

Preparation of the landscape- architectural competition Lety u Písku

The Memorial to the Holocaust of the Roma and Sinti in Bohemia

Record from the 1st consultation afternoon

May 2019

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1 Introduction

In cooperation with the company ONplan, the Museum of Romani Culture is currently preparing an architectural competition for the future design of the Memorial in Lety.

The preparation of the competition follows a series of public debates on the issue of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti and the future form of the Memorial from 2018. The debates took place in Brno, Prague and Lety. The museum collected suggestions on its website and organized three discussion round tables in cooperation with Romea.cz. In March in Prague with the subtitle "Return of Dignity to the Memorial at Lety u Písku", in April a round table in Lety on the future form of the place for the general public, including the citizens of Lety and neighboring municipalities and in May with the Romea.cz and the Prague Forum for Roma History and the Roma Studies Seminar, a discussion on the current research of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti in the Czechoslovak context.

1.1 Involvement of the main participants in the project

The main participants in the project are involved in the preparation of the competition.

The competition assignment is actively created by the working group. It consists mainly of the representatives of the Museum of Romani Culture (they participate in the preparation of the competition to the greatest extent) and the bereaved. The working group has been meeting in Prague or Brno twice a month from the beginning of April.

The outputs of the working group are and will be consulted with the selected main participants. The consultation will take place in the form of two consultation afternoons. The first consultation afternoon took place on May 24, 2019, the second on June 24. More than 100 representatives of the following groups of participants were invited to the consultation afternoon:

- the bereaved of the victims of the Lety camp;
- **the representatives of the Roma groups** who expressed their opposition to the existence of a pig farm and the impossibility of worshipping their victims and those who suffered with dignity. We invited the representatives of Czech and Moravian Roma and Sinti, Slovak Roma, Roma living in the South Bohemian Region and prominent Roma personalities;
- **associations, initiatives dealing with the Roma and human rights issues** - for example only (not exhaustive) Committee for the Compensation of the Holocaust to the Roma in the Czech Republic, Civic Association Slovo 21, SRNM, Drom, IQ Roma Service, Romodrom, IN MINORITA, Association of Roma Representatives of the Liberec Region, KONEXE, Open Society Fund, Výbor dobré vůle (Committee of Good Will) - Olga Havlová Foundation, Tolerance Foundation, IHRA, IN Iustitia, NFOH, Živá paměť (Living Memory), Terezin Initiative Institute, Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Church, Orthodox Church, ROMEA, Romano džaniben, Heidelberg Roma and Sinti Central Council, International Sinti Assembly, Helsinki citizens assembly, European Grassroots Antiracist Movement and others

- Non-Roma personalities openly supporting the Roma minority;
- state or state-run organizations - the Government Council for Roma Minorities, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, the Lidice Memorial, the Terezín Memorial, the Příbram Mining Museum, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic;
- **professional and academic institutions** - Department of Central European Studies, Roma Studies Seminar (Charles University, Faculty of Arts), Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic- Prague Forum for Roma History, Department of Archeology - University of West Bohemia, Czech Chamber of Architects, Institute of History, Academy of Sciences; Skutek Association, Czech Chamber of Architects
- . • **Project funding partners:** Ministry of Finance - National Focal Point for EEA and Norway Grants in the Czech Republic, Falstad Center (Norway), Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway, Embassy of Germany, Embassy of the USA.

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On May 22, a **meeting with residents of municipalities adjacent to the Memorial**, where the evaluation of the current situation and the expectations or concerns of local residents were discussed, took place. The Representatives of these municipalities will also be invited for the second consultation afternoon.

Individual negotiations with the owners of neighboring land, the representatives of the surrounding municipalities of the South Bohemian Region and some state administration bodies are ongoing.

1.2 Objectives of the 1st consultation afternoon

The suggestions presented in this document are a record of suggestions arising from the 1st consultation afternoon.

The objective of the meeting was to introduce the present situation of the Lety Memorial, the intention to build Lety u Písku, Memorial to the Holocaust of the Roma and Sinti in Bohemia and to organize an architectural competition.

After the introductory presentation, the participants had the opportunity of individual consultations with the representatives of the Museum of Romani Culture and the company ONplan on three topics: the current state of the Memorial, the mission of the Memorial, and the architectural competition. The objective of the individual consultations was the opportunity to learn more details and to get comments on these topics.

1.3 The course of the consultation afternoon

The consultation afternoon took place on May 24, 2019 at the Nostic Palace, at the site of the Ministry of Culture, on Friday 24 May from 15:00 to 19:00.

To the first consultation afternoon, it was possible to arrive during its entire course - from 15:00 to 19:00. The information presented in the introductory presentation could be found at the standpoints for individual topics until 17:30.

On behalf of the Museum of Romani Culture, the Director of the museum Jana Horváthová, Anita Topínková, Štěpán Štarha, Anna Vrtálková, Dušan Slačka and Kristýna Čajkovičová took part in the consultation afternoon. Petr Návrat, Karolína Koupalová, Olga Škochová and Eva Dubcová attended on behalf of the ONplan company, which is responsible for the preparation and organization of the competition.

The meeting started at 15:15, when the Director of the Museum of Romani Culture welcomed the participants present.

Subsequently, Petr Návrat from the company ONplan presented the objectives and agenda of the meeting, explaining how the main participants are involved in the preparation of the competition. Štěpán Štarha introduced the current state of the Memorial, sources of financing of the project preparation and implementation, the museum Director presented the mission of the Memorial and at the end of the introductory part of the program, Karolína Koupalová presented the basic parameters of the competition and its schedule. The introductory presentation is attached to this document.

