

TRANSNATIONAL PATTERNS OF ROMA GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION IN THE EU

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Abstract

The research seeks to analyse the EU practices of the Roma genocide commemoration with special focus on its role in the establishment of the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. It asks how and why the EU promotes the development of Roma genocide discourse on the transnational level. To better understand the nature of and motivation behind the EU's involvement in creation of the Roma genocide narrative, the concept of memory entrepreneurs is incorporated into this research. The EU initiates certain memorial activities and provides a specific justification for the need to commemorate the Roma genocide. The analysis of the documents and official statements of the main EU institutions participating in the commemorative practices related to the Roma genocide has revealed that the EU performs symbolic work connected to a broader political agenda of minority integration. In the context of memory entrepreneurship, memory functions as a tool for the EU to solve its Roma minority-related problems. Therefore, by promoting the commemoration of the Roma genocide on the transnational level, the European Union employs it to promote the Roma integration into the European societies.

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I dedicate this thesis to my grandma, whose wisdom and unyielding curiosity have influenced me infinitely.

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Introduction

The Roma¹ in Europe currently are in the spotlight of a variety of transnational actors, including the European Union, OSCE, the World Bank, and others, who all view the Roma as a target group in their inclusion, integration, development, and empowerment programmes, as well as other initiatives.² This development, or a “will to turn the tide for the Roma in Europe,”³ is relatively new, and in the past the European Roma were exposed to either oppression and persecution, or indifference. The Roma experiences of the Second World War, in this thesis referred to as the Roma genocide⁴, have also recently been (re)discovered both by various supra-state actors and scholars. Although the literature covers the historical aspect of the Roma genocide, discusses this event with regards to the Roma identity building and analyses practices of commemoration in case studies, there has not been much progress in studies of the transnational memory of the Roma genocide.

Transnational memory, which is currently at its peak in memory studies, defines the scope of this research because it seeks to employ the logic of transnational processes of memory making to analyse the European practices of Roma genocide commemoration. The European Union (hereinafter to be referred to as the EU) here is perceived as one of the most prominent actors engaged in the promotion of Roma genocide remembrance, and as a memory entrepreneur. Therefore, this thesis aims to research how the memory of Roma genocide is

¹ In this thesis, the term Roma is being used according to the recommendations of the Council of Europe, stating that “[t]he term “Roma” used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.” The term “Romani” is used in some cases to relate to or denote sth.

Council of Europe, "Descriptive Glossary of Terms Relating to Roma Issues." May 12, 2012, 4. Accessed May 31, 2018.
<http://a.cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/documents/Glossary%20Roma%20EN%20version%2018%20May%202012.pdf>.

² Huub van Baar, *The European Roma: Minority Representation, Memory, and the Limits of Transnational Governmentality* (Amsterdam: Universiteit Van Amsterdam, 2011), PDF,2.

³ Ibid, 1.

⁴ In this thesis, the term genocide refers to an act “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” as it has been defined in the 1951 Genocide Convention. The term Roma genocide, thereafter, refers to the persecution and mass killings of the Roma in Europe committed by or under the supervision of the Nazi regime and its collaborators during the Second World War. In this thesis definitions victims of Roma genocide and Roma Holocaust victims are interchangeable, as the later refers to the Roma persecution that happened during the Holocaust.

United Nations, "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, No. 1021," United Nations Treaty Series, Vol. 78, January 12, 1951, 280. Accessed November 31, 2017.
<https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280027fac&clang=en>.

being promoted by the EU, and asks what memorial activities does the EU initiate, and how does it justify the necessity to commemorate it?

An actor-centered approach applied in this research will, therefore, give an opportunity to identify the details of a narrative of the Roma genocide promoted by the EU, the tools of memory creation it uses, the ways in which it is involved in discussions on and is engaged in the broader debates about this issue. To collect the data necessary for the implementation of this study, contemporary mnemonic practices of the EU related to the Roma genocide will be identified and classified by analysing publicly available information on this topic, such as the news articles, content of websites, scholarly articles, official documents, press releases, briefs and reports related to the Roma genocide commemoration.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I provide a comprehensive review of existing literature that explores the field of memory studies with special focus on the Holocaust remembrance and the debate on its uniqueness. Later on, I identify the lack of studies of the Roma genocide memory. In the section of theory, I introduce transnationalized framework of research and an actor-centered approach which is applied in this thesis to research memory entrepreneurs. The second chapter offers an exhaustive record of the historical fact of the Roma genocide during the Second World War, its aftermath and the obscurity that still surrounds it today.

In the third chapter, I delve deeper into the Roma-related policies of the EU, providing a detailed analysis of the European politics of Roma genocide remembrance. To better understand the specificities of EU's commemorative practices related to the Roma victims of the Holocaust, I offer a case study of the establishment of the 2nd of August, the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. I explore the EU's role in this process and its aftermath by analysing the activities of the EU from the perspective of memory entrepreneurs. The last section of this chapter focuses on the official policies, coordination tools, documents and funding instruments of the EU pointed to the promotion of the recognition and commemoration of the Roma genocide. Finally, I present the EU's rationale behind the rhetoric mechanisms that led to the consolidation of the EU memory policy direction to the (re)discovery and promotion of the Roma genocide memory.

Chapter 1. The Roma Genocide Memory: From Forgotten Holocaust to Transnational Arena

1.1 Transnational Memory and the Universal Evil

Memory politics has recently become an important concept in the research field of social sciences. However, the process of commemoration of suffering, especially experienced by minorities or marginalized social groups, remains a relevant but still under-researched topic.⁵ In the last decade, there was a shift in approaches to contemporary studies of memory: traditional perspective, engaging with studies generally employing a so called state-centric approach on memory, that perceives, interprets and analyses memory as a crucial element in state-controlled domestic and foreign politics, has been replaced by the supra-state approach of memory, which is being used in academic works that are not limited to the “constraints of state-centric world.”⁶ This change has expanded the scope of memory studies to the debates of transnational memory that exceeds the limits of national-level-focused research, previously dominated by methodological nationalism. In the dynamic and ever-changing social world, such factors as the persistent need to deal with the atrocities of the Second World War on one side, and globalisation, transnational capitalism, the processes of regional integration and mass migration⁷ on the other, led to the emergence of new theoretical approaches and tools to expand the field of memory studies to transnational level. For example, Ch. De Cesari and A. Rigney operationalize the transnational turn in memory studies by concluding that the term *transnational* helps to research the “multi-layered, multi-sited, and multi-directional dynamic” of memory, which includes the shift of focus to the specific structures of “globalized memories” in institutional as well as cultural levels of research.⁸ The process of transnational memory formation is, therefore, being understood as a result of the “flows of globalized memories”⁹ that have the ability to overcome the so called “container thinking”¹⁰ which limits the research of memory to the spatially restricted levels of analysis. This manifold nature of transnational memory manifests itself through the current debates on shared European memory.

⁵ Dovile Budryte, "Traumatic Memory and Its Production in Political Life: A Survey of Approaches and a Case Study" (ISA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 2013), 2.

⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁷ Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney, *Transnational Memory Circulation, Articulation, Scales* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 2.

⁸ Ibid, 4.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 5.

One of the most prominent ideas on the common European memory focuses on Europe's traumatic events as a unifying experience which can be potentially transformed into shared transnational memory. The Holocaust is a well-known example of instrumentalization of historical trauma in order to create a common background with which Europeans may identify. As has been argued by D. Levy and N. Sznajder, the abstractness of Holocaust memory moves it beyond the state borders, thus granting it cosmopolitan qualities based on which a "common European cultural memory"¹¹ can be created. In this way, starting with the Holocaust as a turning point in the emergence of a universal memory, memorial information develops in a diffuse and regional, rather than concentrated and localised manner.

However, the significance and perception of the Holocaust has not always been the same in Western societies, as the Nazi persecution of Jews remained a localized trauma of the Second World War atrocities in the public consciousness until the late twentieth century.¹² Only in 1995, the European Parliament called for a European Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust to be established in all the Member States. In this resolution, the European Parliament emphasizes "the dangers of totalitarian and racist ideologies" and attempts to tackle anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia which still exist in the modern world.¹³ In 2000, the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was adopted following the International Forum convened in Stockholm, which acknowledged the Holocaust as an event that "fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization," that has by its nature universal meaning and thus should be recognized, commemorated, and taught about for the sake of a better future "amidst the soil of a bitter past."¹⁴ In 2005, during the remembrance event marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a United Nations resolution proposed the 27th of January as the European Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust.¹⁵

In his article "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals," Jeffrey Alexander provides a sound explanation of how the Holocaust became "the dominant symbolic

¹¹ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2002):102, accessed February 29, 2017. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431002005001002>.

¹² Jeffrey C. Alexander, "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The 'Holocaust' from War Crime to Trauma Drama," *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5, issue 1, (2002):5, accessed February 29, 2017.

¹³ European Parliament, Resolution on a day to commemorate the Holocaust, Official Journal C 166 P. 0132, Section C, July 3, 1995, Brussels. Accessed March 12, 2018. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:51995IP0866&from=EN>.

¹⁴ "Stockholm Declaration: A commitment shared by 31 member countries," Stockholm Declaration, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Accessed March 12, 2018. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/stockholm-declaration>.

¹⁵ European Parliament, "The European Union and Holocaust," European Parliamentary Research Service, Briefing, 2018, 1.

representation of evil”¹⁶ and was established as a central event around which the European memory of World War II atrocities revolve. Alexander argues that this specific episode of human history was in the last fifty years culturally transformed into a universal symbol of evil which both testifies about the limits of evil and sets the goal to prevent such crimes in the future.¹⁷ As much as the particular and localized injustice which occurred during the war can be neutralized through the physical conclusion of the crimes and reconciliation,¹⁸ coming to terms with Nazi crimes which have been universalized as an abstract symbol of evil was and still is a complicated process that inevitably affects “the construction of the new world.”¹⁹ In the new narrative of Holocaust, the Jewish tragedy was personalised to become everyone’s trauma, for example, the publishing of the diary of Anne Frank made people to sympathize with Holocaust victims more personally.²⁰ Moreover, the public trials of war criminals made it possible for ordinary people to identify with perpetrators,²¹ as in the court proceedings the defendants appeared to be regular people who by complying with the Nazi regime’s orders contributed to the Holocaust. The shift from the image of perpetrators as inhumane murderers to the realization of the commonness of these people generalized an idea that anyone can become a perpetrator if a crime of such scale happens again. Hanna Arendt proposed an influential interpretation of this shift in her book on the trial of one of the major Holocaust perpetrators A. Eichmann, in which she introduces the concept of the “banality of evil” that can manifest itself in a variety of contexts, anytime, and under different circumstances.²²

1.2 On the Uniqueness of Holocaust. Where do the Roma step in?

However, an increasing number of scholars observe that the field of European memory is too complex to be defined exceptionally by the Holocaust memory. For example, C. Leggewie in his article “A Tour of the Battleground: The Seven Circles of Pan-European Memory,” which aims to visualise the constituents of the supranational and transnational memory of Europe puts dates and sites of events from which shared memory of Europe can

¹⁶ Alexander, “On the Social Construction of Moral Universals,” 5.

¹⁷ Ibid, 6.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, 20.

²⁰ Ibid, 36.

²¹ Ibid, 37.

²² Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a report on the banality of evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

derive into seven “concentric circles”²³ of European memory. Although he starts the list by introducing the Holocaust as a “negative founding myth for Europe”²⁴ that has affected the whole continent and, therefore, can potentially be a uniting material for the production of shared European memories, he refers to other narratives, for example, the memories of Soviet crimes,²⁵ thus contributing to the newly emerging debate on the multi-dimensional remembrance of the Second World War. Some scholars argue that the Eastern European perspectives on the events in Europe which took place in the second half of the 20th century can possibly challenge the existent *status quo* of Holocaust-centered and solely Western European memory. For example, J. Mark introduces complicated relationship between the weight of Communist crimes and the pressure from the West for the Central Eastern European countries to embrace the memory politics condemning Nazism as a precondition for the EU accession and further integration.²⁶ M. Mälksoo presents the narrative on the former Communist states’ experience during and after the Second World War that has been promoted by Poland and the Baltic states, which she interprets as an attempt to extend the collective European memory by adding new perspectives to the customary Western European story of the Holocaust.²⁷ T. Zhurzhenko adds a geopolitical perspective to this debate in the article in which she evaluates the contribution of the Eastern European memory that is being advocated by the countries which, when in confrontations with Russia, use the argument that both the crimes of Communism and Nazism were committed in equally evil totalitarian manner.²⁸

The ongoing discussion about the dynamics between the Holocaust and Communist crimes is a new perspective that can be considered as a revision of the dominant Holocaust narrative in the context of European memory and brings to the spotlight the long-lasting debate on Holocaust uniqueness. The debate on the relationship between the Holocaust and other genocides derives from the attempt to historicize the Holocaust. This process led to the major shift of perception of the Holocaust from the solely Jewish tragedy to a universalized “meta-

²³Claus Leggewie, "A Tour of the Battleground: The Seven Circles of Pan-European Memory," *Social Research, Collective Memory and Collective Identity*, Spring, 75, no. 1 (2011): 219. Accessed March 5, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40972058>.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 220-223.

²⁶ James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution. Making Sense of the Communist past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 1-27.

²⁷ Maria Mälksoo, "The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 4 (2009), accessed February 23, 2018, doi:10.1177/1354066109345049.

²⁸ Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "The Geopolitics of Memory," *Eurozine*, May 10, 2017, 2, accessed February 2, 2018, <https://www.eurozine.com/the-geopolitics-of-memory/>.

event”²⁹ finding its place in the modern world. Scholars advocating the idea of Holocaust uniqueness emphasize the Jewish character of Holocaust both when discussing the dynamics of Second World war’s atrocities and other genocides that happened before and after this event. Another group of scholars opposes to the idea of uniqueness and “insist[s] that the Holocaust was no different from other historical acts of genocide,”³⁰ calling for broadening the concept of Holocaust to the death of all the people (regardless of their affiliation with ethnic, racial, social etc groups) killed by the Nazis.³¹

This scholarly discussion leads to the long-lasting yet still unresolved controversy on the status of the Roma genocide in the context of Holocaust. When positioning the Roma experiences in the context of the Holocaust, Janos Barsony disputes the position of so called “exclusivists”, who argue that the notion of Holocaust and the Second World war genocide should be attributed exclusively to the Jews.³² As opposed to exclusivist arguments of allegedly exaggerated numbers of Roma Holocaust victims or social rather race-based Nazi intentions of Roma extermination, Barsony argues that both the Jews and the Roma were subjected to a genocide which was planned and implemented “via modern industrial methods”³³ by the Nazis.³⁴ This thesis perceives shares views with such Roma and Holocaust scholars as J. Barsony, I. Hancock,³⁵ G. Margalit,³⁶ who see the persecution experienced by the Roma during the Second World War as an exceptional traumatic event of a similar nature to the Jewish Holocaust.

Although the Holocaust has been redefined as a major turning point in the development of the Western World and a solid basis for the emergence of European memory, the Roma genocide remained marginalized in this new transnational narrative of reconciliation and commemoration. In other words, the European audience which embraced the “symbolically extended”³⁷ narrative of Jewish suffering as a collective trauma did not identify with the Roma in the same way. For example, it was difficult for the public to perceive the Roma as victims,

²⁹ Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "The Politics of Uniqueness: Reflections on the Recent Polemical Turn in Holocaust and Genocide Scholarship," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 1999):32, accessed May 01, 2018, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/13.1.2832>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Janos Barsony and Agnes Daroczi, *Pharrajimos: The Fate of the Roma During the Holocaust*, trans. Gabor Komaromy (New York: Idebate Press, 2008), 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Ian F. Hancock, *We Are the Romani People* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2017).

³⁶ Margalit, *Germany and Its Gypsies: A Post-Auschwitz Ordeal* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

³⁷ Alexander, “On the Social Construction of Moral Universals,” 8.

as the Roma were persecuted and convicted as criminals by the Nazi regime because of their so-called “antisocial element”³⁸ – a lack of steady job and income. Moreover, in the Nuremberg Trials no perpetrator was tried for murdering the Roma, neither the Roma witnesses were included in the court proceedings.³⁹ Two main issues complicated criminal investigation procedures against the perpetrators: the nature of the crime (and the question of accountability). First, there was a wide-spread doubt whether the measures against the Roma taken by the Nazis were racially motivated, second, crimes against the Roma were attributed to upper-rank Nazi officers,⁴⁰ thus promoting a narrative on Roma genocide as a less massive trauma. Therefore, while the Holocaust occupies the main role in the Western consciousness, the Roma genocide remains in the margins of the European memory.

However, despite the long-lasting marginalisation, the topic of the commemoration of the Roma genocide is gradually becoming popular among the scholars, as the emergence of Roma rights narrative in academic research has contributed to rediscovery of historical fate and the current situation of the European Roma. There is a growing number of studies exploring spatial expressions of Roma genocide commemoration, which follow the theoretical approach of sites of memory conceptualized by P. Nora,⁴¹ both in local and international contexts. For example, scholars analyse representations of Roma genocide in Eastern European memorial museums,⁴² Western memorial sites⁴³ and the dynamics between dominant Western discourse of Holocaust commemoration and emerging new narrative of Roma genocide remembrance which.⁴⁴ Moreover, this topic has been discovered by those researchers who analyse the representations of the Roma genocide in art⁴⁵ and knowledge production.⁴⁶

³⁸ Margalit, Germany and its Gypsies, 111.

³⁹ European Parliament, Report on Fundamental Rights Aspects in Roma Integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Rapporteur: Soraya Post, 11.10.2017. A8-0294/2017, 23.

⁴⁰ Margalit, Germany and its Gypsies, 124-136.

⁴¹ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire." *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24. doi:10.2307/2928520.

⁴² Ljiljana Radonic, "People of Freedom and Unlimited Movement": Representations of Roma in Post-Communist Memorial Museums." *Social Inclusion* 3, no. 5 (2015): 64-77. doi:10.17645/si.v3i5.229.

⁴³ Nadine Blumer, *From Victim Hierarchies to Memorial Networks: Berlins Holocaust Memorial to Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism*. University of Toronto, 2011.

⁴⁴ Michelle Kelso and Daina S. Eglitis. "Holocaust Commemoration in Romania: Roma and the Contested Politics of Memory and Memorialization." *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 4 (2014): 487-511. doi:10.1080/14623528.2014.975949.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Ioana Szeman, "Collecting Tears: Remembering the Romani Holocaust," *A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 2010th ser., 15, no. 2, accessed March 14, 2018, doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2010.490431.

⁴⁶ Anna Lujza Szasz. "Memory Emancipated Exploring the Memory of the Nazi Genocide of Roma in Hungary." PhD diss., EÖTVÖS LÓRÁND UNIVERSITY, 2015.

Some researchers focus on the mechanism of remembrance within the Roma communities. For example, M. Stewart analyses the structure of Holocaust remembrance among European Roma. He draws on the assumption of collective forgetting within the Roma community and the structure of reminders operating both in the community and the rest of society, arguing that, although Roma communities do not have established longstanding traditions of commemoration of their Holocaust victims, they do remember it in engage with these memories on a social level.⁴⁷ Some studies elaborate on the function of Holocaust memory among the Roma, and analyse the ways in which this memory is being operationalised, while other academic works on the Roma genocide analyse the memory of this event in relationship with the creation of Romani ethnic identity, their traumatic experiences acting as a background for collective identity building.⁴⁸ S. Kapralski analyses the relationship between the history, Holocaust discourse, memory and Romani identity. By examining the emergence of the Roma in the discourse of Holocaust, he author tries to grasp multiple levels of the genesis of contemporary Romani identity and introduces a new notion of transnational identity constructed on the common experience of massive Roma suffering during the Second World War, thus seeking to evaluate the possibility of developing of a “sense of solidarity and of belonging to one ethnic-national group.”⁴⁹ In his other publication, Kapralski questions whether the Holocaust is an exceptional factor that can be utilized in the process of Romani mobilization.⁵⁰ Kapralski introduces the idea of “polycentric network of remembrance”⁵¹ of Roma genocide, in which different actors can coexist and operate while articulating different interpretations of the Roma genocide and of the need to commemorate it.

Notwithstanding the variety of studies on the commemoration of the Roma genocide, a narrower topic of transnational memory of this event has not been completely explored. Regarding the transnational aspect of Roma genocide commemoration, scholars take into consideration Roma lobbying and activist organisations. For example, a promising research on the transnational movement of the Roma genocide memory has been done by Talitha Hunnik,

⁴⁷ Michael Stewart, "Remembering Without Commemoration: The Mnemonics And Politics Of Holocaust Memories Among European Roma." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10, no. 3 (September 2004): 561-82. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9655.2004.00202.x.

⁴⁸ Slawomir Kapralski, "Identity Building and the Holocaust: Roma Political Nationalism." *Nationalities Papers* 25, no. 2 (1997): 269-83. doi:10.1080/00905999708408503.

⁴⁹ Slawomir Kapralski, "The Holocaust in the Memory of the Roma. From Trauma to Imagined Community?." 2007, 15. Accessed 2 March, 2018.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273257544_The_Holocaust_in_the_Memory_of_the_Roma_From_Trauma_to_Imagined_Community

⁵⁰ Slawomir Kapralski, "Ain't nothing special," in *Memory And Change In Europe: Eastern Perspectives*, edited by Edited by Małgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak, 77-96. Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford, 2018.

⁵¹ Kapralski, "Ain't nothing special," 83.

in which she uncovers the memory work done by various actors in France and Germany in the processes of marginalisation and rediscovery of the Roma genocide, emphasising the role of media and Roma activists and lobbyist behind the public debates on the Roma genocide.⁵² H. van Baar adds institutional perspective to this approach, and observes the emergence of a new tendency which he describes as “governmentalization of Holocaust remembrance.”⁵³ When describing the emerging tendency to mobilize certain memories within the EU, he links the cultural practices of the EU with its “integrative goals.”⁵⁴ An important point made by van Baar is a reference to the possible employment of the Roma genocide memory in the EU minority policy. Essentially, the appearance of this topic on the European level can potentially reflect the strategies of the EU minority governance. M. Kelso and D. S. Eglitis offer an additional perspective on the increased attention to the Roma genocide by researching the emerging practice to commemorate the Roma genocide in Romania: according to them, the pressure on the Romanian government to start a dialogue about Roma victims of Holocaust has been applied by two main groups of stakeholders: Roma activists and transnational actors.⁵⁵ The authors acknowledge that “transnational actors have, indeed, been powerfully influential across the post-communist space in asserting the need to mark Holocaust history and atrocity,”⁵⁶ and, most importantly, highlight the significance of transnational impulses in the process of Holocaust commemoration both in Romania and in the broader European context. Kelso and Eglitis argue that “the insistence on fully integrating Holocaust remembrance into institutional memories of post-communist states and societies was not just symbolic,” but motivated by the perspectives of membership “in key economic, political and military organisations like the EU and NATO.”⁵⁷ The activities of transnational actors promoting the commemoration of the Roma genocide have been noticed in in my previous research seeking identify and interview the leading mnemonic actors in Lithuania, interested in the Roma genocide remembrance.⁵⁸ The study examined to what extent public and private actors have been instrumental in the construction of creating memorialization practices associated with Roma genocide in

⁵²Talitha Hunnik, *Wandering Memories. Marginalizing And Remembering The Porrajmos*, Master's thesis, Utrecht University (Utrecht, 2015), 14-15.

