Self-Government of Nagykanizsa holds a memorial day here, attended by survivors of the persecution. Over time, the statue has become a pilgrimage site not only for the Roma of Nagykanizsa but for the entire Roma community.

Csaba Csávás's statue is special not only because it commemorates the victims of the genocide, but also honors those Roma who lost their lives while serving in the military during World War II. The exact number of victims from Nagykanizsa and its surrounding areas is still unknown, but it is almost certain that about half of the Roma population in southern Zala died between 1939 and 1945.

"There are several families I could mention from Bagola, Sánc, and a few from Kiskanizsa, where both parts of the family suffered losses. A young Roma man conscripted in '42 or '43 died in military service, and then in '44 the gendarmes decimated his family, taking away those fit for labor. Not many of them returned," said Ferenc Kardos, a researcher of the Roma Holocaust.



Fig. 44. Detail of the Roma Holocaust Memorial in Nagykanizsa. Photo: Imre Földi

Cserdi

The memorial in Cserdi, Hungary, designed by Mayor László Bogdán around 2009 and completed by 2011, features a long wall with two contrasting sides. The west side presents a polished granite map of Europe with soil samples from every country, symbolizing European unity, including Hungary and Cserdi. The east side, facing the cemetery, starkly commemorates the Roma Holocaust (Porajmos) with imagery of concentration camps, skeletal figures, railroad tracks ending in a wall, barbed wire, and a skull sign. The memorial honors Roma victims deported from Cserdi to the Komárom fortress and other camps in 1944.



Fig. 45. Bogdán László stands in front of the memorial in Cserdi, in 2014. Photo: Attila Kisbenedek

Kalocsa

On the occasion of a Roma Holocaust commemoration event in Kalocsa, Hungary, a memorial was unveiled on August 2 beside the entrance to the local community center. The ceremony included speeches based on historical diaries and letters, as well as wreath-laying and candle lighting. The memorial, a bronze relief of a Roma woman holding a burning candle, was created by sculptor Tibor Farkas and visual artist István Kiss.

The event honored Ilona Jakab Maron, the last known Roma Holocaust survivor from Kalocsa, who could not attend due to age. Speakers recalled the genocide known as Porajmos, particularly the mass murder of some 3,000 Roma at Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of August 2, 1944—including many from Kalocsa. Estimates place the total number of Hungarian Roma victims around 50,000, though researchers believe the real figure is higher due to poor documentation.

The ceremony also acknowledged Nazi medical experiments on Roma, including forced sterilizations and lethal endurance tests. The memorial was initiated by István Sztojka, head of the local Roma self-government, and realized without external funding.



Fig. 46. Commemoration of the victims of the Porrajmos with candle lighting. Photo: János Gábor



Fig. 47. 'For the Roma who were devoured in the Holocaust'. Photo: Dr. Sándor Pinczés

Szigetvár

The Roma Holocaust Memorial in Szigetvár, located in Botykapeterd (Baranya County), was inaugurated in 2009. Initiated by the local municipality, the memorial was created by artist László Kosztics using wood carving and black marble. The memorial stands in a somewhat secluded area, near apartment buildings. It has also been vandalized—the female figure has no hands. It depicts a kneeling woman carved from wood, with a fence post and a section of barbed wire behind her, symbolizing a concentration camp.



Fig. 48. 'Remember! The Roma Holocaust victims of Szigetvár and the surrounding region!' Photo: tdmszigetvar.hu



Fig. 49. The statue after vandalization. Photo: Ildikó Dénes

Szombathely

The Roma Holocaust Memorial in Szombathely was unveiled in 1994 on the 50th anniversary of the Roma deportations. The initiative for the memorial came from László Erdélyi, former chairman of the Roma minority self-government in Szombathely. The costs were covered by the city and county governments. The memorial features black engraved granite mounted on a white raw limestone base and stands about 2.4 meters tall including its pedestal. It is located at Jászai Mari Street 1 in Szombathely, Vas County.

The inscription on the memorial plaque reads:

"In memory of the sufferings of the hundreds of Roma from Vas County who were gathered here in November 1944 and deported from this place to forced labor and concentration camps, the citizens of the city of Szombathely and Vas County erected this memorial on the fiftieth anniversary of the Roma deportations."

The creator of the memorial is unknown.



