

ANTIGYPSYISM IN AUSTRIA

ROMANO  CENTRO

Romano Centro, special edition no. 83, November 2015

Incident documentation 2013 – 2015

Information for victims and witnesses

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ROMANO CENTRO – ASSOCIATION FOR ROMA PEOPLE

Romano Centro was founded in 1991 as one of the first Roma self-organisation in Austria. It represents Roma people from various groups. The main areas of the association’s activities are culture and education; in the last few years its activities in legal and social counselling as well as in anti-racism work has increased. Since November 2015, *Romano Centro* has also established “Romano Zuralipe – A Programme to Strengthen Roma people on the Labour Market”.

The association publishes the *Romano Centro* magazine four times a year, provides learning assistance to 120 children, employs four Roma school mediators at eight Vienna schools, offers social and women’s counselling, works to address racism and assists victims, organises events and keeps a specialised library. *Romano Centro* offers workshops and hosts lectures.

Our work is supported by: the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the European Social Fund, the City of Vienna, Open Society Initiative, Wiener Spendenparlament, respekt.net and Zukunftsfonds (Future Fund of the Republic of Austria).

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PREFACE

Today, for the second time, we are publishing a report on anti-gypsy incidents in Austria. Our motivation in doing so is twofold: we would like to make the public aware of this issue and provide information about the workings and effects of antigypsyism. In addition, we would like to give people who have been affected by antigypsy discrimination the support to report it and defend themselves.

In 2013, we published the first Antigypsyism Report in Austria in which 82 incidents were documented. The report triggered a large media response: many renowned media sources reported on the press conference and quoted individual incidents from the report.

Fortunately, the ÖBV (Österreichischer Bundesverlag Schulbuch

GmbH & Co. KG) contacted us and asked, from our point of view, how the problematic terms (“Gypsy”) should be dealt with in school dictionaries and how we assess the depiction of Roma and Sinti people in Austrian school textbooks. In the planned new edition of the Austrian school dictionary there will be a chapter on dealing with discriminatory, pejorative words; such words will be marked in the reference section and the respective marking will refer to the explanatory chapter. The ÖBV will share the explanations that refer to antigypsy words with us so that we can comment on them.

From our point of view, the public discussion about “Roma” people has narrowed further to the debate on beggars. We notice this at workshops and discussions and it is also evident in the media: this year, at the 20th year remembrance day of the pipe bomb assassination attempt in Oberwart in 1995, many media sources had to point out the “beggar problem” in their reports, even though there is obviously no connection between the two topics. A pleasant exception is the media reports about the “Romane Thana – Places of the Roma and Sinti” exhibit, put on by Romano Centro to-

gether with Initiative Minderheiten, the Landesmuseum Burgenland and the Wien Museum.

Thank you!

We thank all our cooperation partners without whose support this report could not have been produced. The organisations that document antigypsy incidents and make these case descriptions available to us after anonymising them, are of particular importance hereby: ZARA – Civil Courage and Anti-Racism Work, the Ketani Association for Sinti and Roma in Linz, the Roma Association and Karika Association in Oberwart, the Department for Ethnic Groups of the Eisenstadt Diocese, the Bettellobby Tirol, Pax Christi Tirol, the Phurdo Association Salzburg, The Upper Austria Bettellobby and the Steiermark Anti-Discrimination Office.

Furthermore, we also thank our editing team, especially Ferdinand Koller and Bente Giesselmann for preparing this report, and also to Nikolai Schreiter for his contribution to the antigypsy image of the “begging mafia”. /

Vienna, November 2015

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10 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ANTIGYPSYISM

Antigypsyism is a subject that gets little social or media attention and it is a subject that often raises many questions. Romano Centro knows many of these questions from its experience in workshops and lectures. We do our best to answer the most important ones here.

What exactly does “antigypsyism” mean?

Antigypsyism denotes – similar to the term anti-Semitism – a certain type of racism, namely towards people who are attributed as being “Gypsies” or who behave in a “Gypsy-like” way. The term not only denotes the actual discriminations or assaults but also indicates the underlying ideology.

But people shouldn’t say “Gypsy” any more. Isn’t “racism against Roma people” a more suitable term?

There is no perfect term to describe a complex social phenomenon. It’s true, “Gypsy” is a derogatory xenophobic term. That’s why it is ideal for describing this type of racism: it is not “Roma” people that are being rejected for who they really are, but “Gypsies” for the way society represents them. It’s about projecting certain characteristics onto a group. The term antigypsyism tries to describe this resentment and the effects thereof and to designate this specific type of racism. It is also clear that it is never just Roma or Sinti people that are affected by this type of racism, of accusing someone of being “gypsy-like”, e.g. beggars or Yenish people, a socially marginalised group that was also active in

travelling trades. The terms “racism against Roma people” or “anti-Romaism” are criticised for suggesting that the prejudices have something to do with the actual behaviour of the persons concerned.

What is so bad about “Gypsy”?

The term “Gypsy” has long been used in the German-speaking regions (“Zigeuner”) and did not always describe an ethnic group. For hundreds of years it was used to label people who did not comply with the norm (especially settling); only in the 19th century was the term given increasingly ethnic components. It was especially used by police to identify and make a list of people who had a certain type of lifestyle, and to harass them. During the Nazi regime, “Gypsy” became a racist category, however people who were not Roma or Sinti were also persecuted because they lived in a “gypsy-like” manner in the opinion of the persecutors. The term “Gypsy” always implies negative, racist attributions, which is why it is repudiated as being discriminating. “Roma” can also hold this attribution, however it is a self-chosen term with another meaning.

What do these attributions look like?

There is a number of historically accumulated prejudices. The core of the stereotypical image is that “Gyp-

sies” are not (yet) as civilised as the majority of society, that they form an archaically parallel society and that they cannot or do not want to integrate. They are the opposite of the well-behaved citizen and the hard-working farmers. This overall image consists of at least three prejudices:

1. A lack of identity is assumed: “nomadism”, “lack of religious beliefs”, “homelessness”.
2. There is the idea that they maintain parasitic economic activities, in other words, they do not produce anything themselves, they are “afraid of work”, live off of others by “begging”, being “con artists”, “theft” or by “abusing the social system”.
3. Then there is also the idea that they lack discipline and rationality: prejudices like “unbridled passion”, “constant dancing”, “living for the moment”, but also images like “dirt” and “garbage” or the idea that they cannot abide by rules or by the law.

But everyone knows that Roma people are the “travelling people”!

Antigypsy prejudices are often not reflected on and recognised as such, that’s why they are always considered to be “true knowledge”. These stereotypes are taught and learned, for instance, there are many examples in literature that contain the stereotypical “Gypsy” image. This image is hardly ever questioned and

¹ As this publication is made in a German speaking context, the explanations on the term “Gypsy” refer to the German word “Zigeuner”.

10 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ANTIGYPSYISM

unfortunately there are only limited opportunities to learn something about the history and current situation of Roma people. Anyone who knows something about the Roma people knows travelling trades were one of the few opportunities that many families had to earn an income. However, many Roma people in Europe have been sedentary for centuries; they settled, insofar as was possible for them. Antigypsy “knowledge” can have fatal consequences, as the “Maria incident” demonstrated: After a blonde girl was discovered with a Greek Roma family in 2013, the media world was certain that kidnapping had to be involved. The stereotype overrode all reason in this case and consequently there was a search for missing children amongst “the Roma”. In Ireland, children were taken away from their own parents because kidnapping was also suspected there. Ultimately it turned out that neither Maria or the other children were “stolen”.

But music and dancing aren't negative attributions, are they?

Nonetheless, they are attributions. Naturally there is a rich musical tradition. However, the stereotype is that they have music “in their blood”. It also implies that “Gypsies” can't do anything except play music, which is not recognised as “proper” work. Attributions of lack of discipline or cruising around are romantic projections, so to speak as an alternative to living in the modern performance-oriented society, free from all obligations. Ultimately

however, it is none other than another valuation of the same racist attributions of “homelessness” and “fear of work”.

Isn't it true that many Roma people live in ghettos and don't send their kids to school?

Unfortunately, yes. However the reason is not in their culture, but in century-long discrimination and marginalisation that have led to a very serious social situation in many countries. It is important not to ethnicize social problems: those people do not live that way because “as Roma” they can't help it or don't want to help it, but because the lack of social participation does not permit any other kind of life. There is less poverty and less problems in those places where there is less discrimination and marginalisation. Antigypsyism is not only a mind-set, but also has a huge impact on the real lives of those people who are affected.

Who is affected by antigypsyism in Austria?

Antigypsyism affects everyone who could potentially be affected by it. This manifests itself mainly in fear and shame: Roma and Sinti people in particular often hide their ethnic origins and/or are afraid that someone will find out about “it”. Young people from these ethnic groups often speak of “coming out” when they tell their friends that they are Roma for the first time. People who fit into these stereotypes are also affected: beggars, street musicians or migrants from Southeast Europe.

Also the Yenish people, who were also persecuted as “Gypsies” during the Nazi regime.

Who thinks and acts in an antigypsy way?

Antigypsyism is more the rule rather than the exception, because there is little sensibility and reflection regarding the prejudices. Most people in Austria have antigypsy prejudices. This has an effect on behaviour and actions, as is demonstrated in schools, for instance: teachers often claim that Roma children smell or always suspect them first of theft, when something goes missing in the class. Or landlords who believe that Roma people are uncivilised and therefore do not want to give them an apartment.

Is there any research?

Unfortunately there is no research on the current state of antigypsyism in Austria; the 2013 Antigypsyism Report was the first publication ever on the subject. A study on the education situation of Roma and Sinti people² also showed that antigypsyism is a problem in schools. In Germany, there are studies on the antigypsy attitudes of the population that show that prejudices are widespread and the denial rate is very high. It is very important that more research be done in order to better confront the problem and draw more attention to it. /

² Mikael Luciak für die Initiative Minderheiten (Hg.): Roma-Bildungs- und Ausbildungsstudie (ROMBAS) – Studienbericht, Wien 2014.

THE “BEGGING MAFIA” – AN ANTIGYPSY CONCEPT

The idea of the “begging mafia” is on everybody’s lips. It is considered to be a type of “organised crime” that essentially would consist of beggars not begging for themselves, but for others, under coercion.

By Nikolai Schreiter

Already in 2004, in one of the first articles of Austrian print media, in which the term „begging mafia“ is found, a policeman says: „We know from experience that we cannot prove that the Slovaks do not beg voluntarily. That would then be coercion. But they do not speak against the organisers.“ Because it is implied that these would threaten them. Also „the victims do not often see themselves as such“.