⁵³Huub Van Baar, "Cultural Policy and the Governmentalization of Holocaust Remembrance in Europe: Romani Memory between Denial and Recognition," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 4, doi:10.1080/10286631003695539.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Kelso and Eglitis, "Holocaust Commemoration in Romania," 496-498.

⁵⁶Ibid, 497.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Aurėja Jutelytė, *Lietuvos romų genocido atmintis kaip atminties kūrėjų veikimo laukas (Memory of the Genocide of Lithuanian Roma as a Field of Mnemonic Actors)*, Bachelor's thesis, Vilnius University (Vilnius, 2016.)

Lithuanian, concluding that memory in this case entrepreneurs are local, but their ties and motives are transnational. Most of memory entrepreneurs have indicated that their activities are directly or indirectly prompted by such transnational actors as the European Union.⁵⁹

Both Kelso and Eglitis and van Baar touch upon the issue of transnational commemoration of the Roma genocide, but their studies focus on specific country cases. In the context of transnational governmentality linking the commemoration with instrumental uses of memory on the EU level, van Baar examines the connection between the EU cultural policy and Roma genocide memory (particularly in the Czech Republic⁶⁰). To research transnational governmentality and the EU cultural policy agenda, van Baar applies Foucauldian approach to study governmentality, cultural policies, and Roma inclusion.⁶¹ Although this research thesis aims to research different aspects of the EU mnemonic activities (especially the calendar) and uses an actor-centered instrumentalist approach, van Baar's insights are valuable for this thesis, as they provide it with a broader picture of EU cultural memory politics and a direction of what to look for when analysing the institutionalisation process of Roma genocide memory on the EU level with special focus on the commemoration dates.

Theoretical considerations made by previously mentioned authors on the importance of transnational aspect in the actualisation of the Roma genocide on transnational level reveal both the space for significance of a further research on the transnational character of Roma genocide memorialisation. Moreover, the above introduced empirical case study of Lithuania which has proven the importance of supra-state actors (especially the EU) to the rise of mnemonic activities related to this issue encourages to shift the focus of my research up to the EU level memory politics.

Therefore, in this thesis the transnational commemoration of the Roma genocide will be researched by focusing on the mnemonic activities of the European Union, which is here perceived as an actor capable of creating a certain interpretation of the Roma fate during the Second World War as well as communicating it to the national/local level (Member States). In this thesis an actor-centered approach will be applied to research the EU as an actor promoting the commemoration of the Roma genocide on the transnational level. Therefore, this thesis aims to explain how the EU promotes the commemoration of the Roma genocide and why does it do it. In other words, it is focused on the EU activities and justification of the need to remember the suffering experienced by Roma during the Holocaust. To better understand the

⁵⁹ Jutelytė, *Lietuvos romų genocido atmintis*, 46-47.

⁶⁰ Van Baar, "Cultural Policy and the Governmentalization of Holocaust Remembrance," 2-4.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 7.

nature of and motivation behind EU's activities, the concept of *memory entrepreneurs* is incorporated into this research.

1.3. Memory Entrepreneurship and Memory Entrepreneurs

In her book "State Repression and the Labors of Memory," Elizabeth Jelin introduces the concept of "moral entrepreneurs" which describes certain actors who put their effort and energy to draw society's attention to specific issues and create of new generalized models of acceptable and deviant behaviour.⁶² Jelin modifies this concept by asking, how to employ the memory to reach specific goals, and calls actors participating in the memory making activities (or drawing public attention to specific issues related to memory) memory entrepreneurs.⁶³ Jelin's theoretical considerations are based on Halbwachs' assumption that memory is constantly constructed, and in many cases emerge as a product of conscious intention to remember events in a specific way. Therefore, the author presumes that for certain narrative or story about the past to appear, there must be someone spending their time and energy to highlight certain issues in society and emphasize and/or construct the need to address these issues.⁶⁴ To draw public attention to the issues that face them, for example, "political violence and state terrorism,"⁶⁵ the actors described as memory entrepreneurs put effort to make their activities visible, and to attract attention to the specific narrative or certain interpretation of the past events promoted by them (usually they seek to operate in a way that would allow them to achieve visibility on the social level and recognition on the political level).⁶⁶ Depending on the situation in which they find themselves, mnemonic entrepreneurs have different intentions and apply different strategies to promote their interests. Jelin emphasizes the role of such actors as human rights NGOs, political right parties and movements, other political groups with different ideologies, who manage to mobilize the society and attract public attention to history and recent events.⁶⁷ Therefore, to be able to grasp the nature and goals of memory entrepreneurs, Jelin offers to ask "[w]ho they are? What do they seek? What motivates them?"⁶⁸

Following Jelin's reasoning, memories are dynamic enough to be converted into demands or guidelines for specific actions in order to achieve certain goals. This process

⁶²Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2003), 33.

⁶³ Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, 33.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 34.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 34

gradually incorporates personal memories into broader narratives which are ideologically charged, thus linking personal memory to politicized and institutionalized memory structures.⁶⁹ Therefore, it is important to research how the memory entrepreneurs talk about certain issues, and how they justify the necessity to discuss them. As the process of remembering becomes connected to the public sphere, Jelin emphasises the importance of commemoration events, calendar with memorial days, other activities through which memory entrepreneurs attempt to institutionalize their narratives about the past.⁷⁰

In this research, Jelin's theoretical model is combined with the framework of transnational memory, thus creating an opportunity to explore a still not sufficiently researched topic of the transnational production of the Roma genocide memory, at the same time shifting the focus of study from local to transnational level. To clarify the logic behind the choice of this research to focus on transnational level, it is important to discuss the dynamics of memory production in cases when memories are disseminated from transnational to national/local levels and vice versa. Some theories on transnational circulation of memory have earlier on suggested that there is a strong link between local-level actors, their interpretation of international norms and the practices of memory making in which these actors engage themselves. For example, in E. Langenbacher's chapter on collective memory in international relations, the author introduces the dynamics between international affairs and collective memory, the latter being perceived as an independent variable that affects "international institutions, laws and norms."⁷¹ However, the production of the Roma genocide memory in a conventional way cannot be attributed to the nation states due to the specificities of Roma minority as a minority which does not have a country of origin. Moreover, the previously discussed rise of transnational actors' activities related to the Roma and the case study of the memory making processes in Lithuania demonstrated that national boundaries-crossing transnational impulses can be instrumental in the gradual change of country's commemoration practices regarding the Roma genocide.

Therefore, drawing on Jelin's definition of memory entrepreneurs, in this thesis the EU as a memory entrepreneur will be researched by analysing its characteristics, role and activities related to the issue of memory of Roma genocide. Contemporary mnemonic practices of the EU related to the Roma genocide will be identified and classified by analysing publicly

⁶⁹Jelin, 35.

⁷⁰ Jelin, 36-37.

⁷¹ Eric Langenbacher, "Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations." In *Power and the Past. Collective Memory and International Relations*, ed. Eric Langenbacher and Yossi Shain, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown university Press, 2010), 19.

available information on the international commemoration of this topic, such as the news articles, content of websites, scholarly articles describing the commemoration practices, official documents, press releases, briefs and reports related to the Roma genocide commemoration. To identify the narrative promoted by the EU, the research will put additional focus on the vocabulary, rhetoric structures, specific references, contextual elements in written sources. Moreover, an expanded analysis on the EU's role in the establishment of 2nd of August – Roma Genocide Commemoration day (in this thesis referred to as the vector of memory) will be provided as an additional case study to emphasize the instrumental role of the EU in the production of this narrative of commemoration. Nancy Wood offers an interesting new concept to investigate ways to focus attention of the public. She draws on Halbwachs' insights on performativity of public memory, offering to analyse specific memories as “coming into existence at a given time and place through specific kinds of memorial activity.”⁷² To scrutinize certain representations of the past, Wood takes into consideration their performative nature, and employs the concept of “vector”⁷³ to identify and research specific forms of commemoration that function as triggers or even shapers of memory. In her book, vectors of memory emerge as a continuation of Nora's fundamental idea of “sites of memory” – symbolic representation modes, that in a dynamic and performative way charge specific objects and locations with means to selectively remember the past.⁷⁴ Therefore, Wood's vectors of memory, such as historiography, trials of war crimes, literature and movies, serve to actively attract public attention to past events and to administrate the meanings of such commemorations via established channels of mnemonic activities. As this thesis assumes that the emergence of vectors of memory is dependent on the activities of mnemonic actors who administer them and have a potential to shape the existent discourse on the past events, it will analyse the establishment of the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day as a vector of memory, and the EU as a memory entrepreneur linked to the emergence of this vector of memory.

This thesis will contribute to the studies of transnational memory and the Holocaust studies, as well as it aims to somewhat fill the gap of transnational Roma genocide remembrance studies. This thesis brings together two topic which gradually become popular among scholars, but in one combination are still heavily under-researched. Moreover, this research offers a framework to analyse this multidiscipline issue and suggests how and where to apply the results of the research.

⁷² Nancy Wood. *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*. Oxford: Berg, 1999, 2.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, 15-17.

Chapter 2. The Roma Genocide: Contradictory Facts and Controversial Debates

2.1 The Roma Victims of Holocaust

Before analysing the contemporary practices of Roma genocide commemoration more deeply, it is important to review the historical development of violence against the Roma and their treatment during the Second World War. Since their arrival in Europe at the start of the fifteenth century, the Roma have been exposed to various levels of discrimination, persecution and stigmatisation. Throughout their history, the European Roma have been perceived as an inferior actor in societal power relationships, and, under the special circumstances (financial, political, societal crises) as a source of anxiety of the ruling majorities.⁷⁵ In Germany, their unusual lifestyle was explained by using racial terminology together with insights on the perceived asociality of the Roma.⁷⁶ Later on, the ideas of the Enlightenment employed by Otto von Bismarck suggested that education and strict control of the Roma can be used to erase their ethnic uniqueness, thus accelerating their civic correction and assimilation of them.⁷⁷ Weimar Republic started registering the Roma to control them, but this census information was later used by the Nazi regime as it served as a well-developed administrative tool to monitor the population and decide upon their social and racial qualities.⁷⁸

The “Gypsy question” in the Third Reich was addressed by establishing so called Gypsy camps in the 1930s, moreover, from a social concern it was re-qualified into a problem of race.⁷⁹ This led to the radicalization of Nazi “Gypsy Policy” during the second World War II, the deportation of the Reich’s Roma to Auschwitz-Birkenau and other labour and concentration camps, and their subsequent extermination in 1944.⁸⁰ Although the Nazi persecution of Roma was of a slightly different nature in Nazi Germany and the Nazi-occupied or collaborating countries, the Roma communities were exposed to severe oppression both in the territory of the Third Reich and beyond its borders. Nazi officials deported the Roma of the Third Reich

⁷⁵ Margalit, *Germany and its Gypsies*, 14.

