

International Symposium

Allianz Forum Pariser Platz 6, Berlin

November 10th & 11th 2011

GYPSY?

WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
IMAGE AND SELF-IMAGE OF
EUROPE'S LARGEST MINORITY

An international symposium organised by the Allianz Kulturstiftung and the German Federal Agency for Civic Education in cooperation with Literarisches Colloquium Berlin and the project office "Reconsidering Roma."

How does Europe deal with its largest minority? Around 12 million Sinti and Roma of different nationalities live in Europe today. The majority of society tends to be very one-sided in its perception of this minority, and generally excludes it simply as "the other".

While the European Commission has made cultural diversity part of its programme by declaring it "one of the most important drivers" for "creativity, innovation and prosperity", the exclusion of the Roma is on the rise in many member states. The Central Council of German Roma and Sinti states that "racism in Europe has become increasingly acceptable, even in the middle of society." In many countries, laws have been passed to the detriment of the "travelling people" that flagrantly violate the European Convention on Human Rights. The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights recently reported that antiziganistic ("anti-Gypsy") stereotypes are now prevalent in a number of European states.

On January 27th, 2011 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day – a representative for Europe's Roma and Sinti spoke in front of the German parliament, the Bundestag for the very first time. In his speech, Zoni Weisz impressively showed how little imprint the destinies of the more than half a million Roma and Sinti killed during the Nazi era have left in Germany's collective memory. The condition of the still uncompleted memorial for the murdered Roma and Sinti is a symbolic reminder of this issue.

In spite of – or perhaps because of – its historic predisposition, antiziganism is a reality also in Germany and has been encouraged by a number of reports in the media. These strengthen stereotypes – and this not just within the context of the deportation of refugees from Yugoslavia's civil wars to its successor states. Although the diversity of lifestyles amongst Roma and Sinti is just as diverse as in other social groups, the image that is communicated through the press remains homogeneous and stereotypical.

What do Roma and Sinti think about their role within European societies? What does their art and literature say about them – about their culture and their identity? A young generation of Roma and Sinti academics, artists, and activists is now conducting a self-confident discourse on emancipation, identity, and difference, which led – among other things – to the organisation of the first Roma pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale. The aim of this symposium is to provide a new platform for this debate, because respect and dialogue are basic elements of democracy. Europe's democratic validity will not least be measured by the policies it pursues in relation to its minorities.



Daniel Baker, "Mirrored Books", GB 2008 – 10, panel from a series of 50. Enamel and silver leafing on Perspex, variable dimensions

Can cultural diversity and the transnational history of the Sinti and Roma act as a symbol for a future Europe without borders? To strengthen the rights of the Roma and highlight their contribution to European culture, the Allianz Kulturstiftung and the German Federal Agency for Civic Education/bpb have organised this international symposium in cooperation with Literarisches Colloquium Berlin and the project office "Reconsidering Roma".

Registration required:

For Nov. 10th 2011:

allianz1011@event-consult-berlin.de
Telephone: +49.(0).303218081

For Nov. 11th 2011:

allianz1111@event-consult-berlin.de
Telephone: +49.(0).303218081

Press contact:

Heike Gatzmaga, PR Netzwerk
presse@pr-netzwerk.net
Mobile: +49.(0).172.4052832

www.allianz-kulturstiftung.de/en/projects/education/debate_on_europe_2011/lecture_3/index.html
www.bpb.de/roma-symposium
www.facebook.com/romasymposium



Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung
Christoph Müller-Hofstede
mueller-hofstede@bpb.de
www.bpb.de

In cooperation with

**PROJEKTBUERO
RECONSIDERING
ROMA**

Projektbüro Reconsidering Roma
Lith Bahlmann / Matthias Reichelt
info@reconsidering-roma.de
www.reconsidering-roma.de

Media partners



**Allianz
Kulturstiftung**

Allianz Kulturstiftung
Michael M. Thoss
michael.thoss@allianz.com
www.allianz-kulturstiftung.de



Literarisches Colloquium Berlin
Christina Pichler / Timon Perabo
pichler@lcb.de
www.lcb.de

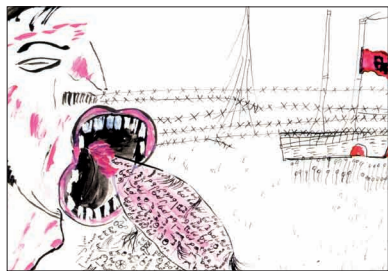
Z

Discussion Panel –part of the DEBATE ON EUROPE series **How Europe Is Dealing With Its Largest Minority**

Ever since the end of the Middle Ages, the Roma living in Europe have been both romanticised and persecuted. But most commonly-held beliefs about this “travelling people” are false. What does it mean to be a ‘Gypsy’ in Europe in the year 2011? How do the mechanisms of folklorisation and exclusion work today? What happens to the Roma children and young people that Germany deports to their supposedly new “home countries”? How can the EU protect its largest minority in light of increasing racism in many of its member states?

PANEL 1 **European and National Strategies: Balance, Perspectives, and Demands**

In April 2011, the European Commission approved the European Action Plan for improving the situation of the Roma and instructed its member states to develop national strategies for the social inclusion of the Roma by the year 2020. How efficient are those concepts and measures? Do they get to the roots of the existing problems? In what ways are Roma associations included at both European and national levels? What could and should European society additionally do to counter-balance antiziganistic movements and resentment?