Antigypsyism is contained in many ways in the concept of the „begging mafia“. The second word, „mafia“, means a criminal organisation that operates undercover, is hierarchically structured and aimed towards making money with dishonest means. The idea of „gangs“ also reverberates in the word „mafia“ in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, the criminal gang that often appear in the term „organised beggar gang“; on the other hand the family gang that is associated with the idea of „clan“ or „tribe“, as is customary in mafia movies. The antigypsy image of hierarchically and archaically organised „Gypsy clans“ is a template for the idea of the „begging mafia“.

Antigypsy content is also found in the first word of „begging mafia“: begging. The core of antigypsyism is the century-old „Gypsy“ image.

One of its essential elements is the insinuation that they make their living without working. This „non-work“ takes on various shapes in antigypsyism: from stealing and begging to peddling. These designations often contain the accusation of living off of what one finds, which however already had a previous owner. Begging at least implies the agreement of those who give. But because begging is also considered a „trait“ of those identified as „Gypsies“, like stealing, people are not only afraid of being approached by beggars but of also being robbed by them. That is why theft and break-ins that are committed by Romanian citizens, are often attributed to „beggars“ in the media.

When speaking of the „begging mafia“, it is implied or explicitly emphasised that it is an „Eastern European begging mafia“. This primarily means that people who beg are excluded from Austrian society, that they are strangers – again in accordance with supposed „Gypsiness“ – who wander and take anything that they can get. In addition to non-work, the insinuation of „rootlessness“, as opposed to civil sedentariness, is another central element of antigypsy resentment that is found in the idea of the „Eastern European begging mafia“.

There is no evidence of the existence of a „begging mafia“. In the few cases where „organisers“ were convicted, it was not a matter of large networks with rich „capos“, but coercion among the poor, in part within families. These offences should not be relativized, but they are not proof that all beggars are part of a „mafia“. The ongoing repetition of the stereotypical image of the „beggars mafia“ leads to all social interactions among beggars being adduced as „evidence“ of the existence of an „organisation“ or a „mafia“. Speaking to each other, driving together or living together is considered a clear indication of „organised“ criminal activity, for this group only.

The image of the „begging mafia“ leads to legitimization being taken away from people who are affected by poverty. They are not really poor, but part of a sophisticated criminal business model. Although this image, riddled with antigypsy stereotypes, does not have much to do with the real life of people who beg in Austria, it has an effect on their lives. Giving money to a person in need becomes undesired behaviour and naive support of an „organised gang“. Many people are uncertain and no longer give anything, which leads to the people who beg receiving even less income. /

MEDIA

The depiction of “Roma” people or of “beggars” in the media is often in line with antigypsy stereotypes, whereby both terms are often used synonymously. Roma are usually only depicted in relation to things other than begging, music or criminal activity when Roma associations make active efforts to provide these depictions. Openly racist articles are rare, but focusing and limiting to only certain subjects like begging increases resentment. In addition to the image of the “begging mafia” (see pg. 7), the derogatory language that is used is also noticeable in articles about “Roma beggars”: “dwelling” instead of “residing”, “being carted”, “clan” or “tribe” instead of family and “gang” instead of “group”. These terms contribute to the solidification of the image of the criminal minority and also fuels the idea of an archaic way of life.

1 / CAMPAIGN AGAINST BEGGARS IN THE KRONEN /

In January 2014, the *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper published a series of articles in numerous federal states, wherein it pretended to have uncovered the intrigues of the „begging mafia“. For the article the *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper used photos from a report in *National Geographic* (German edition, September 2012). The *National Geographic* report was about wealthy Roma families in Romania, who earn well and live in big houses thanks to metal trading and metalworking. It was not about criminal activity. In an interview with the *New York Times* in April 2013, both photographers, Ivan Kashinsky and Karla Gachet, emphasised what they wanted to show with this report: “We wanted to break the image of Gypsies in the street, begging where cars stop, stealing whatever they can and living in total poverty”.

The *Kronen Zeitung* however, made up a story to go with these photos about the „begging mafia“ and claimed that the big houses in the photos belong to the „organisers“ of the people who beg in Graz, Salzburg or Linz. There are even articles wherein the *Krone* pretends they did the research, and others wherein they stress that the „US magazine“

has uncovered the „beggar organiser scam“. It was also implied that the „clans“ that live in these houses were also responsible for numerous metal thefts in Austria. They were supposedly also responsible for the begging on the streets in Austrian city centres: „Plus there is the rotten business they do with their own native people, who are carted to Vienna and Salzburg, among other places, by the busful. These people are forced to beg and to handover the change they receive, while the gang bosses earn a fortune. They do not seem to care at all about the suffering and inhumane conditions associated with it, which can also clearly be observed in Salzburg.“

Romano Centro and other readers report this article to the *Press Council*, which conducts an *independent procedure* and as a result discovers a violation of the journalistic code of honour. At *National Geographic* the editing staff in charge in Hamburg is initially shocked and consider taking legal action against the *Krone*. Ultimately, *National Geographic* can't even make up their mind to publicly distance themselves from this smear campaign.

Johann Gudenus (*FPÖ Vienna*) broaches the subject and in a press release demands tightening the Viennese Security Law. In so doing he refers to the *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper's fictitious „documentation from *Natio-*

nal Geographic, which illuminates the luxury lifestyle of godfathers in their Romanian homeland“ (see Incident No. 17).

2 / “ROMA COLONY TERRORISES KNITTELFELDER” /

On 26/06/2014, an article is published in *www.regionaljournal.at* about people who beg, reporting on how they live in tent camps and that there is a problem with garbage disposal. Furthermore, it also reports that some of the beggars behave „aggressively“. The article is given the exaggerated and derogatory title „Roma colony terrorises Knittelfelder“.

3 / “MOBILE ETHNIC MINORITY” IN THE KRONEN ZEITUNG NEWSPAPER /

On 06/08/2014, the *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper publishes an article about a group that committed insurance and credit fraud. The culprits are described as belonging to a „mobile ethnic minority“, which signifies a clear and inadmissible attribution of the Roma ethnic group. It was not clear whether the term „mobile ethnic minority“ originated from the police or from the *Kronen*

Zeitung newspaper. In the last few years it has become entrenched as an alleged neutral code word for police and media when describing the Roma people.

4 / “HELP YOURSELF” - LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN THE KRONEN ZEITUNG NEWSPAPER /

On 14/04/2014, a letter to the editor is published in the Tyrolean edition of the *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper titled „Help yourself“ with the following wording: „The authorities say ‚We are powerless‘ in regard to the illegal Gypsy camps in Tyrol. How are we supposed to understand this? Does it mean they have given up against a couple of Gypsies? Then we need to elect people with more backbone. As a child in the 30’s, I remember that Gypsies were only

³ The term „Endlösung“ was used by the Nazis to describe the genocide against the Jews in World War II.

allowed to stay in the same spot for 24 hours. After that the order was: decampment. Why was it possible back then? One time in Salzburg, a farmer couldn’t get rid of Gypsies on his own land because the police was ‚powerless‘ there as well. He was able to drive out the undesirables by spreading liquid manure over his fields. People, help yourself and God will help you!“

5 / CARPET GANG /

On 21/12/2013, the *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper reported on a group of fraudsters who cleaned carpets at high prices and supposedly switched the valuable ones for cheap ones. The first name and first letter of the last name of the suspects are listed – with the addition „all of them Roma or Sinti“.

This reference to ethnic affiliation was missing in an online article on

kronen.at from the day before. Nonetheless, the Roma were hounded severely in the comments: One user described the depicted men as „Transylvanian roaming insects“. Another says: „Gypsies... they all have the same face... casualties of inbreeding“. A third person even demands genocide: „Bitte um ENDLÖSUNG (A plea for the FINAL SOLUTION)³“. *Romano Centro* presses charges for endorsement of the Nazi genocide (Prohibition Statute).

6 / “ROMA-CLAN” /

An example of derogatory language being used in relation to Roma people comes from the daily newspaper *Der Standard* from 01/04/2014. The article deals with the conflict between *Caritas* and city politics surrounding the opening of an establishment in Klagenfurt for people who beg. The term „beggar“ and

THE AUSTRIAN PRESS COUNCIL

The Austrian Press Council monitors compliance with the principles of journalistic work, the so-called code of honour for the Austrian press. It is responsible for print media and their online presence. The code of honour prohibits, among other things, making sweeping suspicions and the revilement of people or groups of people as well as any discrimination based on age, disability, gender, ethnicity, national, religious, sexual, ideological or other reasons. Personal defamation, revilement and persiflage also infringe on the ethos of journalism.

Media source that profess to the responsible practice of freedom of the press, can voluntarily submit themselves to be audited by the Council on specific occasions. The *Kronen Zeitung* newspaper did not submit itself.

There are two ways to complain to the *Press Council*, for instance about a racist article: an *independent procedure* can be initiated by anyone by reporting an ethical violation by the media in print media (as well as those not subject to the *Press Council*) or on an affiliated website. The *Press Council*’s decisions are published regularly. A *complaint procedure* can only be initiated by people that are individually affected by the disputed report. An arbitration agreement can be concluded between the affected person and the media source. The media sources that are members of the *Press Council* have generally subjected themselves to its arbitration. In the complaint procedure the imprint of the *Press Council*’s decision can be enforced in the affected media source.

MEDIA

„Roma“ are used synonymously, as if all Roma people were beggars and all beggars were Roma people. Furthermore, the derogatory word „Roma tribe“ was used instead of talking about a group or a family. In another article in the *Standard* from 21/10/2015, a woman is described as a „clan elder“.

7/ „MOBILE FAMILY-CLANS“ /

Like Incident 3 demonstrates, offenders are often not explicitly described as „Roma“ or „Gypsy“ but identified (as a foreigner) as being Roma by using other descriptions. The *Kurier* gives us a good example of this in an article from 01/12/2014 titled „Punch mugs: the new gold mine for gangs of thieves“. The article is

about the organised petty crimes of Eastern European offenders. It describes how children are trained in training camps to steal the punch mugs at Christmas markets. The ethnic affiliation is indirectly clarified by the following sentence: „Two very mobile family-clans are behind this gang crime.“

8/ „GYPSIES“ IN RATTENBERG /

The Tyrolean regional newspaper *Rofan-Kurier* published two articles about „Gypsies“ in Rattenberg. In the first article from 01/07/2014, titled „Summertime is camping time in Rattenberg“, the supposedly intolerable conditions are described caused by a few campers in a parking lot.