⁷⁶ Margalit, 14-16.

⁷⁷ Margalit, 29-31.

⁷⁸ Götz Aly, Karl Heinz Roth, Edwin Black, and Assenka Oksiloff. *The Nazi Census: Identification and Control in the Third Reich*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004, 49-50.

⁷⁹ Margalit, 31-35.

⁸⁰ Margalit, 51.

to labor and concentration camps inside and outside of the country. When imprisoned, the Roma were subjected to violence, torture and cruel SS medical experiments. In Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Roma were housed in a special part of the concentration camp also known as “Gypsy family camp.”⁸¹ On the 2nd of August 1944, the “Gypsy family camp” was annihilated.⁸² Altogether, 19,000 to 23,000 Roma deported to Auschwitz were killed there.⁸³

The situation of the Roma outside of the Nazi Germany was similar during the war. According to the data provided by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,⁸⁴ in German-occupied Europe the Roma were initially arrested to be deployed at German forced labor camps or to be deported to camps established in Poland where they faced exploitation or death.⁸⁵ However, the severity of their persecution varied depending on the specific situation in different countries. In the territories of the Nazi-occupied Soviet Union, the Roma were treated in the same manner as Jews and Communists, in addition, especially in the Baltic States, executions of the Roma were performed by mobile killing squads.⁸⁶ Active measures of Roma annihilation were applied in Yugoslavia, where approximately 90,000 Roma people were killed.⁸⁷ In occupied Serbia, where in 1941 and 1942 the Roma were killed within the country by shooting and killing with gas, the total number of victims ranges between 1,000 and 12,000 thousand.⁸⁸ As one of Nazi Germany’s axis allies, the Croatian authorities and militant Ustasa government established a concentration camp system and annihilated the entire Roma population of Croatia (historians estimate 25,000 people killed).⁸⁹ The Romanian regime, another German axis partner, deported Roma from Romanian territory to Transnistria, which was by that time administered by Romanian officials.⁹⁰ Around 26,000 Romanian Roma were forcibly displaced in 1941 and 1942, where “[t]housands of those deported died from disease, starvation, and brutal treatment.”⁹¹ The number of Roma who died in Romanian-occupied territory during the war reaches 36,000.⁹² In France, the Roma faced persecution in unoccupied

⁸¹ "Genocide of European Roma (Gypsies), 1939–1945." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed March 17, 2018. <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005219>.

⁸² "Genocide of European Roma." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "The Roma Genocide." Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative. Accessed March 17, 2018. <http://2august.eu/the-roma-genocide/>.

⁸⁸ "Genocide of European Roma." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "The Roma Genocide." Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative.

⁹¹ "Genocide of European Roma."

⁹² Holly Cartner, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania: A Helsinki Watch Report*, September 1991 (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1991), 13.

parts of the country as well as in the part of France administered by Vichy authorities. The Roma from France (just like the Roma from Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands) were sent to labor and concentration camps in Germany, where 16,000 to 18,000 French Roma were killed.⁹³ In Italy the policy against Roma resulted in their detention, while some of them were sent to labor and extermination camps. Hungarian Roma suffered the same fate. Meanwhile, the Roma in Slovakia were “forced into labor brigades, expelled, and murdered by their Slovak countrymen.”⁹⁴ Polish Roma were placed in ghettos within the country, and subsequently deported to labor and extermination camps where 25,000 or more than 60% of them died.

Due to the lack of information on the size of the Roma population in pre-war Europe and cases of poorly documented murdering of Roma people on the spot, it is still difficult to estimate the number of Roma victims of Nazi persecution. For example, in the territory of the Soviet Union and the Balkans, mobile (and often self-organised) killing groups travelled from one settlement to another with the purpose of detect and destroying the Roma living in villages scattered in the area. In this way, Roma were massacred without any records of the nature and extent of these killings in official documentation.⁹⁵ Therefore, different sources provide radically different data about the Roma genocide. For example, some sources estimate 300,000 to 500,000 Roma killed by Nazis and those who collaborated with them in occupied Europe.⁹⁶ The International Roma Youth Network states that at least 500,000 European Roma suffered from persecution, estimating around 80% of the total number of Roma living in European countries at the time of Holocaust.⁹⁷ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum acknowledges the lack of clarity surrounding the number of Roma victims of genocide but chooses to promote a rather moderate interpretation of Holocaust-related facts and figures, stating that approximately 220,000 or 25% of Roma living in Europe were killed by Nazi Germany and its allies.⁹⁸ However, some scholars argue that the number of Roma victims was much larger than it has been estimated. Ian Hancock, a well-known Roma scholar, makes an even more forceful argument, claiming that the scope of Nazi persecution of Roma remains underestimated, and therefore the real number of the Roma victims of the Holocaust might

⁹³ “Gypsies.” Shoah Resource Centre, The International School for Holocaust Studies. Accessed 11 May, 2018. http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/microsoft%20word%20-%206324.pdf

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “The Roma Genocide.”

⁹⁶ “The Untold Chapter of History Europe Must Learn.” Open Society Foundations. July 2014. Accessed March 17, 2018. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/what-roma-genocide>.

⁹⁷ “The Roma Genocide.” Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative.

⁹⁸ “Genocide of European Roma.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

exceed one million people.⁹⁹ The confusion that surrounds the historical facts of the Roma genocide has continued to affect the treatment of the Roma victims, and continues to influence the perception of the Roma genocide both in contemporary popular consciousness, and among scholars.

2.2 A New-Old Post-War Order

Although the Nazi and fascist regimes during World War II managed to exterminate a great number of Roma in Europe, and those who survived persecution found themselves in poverty, physically ill and mentally broken, very little sympathy was expressed towards the Roma in post-war Germany. The denazification policy did not address specifically the issue of antigypsyism, therefore persecution of the Roma remained a cultural rather than political issue in Germany.¹⁰⁰ Only from the late 1950s on did part of German society begin to perceive the Roma as a victim of Nazism. However, this change in attitude was not substantial, as antigypsyism was tolerated in the society if it did not have obvious Nazi rhetoric, thus further marginalizing this group.¹⁰¹ By examining the further development of Germans' attitudes towards Roma persecution, Margalit finds three interpretations of their past suffering: the Nazi narrative (based on the assumption that the Roma are guilty for their suffering), Jewish-like narrative (perceiving Roma as a victim group), and Syncretic narrative (combining different elements of the first two narratives).¹⁰²

In 1982, the syncretic narrative was pushed from the discourse of Germany's political establishment by the Jewish-like narrative, leading to the official German recognition of "*the Gypsy victim*."¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Margalit argues that there has been no final reconciliation between the German society and its Roma community and, as the Nazi persecution did not evoke additional empathy towards the Roma, the long-lasting hatred for the Roma remained even after the World War II. Formalistic recognition but without broader cultural acceptance prevent the reconciliation from happening on the ground. He, therefore, concludes that the correction of historical wrong done has been "a bitter failure" in the case of Germany's Roma.¹⁰⁴ However, a sign of a new development of Roma genocide commemoration in Germany appeared in 2012, when a memorial to Roma genocide victims in Berlin was opened

⁹⁹ Ian Hancock, "Ian Hancock: 500 000 Romani Holocaust Victims? There Could Have Been Twice That." Romea.cz. September 22, 2014. Accessed March 13, 2018. <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/ian-hancock-500-000-romani-holocaust-victims-there-could-have-been-twice-that>.

¹⁰⁰ Margalit, *Germany and its Gypsies*, 142.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 142-149.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 161-183.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 202-208.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 214-219.

by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.¹⁰⁵ Although the creation of physical space for Roma genocide remembrance was welcomed by the various local and transnational actors, the context of the emergence of this monument indicates tensions in the German field of Holocaust memory. On a symbolic level the monument had to find its place in relation to already existing monuments for Jews and LGBT community, thus hinting about competitive victimhood, as well as its belated opening indicates that there were complications in the articulation process pushing forward the need to commemorate this event.

The reoccurring pattern of post-war ordeals regarding the Roma can be found in other countries with similar Second World war history. Not only in Germany, but also in other European states such as Romania or Czechia the full scope of the Holocaust atrocities was underestimated and neglected in the public discourse on the Roma for a long time. The situation of Roma genocide remembrance in these countries will be presented to illustrate the cases of Central-Eastern Europe with large Roma populations and the recent rise of anti-Roma stereotyping and behaviour. A long-lasting controversy over the site of a former concentration camp in Czechia illustrates this negative development. During the World War II, the Czech Roma were imprisoned in Lety concentration camp, where, according to the data provided by the European Roma Rights Center, “Of the 1,300 Roma rounded up in the Lety camp, over 327 died there, including 241 children, while more than 500 were deported to Auschwitz.”¹⁰⁶ In 1971, a pig farm was built on the site of the camp, which was later taken over by the private business. For many years, Roma organisations, human rights NGOs, other activist groups advocated for the removal of Lety pig farm, moreover, UN Committee for Human Rights and European Parliament pressured the Czech government to remove the farm from a former Roma-killing site.¹⁰⁷ There were cases of denial and relativization of the Roma genocide in public discussions on the Lety issue, when, for example, Czech politicians argued that the Roma in Lety died for other reasons than systematic annihilation or that imprisonment and subsequent death of the majority of Roma in Lety did not originate from Nazi racial policies but was a result of the authorities’ action against criminals intended to ensure the public order. Only in 2017, the Czech authorities have announced that they will buy out the pig farm in order

¹⁰⁵ “Merkel Opens Roma Holocaust Memorial in Berlin.” 2012. *BBC News*. BBC. October 24. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20050780>.

¹⁰⁶ Rorke, Bernard. "Genocide and the Pig Farm: End in Sight to the Lety Controversy." European Roma Rights Centre. Accessed March 22, 2018. <http://www.errc.org/news/genocide-and-the-pig-farm-end-in-sight-to-the-lety-controversy>.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

to remove the premises and open the space for commemoration of those Roma citizens who were interned and killed in Lety.¹⁰⁸

In Romania, during the communist period and in the early years after transition from communism, the state argued that it was not involved in the Holocaust crimes.¹⁰⁹ For a long time, the popular narrative of Holocaust not only excluded the role of Romanian dictator Ion Antonescu in the process of elimination the Jews and Roma from the territory of the country, but also focused explicitly on the Nazi racial politics towards the Jews. Moreover, the fact of Roma persecution during the war remained marginalised both in post-war and even post-communist periods.¹¹⁰ In 2003, an international outrage was caused by Romanian Government, because it publicly denied the Holocaust in Romania. Only after this event, a Holocaust commission was formed to examine the Holocaust that had happened in Romanian territory, and to evaluate the involvement of official Romanian authorities in the mass killings. In 2004, the commission officially announced that “the Romanian regime of Ion Antonescu (1940–1944) had perpetrated the Holocaust in Romanian controlled territories, killing more than 200,000 Jews and 10,000 Roma.”¹¹¹ This development, although belated, was an important step in the path towards the recognition of the Roma genocide. Both cases serve as an illustration that the attempts to commemorate Roma genocide take place in different locations, but the process of establishment of any kind of commemorative practices is marked with struggles of a similar nature. Considering this, the following chapter will analyse the practices of the Roma genocide commemoration created on the transnational level and promoted by the EU.