After the presentations, at three standpoints, the participants had the opportunity to obtain more detailed information on the current state and funding of the Memorial, the future and mission of the Memorial, and the architectural competition from the representatives of the Museum of Romani Culture and the company ONplan and to convey their suggestions and express their expectations.

2 Record of suggestions and reactions to them

Suggestion	Reaction
Focus of the Memorial on young generation	

<p>In Lety there should be an exhibition that will speak the current language so that it is interesting for the young generation, for future generations - for example, the use of various media, virtual reality is considered.</p>	<p>The timelessness, clarity and attractiveness of the message for the young and future generations will be one of the basic requirements of the competition. Educating the young generation to understand the memento of the past, seeing parallels to the current situation, moving education towards tolerance and democracy is one of the fundamental missions of the Memorial.</p>
<p>Schools, the 8th and 9th grades, are a key target group as well as secondary schools that should complete the educational programs on the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti in the context of teaching the history of the 20th century.</p>	<p>Educational programs, which will be prepared in parallel with the preparation of the project, will mainly target older primary and secondary school students. Nevertheless, education will be prepared for other age groups as well.</p> <p>The competition will also include a list of means to interpret the history of the camp, the history of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti. Among them will be, apart from others, audio and video recordings of the memories of witnesses, documentaries and also there will be a possibility of using virtual reality.</p>
<p>It would be appropriate to initiate the production of a documentary by Czech Television, which would map the stories of witnesses, their descendants, their view of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti. No such comprehensive document exists at present.</p>	<p>We expect that the preparation and implementation of the Memorial will mean, among other things, increasing the interest in the theme of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti in Bohemia and Moravia as an integral part of Czech history. We believe that in the future there will be partners to make such a documentary.</p>

Work with the stories of the individuals

At the Memorial it should be intensively worked with authentic memories of witnesses, their descendants, but also with authentic records of the fight for the destruction of the pig farm.

One of the themes of the Memorial will be to show where the reduction of an individual to a mere part of the mass leads. In the Memorial, the story of the Roma and Sinti from the First Republic should be told today mainly through the stories of individuals and their families. The aim will be to show the Roma and Sinti not only as victims but also as participants in the resistance against violence, injustice.

For example, the use of authentic records of witnesses' memories, documentaries, and photographs can be used to tell individual stories.

Names of the victims

There should be names of victims in the Memorial. The names of the deceased ancestors are important to the Roma, as they are the first to be looked for. However, the list is not complete.

The list of victims should include the name, date of birth and date of death.

Creating a suitable space for the names of victims and basic information about them will be part of the competition. Since the list of names is not complete, architects will work with the requirement to create an "open" list.

The process of establishing the Memorial in Lety should also include efforts to encourage the processing of a database of prisoners in the camp, database of victims of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti, to initiate targeted scientific research. A representative of the German embassy encouraged communication with the embassy on the possible funding of this research by the German side. At present, the history of the Roma is better mapped than the one of the Sinti.

The sources for this database are, according to the discussers, among other things:

District archive in Třeboň, Gypsy camp fund - these are documents that have been produced mainly by supervisory staff whose information value is thus limited.

Book of the deceased of the parish office in Mirovice, registries and other archives.

The Museum of Romani Culture is aware of this gap in research and plans to take into account the possibility of modifying the list of victims in the future in the Memorial, probably in such a way that the list that will be placed at the Memorial can be modified or updated in the future.

The Museum of Romani culture is in constant contact with the German Embassy and will deal with them in this matter as well.

The Terezín Initiative Institute, with which the Museum of Romani Culture is in constant contact, is already working on the database of victims of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti.

Victims executed by April 5, 43 are perhaps registered in the funds of Pankrác Prison.

It is necessary to coordinate the activities of various participants involved in mapping the Holocaust of Roma and Sinti.

Of course, the activities of various Museum of Romani Culture entities are closely monitored and often also part of them, for example the Museum of Romani Culture representatives are members of the working group for the database the ITA creates.

	Likewise, the Museum of Romani Culture employees are members of IHRA, cooperate with the Prague Forms for Roma History and other foreign and Czech organizations.
The involvement of the main participants in the creation of the competition assignment	
<p>According to one of the participants, it is not participation, it is just an alibi. It is not correct to talk only to the survivors' representatives.</p> <p>There are foreign companies that are interested in the project and they are not here.</p>	<p>More than 100 representatives of the survivors, who were actively involved in the initiatives to buy the pig farm in Lety, have been interested in the events concerning the Memorial, or deal with the history of the Holocaust to the Roma and Sinti and human rights in general (see above in section 1. 1.) were invited to the consultation afternoon. Foreign partners interested in this issue were addressed (eg IHRA, EGAM, Central Council of Roma and Sinti in Heidelberg and others).</p>
Pig farm demolition	
<p>According to the initial presentation, the Museum of Romani Culture plans to dismantle and sell pig farm silos. These silos, together with stables, form the landscape dominant of the area.</p> <p>As far as I know, architects who plan to preserve such landmarks and want to integrate them into the future Memorial are going to participate in the competition.</p> <p>Therefore, it should be considered that the demolition of silos should wait until the results of the competition are known.</p>	<p>In these matters, it is always necessary to take into account the obligation of the museum to reduce the costs associated with the management and maintenance of the premises (present and future), the requirement for economical management of entrusted property and the actual effort to preserve the memory of the place.</p> <p>Currently, only laminate containers have been electronically auctioned.</p>