The „travelling people“ are portrayed as a problem that can't be solved because the police do not have the legal means to take action against the misconduct of the campers. In the second article from 29/09/2015, the derogatory term „Gypsy“ is used again, and it reports again, in the same slanderous style of the first article, about how the camping people have been relieving themselves publicly. The Press Council already demanded that the newspapers editors stop using the derogatory term „Gypsy“ after the first article.

Recommendations of the Council of Europe

In its *General Political Recommendations on Fighting Racism and Intolerance Against Roma/Gypsies*, the *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)* recommends, among other things, ensuring that the name used for the various Roma/Sinti communities is the one that the respective community would like to be referred to as. In addition, the awareness of the special responsibility of those working in the media should be encouraged, so that they do not spread prejudices while practising their profession and avoid reporting on incidents involving members of the Roma/Sinti community where the Roma/Sinti community as a whole is made responsible.

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RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST MEDIA

Time and again, antigypsy articles are found in FPÖ⁴-affiliated media, that are partially been rated as extreme right-wing media by the *Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW)*. The subjects of “begging”, EU-freedom of movement and “abuse of the social security system” are mainly covered. Although the talk is vaguely about “beggars” or “impoverished migrants” in many of the articles, the stereotypical image and associated captions (“Gypsies”, “wandering people”) make it clear that the Roma are meant thereby.

9/ EQUAL TREATMENT AS “SPECIAL TREATMENT”/

The request for a German Roma Association, access to education, work, the health system and guaranteeing living space for the Roma minority, and implementing EU law, is described as “insolent” by the Austrian newspaper *Aula* (7-8 2015). They want “special treatment, in other words, more money” - the request for equal treatment and activism for self-organisation is defamed as preferential treatment and as “demanding pity”.

10/ “BEGGAR RIFF-RAFF”/

In the October 2013 issue of the *Aula* (10/2013), the liberal District Representative of Bozen, Reinhard Gaiser calls for “cleaning up” the city of “loitering parasites” and “antisocial, riff-raff that can’t be integrated” with a “strict begging ban”. The “begging people” (described as “Gypsies” in the caption) harass the population especially before Christmas and make a profit through mafia-style structures and feigned disability. “Aggressive begging” and calls for cracking down are regular topics in extreme right-wing media with titles like “Beggars that beat in Krems” (*Aula* 5/2014) or “Beggar terror” (*Aula* 11/2014).

⁴FPÖ: Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party).

11/ “GENETICALLY PREDISPOSED TO BE AFRAID OF WORK”/

In a reader’s letter in the *Aula* magazine (6/2014), a reader writes about “unscrupulous swindle of well organised, ethnic gangs” and gives a suggestion to “respectable Romanians” on how to deal with “a certain ethnicity” in their country, who are “perhaps even genetically predisposed to be afraid of work”: “One could, like we once did, place them in clean accommodations, e.g. barracks with full board, medical and cultural support, and use them for productive well-organised labour with remuneration.” Apart from the racist attributions, this reader relativizes genocide and transfigures extermination through forced labour in concentration camps to full board labour, which should be used to put the Roma people “back to work” today.

12/ ANTHEMING “OCCUPIED”/

In its 9/2013 edition, *Zur Zeit* reports on a “Group of Gypsies”, ironically and no less derogatory in their description as “rotating Europeans” and “mobile ethnic minority”, who “occupied” the field of a Salzburg farmer, destroying his harvest and attacking the farmer. Transient Roma people are described as

a harmful infestation in this article - a group of Roma people did actually camp on a field and paid the farmers a compensation after a dispute (*Der Standard* 03/09/2013). There was no mention of how soon after the group was attacked by adolescents in Bischofshofen close by.

13/ “THE GYPSIES ARE COMING”/

The weekly newspaper *Zur Zeit* published with emphasis on “The unloved minority” (issue 40/2010) and “Gypsy immigration: unloved marginal group” (issue 12/2013), both cf. Incident 18 in the 2013 Antigypsyism Report) plus a special issue titled “Poverty migration: the Gypsies are coming” (5/2014). Although many authors write about the opening of the labour market and the immigration of Eastern European migrants, the title of the issue and various antigypsy captions make it clear that they are actually propagating a “Gypsy immigration problem”. All the authors maintain the usage of racist terms to describe foreigners. They imply that the Roma people are members of a “culture that is foreign to Europeans” who have only migrated to Germany and Austria to “abuse the social system”: “Many immigrants try to get illegal income or pursue begging”. The subject of “abusing the social system” is a recurring theme in other right-wing media as well: after Ro-

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mania and Bulgaria joined the EU, Roma people immigrated in order to “fraudulently secure unemployment benefits using various tricks” so they can “fall back onto the social network” (fakten 2/2014).

The article “The not so merry Gypsy life” by Anna Krassnitzer for *Zur Zeit* 5/2014 depicts Roma people as being a particularly problematic ethnic group. The author represents the point of view that “when one sees them begging on the street...,...but rather disgracefully, alien and many even find it repulsive”. They “hoard everything that isn’t nailed down” and “they destroyed the infrastructure where

they came from”, they “drink and beat their wives because they also drink”. They are “nomads, uneducated, living their daily lives with no sense of time or property”, their “children, which Gypsies usually have a whole horde of, aren’t allowed to go to school”. Their world is “cold, dirty and hopeless”.

The *Press Council* initiates legal proceedings because of this last article declaring a serious infringement against the code of honour of the Austrian Press, because the ethnic group of Roma people was sweepingly denigrated and discriminated against in a way that violates human

dignity. The *Romano Centro* filed a complaint to the public prosecutor’s office, because of earlier editions of *Zur Zeit* and Anna Krassnitzer’s articles, but no legal proceedings were initiated. After a letter of protest, the Ministry of Justice concluded that the statements do not satisfy the offence of inciting hatred, because “the stereotypes depicted in the article were “just” derogatory disparagements and offensive statements, which however do not aim to awaken feelings of hate. There is no violation of human dignity, particularly as the right to humane treatment has in no way been denied.”

INCITING HATRED

The prohibition of inciting hatred in Austria is defined in Sect. 283 of the Penal Code as follows:

- (1) **Whoever publicly expressly prompts or provokes violence against a church or religious society or other criteria on the basis of “race”, skin colour, language, religion or ideology, nationality, ancestry or national or ethnic origin, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation of a member of such a group because of their affiliation in such a group, in a way that can endanger public order, is liable to a penalty of up to two years imprisonment.**
- (2) **Whoever stirs up hatred against a group as described in Sect. 1 in a way that is perceptible to the general public or reviles them in a way that violates human dignity thereby seeking to disparage them is also punishable.**

With an amendment in 2012, the offence was expanded to consider protected groups as well as the modalities of the committed offences, yet it still does not guarantee any effective protection against incitement of hatred. Firstly, because of the requirement of perceptibility for the general public, incitement of hatred on a smaller scale continues to go unpunished. Secondly, in practice it is difficult to prove the intent of all aspects of the offence (e.g. “thereby seeking to disparage them”). Thus abuse in a way that “violates human dignity” is only present, according to the jurisdiction, when the victims’ right to being human are absolutely disputed by the act. This would be the case if the affected group of affiliated people were described as “subhuman” or a statement is made that they should be “gassed”, “exterminated” or “they should all be cleared away”.

In 2013, after a group of adolescents in the Bischofshofen area incited violence on *Facebook* towards several travelling families, it led to convictions with conditional prison sentences in eight cases, after being reported by *Romano Centro* (see Case No. 61 in the 2013 Antigypsyism Report).

In 2016, an amendment to the criminal code is intended to state more precisely what the offence of incitement of hatred is and to expand on it. It remains to be seen whether this will actually bring more legal options against incitement of hatred or whether it will remain difficult to take legal action against scornful hate speech. Despite criticism, the legislator holds on to the term “race”, which implies that there are different “races of humans”.

POLITICS

Politicians are generally less sensitive to antigypsy prejudices and statements. The *Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)* in particular keeps bringing antigypsy statements, texts or posts to the foreground. The party in part severely propagates hate speech against Roma people and often portray them as a threat to the Austrian population or the welfare state. Unfortunately, only the *Green Party* has brought up antigypsyism for discussion as a problematic subject.

14/ THE ÖVP ELECTION CAMPAIGN /

The *Salzburg ÖVP (Austrian People's Party)* makes begging one of the main subjects of its election campaign for the municipal council elections on 09/03/2014. The party puts a poster up on a town sign with the title "Salzburg - City of organised begging gangs". However, the usage of antigypsy ideas (see the text on page 7) is not well received by the voters. The party loses more than 8 % compared to the results from the previous election.

15/ CAMPING BAN IN WELS /

On 18/11/2013, the Municipal Council of Wels creates a local police regulation that forbids camping on the trade fair grounds. The camping ban is aimed at travelling Roma families who have always camped on the trade fair grounds in Wels time and again. On April 2014, the country's Constitutional Office determines that the ban is illegal and discriminatory. However, the Municipal Council of Wels refuses to lift the regulation. The state government only exercises its power to lift the illegal regulation on 12/01/2015, which is why the illegal and discriminatory ban was

in place for over a year. Like many other critics, the Wels trade fair management also does not see the need for a ban. Despite the ban, travelling families are once again on the trade fair grounds in the summer of 2014. There are neither problems or charges laid during these stopovers. In the meantime, the city plans to set up a camping ground with a suitable infrastructure, which can be also be used by travelling Roma families, among others.

16/ "NOT COMPATIBLE WITH SEDENTARY CULTURES" /

In a report on *FPÖ-TV* from 21/11/2013, a threat scenario is outlined for Austria in regard to the upcoming opening of the labour market to Bulgaria and Romania. The presentation begins with talk of "social tourism", and the false claim that free access to the social system would be enabled by opening the labour market. It then emphasizes that it is mainly Roma people who live under the poverty line in these countries and that they have "no health insurance and hardly any education". A glimpse at Germany shows us what is imminent: pictures of a single apartment building in Duisburg are meant to illustrate that "so-called Gypsy slums [...] in Germany threaten social peace".

Harald Vilimsky, FPÖ General Secretary and member of the National Parliament at the time (Member of European Parliament since 2014) gives his input and speaks of "immense migration pressure" and demands to "severely reconsider the principle of the free movement of persons". The report then goes on about "organised beggar gangs" and several crimes are depicted that are also attributed to "Roma" people or "beggars". After the account of a murder the report says: "all of this is the fatal side effects of mass immigration from a foreign cultural group". This is followed directly by Vilimsky: "The travelling people, which the Roma and Sinti people are also described as, are in many cases incompatible with otherwise sedentary cultures".