CEIJA STOJKA, from the large series “Sogar der Tod hat Angst vor Auschwitz” [EVEN DEATH IS AFRAID OF AUSCHWITZ] 1997–2004
Indian Ink and watercolors on paper
30 x 40 cm

Thu Nov. 10th

6:00 p.m. **Welcome and Opening Statements**

Wolfgang Ischinger Global Head of Government Relations and Public Policy, Allianz SE

Thomas Krüger President of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education / bpb

Reading Herta Müller Winner of the 2009 Nobel Prize for Literature

Discussion Panel – part of the DEBATE ON EUROPE series **How Europe Is Dealing With Its Largest Minority**

Panelists

Zoltán Balog Hungarian State Minister for Social Inclusion

Klaus-Michael Bogdal Professor of Literature at Bielefeld University and author of “Europa erfindet die Zigeuner”

Morten Kjaerum Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Vienna

Herta Müller Author (Nobel Prize for Literature 2009)

Silvio Peritore Head of the Department of Documentation at the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma

Moderation Marion von Haaren

Deputy Director of the ARD-Studio Brussels

8:00 p.m. **End of Discussion Panel**

Fri Nov. 11th

10:00 a.m. **Welcome**

Michael M. Thoss Managing Director of the Allianz Kulturstiftung

Christoph Müller-Hofstede German Federal Agency for Civic Education / bpb

10:15 a.m. **Impulse**

Viviane Reding (via video link)

Vice President of the EU Commission and EU Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship

Romani Rose

Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

Petra Rosenberg

Chairwoman of the Berlin-Brandenburg Association of Sinti and Roma

10:40 a.m. **PANEL 1 European and National Strategies: Balance, Perspectives, and Demands**

Panelists

Zoltán Balog Hungarian State Minister for Social Inclusion

Emran Elmazi Chairman of the Intercultural Youth Organisation of Roma and non-Roma Terno Drom e.V.

Valeriu Nicolae Director of the Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities, Bucharest

Daniel Strauß Chairman of the Baden-Württemberg Association of the German Sinti and Roma

Gert Weisskirchen Member of German Bundestag 1976-2009, Board Member of the Central European Future Forum

Moderation Claudia Nothelle

Director at German broadcasting corporation rbb

12:00 a.m. **Book Presentation** Klaus-Michael Bogdals introduces his new book “Europa erfindet die Zigeuner” (Europe’s invention of the gypsies)

Introduction Thomas Krüger President of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education / bpb

Matinee of the Suhrkamp Publishing House plus reception

2:00 p.m. **PANEL 2 Roma Art: A Means of Emancipation or a path to a Folklore Ghetto?**

Panelists

Daniel Baker Artist / Curator, GB

Maria Hlavajová Curator, NL

Mathias Jud Artist, CH

Tímea Junghaus Curator, HU

Delaine Le Bas Artist, GB

Christoph Wachter Artist, CH

Moderation Matthias Reichelt Journalist / Curator, Berlin

4:00 p.m. **PANEL 3 Roma Literature: The Challenge of Writing in Constant Exile**

Panelists

Carmen Francesca Banciu Author, Berlin

Julia Blandfort Regensburg University (Literary Studies)

Cécile Kováčsházy Limoges University (Literary Studies)

Kiba Lumberg Artist / Author, Helsinki

Slaviša Marković Director / Head of the Roma Aether Klub Theatre, Berlin

Moderation Timon Perabo Manager / Publicist, Berlin

6:00 p.m. **Participants depart to vernissage of the exhibition “Reconsidering Roma – Aspects of Roma and Sinti Life in Contemporary Art”**

at the Kunstquartier Bethanien: Center for Contemporary Arts, Studio 1, Mariannenplatz 2, 10997 Berlin / www.reconsidering-roma.de

7:00 p.m. **Opening of the exhibition**

10:30 p.m. **DJing Susie Reinhardt / Hamburg**



Delaine Le Bas, „Witch Hunt“, 2009 – 2011, Installation, Detail

PANEL 2 **Roma Art: A Means of Emancipation or a path to a Folklore Ghetto?**

The Roma pavilions at the 52nd and 54th Biennale art festivals in Venice discontinued the questionable convention of presenting things within national contexts. They opened a door and acted as a new avant-garde. But a critical question that must be asked is whether reducing the issue to an ethnic context will not eventually foster a new ghettoisation – this time in the world of art. Having Roma artists at the Biennale: chances and limits of emancipation through art. This is the question curators and artists from Roma and non-Roma backgrounds will discuss in this panel.

PANEL 3 **Roma Literature: The Challenge of Writing in Constant Exile**

Why is the long tradition of literature among the Roma so unfamiliar to those outside the minority itself? This panel takes a closer look at the rich body of work written by members of the minority. Some Roma authors write in Romanes – a language that is virtually unknown to the majority society. How does this affect the production and reception of Roma literature? Is there enough common ground to be able to hold a general discussion about Roma literature in Europe? Which identities are young Roma authors developing today? And what motivations for new, more realistic perspectives of the Roma can be drawn from them?

Participants must register to take part in the symposium.

During the symposium, artistic works by Nihad Nino Pušija, Christoph Wachter and Mathias Jud will be exhibited in the Allianz Forum.

Conference language is German. Some panelists will communicate in English.