Fig. 50. 'Memorial to the Victims of the Roma Holocaust'. Photo: Róbert Orbán

Várpalota

The Roma Holocaust Memorial at Grábler Lake in Várpalota was erected in 2014 by the local municipality in cooperation with the Veszprém County Archives. The memorial consists of a natural stone base with a limestone plaque and commemorates the Roma victims of the Holocaust. It is located in Várpalota, Fehérvári út, Veszprém County. In the first days of February 1945, during the Arrow Cross rule, 118 Roma men, women, and children from Székesfehérvár and Várpalota were executed by gendarmes near Grábler Lake on the outskirts of the city. Their mass grave has since been submerged by the lake's waters, alongside which a small amusement park once operated. More than 60 years later, this memorial plaque was erected in their honor. The creator of the memorial is unknown.



Fig. 51. 'In memory of the Roma Holocaust victims'. Photo: unknown

The inscription on the plaque is an excerpt from József Daróczi Choli's "They Took the Gypsies...":

*They took all the Roma away,
to dig large ditches they were led.
The great ditch slowly deepens,
water bubbles up from the depths.*

Hungary - Overview

Our research on Hungary found several memorials and memory sites, with varying characteristics. Several memorials stood out for their visual character fed by relevant local oral history, making them specific and potentially more representative for their respective locations. This is likely to go hand in hand with the fact that some memorials were made possible through self- and crow-funded initiatives.

Another noteworthy point is the role that local Roma self-governments played across Hungary, either by pushing for memorials or by funding them.

The dates of the unveiling of memorials varied, with the memorial in Nagykanizsa being one of the earliest found in this project (1990-1), and some newer ones. What several memorials have in common, unfortunately, is a trend of vandalism.

Education on the Porajmos also varied, state-approved textbooks for Roma pupils exist (Council of Europe, 2020), no consistent nor significant mention of the Porajmos appears in Hungarian schools.

INTERVIEWS

All interviewees were familiar with the Porajmos.

N.G. - Age: 24

Do you remember if you learned about the porajmos in school? 'No. Literally nothing.'

A.V. - Age: 24

Did you learn about the porajmos in the school? 'It was only mentioned. But we did not really learn about it.'

Where did you learn about it for the first time? 'I think in highschool. We talked about it at the university, but that was different...'

R.R. - Age: 29

Where did you first learn about the porrajmos? 'Instagram I think. About the Roma Holocaust – what I remember from school is that there was mentioning about it, that there were victims of the Holocaust who were Roma. I think only Roma were mentioned, Jews and Roma, but I don't remember talking about gay people. We learned about the Holocaust in elementary already, but I don't remember what we covered. I remember though, that when we went to Auschwitz on a fieldtrip in high school, there was a section in the memory/remembrance center that was specifically for Roma. That's all I remember.'

Conclusion

Our research has found that the outlook of Porajmos memorial across Central and Eastern Europe is unevenly fragmented, and often driven by regional initiatives rather than national or international ones, despite some cases being driven by EU initiatives. What we can see emerging from the selection of memorials is not only a cartographic work of memory, but also a cartography of silence, resilience, and struggle for representations. As noted, it is small towns, villages, and grassroots initiatives that have taken on the task of remembering. These memorials, placed between forests, cemeteries, and at former execution sites, speak significantly of the way remembrance operates in different national and regional contexts.

Language was a relevant part of our research. While the term "Roma Holocaust" is more widely recognized, it tends to position Romani persecution as a footnote to the Shoah – something appended rather than intrinsic to Nazi racial ideology. Using the term Porajmos (and its variants such as Samudaripen) is not merely about naming; it is an act of recognition, a linguistic step toward acknowledging the distinct historical and racialized violence targeted at Roma and Sinti. Language matters – because what is not named cannot be properly grieved, remembered, or repaired.

Notably, many of these initiatives have been supported – or at times quietly accompanied – by local Jewish communities, whose own memorial cultures have often served as a model or moral catalyst. These cross-community efforts reflect shared histories of racialized persecution, but also the differentiated ways in which these histories have been remembered and institutionalized.

In this context, the 2015 EU recognition of “antigypsyism” (which we have referred to as “anti-Roma racism”) as a specific form of racism marked an important political and symbolic turning point. It created a vocabulary for naming contemporary continuities of exclusion, and positioned remembrance of the Porajmos as a component of fighting structural anti-Roma racism today. Still, commemoration alone is not enough. Recognition must translate into rights, education, and the transformation of public discourse.

Moving forward means deepening and broadening this memory work. It means embedding the Porajmos into national and transnational education systems, supporting Romani-led remembrance projects, and protecting vulnerable memorial sites from erasure (in a physical, bureaucratic, and ideological sense). It also requires listening to younger generations of Roma and Sinti activists, scholars, and artists who are reshaping the politics of memory on their own terms.

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