Chapter 3. The EU as a Roma Genocide Memory Entrepreneur

3.1. Roma in the European Union

According to the data provided by the European Parliament, the Roma are the biggest ethnic minority in Europe, approximately 6 million Roma out of an estimated 12 million Roma living in Europe reside in the territory of the European Union. Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania

¹⁰⁸ Velinger, Jan. "Culture Minister Says Buyout of Controversial Pig Farm at Lety Only Weeks Away." Radio Prague. July 26, 2017. Accessed March 29, 2018. <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/culturafrs/culture-minister-says-buyout-of-controversial-pig-farm-at-lety-only-weeks-away>.

¹⁰⁹ Kelso and Eglitis, “Holocaust Commemoration in Romania,” 487.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 492.

¹¹¹Michelle Kelso, "'And Roma Were Victims, Too.' The Romani Genocide and Holocaust Education in Romania." *Intercultural Education* 24, no. 1-02 (2013): 65. doi:10.1080/14675986.2013.768060.

and Slovakia are the Member States hosting the largest Roma communities.¹¹² Unfortunately, the Roma communities are the most marginalized in Europe, facing material deprivation, lack to access to justice, labor market, healthcare, housing, adequate treatment in education systems. Moreover, the Roma people are subjected to prejudice, discrimination and hate-speech on everyday basis. To address problems faced by the Roma, the European Union has recently initiated a variety of EU-wide initiatives and programs, such as the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 that was adopted in 2011 and instructed the Member States to create and implement national strategies to integrate the Roma into their societies. This Framework is the most prominent set of the EU's policies explicitly targeting the European Roma communities, as well as it is an important tool through which the EU attempts to reach the local level issues in the Member States. By doing so, the EU sets transnational agenda of Roma inclusion and coordinates the process of Roma integration into European societies by monitoring the Roma situation in Member States in the areas of education, healthcare, access to labor market, and housing. The goals of the Frameworks which are based on these 4 priority areas can be generalized into a particular aim to eliminate Roma segregation and to reduce the level of social exclusion experienced by the Roma. Therefore, the main pillars sustaining one another on which the reasoning behind the Framework is based are the need to improve Roma situation and the aspiration to integrate them into societies.¹¹³

The driving force behind EU's work towards the Roma integration is, according to the European Commission, "a special responsibility towards the Roma, who live in all Member States, candidate countries and potential candidates"¹¹⁴ which is based on a set of European values and moral duty to be practically transferred to the Member States, and "an economic imperative promising long-term benefits for ageing European societies."¹¹⁵ Antigypsyism is perceived as the main cause of hate-speech and hate-crime faced by the European Roma, as well as it is addressed as an obstacle to successful Roma integration. As one solution to the problem of antigypsyism, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights offers education on Roma culture and history at schools, emphasizing the importance of youth education both to support

¹¹² European Commission, "Tackling Discrimination." May 02, 2018. Accessed May 15, 2018. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm.

¹¹³ European Commission, *An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*, Brussels: European Commission, 05 April 2011. COM(2011) 173 final.

¹¹⁴ European Commission, *The Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe*, Brussels: European Commission, 07 April 2010. COM(2010)133 final.

¹¹⁵ European Commission, *Midterm Review of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, Brussels: Publication Office of the European Union, 30 August 2017, 2.

the Roma youth and to deal with “the subconscious societal consensus to exclude Roma.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, some of the EU documents and statements emphasize the importance of special focus on Roma genocide in the national and EU level Roma-related activities and initiatives. A few examples: in European Parliament’s Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, Hungary’s initiative to introduce the topic of Roma genocide in school curriculum was welcomed as an example of good practice to be adopted by other Member States;¹¹⁷ in 2016, the EU Council adopted its conclusions on the Roma integration, mentioning both the importance of actions against antigypsyism, and the need to recognize and commemorate the Roma genocide.¹¹⁸ Therefore, the following subchapter will cover the main activities of the EU related to the remembrance of the Roma genocide.

3.1.2 The EU and the Roma Genocide Remembrance

Every year since 2015 the European Commission as well as the European Parliament marks the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. The development, establishment and significance of this memorial date which is the biggest successful mnemonic initiative of the European Parliament will be analysed in detail in the next section of this chapter. Moreover, the question of Roma genocide recognition and commemoration appears in the context of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.¹¹⁹ This document evaluating the implementation of the subchapter of Framework’s guidelines on “Fighting discrimination and anti-Gypsyism” addresses the Roma related problems and encourages the Member States which made suitable steps to promote the Roma integration into their societies. First, the document claims that Roma discrimination is still unacceptably common in every European society, then it emphasises the good practices of the Member States promoting the Roma integration to tackle discrimination against them, such as diversity, intercultural dialogue, education on the history and culture of the Roma, especially when the topic of the Roma genocide is incorporated in school curricula. In this document, education is emphasized as an important mean to use against discrimination and hate speech faced by the Roma, and to

¹¹⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2018), “A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion”, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018, 10.

¹¹⁷ European Parliament, “Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies”, Brussels: 2015, 54.

¹¹⁸ Council of the European Union, “EU Council Conclusions highlight the fight against antigypsyism and the recognition of the Roma Genocide” (Adopted by the EPSCO Council, 3507th meeting, 2016).

¹¹⁹ European Commission, “Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States,” Brussels: Publication Office of the European Union, 27 June 2016. SWD(2016) 209 final.

facilitate the development towards equality, which is depicted as one of the main aspirations of the EU.¹²⁰ For example, the assessment of Member States' progress in implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies compliments the effort of Austria for implementing "measures aiming at raising awareness about the Roma Holocaust,"¹²¹ Croatia for "support of memorial day for Roma victims of the Holocaust,"¹²² Estonia for "the organisation of an annual Remembrance ceremony on the day of Roma holocaust on 2nd of August"¹²³ in order to tackle discrimination and antigypsyism. Therefore, the assessment of member states' progress in improving the Roma situation specifies good examples and encourages the others to follow them. The commemoration of Roma genocide is depicted as a positive development which is, in addition, inseparable from the goal of integration.

In addition to the activities designed to monitor and set an example of good practices of the Roma integration, the EU creates a space for a dialogue about the Roma genocide. One example: in 2016, the 10th Meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion "Mutual accountability of all"¹²⁴ brought together for a discussion the sides interested in Roma integration, including such stakeholders as representatives of both local and national authorities from the Member States of the EU and countries participating in the enlargement negotiations, European institutions, transnational organisations, Roma organisations, civil society organisations, press and scholars. In this event, the European Commission created a platform for the integrated event held together with *TernYpe International Roma Youth Network* on Roma genocide education, remembrance and recognition.

Apart from facilitating the emergence of new space to discuss the Roma genocide, the European Commission has developed a programme "Europe for Citizens - European remembrance" through which it funds transnational level projects or projects with European dimension aiming to analyse the consequences of the emergency of totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century Europe and to remember the victims of totalitarian crimes, with special focus on "tolerance, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation."¹²⁵ A variety of projects related to the Roma genocide has been implemented in the framework of this programme. For example, in 2015, the EU funded the implementation of a large-scale 1 year

¹²⁰ European Commission, "Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework," 8.

¹²¹ Ibid, 37.

¹²² Ibid, 46.

¹²³ Ibid, 50.

¹²⁴ European Commission, "Justice and Consumers." November 04, 2016. Accessed March 10, 2018. http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=36992.

¹²⁵ "Europe for Citizens - European Remembrance - EACEA - European Commission." Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. December 11, 2015. Accessed March 15, 2018. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/strands/european-remembrance_en.

project “70 Years after Auschwitz – Remembrance and Education of Young Europeans about the Roma Genocide.”¹²⁶ This project was part of a wide-spread commemorations of the end of The Second World War and aimed to raise awareness about the Roma victims of Holocaust and to create new methods for Holocaust education on local, national and European level with special focus on the Roma. One of the outcomes of this project was a “European Conference on Roma Education and Remembrance of Roma Genocide,” held in Brussels, Belgium, where the participants met members of the European Parliament. During the event the fact of insufficient recognition of the historic fact of the Roma genocide was directly linked to marginalization, hate speech and antigypsyism spreading towards the Roma in the European societies.¹²⁷ Another project “Keeping the Memory Alive: the Roma and Sinti Holocaust” in 2013-2015 aimed to raise awareness about the Roma genocide and to link their traumatic history to their current situation.¹²⁸ Project “Remembering the forgotten Roma Holocaust” implemented in 2011 aimed to rediscover the Roma genocide victims in European history. Its closing conference “Learning from the past: the Roma Holocaust” was held in the European Economic and Social Committee and aimed to inform both the Roma audience and the public about the Roma genocide.¹²⁹ In addition, the European Union has funded such projects as “The Forgotten among the Forgotten” (2009), focused on remembrance of Roma and LGBT victims of Nazi persecution¹³⁰, and the “Forgotten Roma Holocaust” project implemented in 2008 and aimed at collecting testimonies from Roma genocide survivors and educating the European societies about Roma Holocaust victims.¹³¹

The significance of the above-mentioned activities of the EU institutions lies in their material support for the implementation of commemorative project and remembrance initiatives as well as in their symbolic action of opening the space for debates allowing to discuss the fact of the Roma genocide itself and to facilitate the creation of a further narrative

¹²⁶ "Europe for Citizens Map - Project Details Page." Social Protection Statistics - Unemployment Benefits - Statistics Explained. Accessed March 15, 2018. <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/efc-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/5ae67b18-9dbf-4a30-8014-98cf74f63c72>.

¹²⁷ "70 Years after Auschwitz – Remembrance and Education of Young Europeans about the Roma Genocide." Nevoparudimos. June 13, 2016. Accessed May 31, 2018. <https://nevoparudimos.ro/2016/06/13/70-years-after-auschwitz-remembrance-and-education-of-young-europeans-about-the-roma-genocide/?lang=en>.

¹²⁸ "Keeping the Memory Alive: The Roma and Sinti Holocaust." ERIO - MemoROM. Accessed March 15, 2018. <http://www.erionet.eu/memorom>.

¹²⁹ "Closing Conference of ERIO's Project MemoRom,"– AEDH. July 06, 2017. Accessed March 25, 2018. <http://www.aedh.eu/en/closing-conference-of-erios-project-memorom-remembering-the-roma-holocaust-and-acting-against-todays-violence-and-discrimination-against-roma/>.

¹³⁰ European Commission, “EU Projects in Favour of the Roma Community Exhibition Catalogue Conference. Brussels, 2010, 10.

¹³¹ Ibid, 13.

to which the broad audience is exposed. In this process, the framework of commemoration is sustained which simultaneously conforms to the story of Roma genocide victims promoted by the EU and allows other stakeholders to participate in the development and spread of this discourse. Thus, the EU becomes a mediator bridging the initiatives coming from activist and civil society to the general public by providing them with tools and communication channels to initiate the discussion about and translate the message on the Roma genocide. The previously mentioned activities are of a mixed nature, but they simultaneously reflect the main topics promoted by the EU: recognition, commemoration and education (with special focus on the European youth). These focus points are intertwined with the story of the Roma genocide that is being narrated by the EU and correspond to some of the main arguments used by it to justify the importance of these mnemonic activities. To illustrate the development of the Roma genocide story promoted by the EU, the case study of the 2nd of August, also known as the day of recognition and remembrance of the Roma genocide, the establishment of the official memorial day and its institutionalization in the official documents and statements of the EU institutions will be presented and analysed in the following chapter.