17/ FPÖ PRESS RELEASE /

Shortly after the *Kronen Zeitung* propagated hate speech against the "Roma" people in a number of articles (see Incident No. 1), Johann Gudenus, the Club Chairman of the FPÖ Vienna, demands tightening the Vienna National Security Law, especially the provisions referring to begging. In this press release he refers to a "documentation from *National Geographic*, [that shows] the luxury life of the godfathers", which

however was invented by the editing team of the *Krone*. “Begging is always associated with mafia structures, human trafficking and enslavement” Gudenus says, and demands: “We have no alternative but to establish a general begging ban with a few exception zones, as is being planned in Graz. This is in the interest of the unfortunate victims that have to come up with the money for the mafia under degrading conditions, as well as in the interest of the Viennese citizens since the beggars are becoming criminal more often than average and also keep introducing highly infectious diseases.”

18 / PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IN VIENNA /

The Vienna FPÖ motioned to introduce a sectoral begging ban in the Vienna State parliament, which was debated in the session on 27/11/2014. The FPÖ parliamentarians argued strongly with antigypsy attributions in order to justify the begging ban in certain areas, because the “dreadful state of beggary” is no longer bearable for the population. Parliamentarian Wolfgang Seidl says: “The panhandled money - where does it go? We already heard that today as well. It goes to the organisers and the rich Roma clan bosses in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia. Of course a few individuals are earning a fortune by exploiting their fellow compatriots. In Romania and Bulgaria - and we know this - there are 30 to 40 capos respectively that divide up the country. Then you know where the money goes”. Parliamentarian Karl Baron speaks of a “real infesta-

tion of beggars. Foreign, especially Romanian, Bulgarian mafia organisations, that primarily consist of Roma organisations, attack Europe, so to speak, with their dreadful beggary, bother shopping streets, business people, and it is no longer tolerable in this way”. The image of the Roma people as a criminal minority is reinforced even more by descriptions of “breeding” criminals: How did this come about? Well, there are terrible stories, all of which are unfortunately true. There are training camps in Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia, where people are actually raised to beg - to beg, steal and for prostitution. And this is in the 20th century, in 2014 in Europe! And this is not acceptable in this way.” The proposal was denied. The Green Party move for a call to order for the statements made by Parliamentarian Baron because they are contemptuous of human rights. The Chairperson does not follow this view.

19 / INCITEMENT OF HATRED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL /

On 23/10/2013, Markus Gudenus, FPÖ District Council in Vienna Wieden, and brother of elected vice mayor, Johann Gudenus, posts the following comments on a link to an article in the *Österreich* daily newspaper: “Another popular sport amongst the Roma people is not only kidnapping children in order to collect more child benefits, but also misleading strangers on the street, in subways, etc. to then drug them with knock-out drops and rob them! These mobile minorities are mostly people who refuse to work and who

mainly try to get money with criminal means and beggary!”.

The article in the *Österreich* daily newspaper with the title “Venus Trap: a stranger takes a Viennese man out”, is about a woman who drugs a man and robs him. There is no talk of the ethnic affiliation of the alleged perpetrator. Markus Gudenus’s comments receive a “like” from many people, including Johann Gudenus. In early October 2015, Karl Öllinger, member of the national parliament from the Green Party and operator of the internet site *stopptdierechten.at*, yields an exposition of the facts because of suspicion of incitement of hatred at the Vienna public prosecutor’s office.

20 / COIN THEFT FROM FOUNTAINS /

On 14/05/2014, the FPÖ brings up a parliamentary question regarding “coin theft from decorative fountains”. The parliamentarians describe tossing coins into fountains as an “old folkloric custom” and claim that there have been many complaints that “primarily organised gangs climb into the decorative fountains and steal the coins” thereby destroying this custom. The basis for the question is an article on the FPÖ-compatible website *unzensuriert.at* (see also 36) with the title “Roma women fish the coin fountain empty” from 06/04/2014, citing an old photo of two women in a fountain in Vienna as the alleged evidence. The Ministry of the Interior answers the parliamentarian’s question saying that no information can be provided on that because there are no statistics on it.

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In daily situations – like going to a café or looking for an apartment – people are constantly faced with discrimination due to their (alleged) ethnic affiliation. The actual extent of such cases cannot be estimated, especially because the majority of these cases are not reported, either by victims or witnesses. The incidents presented here shockingly illustrate how people are affected by racist insults and discrimination in daily situations.

21 / DENIED TRAVEL /

Both the *Wiener Zeitung* as well as Hungarian media report on the following incident in June 2015: Ms. F, a Roma with Hungarian citizenship wanted to fly to Canada from the Vienna-Schwechat airport on April 8, 2015. The 60-year old academician took care of all the necessary aspects: she had a return flight ticket, enough money and the addresses of Canadian friends who vouched for her. Hungarian citizens do not need a visa to enter Canada. However, at the check-in counter of an Austrian airline at the Vienna-Schwechat airport, she was sent to an employee

of a private security company who was supposed to check her personal information again. Ms. F had to explain the purpose of her trip and where she got her cash money, and they asked for the telephone numbers of her Canadian friends to check whether they had actually invited her. Then she was not permitted to journey onwards by the employee of the security company: he did not reach her friends in Canada and the onward journey was therefore not possible. Later, Ms. F's friends said that they did not receive a phone call during that timeframe. Because similar incidents have transpired of Roma families being denied departure to Canada from the Vienna-Schwechat airport, the

concerned parties assume that they were not permitted into Canada because of their ethnic affiliation and/or dark skin colour.

22 / INSULTS THE TRAIN /

In October 2014, Ms. P takes the train from Wiener Neustadt towards Aspang. She observes the ticket inspector checking a young man from Romania who apparently does not have a ticket. The ticket inspector begins insulting the young man with racist insults and says: "I've already caught so many of you Gypsies today!" Ms. P reports the incident to the *ZARA* counselling centre and

DISCRIMINATION IN THE RESIDENTIAL SPHERE

The *Equal Treatment Law* prohibits discrimination based on ethnic affiliation when accessing housing. If, for instance, a rental agreement is denied, the affected party is entitled to compensation for economic loss and compensation for any personal detriment they suffered. In this case, compensation must be claimed at the applicable District Court, whereby the risk of litigation costs must be observed. The *Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft* (Equal Treatment Advocates) (<http://www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at/>) offers free legal counselling and support.

If apartments from the jurisdiction of the federal states are affected (e.g. community housing), the anti-discrimination laws of the federal states apply. In Vienna and Lower Austria, these laws demand, e.g. conducting a conciliation procedure before taking legal recourse: In this case, it is only possible to pursue the claim in court if the competent authority (NÖ: Anti-discrimination office, Vienna: Stelle zur Bekämpfung von Diskriminierungen (Agency Against Discrimination)), confirms that no agreement has been reached. If an agreement is reached the contract can be legally put through by both sides.

In Vienna, the *Wohnpartner* assist residents in community housing when there are conflicts with neighbours. This service is free and can be used by all residents in city housing systems.

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informs herself because she would also like to write a complaint to the ÖBB (Austrian Federal Railway) herself.

23 / VERBAL ABUSE IN THE APART- MENT BUILDING /

A property owner from Vienna turned to the ZARA counselling centre with the following problem. She rents out a number of apartments, one of them to a Hungarian-Slovakian family. Two other renters keep insulting them as „Slovak outsider!“ and „Gypsies“. These renters had even asked the property owner whether the house still belongs to her or whether „they“ can do what they want. She turns to ZARA because she is concerned and would like this discrimination to stop and is not sure what steps can be taken. She is coun-

selled there on various possible courses of action. It is decided to appoint the property owner's granddaughter to mediate between the two conflicting parties. This mediation soon demonstrates the desired success: the affected family is no longer insulted.

24 / HARASSMENT IN THE CAFÉ

On 03/05/2015, Ms. M is sitting in a café at the Linz central train station, when suddenly three men sitting at the next table begin to verbally abuse four other guests in the café because they are not speaking German with one another. Among other things, the guests are insulted as „Gypsies“. The waiter does nothing to stop the verbal abuse and continues to serve the racist guests. One of the affected individuals asks if he can speak to the manager. The waiter says that the manager is not

there, whereupon the affected guests leave the café. Ms. M reports the incident to ZARA and gets information about how to act in such a situation. ZARA explains the options but she then decides not to take further action.

25 / VERBAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN /

In July 2015, an older resident of an apartment building complex in Oberwart often goes up to Roma children at the playground and insults them, saying things like „Go away you Gypsies!“ or „You belong back where you came from!“ After numerous verbal attacks on the children, their parents contact the mayor, who steps in and clarifies the situation. The woman who had verbally abused the children is given a warning from the building's management and from the municipality.

DISCRIMINATORY REFUSAL OF SERVICES

The *Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts (EGVG)* provides an option for fighting back against racist discrimination or discrimination based on disability or interference with the public use of certain places and services, like shopping or entering restaurants. Racist discrimination in this area can be reported to the District Authority (or the Magistrate in Vienna) and is punishable with a fine of up to 1,090 Euros. The dissemination of Nazi ideas in accordance with the Prohibition Statute as per EGVG is punishable with a fine of up to 2,180 Euros. Affected parties can simply appear as witnesses in the proceedings of administrative criminal law. For this reason they will not be informed of the outcome of the proceedings. Unlike the *Equal Treatment Law* (see below), the *EGVG* does not provide the option of compensation for the affected parties.

According to the *Trade Regulation Code*, in the event of a violation of the *EGVG* as listed above, the business license would be revoked by the District Administration Authority. As far as we can tell, a business license has never been revoked in practice because of racist discrimination.

The *Equal Treatment Law* also protects in the event of discrimination when accessing goods and services and housing space, when it occurs based on gender or ethnic affiliation. The law also provides for compensation of economic loss and compensation for personal damages suffered.

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The 2013 Antigypsyism Report already demonstrated that the internet is a central site for the incitement of antigypsy hatred. In the last two years, the number of reports of incitement as well as the number of convictions in general have increased greatly. Facebook in particular, is a platform that is being used to spread racist content, insults and calls to violence. This is often done in complete awareness that it is a violation of the criminal law. In the course of the “refugee crisis”, which has brought a wave of hate posts and hate inciting content with it, the responsibility of the company is currently being discussed and charges have already been laid against Facebook.