3.2 Path Towards Recognition of the Roma genocide: a Case Study of the 2nd of August

On the night of 2 August 1944, the Nazis exterminated the so called “Gypsy camp” or “Gypsy family camp” in Auschwitz, where Roma families lived together in a special facility constructed to keep them in one place. This family camp is well known as its inhabitants were subjected to medical experiments of Dr. Josef Mengele, who was particularly interested in the people of Romani origin. In 1944, approximately 3000 Roma men, women and children were left in this camp. The act of extermination was racially grounded and targeted the Roma specifically, as it was implemented in accordance to the “Final Solution” designed to solve the “Gypsy” problem.¹³² Although the Roma attempted to resist the liquidation, in the end they were transported to the gas chambers and killed.¹³³ The massive murder of the Roma in Auschwitz-Birkenau marks the end of Roma history in Auschwitz, because it annihilated the whole Roma community imprisoned there. According to the information provided by the Roma

¹³²Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Accessed March 18, 2018. <http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/porrajmos>.

¹³³"2 August – Roma Genocide Remembrance Day." Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative. Accessed March 18, 2018. <http://2august.eu/the-roma-genocide/2-august-roma-genocide-remembrance-day/>.

Genocide Remembrance Initiative, only 4 Roma were found alive by the liberators of Auschwitz in 1945.¹³⁴

3.2.1 Development Towards the Official Establishment of the 2nd of August

The date of Roma extermination in Auschwitz has become an important date in the historiography of the Roma genocide, putting the need to commemorate the 2nd of August in the center of various discussions on the recognition of the Roma suffering during the World War II. To illustrate the context in which the resolution on the Roma genocide recognition and commemoration was adopted, the following part of this chapter will introduce the direction towards which the debates on the EU level drifted before the official adoption of the document.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust initiative registered attempts to commemorate it internationally by marking the 2nd of August as Romani Extermination Remembrance Day in 1997.¹³⁵ The symbolic commemorative discourse surrounding this day (popular among the Roma organisations and Roma rights activists) was extended to a spacial dimension when in 2001, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum opened its first permanent exhibition on the Roma in the time of Holocaust, focusing on their fate in Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. Consequently, the camp was turned into “a symbol and a centre for the Roma Genocide commemoration and related activities, including carrying out research and publishing their findings,”¹³⁶ and a space for unofficial events to commemorate the 2nd of August.

At the same time, the EU institutions started to talk about the Roma genocide. In 2011, the Vice-President of the European Commission for Inter-institutional Relations and Administration Maroš Šefčovič gave a speech in a plenary meeting of European Parliament on the recognition of the Roma genocide in times of the Second World War.¹³⁷ In this speech made on behalf of the European Commission, Mr. Šefčovič stressed three main points: first, he acknowledged the brutality of Holocaust by using the specific wording recognizable from the debates on the Holocaust uniqueness, which refers to the “inhumanity of the Holocaust

¹³⁴ “2 August – Roma Genocide Remembrance Day.”

¹³⁵ “Auschwitz-Birkenau's Gypsy Family Camp.” Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. June 8, 2015. Accessed March 23, 2018. <http://hmd.org.uk/news/auschwitz-birkenaus-gypsy-family-camp>.

¹³⁶ Andrzej Mirga, “Roma Genocide: Historic and Symbolic Meanings for Collective Memory and Identity.” In *Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide: Scholarship, Commemoration and the Role of Youth*, edited by Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Esteban Acuña, and Piotr Trojański, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, Filip Lohner, 2016), 57-81:66.

¹³⁷ European Commission, Press Release, Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ Vice-President of the European Commission Responsible for Inter-institutional Relations and Administration Recognition of the Roma Genocide during World War II Plenary of European Parliament Brussels, 02 February 2011." February 02, 2011. Accessed March 25, 2018. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-11-92_en.htm.

perpetrators” and expresses how shocking it is to believe that such event as the Holocaust happened in the twentieth century Europe. Second, he emphasized the importance of remembrance and education of young generation to make sure that this “sad story” is “remembered and never repeated.”¹³⁸ Finally, Mr. Šefčovič made a link between “what racial hatred and intolerance can do”¹³⁹ and the current Roma situation in the EU. Although he acknowledged that the EU is built on a set of values and rights including protection of its minorities which “apply in full to Roma,” his speech refers to the issue of “unacceptable” ethnic origin-based discrimination as well as social exclusion and racism which European Roma experience on daily basis.¹⁴⁰ Following that, the Roma inclusion is perceived as EU’s priority which can be achieved by joining the efforts of “national and local authorities, civil society and EU institutions.”¹⁴¹ The adoption of the earlier mentioned European framework for national Roma integration strategies was an attempt to achieve this goal. Therefore, in the context of the Holocaust, integration and protection of human rights are vocalized on behalf of the European Commission as means to ensure that “history definitely never will repeat itself.”¹⁴² This speech contains rhetoric statements about the significance of Holocaust commemoration and provides a discursive linkage between the past persecution of the Roma, their current situation in the EU, offering an instrumental approach to this problem through better integration of the Roma into European societies. It sets the example of reasoning which was appropriated in the subsequent statements and actions (such as the official recognition and commemoration of Roma genocide, integration programmes) of the EU institutions.

In addition to the emerging discussions about the Roma genocide within the EU institutions, Ethel Brooks mentions an event which, according to her, was a culmination and institutionalisation of a massive initiative of the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the annihilation of the Roma camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, which she considers to be a “turning point in intergenerational Roma and Sinti memory and commemoration.”¹⁴³ In 2014, more than one thousand Roma people, Holocaust survivors and their families, Roma rights activists and members of various NGOs participated in the gathering at Auschwitz-Birkenau, organised to share the Holocaust experiences, discuss the details of Roma genocide stories and pay respect

¹³⁸ European Commission, Press Release, Maroš Šefčovič, 2011.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Robin Migdol, "The History and Significance of August 2, Roma Holocaust Memorial Day." USC Shoah Foundation. August 01, 2017. Accessed March 25, 2018. <https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2017/08/17266-history-and-significance-august-2-roma-holocaust-memorial-day>.

to Roma genocide victims.¹⁴⁴ This initiative has accumulated the concerns of an interested group of people to commemorate the Second World war Roma suffering on that specific day, it made them visible and turned these concerns into a content to work with in order to push the narrative of recognition and remembrance of Roma genocide into transnational level. The organisers of this event enjoyed the patronage of Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Honorary Patronage of Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament.¹⁴⁵

The rhetoric supporting the same cause can be also seen, for example, in the policy briefing released by the European Parliament in 2015 on the International Roma day, couple of weeks before the voting on Resolution that recognized the Roma genocide and institutionalised the 2nd of August as the official Roma genocide memorial day. This briefing acknowledges the Roma as the largest ethnic minority in Europe and puts together the need “to raise awareness of the extermination of Roma people by the Nazis during WW II and of Anti-Gypsyism, hate speech and hate crimes against this minority, past and present.”¹⁴⁶ European Parliament’s press release which was issued days before the upcoming voting on this resolution presented the Parliament members’ debate on the current problems faced by the European Roma communities, and the question of commemoration. In the press release the Roma situation in many EU Member States was depicted indirectly linking it with the context of not well-known historical fact of the Roma genocide. During the debate, the recognition of the 2nd of August was supported by Members of Parliament as a way to pay “tribute” to and to “honour” not only those killed when the Auschwitz Roma camp was liquidated, but also “the hundreds of thousands of Roma who perished at the hands of Fascist henchmen all over Europe [...]”¹⁴⁷ This document quotes the speech of the Parliament Member D. Draghici who stated that “Roma are under threat in many of our member states” and “[p]hysical aggression against them is frequent,”¹⁴⁸ in this way linking the physical threat experienced by the Roma both during the World War II and in nowadays. This rhetoric invokes a certain moral obligation to

¹⁴⁴ Robin Migdol, "The History and Significance of August 2"

¹⁴⁵ "European Parliament Recognizes 2 August as the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day." Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative. April 20, 2015. Accessed March 26, 2018. <http://2august.eu/ep-recognition/>.

¹⁴⁶ "Agenda Briefings | News | European Parliament." March 24, 2015. Accessed March 25, 2018. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2015-03-25/6/anti-gypsyism-in-europe-and-eu-recognition-of-roma-genocide-remembrance-day>.

¹⁴⁷ "International Roma Day: Celebrating Europe's Largest Ethnic Minority" European Parliament. March 25, 2015. Accessed March 03, 2018.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/security/20150324STO37305/international-roma-day-celebrating-europe-s-largest-ethnic-minority>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

protect the Roma community now, instead of repeating the mistake of the times of World War II when the European societies have not only left the Roma to face the Nazi brutality, but also joined the repressions against them. This example illustrates that although the story of the Roma genocide promoted by the EU is very coherent, the way the Roma suffering during the Second World war is interpreted is still an object of (discursive) manipulation which is inevitably linked to the current struggles of Roma people in Europe.

3.2.2 The Resolution, its Advocates and Supporters

Taking into account the previously mentioned development of the Roma genocide recognition, on the 15th of April 2015, the European Parliament adopted the resolution “on the occasion of International Roma Day – antigypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II,”¹⁴⁹ which states that “the European Roma [...] have historically been part of society in many European countries, without a single kin-state, and have contributed to Europe as its citizens, is distinct among national minorities in Europe, which justifies specific measures at European level,” sees the Roma as “part of Europe’s culture and values,”¹⁵⁰ and, therefore, urges the Member States of the European Union and other European countries to “address the history of Roma people through dialogue with citizens and young people, in particular the genocide of Roma during World War II,¹⁵¹ and, most importantly, invites the Member States “to officially recognise this genocide and other forms of persecution of Roma such as deportation and internment that took place during World War II.”¹⁵²

The resolution draws on a solid set of documents where memory politics of European Union come into debate on the Roma integration strategies. Based on the variety of sources on which the logic of this resolution is build, the development of the Roma Rights recognition discourse has a formalistic side and reflects the EU minority integration policies, which include both urge for minority inclusion and the fight against racism and discrimination. Furthermore, important arguments are made in the following part of this resolution: first, the European Parliament acknowledges the Roma as an important part of European societies. Second, it claims that the Roma minority made a substantial contribution to the development of European

¹⁴⁹ European Parliament resolution of 15 April 2015 on the occasion of International Roma Day European Parliament. Accessed March 28, 2018.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2015-0095>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, entry F.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, entry 9.

¹⁵² Ibid, entry 9.

culture and values and places the Roma in the broader narrative of shared European culture and, most importantly, history. Following that, the resolution highlights the racism towards the Roma as a long-lasting phenomenon “nurtured by historical discrimination,”¹⁵³ which caused the discrimination and marginalisation suffered by the Roma “historically in many European countries.”¹⁵⁴ In this way the resolution underlies historical links between the past suffering experienced by the Roma and their current situation. Finally, it puts the abstract story of Roma suffering into the Holocaust narrative, acknowledging the historical fact and scope of the Roma genocide (the resolution takes a moderate stand regarding the numbers of Roma victims, thus estimating the extermination of at least 500 000 Roma).