26 / “HUMAN GARBAGE” /

On 15/09/2014, a *Facebook* user from Vienna shares another user’s photo on his timeline, and adds a text to the image wherein he engages in extreme incitement of hatred towards “Gypsies”. He describes the “dirty pig Gypsies” as “human garbage” and demands that EU politicians should prohibit their entry to the EU. He continues that “Gypsies are genetically incomplete rats”, and emphasizes that he would accompany his son to school every day to protect him. Then he writes that he would “immediately shoot one of these pigs” and concludes with the comment: “The dirty Gypsies originally come from India and have absolutely nothing to do with Europe!” Thereupon, *Romano Centro* transmits a description of the facts to the public prosecutor’s office and asks them to initiate proceedings due to incitement of hatred. Nothing was known of the outcome of the proceedings. However, on 12/11/2014, the user posted the following on *Facebook*: “Caution: I have received a summons from the Office for the Protection of the Constitution because I wrote racist things about “Roma Gypsies”. I only wrote the truth and nothing but the truth and I will [tell the] the constitution protectors they should be protecting respectable Austrians instead of criminal Gypsies! I will never censor myself”.

27 / PENSIONER INCITES HATRED ON FACEBOOK /

A pensioner from Wiener Neustadt continually incites hatred against Muslims, Roma people, refugees, Africans and migrants, always degrading them and in part even inciting violence. Antigypsy ideas play an important role in her hate-filled tirades. She summarises what she thinks about “Gypsies” in a post: “...I would help every single animal rather than save the life of one of these lazy, dirty Gypsy-Balkan bastards with a crust of bread... crawl back to where you came from... fat, lazy, dirty, work fearing, criminals and abusers... it’s no wonder that no one wants you in the country you came from...the main thing is that we have this do...around our necks and on our pockets... there are actually forms of life that even the devil dreads...” Using violence against “Gypsies” and other “sub-humans” with the same description would be the best solution for them. She continues to lament the fact that this is forbidden, as this following post demonstrates: “I’d rather have a country covered in dog shit than a homeland occupied by Turks and Gypsies. I can clean away the dog mess, but I’m not allowed to do the same about the others!!!” This is even more explicit further on: “... many Hungarian-Gypsies drive

around in small buses; they often call and ask, but at the same time they are spying. If you aren’t friendly, they even swear at you! The best thing to do would be to shoot them, but then you land in jail!” The woman from Lower Austria is aware that her postings violate the law. This is what she says about it in a post: “...I will soon be honoured by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, because of Niggers, Gypsies, dirty packs...well, the whole pallet.” The racist and hate inciting statements of the pensioner are saved and collectively sent to the public prosecutor’s office by data forensic analyst Uwe Sailer. In November, 2014, the 63-year old pensioner is sentenced to five months conditional imprisonment.

28 / HATE POSTS AGAINST BEGGARS /

In spring 2014, a 28-year old man posts the following on a *Facebook* page that promotes a begging ban in Salzburg: “They smell! They have no respect for anyone! They have more money than I do! (50 hour job!!!) [...] they leave there garbage all over the place! And play dumb!! There is a solution for me! send these dirty vermin to mauthausen to shower in the most famous showers worldwide!” The man is charged for inciting hatred and sentenced to

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three months on probation in October 2014. There are further racist comments on this and other *Facebook* pages.

29 / POSTS ON SALZBURG.COM /

On 03/05/2014, a user with the nickname “Engelbert Dollfuss” leaves two racist comments under an article about hate posts against beggars (see above) at www.salzburg.com titled “Hate-filled tirades against beggars: the police continues investigations”. In the comments the “begging gypsies” are described as nomads that do not do any honest work and instead would rather “just sponge off others and sit on their asses”. The comments were reported by *Romano Centro*; at first only the first is removed, and after being asked again, the second comment is then also removed. Those in charge of the *Salzburger Nachrichten* react and regret that these comments were online for several days before being removed.

30 / HATE POSTS ON THE POLICE'S FACEBOOK PAGE /

The following comments were published on the *Facebook* page of the police regarding the debate about the Akademikerball (academician's ball)⁵ in the Vienna Hofburg, where Professor Rudolf Sarközi, Chairperson of the Ethnic Groups Advisory Board of the Roma People, also spoke and criticised the event: “The Gypsy president and his followers can demonstrate in Oberwart or, even better, in India.

⁵ The so-called „Akademikerball“ is under critique as being a meeting point of the extreme right in Europe.

Gypsies avoid work, but are quick with the knife. First they leave their Indian nesting place, then the Gypsies invite themselves to Austria, and then they want to demonstrate. For what exactly? For even more social assistance or what? They can't demonstrate against right-wing extremism because they aren't even worth demonstrating against. And I can't confirm what allegedly happened to the Gypsies during the Third Reich because I did not live at that time.”

Since the author downplays the genocide during the Nazi regime, *Romano Centro* asks the police what legal steps the police had taken. Despite numerous requests, there is no written statement from the police. It was only stressed on the telephone that they would “take care of it”.

31 / ANDREAS-UNTERBERGER.AT BLOG /

Various texts can be found on journalist Andreas Unterberger's blog, wherein it is insinuated that Roma people from Eastern Europe “abuse the social system”, and engage in petty crime and vandalism. He himself uses the degrading term “Zigeuner” (“Gypsy”) and defends it. Unterberger writes generalisations about Roma people, for example: “Problems like petty crime and vandalism or unwillingness to work or the many pregnancies of young girls still exist and the numbers are still above average.” In other blog entries he writes about “the escalating Roma-problems in Vienna and Linz” as well as the “Roma invasions” in Italy and France and generally describes the Roma people as

a “problem group”. The comments on the articles also frequently contain antigypsy content. One user writes: “Gypsies simply cannot be “socialised” and/or made to be “civilised”. They are a nomadic people (which is where the expression ‘to wander around like a Gypsy’ comes from) with a completely different view of life than that of the regular ‘Europeans’”. On 26/03/2014, another user describes them “as lazy, useless, yet criminal vermin that obtain social benefits by fraud”, and then makes an abstruse comparison that in turn is meant to prove their inability to work: “During the Third Reich the criminal Nazis were able to destroy the Gypsies by making them work; in the case of the Jews [...] the victims only became stronger [...] and had to be ‘eliminated’ in another way.”

32 / QUERSCHÜSSE.AT /

The degrading term “Zigeuner” (“Gypsy”) is also used consistently on the www.verschuesse.at internet page. The operator of the page discusses “Gypsies” as criminals again and again. In an article from 27/02/2014, he writes about criminals from Bulgaria and Romania: “Every day we read and hear about Romanian and Bulgarian beggar gangs, Romanian and Bulgarian burglars, car thieves, robbers, Romanian and Bulgarian children that are sent out to steal who aren't even children any more. But this is a bitter injustice to Romanians and Bulgarians. This is because these people are only Romanian and Bulgarian according to their passports – in reality they are namely Gypsies.”

33 / "CATS POISONED" /

In their online edition from 20/03/2015, the *Tiroler Tageszeitung* reports that the Innsbruck municipal council agreed on a begging ban with a time and location limit. Numerous comments are written about the article, including the following comment with racist content: "The GREEN Party used to stand up for nature, the environment and animal protection. And today? - Eastern gangs who destroy our living space (parking lots devastated like in Oberland Pettnau, in Rattenberg p3, Muenster...), woodland covered in garbage (Muenster 2014, Brandenberger Ache), pouring their rubbish into the Inn river (Kufstein, Innradweg, Innsbruck etc.) - Dogs are being shot, cats poisoned, horses disposed of alive like in Spain), for them an animal is just a minion, nothing else! - and these Roma gangs who only cause problems in their homeland are even being supported and defended by OUR LEFT-WING POLITICIANS!"

34 / SCHAU AUF LINZ /

The website *schau.auf.linz.at* invites citizens to report problems, deficiencies and improvement possibilities in their neighbourhood. Unfortunately, again and again this option is misused to incite hate against "Roma and Sinti", "beggars" or "Gypsies". Their presence in public parks in particular causes a commotion among certain users. On 20/04/2015, a user reports: "Once again the Gypsies have settled in the Volksgarten and are begging. Everything is occupied around the play-

ground. After the city invested so many millions of Euros in the stunningly beautiful opera house I think it is very unfortunate that there is absolutely no presence of a city guard in the Volksgarten and the southern Landstrasse!!" There are reply comments underneath like "animals are cleaner than these figures" or "these hordes of Gypsies are extremely annoying". The following reply was made on 20/05/2015: "A few days ago I was witness to a pair of Gypsies trying to sell their small child. Unfortunately I was so shocked at that moment that I couldn't call the police. Then they lay around on the grass and simply left their garbage lying there. The next day, the lawn was mowed. The worker first had to clear away the garbage before he could do his actual work. This can't be happening. Security staff arrived there shortly, but they stood a few meters away from the mob and did not address them. It's simply sad to have to watch Linz being ruined." The replies and comments are answered by the city. The racist prejudices and insults in these answers are mainly ignored.

35 / "WE KILL ALL GYPSIES" T-SHIRT /

The online service *Zazzle*, which also operates the *zazzle.at* website in Austria, has a t-shirt in its selection until September 22, 2015, with a big emblem that says "Gipsy Hunter Badge" and "We kill all Gypsies". The lettering frames a hand where the index finger and thumb form a circle – the common sign for "everything is ok" or "I think that's good". The t-shirt cost 20.95 Euros and could also be ordered in Austria. After the incident became known,

charges for inciting hate were laid against the company by ZARA and *Romano Centro* in Austria, as well in Germany. After complaints, the product was immediately removed from the online offer.

36 / UNZENSURIERT.AT /

Between autumn 2103 and autumn 2015, over 50 articles were published about 'Roma' people or rather 'Gypsies' by the right-wing populist website *unzensuriert.at*. The degrading term "Zigeuner" ("Gypsy") is consistently used in all the articles while groups are usually referred to as 'Roma clans' or 'Gypsy clans'. The theme of the articles revolve mainly around a supposed mass immigration to Western Europe, especially to Germany, and the alleged related problems like "littering", 'abusing the social system', crime or the "begging mafia". The photos often have nothing to do with the content being reported. One example is a photo that was taken in a refugee camp in Serbia in 2003. In 25/07/2015, it was published with the caption "Gypsies leave piles of feces and garbage in Switzerland". The abasement and exaggeration of the article are intensified considerably in the comments. The 'Gypsies' are referred to as 'garbage rats', 'cockroaches', 'vermin', 'parasites', 'packs of criminals', 'uncivilised beings', 'criminal tourists' etc.. Many of the comments emphasise their alleged inability to be civilised or work. On 07/11/2013, one user comments saying that they are a "group of perverse abnormal creatures that are only good for one thing, to be used as fuel for house fires." Another writes on 03/04/2014: "They

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have their own 'culture' that prohibits them from working regularly, which according to their lifestyle only allows them to live as parasites on whichever society they happen to infest at that moment."

Particularly severe comments are apparently deleted by the operators;

there are constant user complaints about this. The direction in which the comments go be guessed from this reaction to the removal of a comment from 05/09/2013: "Delete this again! We had this problem in the thirties. But no 'do-gooder' who showed solidarity with the

Gypsies (thieves!)... ." The operators of the website are from the sphere of the FPÖ. In 2014, an article that is published on the website serves as the basis and single source for a parliamentary question regarding "coin theft from decorative fountains" (see 20).

RACISM ON THE INTERNET

Racist insults and threats that are expressed on the internet are just as criminally relevant as those in the non-virtual world and can be reported to the police or the public prosecutor's office. The online media forums are moderated; user comments and posts can be checked for content. The user conditions of many online media prohibit racist comments, among other things. Users can report inappropriate or racist posts themselves. Unfortunately, the editing staff of the media do not always react to these reports or can only utilise their control function insufficiently due to the large amount of posts. In social networks and other internet sites there is the option of turning directly to the operators to ask that the content be deleted when it infringes against the terms of use (e.g. an insult). However, reporting corresponding posts or pages often has no consequence.



POLICE

Antigypsy attitudes are also widespread amongst the police. Time and again it is demonstrated that it is completely standard practice to sweepingly attribute certain violations of the law to the “Roma and Sinti” or the “mobile ethnic minority”. Furthermore, incidents continually occur whereby police officers discriminate, trivialise a discrimination or do not take it seriously when victims turn to them. The result is that the affected individuals begin to lose their trust in the police.

37/ DEGRADING TREATMENT /

Ms. B, a Romani woman, who makes her living begging, reports the following incident to the *Bettel-Lobby Tirol*: As she was begging in Landeck on 27/03/2015, she was asked by two police officers to accompany them to the Landeck police station. Ms. B complies with the request. She is treated in a degrading way once they get there: her mobile phone is taken away, she is not allowed to call anyone, her SIM card disappears. She tells the police that she is sick and they accuse her of just pretending. When she vomits, she is insulted by the police numerous times as a “tramp” and with insults like “go back to Romania” and forced to clean up her vomit. With the support of the *BettelLobby Tirol* and a lawyer she files a measures complaint. The State Administrative Court does not believe her statement about the insults, the refusal to contact someone and the missing SIM card. However, they do determine that having to clean up her own vomit at the police station constitutes a “particular humiliation” and degrading treatment according to Art. 3 of the *European Convention on Human Rights* (prohibition of torture and degrading treatment). The victim is able to assert a claim for damages, however as of yet there was no decision made by the editorial deadline.

38/ INACTIVE POLICE OFFICER /

On 14/05/2015 Ms. S, a Romani woman, enters a restaurant in a Burgenland municipality in the Oberwart district. She is insulted by a guest with the words “f-cking dirty Gypsy, go back where you came from”, “You are worthless, you filthy pig Gypsy with your black hair” and other insults. She leaves the restaurant because the man threatens her with violence and calls the police. However, the police turns out to be no help at all: first the officers doubt that anything happened at all. Then they say: “And what are we supposed

to do? If we go in there he’ll just fall all over us too...” Ms. S explicitly insists on reporting the incident. The police tell her that it is useless, that the man will not change because of it and that his behaviour is already known. Nonetheless they do go inside, but tell Ms. S that she should leave so that the man does not get upset again. Ms. S goes into another restaurant where she encounters the parents of the offender. A short time later however, the man arrives there and begins to insult Ms. S again. His parents are able to calm him and his mother brings him home. Ms. S is distressed because she did not receive any support. The next day she contacts the *Verein Roma* in Oberwart

INSULT

Whosoever insults a person, mistreats them physically or threatens them with physical abuse publicly or in front of other people, is to be punished in accordance with § 115 of the criminal code (StGB) for insult. Hereby the offence must be committed in the presence of two people other than the offender and the person being attacked who must be perceptible to them. In general, the offence will only be pursued at the request of the injured party, because these punishable acts against honour are so-called offences with private prosecution, in other words the law enforcement authorities do not investigate at their own initiative. Officially however, insults are to be pursued if they are committed against the injured party because of their affiliation with a group indicated in § 283 Sect. 1 StGB (see above, page 12) or those that consist of mistreatment or threat of mistreatment or an insult that violates human dignity or mockery. For this reason the law enforcement authorities must investigate in the case of racist insults and ask the injured party whether he/she authorises the law enforcement. Victims can join the resulting criminal proceedings and assert their claims, e.g. for damage compensation, without bearing the risk of litigation costs.

POLICE

and describes the incident. They forward the incident to the *Equal Treatment Advocates*. The *Equal Treatment Advocates* informs Ms. S that she can report an incident because of verbal abuse based on § 115 StGB and/or § 117 StGB (see information box). Ms. S goes to the police to report the incident. She is told that the responsible police office is not there and that she should come back another time. She makes an appointment and goes to the police station again, expressing her wish to report an incident of verbal abuse. However, the police officer asks her to leave it be and not to “make such a fuss”. He does not record the incident. The offender was punished on the evening if the incident with a fine of 20 Euros. Once again Ms. S turns to the *Verein Roma*. They in turn ask ZARA for support. ZARA recommends that Ms. S submit a description of the facts due to racist verbal abuse to the public prosecutor’s office.

39 / NO VERBAL ABUSE, NO INCIDENT /

On 16/07/2013, Ms. F, a Romani woman from Burgenland, goes shopping in a large store in Fürstenfeld. As she is sitting in her car after shopping she sees her son drive by and honks her horn briefly so that he stops. She gets out and would like to tell him about a traffic obstruction. However, a woman comes out of the store and starts to insult Ms. F. The woman basically says: “Where are you from, from in there, from Burgenland, where the Gypsies live; what are you Gypsies doing there? Don’t you have any stores in Burgenland? These Gypsies, I’ve already eaten them ...”

Ms. S and her female companion are shocked. A municipality employee who observed the incident by chance, advises them not to accept being treated this way and to report

the incident to the police. Both women go to the police in Fürstenfeld. Once there however, the officers refuse to record the incident, telling the women that the term “Gypsy” is common, that there was nothing anyone could do and that they can take it to the court or to a lawyer. The district court sends them to the Protection Against Violence Centre, and from there they are again sent to the police who again do nothing. The attempt of reporting the incident to another police department also fails. In the end the incident is not reported, although the police were obliged to do so in the first place (see information box Verbal Abuse page 21).

40 / “GYPSY BY DESCENT” /

On 16/04/2014, the Tyrol State Police Headquarters publishes the following text in a press release: “A women, about 40-50 years of age, Gypsy by descent or similar background, acquired 50 Euros by means of a change trick in a flower shop in Landeck. The woman fled after the scam was discovered and was able to escape undetected.” This was brought to the attention of *SOS Mitmensch*, which then immediately complains of the racist attributions that are included in a police press release. A speaker for the State Police Headquarters protests that it must be a mistake and that the text will be corrected. *SOS Mitmensch* takes this incident as an opportunity to demand raising more awareness amongst the police and systematic elimination of ‘ethnic profiling’.

POLICE AND MEDIA

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommends that, among other things, the member states of the Council of Europe “ensure that the police expresses itself to the media and the general public in a manner that does not abet the hostile attitude and prejudices towards members of minority groups.” For this reason, information about ethnic affiliation, skin colour, religion or citizenship of a suspect or a group of offenders cannot be disclosed. The police can only be permitted to spread this information if it is absolutely necessary and serves a legitimate purpose. In addition, the police must also ensure – especially when forwarding statistical data – that they do not contribute to the dissemination and perpetuation of the myth that there is a relationship between crime and ethnic origin. This recommendation does not always seem to be observed in Austria: It often occurs that the police names the ethnic affiliation of the offenders directly or indirectly (“mobile family clans”) or that certain types of crimes (child trafficking, pocket theft) are attributed to the “Roma” people.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public antigypsy debates frequently revolve around the presence of beggars in shopping streets that are attractive to tourists. Unfortunately these debates, such as those during election campaigns in Salzburg 2014, the incitement of hatred and defamation of impoverished people also lead to racist incidents occurring against beggars in public spaces.

41 / "GYPSIES, BEWARE" /

On 02/03/2015 in Leoben, a woman who begs in the area is stopped after Sunday mass by two men in a black car. The men are in plain clothes and hold something out towards the woman that resembles a police badge. They tell her to get in the car and drive with her to Leoben Donawitz (approx. 5km away from the church). There they take her ID and money purse away from her and tell her to get out of the car. After saying some words, which she does not understand, they give her a piece of paper that says: "Gypsies, beware! From now on we are defending our property and our churches! Whoever steals must expect punishment!" The text is also translated into Hungarian. The two men then drive away without giving the woman her money purse or her ID back. With the help of an acquaintance who speaks German and Hungarian, the woman reports the incident to the police. Her ID is later found in a garbage bin. However, the woman did not pick it up because she left Austria immediately after the incident happened. The police investigations did not bring any results.

42 / ARSON

On April 6, 2014, two cases of arson result as part of the heated debates on "organised begging gangs". As

reported in *Der Standard* and other media sources on 08/04/2014, unidentified offenders lit a fire in two camping dorms in which numerous people resided. In August 2015, there is another case of arson at a place where beggars sleep. The *Verein Phurdo* documents the damages.

43 / GRAFFITI ON CARITAS ESTABLISHMENT /

During the night of 30/04/2014, an establishment in Salzburg is vandalised with the letters "KZ" (abbreviation for concentration camp). A door lock is also gummed up. At this time there is a public debate going on in Salzburg on the housing of impoverished Roma people; *Caritas* plans to house them in the establishment in question.

44 / "ROMA GET OUT" /

On 30/11/2014, a passer-by delivers a photo to *Romano Centro*. It shows racist graffiti at Vienna Westbahnhof train station of the words "Roma get out". The passer-by informs the *Wiener Linien* public transit company himself and asks that it be removed, but receives no answer to his request.

45 / SNOWBALL ATTACK /

A man reports the following incident from Salzburg to the *Verein Phurdo*:

On 31/01/2015, shortly before 12:00, he observes how two men throw snowballs at a beggar woman, who regularly begs at the Makartsteg, and insult her with the words "What are you doing there, Gypsy?" The witness stops and stands there. As soon as the men notice that they are being observed, they stop what they are doing and make off into the distance.

46 / VERBAL ABUSE IN INNSBRUCK /

Pax Christi Tirol reports that Roma people who sell newspapers or beg in public places in Innsbruck, tell how they are confronted with offensive insults based on their ethnic affiliation numerous times a week.