The 3 important elements included into the reasoning behind the European Parliament’s initiative to recognize and commemorate the Roma genocide that can be seen in the rhetoric of the resolution are a shared European memory, historical justice, and minority integration. The resolution highlights the importance to commemorate Europe’s dark past by creating a link between the collective remembrance of human rights violations and crimes against humanity, and “peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights”¹⁵⁵ perceived as fundamental values in today’s Europe. Subsequently, it draws attention to the problem of “ignored”¹⁵⁶ victims of the Second World war, thus advocating for historical justice for the Roma whose genocide is “still largely ignored and is therefore not acknowledged by the broad public and often not recognised or taught in schools.”¹⁵⁷ Therefore, following the logic of the resolution, the official recognition and commemoration is important not only as a formal step towards restitutions and a continent-wide fact check, but also as a symbolic step to tackle anti-Gypsyism and to “contribute to the general knowledge of Roma history in Europe.”¹⁵⁸ According to the reasoning of the European Parliament, these steps are crucial for the Roma integration and the insurance of respect of their fundamental human rights.¹⁵⁹ In other words, the recognition of the historic fact of Roma genocide together with establishment of a special day to commemorate it was initially advocated by the European Parliament as a way to create a symbolic platform, allowing the European societies and the Roma to find a common ground for dialogue and cooperation. In this way, the resolution employs the memory of the Second World war atrocities to address the problems of today’s Europe.

¹⁵³ European Parliament resolution of 15 April 2015, section C.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, section D.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, section L.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, section K.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, sections M, N.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, section 1.

The European Commission shares a similar approach on the commemoration of Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. Starting from 2015, First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová annually issue an official statement on the occasion of the 2nd of August. The content of these statements includes three main themes: discrimination currently faced by the Roma in Europe, the importance of understanding and learning from the past, and the education of young generations. In 2015, the first statement was released to mark the establishment of a new memorial day. In this statement, the representatives of the European Commission expressed their support to the resolution of the European Parliament and encouraged other Member States to follow this initiative. Moreover, the knowledge about the Roma genocide in this statement is seen as a way to better understand “our history,” whereas addressing it as a “tragic episode of our past”¹⁶⁰ draws a sketch of a shared European memory, thus portraying Roma as a community entitled to be a part of united European history. The rhetoric of this statement foresees the successful consolidation of the EU as a consequence of the effort of new generation to come, which, being well informed about Europe’s past, will be able to build “Europe that is better and stronger.”¹⁶¹ Therefore, a strong emphasis is being put on the need of an open discussion of the atrocities of the World War II with special focus of the newly emerged discourse of Roma genocide.

A similar narrative has been transferred to the European Commission’s statement issued in 2016, in which it claims to commemorate the 2nd of August “in memory of all these innocent victims and the horrific injustice they suffered and died from,” and refers to the World War II as to “dark moments in our history” under the scope under which the Roma genocide falls. In this statement, the issue of the Roma genocide being an “under-taught and under-recognised topic” is tied to a problem of hate speech as well as hate crimes in Europe.¹⁶² The European Commission’s statement of 2017 incorporates rhetoric of the previous statements, touching upon both the need of education of Roma genocide, because “[r]emembering the wrongs of the past helps us to build tomorrow's Europe based on our common European values,” and the effect of neglected past on today’s discrimination which has “no place in the

¹⁶⁰ Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová." European Union. July 31, 2015. Accessed May 31, 2018. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-15-5444_en.htm.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová." European Union. August 2, 2016. Accessed May 31, 2018. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-2708_en.htm.

European Union.”¹⁶³ The most important keywords in these three statements which connect the messages sent by the European Commission 3 years in a row are referring to dignity of and justice for the European Roma communities with a strong determination to remember the Roma genocide as an important episode of a shared European past. In every case, these statements are followed by the call on better integration of the Roma into the European societies.

3.2.3 Life after the Resolution: the Spread of the Narrative

Ever since the European Parliament’s resolution of 2015 has been adopted, the reoccurring elements of the Roma genocide narrative established in this document can be indicated in the later documents and statements of the EU institutions. For example, in its 2016 document on the Roma integration, the Council of the European Union in its document on the Roma integration urged the EU Member States to recognise and commemorate the Roma genocide committed during the Second World War “in accordance with their national practices.”¹⁶⁴ In European Parliament’s report on “Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti[g]ypsyism,”¹⁶⁵ insufficient knowledge of the Roma genocide is directly linked to prevailing discrimination and prejudice towards the Roma. The report urges the EU Member States to recognize the 2nd of August as Roma Holocaust Memorial day, to educate their societies (especially civil servants) about the Roma genocide, to grant restitution to those who survived the Holocaust, and to incorporate the Roma in European Commission’s events on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, it called on the EU members to “clearly condemn and sanction the denial of the Roma Holocaust, hate speech and scapegoating by politicians and public officials at all levels and in all types of media, as they directly reinforce anti[g]ypsyism in society,” and urged the European Commission to mobilize civil society to “monitor and report hate speech, hate crime and Holocaust denial”¹⁶⁷ as a mean fight prejudice and hate speech. Furthermore, it called on the European Commission to mobilize their resources in order to “fight anti[g]ypsyism, raise awareness about the Roma Holocaust and to promote Holocaust remembrance.”¹⁶⁸ The

¹⁶³ Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová." European Union. August 1, 2017. Accessed May 31, 2018. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release STATEMENT-17-2241_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-17-2241_en.htm).

¹⁶⁴ Council of the European Union, “EU Council Conclusions highlight the fight against antigypsyism and the recognition of the Roma Genocide” 8. 15406/16

¹⁶⁵ European Parliament, Report on Fundamental Rights Aspects in Roma Integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism, Rapporteur: Soraya Post, 11 October 2017. A8-0294/2017

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 8.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 10.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 17.

explanatory statement of this document asks “nothing more, but also nothing less for the Roma people, than [...] for the majority society.”¹⁶⁹ It states that the treatment of Roma for a long time was “unthinkable” and “unacceptable” because of deprivation of their fundamental human rights.”¹⁷⁰ The same document provides information about the Roma genocide in a paragraph titled “Antigypsims in numbers,” in which antigypsyism as a concept of modern times is directly linked to the Nazi policies against the Roma during the World War II. This paragraph estimates that approximately from 25% to 50% of the European Roma were murdered during the Holocaust.¹⁷¹

3.3 Overlapping Memories, Competitive Narratives?

As the memory of the Roma genocide has not been established in a solid set of mnemonic practices for a long time, it frequently overlaps with memories of other events. Not only the reproduction of mnemonic discourse, but also the position of a certain narrative in a mnemonic field is important to better understand the story of the Roma genocide and discussions surrounding it. Therefore, the 2 cases of overlapping memories will be introduced in the following section to illustrate the dynamics between the official EU narrative of the Roma genocide and other/alternative narratives.

The Holocaust narrative promoted by the EU follows the guidelines established in the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, it recognizes the Holocaust as a “tragic event in the history of our continent,”¹⁷² and commemorates annual Holocaust Memorial Day. In European Parliament’s briefing on the Holocaust, the need to commemorate the Holocaust is framed as a “duty of remembrance.”¹⁷³ European Parliament’s mnemonic activities regarding the Holocaust started in 1995 when it called for a European Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust to be established in all the Member States. In 2005, the European Parliament proposed an annual European Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust.¹⁷⁴ At the same time, this narrative is inclusive because it perceives the Second World War atrocities as “the mass murder of 6 million European Jews, Roma and other persecuted groups

¹⁶⁹ European Parliament, Report on Fundamental Rights Aspects, 19.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁷² Philippe Perchoc, Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, “The European Union and Holocaust,” European Parliament, Briefing. European Union, 2018. 26 March 2018, 1. Accessed May 14, 2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/divers/eprs_briefingholocaust_en.pdf.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 3.

¹⁷⁴ "Resolution on a Day to Commemorate the Holocaust." July 03, 1995, section 1. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:51995IP0866&from=EN>.

whom the Nazi regime and its collaborators sought to annihilate.”¹⁷⁵ It acknowledges that the main reason that condemned both Jews and Roma to extermination during the Holocaust was their origin.¹⁷⁶ The briefing of European Parliament quotes the 2002 speech of Simone Veil, an Auschwitz survivor who in 1979 became the President of the European Parliament, who acknowledged the Roma victims of Holocaust and criticized popular indifference towards their “tragic fate.”¹⁷⁷

A model case illustrating the phenomena of overlapping memories is the commemoration of Holocaust (traditionally emphasizing the victimhood of the Jewish community.) A reference to the development of EU’s commemorative activities with overlapping memories can be noticed in the narrative of Roma genocide that is included in the general Holocaust commemoration practices. For example, in 2016, during the official commemoration ceremony of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, members of the European Commission opened the exhibition titled “The Roma Genocide during WWII”.¹⁷⁸ In 2018, the annual Holocaust commemoration event hosted at the European Parliament was not only followed by the opening of an exhibition about the Roma victims of Holocaust, but also included an active participation of members from both Jewish and Roma communities. The event was described as the first joint commemoration of this kind, where the European Parliament created a platform for the Jewish European leaders and Roma representatives to address the traumatic past of their communities and the widespread hatred towards European minorities facilitated by the rise of European far-right.¹⁷⁹ Although a “joint post-war commemoration”¹⁸⁰ of the persecution of both communities is not common in the European (especially Central-Eastern European) locations, during the event the Member of European Parliament Soraya Post stressed that “[a]ll victims faced the same suffering, the same fate, and the same ending by the same perpetrators”¹⁸¹ thus justifying the reasoning behind the joint commemoration of Jewish and Roma suffering during the Second World War.

Another interesting case related to the memorial days is an emerging practice widely supported by the Roma NGOs, European Roma youth and civil society activists to

¹⁷⁵ Perchoc and Pasikowska-Schnass, “The European Union and Holocaust,” 1.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 3.

¹⁷⁸ European Commission, “EC Audiovisual Service - Photo.” January 27, 2016. Accessed March 30, 2018. <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/photo/photoByReportage.cfm?sitelang=en&ref=030684>.

¹⁷⁹ Newman, Marissa. “At Jewish-Roma Holocaust Event, Bowing Heads to the ‘forgotten Victims’.” The Times of Israel. January 24, 2018. Accessed March 14, 2018. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-jewish-roma-holocaust-event-bowing-heads-to-the-forgotten-victims/>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

commemorate the 16th of May, also known as the Romani Resistance day. The commemoration of this day is an example of active Roma interpretation of their traumatic World War II history, as it remembers an unexpected course of events in Auschwitz-Birkenau in May 1944. As the Roma imprisoned there learned about the upcoming liquidation of the Roma family camp on the night from the 15th to the 16th of May, they barricaded themselves, armed themselves with everything that could be turned into weapons (including metal pipes, stones, and, according to some sources, loafs of bread¹⁸²) and resisted against the Nazis. The resistance made the Nazis to postpone the annihilation of the Roma camp and gave them 3 additional months to live.¹⁸³ The initiative to commemorate the Roma uprising comes from the Roma activists who perceive this day as an alternative platform to demonstrate that the Roma were not “helpless victims of the Nazis.”¹⁸⁴ Instead of solely emphasising their victimhood, the Roma have started to celebrate the Romani Resistance day as an inspiring and unifying mean to fight against the struggles faced by the Roma in today’s Europe.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, although this thesis only focuses on the EU as a memory entrepreneur and delves deeper into only one case study of the commemorative date, the two cases of existent alternative and overlapping memories of the Roma genocide broaden the understanding of the field of Second World war memory which contains intertwined narratives and different stories which are being promoted by various actors.