47 / "GYPSIES OUT" /

On 16/04/2014, a woman at the Graz central train station observes two security employees expelling a woman from the train station building. In so doing, one of the employees says "Gypsies out" and makes the matching gestures. The observer points out to the two employees that this is racist and asks for their ID service cards, which they refuse. The employee at the ÖBB counter does not feel responsible and only gives her the contact information of the security company. The woman that observed the incident reports it to the *ZARA* counselling centre.

EDUCATION

Discrimination based on antigypsy prejudices in school are very frequent. The teachers seldom question their prejudices and do not sufficiently take responsibility to protect children and youth from discrimination at school. Parents are often very afraid to address the discrimination that their children experience at school because they fear negative consequences. A lately conducted study on the educational situation of Roma and Sinti in Austria⁶ shows that the discrimination experienced by the survey participants and the way in which teachers and fellow students handle it, are amongst the factors that determine the further course of education.

48 / BULLYING

A student at a middle school in Vienna and his mother report experiencing discrimination at school to Romano Centro. The student was verbally abused and called “Gypsy” and bullied over many months by other children. The teacher’s efforts and talks with the other students lead to these insults no longer continuing.

49 / “THEY SHOULD GO WORK!” /

At the start of the 2014 school year, a family gets in touch with the *Verein Roma* in Oberwart with a request for financial support. It is a matter of 165 Euros for music class for two children. The family is in a precarious financial situation. An employee at the *Verein Roma* association contacts the school principal, explaining the situation and that the family will apply for the amount from the Roma fund and will then be able to pay it. He also asks in addition, whether there is an option to pre-finance the amount in the school – through the parents’ association, for instance – in the event that the payment is urgent. The headmistress replies indignantly and says: “They should go work!”.

⁶ Mikael Luciak für die Initiative Minderheiten (Hg.): Roma-Bildungs-und-Ausbildungsstudie (ROMBAS) – Studienbericht, Wien 2014.

Although the situation is clear for the school, it is frequently asked in an impolite way when the money will finally be paid. The *Verein Roma* offers to mediate and clarify the situation. The headmistress rejects this offer and says the following about the family: “Who knows if they will move away again!” The headmistress is also told that the family feels discriminated against by the harsh behaviour. To which the principal replies that she feels discriminated against herself because they are not paying. The employee of the association explains to her the work that his organisation does and about discrimination against Roma people in the school system and on the labour market, to which she reacts snidely. At this point the association ends its attempt at conciliation and files a complaint with the district school inspector. Soon afterwards, the headmistress gets in touch with *Verein Roma* and stresses how important she thinks the work is that the association does.

50 / SMELLY CHILDREN /

A student of education from Vienna reports that during her internship she was asked by a teacher to translate to an elementary school child and its mother, both of whom do not speak German well, that the child smelled. However, the student teacher vehemently refused to: she felt there

was absolutely no need to because the child did not smell and she felt it was generally alarming to discuss something like that in front of the child. Unfortunately, this experience is consistent with the experience that the *Romano Centro* has when working in schools: The prejudice that Roma children smell is widespread among teachers. This leads to conflicts with parents again and again.

51 / “YOU SHOULD BE GASSED” /

During the third school week of the 2015/16 school year, a student from a Roma family is insulted severely by a fellow student in a middle school in Burgenland: “You f-cking Gypsy!” “You should be gassed”. The school’s administration reacts to the incident and invites the parents of both students to a discussion during which it is possible to resolve the conflict.

DISCRIMINATION AT SCHOOL

The *Equal Treatment Law* forbids discrimination based on ethnic affiliation in the area of education and vocational training. Teachers and/or the school management is/are obliged to step in, based on educational regulations, in the event of discrimination or harassment. In certain situations there is also an obligation of remedial action according to the *Equal Treatment Law*.

EMPLOYMENT WORLD

Wage labour is a key area of participating in social life. If discrimination takes place in this area, for instance in the application process, it has major effects on the social situation of the affected persons and their families. Unfortunately, antigypsy mind-sets also lead to harassment and discrimination in the employment world as well. These kinds of experiences also discourage and demotivate the affected persons and lead to their opportunities on the labour market deteriorating.

52 / “YOU HAVE NO RIGHTS HERE” /

In August 2014, Mr. C, a Romanian citizen, is verbally abused by his fellow worker: “You have no rights here in the company. You have no say here. You aren’t allowed to ask anything. You can’t purchase anything here. You aren’t allowed to drink coffee here. You Romanian Gypsy. You ugly foreigner!”. Xenophobic statements are made at the workplace again and again.

When Mr. C addressed this once, he is again insulted by another colleague with the words “dirty pig” and “Gypsy”. After that, Mr. C contacts the *Anti-Discrimination Office Steiermark*, which subsequently launches court proceedings due to discrimination with the support of the *Chamber of Labour*. The proceedings lead to a settlement and Mr. C receives a financial compensation.

53 / ALLEGATIONS AT AMS /

In July 2015, an allegation is made that a Roma from Burgenland is trying to “cheat the state” with a falsified confirmation at an information desk at the *Labour Market Service (AMS)*, and that his residential address is a fake address because he wanted to submit

DISCRIMINATION IN THE EMPLOYMENT WORLD

The *Equal Treatment Law* protects against discrimination in the employment world. All areas are recognised that are associated with performing a job: job postings, hiring and termination of an employment relationship, further education, internships and practical training, career counselling, offers provided by the labour market service as well as access to self-employment.

Free counselling and support for affected persons are provided for instance by the *Equal Treatment Advocates*, the *Chamber of Labour* or various establishments in the federal states, e.g. the *Anti-Discrimination Office Steiermark* (see page 29). An review is performed in a (free of charge and) private procedure at the *Equal Treatment Commission* to determine whether discrimination has taken place. This procedure can be initiated by the affected person themselves or with the support of the *Equal Treatment Advocates* or other establishments. It ends with a legally non-binding assessment of the *Equal Treatment Commission* of whether discrimination has occurred and reparations are recommended. The *Equal Treatment Commission* cannot award compensation for damages or make an enforceable verdict.

Court decisions and settlements, on the other hand, are legally enforceable. In the event of discrimination in the employment world, according to the *Equal Treatment Law*, the affected party is entitled to compensation for economic loss and compensation for the personal detriment they suffered. Compensation must be claimed at the applicable Labour and Social Welfare Court, whereby the risk of litigation costs must be observed. The *Member Organizations of the Legal Action Association (Mitgliedsorganisationen des Klagsverbandes)* for instance, offers free legal counselling and support.

a confirmation of participating at an information event with a copied confirmation that had been corrected by hand. It was given to him the day before by the speaker at the information event because he did not receive a letter from AMS with the original

document. He only found out about the information event because an acquaintance told him that he is on the list and that he should come. In the end, it turns out that the fault was with the AMS and the accusations were completely unfounded.

EMPLOYMENT WORLD

54/ NO UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS /

Four members of the Roma ethnic group in Burgenland turn to a Roma association throughout the course of 2014, because they believe that their unemployment benefits were cut without justification. The association intervened at the responsible employment office and

achieved that all of the four affected persons received their benefits again. It turns out, that the cutting of the benefits was partially unjustified, or rather only happened due to delays and date mix-ups. The affected persons are certain that they were treated differently than other clients because of their ethnic background.

55/ NO "GYPSIES" /

The *Bettelobby Tirol* reports that while looking for work in the summer of 2015, a number of affected persons were turned down with the words „we have no room for Gypsies“.

ADDITIONAL INCIDENTS

56/ REFUSED TREATMENT /

On 21/05/2015, Ms. V, a young Roma woman takes her sick child to her physician in Linz, who prescribes medication for the child. On the following weekend, the child's condition becomes worse and the mother decides to go to the doctor again. Since the physician is not there, she sees the other doctor on duty on 01/06/2015. The doctor examines the child, but only superficially, seems annoyed and speaks in a condescending manner with the mother. The doctor says that the child is fine. The mother is not satisfied with the diagnosis and takes the child to the hospital. The child is diagnosed with pneumonia and the child is immediately hospitalised. Ms. V is certain that she and her child were treated badly because of their ethnic background, which is why she reports the incident for documentation at *Verein Ketani* in Linz.

57/ NO NAPPIES FOR THE MAFIA /

When distributing aid packages to refugees at the Linz train station, a Roma family that also required sanitary products gets in line. A volunteer worker gives the family a package that included nappies, sanitary products and some food. While doing so, the worker is photographed by a man who then complains to the aid organisation that he donated money for refugees and not for the "Roma mafia". The worker answers the complaint saying that no distinction is made between people in need and that she could not understand what the mafia was supposed to do with a few nappies. She reported the incident to the *Verein Ketani*.

Roma player is verbally abused by a player from the opposing team with the words "What do you want you f--cking Gypsy!" and "Go back where you come from". The incident is reported to the *Burgenland Soccer Association*. The player that made the racist comments is banned for seven games and his club has to pay a fine.

59/ "SUB-HUMAN GYPSIES" /

In 2014, the counselling centre ZARA receives the following anonymous message via the contact form on their homepage with the subject "Gypsies, an infestation of the country": "The most recent racist act of violence against Roma in Bischofs-hofen clearly shows the great degree to which Roma are still affected by racist discrimination and violent opposition. The sub-human Gypsies will continue to encounter this opposition as long as they do not change their animal-like behaviour."

58/ INSULTING A SOCCER PLAYER /

During a soccer championship game of the 2nd Class A South/Burgenland on June 14, 2014, a

ADDITIONAL INCIDENTS

60 / DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE GERMANS /

In August 2014, the ZARA counselling centre receives a message in which an anonymous author complains that ZARA “[supports] the Gypsies that are allowed to break in, rob and raid us, because all of us ethnic Germans have to tolerate it. I wish you, with your attitude of discrimination against Germans, all the best and a nice end”.

61 / “ZIGEUNER- SCHNITZERL” ON THE MENU /

A student at the *St. Pölten Technical College* notices that a “Zigeunerschnitzel” (“Gypsy-style escalope”) is being offered on the menu at the cafeteria. She complains to the operating company about the usage of this discriminatory term and informs the *Romano Centro* association who also writes a letter to the operating company. The operating company is very understanding in their response, is thankful for the indication and reassures that the term will no longer be used.



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SUMMARY

Like the first edition from 2013, this report illustrates that anti-gypsyism in Austria is present in many areas of society and that those affected are impaired by it in their social participation. The report does not portray a complete documentation of all antigypsy incidents, moreover, one can assume that there is a high number of unrecorded incidents. Even though it is not possible to make a quantitative comparison with the previous years, conclusions can be drawn from this documentation of individual incidents. The incidents that must be considered as particularly problematic are those where state representatives are either discriminatory themselves or when people affected by discrimination are not taken seriously. Again several incidents from police work have come to our attention that portray clear misconduct and a lack of sensitivity to this form of racism.

The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and their affiliated newspapers and internet sites contribute greatly to the dissemination of antigypsy content and they often bring this racism into political debates. Other parties and the public do not stand up against this type of racism with the same vehemence as in the case of anti-Semitic statements. On the contrary, the ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) also campaigns with antigypsy statements or clearly discriminatory measures against impoverished families from Romania, as is currently the case in Vorarlberg: a debate exploded there in autumn 2015 regarding homeless

“Roma families”. Offers of support are being barred, the families are being threatened with having their children taken away and they are constantly referred to by politicians as ‘clans’ that are residing illegally in Vorarlberg. Laws on begging and camping are being tightened or re-implemented. Debates of this kind are more frequently leading to violent attacks (see incidents 41, 42 and 45), most recently on 11/11/2015 in Dornbirn, where two men passing themselves off as policemen wanted to force Romanian families to give them money and assaulted them physically.

The media contributes to the underlying sentiment of antigypsyism in Austria by constantly reproducing the same stereotypical images of Roma people. However, with the exception of the *Krone*, which attracted attention with an unparalleled campaign of inciting hatred in 2014, the growing sensitivity of editorial staff to the topic is being reflected in media coverage.

In contrast, antigypsy hate speech is increasing greatly in social media, especially on Facebook. The incidents documented here show a shocking degree of conceptual dehumanisation through positive references to Nazism, instigating murder and extermination fantasies. Several users incite hate in full awareness that their actions are punishable. The measures to control and prevent such racist and hate inciting statements are insufficient. Fortunately, several people have been convicted because of their posts, however the previous legal reg-

ulations on inciting hatred (not only online) still allows a lot of leeway for vilification and hate speech.

It is encouraging that numerous incidents are found in this report where it was worthwhile for the affected person to take a step against discrimination. Conflicts with fellow students were resolved, compensation for discrimination at the workplace were won, people who incited hatred were convicted.

The report clearly shows that there is a need for action.

Among other things, *Romano Centro* recommends the following measures to fight anti-gypsyism in Austria:

- Recognising and naming anti-gypsyism as a separate form of racism and including it in general measures for combating racism, especially in schools
- Developing sensitisation endeavours on the topic of antigypsyism for all relevant professional groups (police, judges, civil servants, teachers, journalists and others)
- Developing and implementing awareness raising campaigns
- Developing human rights-based, pragmatic and constructive solution approaches to ‘poverty migration’ from other EU countries instead of expulsion, defamation and incitement of hatred
- Promotion and institutionalisation of research on the topic of anti-gypsyism
- Increased controlling of internet platforms for hate inciting content /

SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR AFFECTED PERSONS

There are many institutions and establishments across Austria that people affected by racism and discrimination, or witnesses thereof, can turn to in order to get information and support or to record incidents. The institutions listed represent a selection.

ANTIDISKRIMINIERUNGSSTELLE STEIERMARK (ANTI-DISCRIMINATION OFFICE STEIERMARK)

The Anti-Discrimination Office Steiermark is a drop-in centre for people affected by any form of discrimination. It provides counselling on possible courses of action.

Stigergasse 2, 8020 Graz
Tel: 0316 / 714 137
buero@antidiskriminierungsstelle.steiermark.at

ARBEITERKAMMER (CHAMBER OF LABOUR)

The Chamber of Labour offers support and counselling for employees that are discriminated against at the workplace. You can find contact information for the nearest information centre at

www.arbeiterkammer.at

BUNDESAMT FÜR VERFASSUNGSSCHUTZ UND TERRORISMUSBEKÄMPFUNG (FEDERAL OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND COUNTERTERRORISM)

The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism is a security agency that is responsible for combating terrorist and extremist activities, among others. The BVT also monitors the right-wing extremist scene in Austria and for this purpose operates a notification office for Nazi resurgence (**ns-meldestelle@bvt.gv.at**), where neo-Nazi and racist content on the internet can be reported.

GLEICHBEHANDLUNGSANWALTSCHAFT AND GLEICHBEHANDLUNGSKOMMISSION (EQUAL TREATMENT ADVOCATES AND EQUAL TREATMENT COMMISSION)

The Equal Treatment Law (GIBG) protects against discrimination in the employment world based on gender (also with respect to marital status), ethnic affiliation religion or ideology, age or sexual orientation.

Unequal treatment outside of the employment world in the access to and supply of goods and services based on gender or ethnic affiliation is prohibited (e.g. housing space, various recreational facilities, etc.). Discrimination based on ethnic affiliation is also prohibited in the areas of education, social benefits and social protection. The Equal Treatment Advocates are responsible for counselling and supporting victims of discrimination. In addition, it can commission studies on the topic of discrimination or compile them itself.

Incidents can be submitted to the Equal Treatment Commission review. Its senates make decisions at the request of affected parties or advocacy groups about violations of the GIBG and they can also compile general expert reports on the topic of discrimination. These proceedings at the commission are free of charge for affected persons. Unlike a court verdict, a decision made by the Equal Treatment Commission is not legally binding.

Taubstummengasse 11, 1040 Vienna
Tel.: 01 532 02 44
gaw@bka.gv.at
www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at

KLAGSVERBAND ZUR DURCHSETZUNG DER RECHTE VON DISKRIMINIERUNGSOPFERN (LITIGATION ASSOCIATION OF NGOS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION)

The Klagsverband supports victims of discrimination in court. Before legal proceedings are initiated however, a consultation at a member association is required. The Klagsverband is not an initial advice centre! Other work related key areas of the Klagsverband are the documentation of laws and jurisdiction in the area of anti-discrimination and equality and the improvement of legislation through position statements and shadow reports. An extensive programme of workshops and seminars on the topics of anti-discrimination and equality completes the range of services that the Klagsverband has to offer.

www.klagsverband.at

ROMANO CENTRO (VIENNA)

The Romano Centro association provides support for persons affected by discrimination and advocates against antigypsyism.

Hofmannsthalgasse 2/2, 1030 Vienna

Tel.: 01 7496336 15 | office@romano-centro.org

STELLE ZUR BEKÄMPFUNG VON DISKRIMINIERUNGEN - VIENNA (AGENCY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION)

The Agency Against Discrimination in the City of Vienna is at the service of people who feel discriminated against based on their ethnic affiliation, among other things, in social, health and education areas (insofar as is regulated by national law), access to and supply of goods and services (including housing space), plus access to self-employment. This agency also provides service for all employees in the City of Vienna, including discriminating behaviour of an employee in carrying out work or discriminatory behaviour towards another employee in the City of Vienna.

Muthgasse 62, Riegel C 3.07, 1190 Vienna

Tel. 01/4000-38951 | post@bsb.wien.gv.at

VEREIN KARIKA (OBERWART)

The association, based in Oberwart, campaigns against racism and discrimination and for communication between Roma and non-Roma people. The main areas of the association's activities are particularly in the areas of human rights and civil rights work, pedagogical work, information and counselling.

Andreas Hofergasse 18/2, 7400 Oberwart

Tel.: +43 676 9306694 | verein.karika@gmx.at

VEREIN KETANI FÜR SINTI UND ROMA - LINZ (KETANI ASSOCIATION FOR SINTI AND ROMA PEOPLE)

The Ketani Association addresses the concerns of Sinti and Roma people. Ketani takes care of fostering culture and language, campaigns for the elimination of prejudices and offers lectures, workshops etc. for schools and education centres. The association created two adequate locations for travelling Sinti and Roma people for their temporary stays in Braunau and Linz. Since 2012 they offer free psychotherapy for victims of concentration camps and their descendants. Ketani means ‚together‘; in this sense the association is committed to better and peaceful cooperation of people.

Wachrenergasse 2, A-4020 Linz

Tel. 0732 318431 | Fax: 0732 318431-4

verein.ketani@aon.at | www.sinti-roma.at

VEREIN ROMA (OBERWART)

The Verein Roma association in Oberwart is the oldest Roma organisation in Austria. The goal of the association is to improve the living conditions of Roma people in Austria. The association provides education and recreational programmes for children, counselling in social and labour market areas, and provides information about the history and current situation of the Roma people.

Evangelische Kirchengasse 3, 7400 Oberwart

Tel. 03352-330 59 | Fax: 03352-330 59-4 | office@verein-roma.at

ZARA – ZIVILCOURAGE UND ANTI-RASSISMUS-ARBEIT (CIVIL COURAGE AND ANTI-RACISM WORK)

The ZARA association in Vienna provides information across Austria on legal and other options in the event of racist incidents and attacks as well as accompanying clients. All reported incidents will be documented and a selection appears in the annual racism report. In addition, the association implements projects and campaigns for the sensitisation of racist-based issues as well as conducting prevention work in the form of trainings and workshops.

Schönbrunner Straße 119/13

(Eingang: Am Hundsturm 7, 1050 Wien)

Tel. 01 929 13 99 | office@zara.or.at

Counselling centre contact information: **Tel. 01 929 13 99** or **beratung@zara.or.at | www.zara.or.at**

TIPS FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

It is possible to fight back against racism and discrimination in Austria. Whoever is a witness of, or personally affected by racist and/or discriminatory incidents should make use of the support of a counselling centre in all cases.

The following tips can be helpful to people who have been affected:

- **Ask passers-by or other people that are present to help you.**
- **Get yourself to safety if necessary and call the police for help.**
- **Speak to people who observed the incident, note down their names and contact information.**
- **Write down exactly what happened (date, time, what was said/done?).**
- **Involve a person who you trust (a friend, parents, teacher, headmistress, supervisor, works council, ...).**
- **Seek the support of a counselling centre.**
- **Report racist attacks or discrimination to the police when accessing goods and services; when doing so, be accompanied by a person you trust (like a person from a counselling centre).**
- **Report racist incidents or discrimination at work or at school to the supervisor, works council, a teacher. When doing so, be accompanied by a person you trust.**

Witnesses should note the following tips:

- **Ask passers-by or other people that are present to help you.**
 - **Offer the affected person your assistance.**
 - **Get yourself and the affected person to safety if necessary and call the police for help.**
 - **Write down exactly what happened (date, time, what was said/done?).**
 - **Offer the affected person your assistance as a witness in any possible proceedings; give them your contact information.**
 - **Get information about counselling options; if necessary, get advice on what to do.**
-



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IBAN: AT 876 000 000 091 000 590 | BIC: OPSKATWW Mehr Informationen unter www.sosmitmensch.at

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