Although it seems that the commemoration day to remember the victims of Holocaust is becoming even more inclusive to the Roma, the two more memorial dates (the 2nd of August and the 16th of May) simultaneously exist in the broader context of the commemoration of the Second World War atrocities. The EU supports the inclusion of Roma narrative into the Holocaust commemoration initiatives, promotes a special day of commemoration of the 2nd of August and stays neutral regarding the 16th of May, therefore it might seem that the EU’s mnemonic practices are not consistent enough. As the EU in this thesis is researched as a mnemonic entrepreneur or a narrator of specific stories, a look into the compatibility of its official narrative of the Roma genocide with emerging alternative interpretations of this event

¹⁸² "16 May – Romani Resistance Day." Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative. Accessed April 14, 2018. <http://2august.eu/the-roma-genocide/16-may-romani-resistance-day/>.

¹⁸³ Ethel Brooks, “A Watershed Moment in History and a Wish-List for the Future.” In *Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide: Scholarship, Commemoration and the Role of Youth*, edited by Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Esteban Acuña, and Piotr Trojański, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, Filip Lohner, 2016), 81-97:84.

¹⁸⁴ “Auschwitz-Birkenaus Gypsy Family Camp.”

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

can provide some interesting insights about the broader mode of the Roma genocide memory in which the EU operates.

First, although the initial choice of the EU to employ the historical fact of a genocide as one of the cultural tools to foster the Roma integration might raise a question of whether focusing on negative past is the best way to integrate the Roma, it is important to notice a two-step strategy of the EU. First it strives for the recognition of the Roma genocide, in this way attempting to reconnect the Roma communities and the dominant majorities, and then it promotes the commemoration as symbolic work to maintain cooperation between these groups. The goal of Roma inclusion might look contradictory in the context of EU's support for the establishment of a separate day to commemorate the Roma genocide. This symbolic work resembles the strategies of affirmative action when first the group to be included is defined as the one facing exclusion. Thus, the EU opened a symbolic space for a dialogue, following which some grassroots initiatives later turned into the celebration of the Roma resistance day (focusing on active response to the annihilation rather than passive victimhood).

Second, the initiative to commemorate the Roma Resistance day can be interpreted in two ways: it is either an implicit objection to the institutionalised Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, or an attempt to expand the narrative about the Roma during the Second World War. Both cases signify the plausible changes in the established power dynamics in the field of Holocaust memory, as the emerging narratives and commemorative practices can gradually affect dominant and often one-dimensional story of the Roma genocide. As it has been argued by Jelin, memory entrepreneurs try to incorporate their version of certain events into the popular interpretations of the past, therefore activities of both the Jewish community and the Roma grassroots organisations promoting the 16th of May illustrate that these actors are also memory entrepreneurs.

These examples show that the flexible transnational narrative of the Roma genocide is being shaped by a variety of actors, including the EU. The Roma genocide commemoration narrative is being developed through continuing recognition and negotiation. It reminds that although this research is focused explicitly on the EU mnemonic activities, the EU as an actor doesn't operate in a memory vacuum, the discursive field surrounding the topic of the Holocaust is crowded with different actors, agendas, alternative interpretations of the past events, and different outcomes from their labors of memory.

3.4. Memory Entrepreneurship of the EU

The European Parliament Resolution on the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day was an important turning point in the further development of EU Roma-related memory policies. As the European Parliament created a new standard of Holocaust recognition which serves as a tool to measure the Member States' progress in the implementation of Roma integration programs, this resolution has become a source of a legal character (although of advisory nature) and an institutionalized moral imperative. A conclusion can be drawn, based on a variety of elements of EU characteristics which manifest itself through previously analysed activities and a specific manner of argument construction in justifying the importance of Roma genocide commemoration, that the EU falls under Jelin's definition of memory entrepreneurs.

Findings of the empirical research have confirmed the memory entrepreneurship of the EU based on the following conditions to be fulfilled for memory entrepreneurship established by Jelin. First, an actor qualifies as a memory entrepreneur if it aims to draw public attention to a specific issue. The extent to which the mnemonic concerns of the EU are communicated to the general audience depends on its well-developed communication strategy, which aims "connecting with people locally by addressing them in their national or local settings, through their favourite media."¹⁸⁶ Moreover, the EU covers the Roma genocide question not only in its press releases and statements targeting the general public, but also through a set of evaluations and recommendations to the Member States. Thus, a specific way to remember, which is decided on the transnational level, is being communicated to national and local levels. Second, the EU is capable of actualizing the memory issues and, as it has been defined by Jelin, seeks to remember events in a specific way, because it has the power to set the agenda and to decide which questions are to be discussed. Third, the memory of Roma genocide is used by the EU as a tool to accelerate the Roma integration. It has both political aspirations (incorporated in the EU's agenda of minority policies) and ability to turn the memory into generalized demands.

The narrative promoted by the EU can be defined by the 3 main themes which reoccur in the EU institutions' documents and statements related to the memory of Roma genocide are recognition, commemoration and education. These themes represent the EU's goals related to it, which can be summarized as an objective to remember, the never-again objective, and objective of integration. The manner in which these goals are communicated by the EU

¹⁸⁶ "Communication Policy | EU Fact Sheets | European Parliament." Malala Yousafzai - EP SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK. Accessed April 31, 2018.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_3.6.8.html.

correspond to the arguments for Holocaust universalization introduced by Alexander. For example, the EU uses the similar wording (for example: unspeakable crimes against the Roma, tragic episode of our past, horrific injustice, dark moments in our history) to describe the scale of the Roma genocide, its aftermath and effects on the further development of European societies as it is used in Alexander's piece to depict the extent and brutality of the Holocaust. It demonstrates that the EU rhetoric is soaked in the general Holocaust discourse and doesn't attempt to portray the Roma genocide as a separate minor event which falls out of the narrative of traumatic European history of the World War II. It not only places the story of Roma suffering in the broader Holocaust commemoration narrative, but also perceives the extermination of European Jews and Roma as the manifestation of evil that was never seen before, thus substantiating the popular call on the European societies to educate their youth so that event like Holocaust never happens again, making a better future imaginable.

The narrative of the Roma genocide promoted by the European reflects the Jewish-like narrative suggested by Margalit, as the steps made by the EU towards the recognition and commemoration of the Roma genocide are like those made in the case of the Holocaust commemoration (traditionally focusing on the Jewish victims). The Roma genocide remembrance gradually becomes incorporated in the Holocaust remembrance events. The story of Roma victimhood is included in the broader narrative of the Second World War atrocities not through competition between the victim groups, but by acknowledging that the Roma persecution was based on the same racial/ethnic reasons as that of Jews.

Another dimension of importance of Roma genocide commemoration articulated by the EU lies in the link it makes between the current vulnerability of the Roma communities across the Europe and reoccurring symbolic and physical violence against the Roma people. This logic connects the need to commemorate the Roma genocide victims with the necessity to acknowledge the prevailing marginalization of the Roma in European societies, as well as the responsibility of the dominant majorities to approach these issues as continuity. Based on this research, the memory of Roma genocide can also be positioned in another broad narrative of integration promoted by the EU. The framing of the need to recognize, commemorate and educate the EU citizens about the Roma genocide is extended to the temporal dimension, as the treatment (inclusion) of Roma is promoted by the EU as one of the conditions for societies' well-being in the present and future. In this story, the better future is beneficial for all stakeholders: for the Roma integration is presented as a tool to fight against prejudice and antigypsyism; the European societies would benefit both economically (for example, better integration leading to the active participation in labor market) and morally by being exposed

to the relatively unknown history of the biggest European minority; and for the EU itself as it corresponds to the fundamental ideas on which the EU builds its identity such as human rights, integration, and democracy.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to analyse the patterns of transnational commemoration of the Roma genocide, focusing on how and why the memory of it is being promoted by the EU. In other words, it is focused on the EU activities and justification of the need to remember the suffering experienced by Roma during the Holocaust. To better understand the nature of and motivation behind EU's activities, the concept of *memory entrepreneurs* is incorporated into this research. As a memory entrepreneur, the EU initiates/participates in certain memorial activities, and provides a specific justification of the necessity to commemorate it.

This research focuses on a specific case study of the establishment of the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, in which the EU was an instrumental actor. This thesis, however, does not aim to recreate the path of Roma genocide commemoration on the European level, nor it seeks to explain the so-called underwater streams of the decision-making processes in the EU. Instead, it aims to look into the story of the Roma genocide that is being told by the EU institutions and to analyse the ways in which it is being narrated. The EU is perceived in this thesis as an actor capable of mobilising resources to focus the attention to the issue of Roma genocide remembrance, establish its supported version of history and transform the commemoration of the Roma genocide into a tool that might be useful in its political agenda – the aspiration of better Roma integration into European societies.

The research of the EU practices of commemoration and the development of the narrative of remembrance of the Roma genocide leads to the conclusion that memory functions as a tool for the European Union to solve its Roma minority-related problems. In other words, by promoting the commemoration of the Roma genocide on the transnational level, the European Union employs it to promote the Roma integration into the European societies. Besides the official recognition and the establishment of a memorial day, the EU set the direction on how to communicate about the Roma genocide. This direction can be identified in reoccurring patterns of discursive statements, choice of vocabulary, logical structures of documents and speeches. In this way the EU disseminates a very coherent narrative of the Roma genocide which is (together with the reasoning of the significance of recognition, commemoration and education) further reproduced. Moreover, the 2nd of August is both a discourse-shaping material to create and promote special narratives about the Roma genocide in a field of memory, and a mobilizing tool to reach the public and bring its attention to certain issues.

It is important to notice that this thesis doesn't delve in the lobbying processes behind the decisions of the EU institutions, something that should be researched more in the future. Although it acknowledges the existence of complicated procedures that happen during the process of decision making, it only focuses on the official policies, coordination tools, documents and funding instruments of the EU pointed to the promotion of the recognition and commemoration of the Roma genocide. Therefore, the activities of other actors (including the Roma groups) are left out of the scope of this research. The design of this research was created taking into account the fact that the EU is not a monolith unit, but an actor containing different (semi)autonomous institutions. However, in most of the cases an official unified EU position on various issues, starting from the idea of our European history to common European values, is being coherently articulated in the documents and statements and implemented in practice of its institutions. In addition, it would also be interesting to understand how member-states' commemorations are influenced by the EU policy.

This research covers only one element of the broad field of research of transnational Roma genocide remembrance, but theoretical framework made for this thesis and its findings could be applied to analyse similar cases of other Holocaust victims' remembrance. For example, this research proves that an actor-centered approach to analyse transnational processes of memory production can give some valuable insights. As this research is based on an empirical insight from the case study, proving that the EU incentives served as a transnational push to commemorate the Roma genocide on the local level, the further research of the transnational memory of Roma genocide could shift the focus back to the state level and implement a large-scale comparative analysis of the case studies (focusing on regional locations or the Member States of the EU). Moreover, the issue of Roma genocide commemoration could be approached from the perspective of human rights, because a degree, to which a political community is willing to recognize and respect the memory of those who suffered in the past, is linked to the creation of norms associated with human rights. Such norms (for example, "never again" regarding the Holocaust) are the foundations of moral underpinnings of democratic political orders.

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