

Antigypsyism in Austria

Documentation of racist incidents against Roma/Romnja
and Sinti/Sintize

Information for victims and witnesses of racism

ROMANO  CENTRO

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Tackling Antigypsyism

For 22 years, Romano Centro has sought to improve the lives of Roma and Sinti in Austria through various projects and programmes. These include long-running programmes such as learning assistance for Roma children, Roma school mediation, and the magazine *Romano Centro*.

Combating racism and stereotypes is an important part of the organisation's work, as is tackling prejudices. But what is the most effective way to combat widespread and, in some cases, centuries-old perceptions and attitudes towards Roma? Does more information help, or is this only heard by those who are already willing and able to question stereotypes, while those harbouring the most prejudices remain largely unaffected? We often see at information events and training sessions how people tend to want to preserve "their impressions", and how well-founded information can be met with scepticism when it does not fit in with these impressions.

We believe that information aimed at the "majority society" about the real-life situations of Roma and Sinti, but also about the racism directed towards these groups, is a vital element of any strategy for combating antiziganism. This report seeks to fulfil that aim, as does our quarterly magazine *Romano Centro* and our range of training courses and presentations. Events aimed at a broader public, as well as international networks such as the Europe-wide campaign *Roma Pride*, also play an important role.

The decision to publish our own report on antiziganism was also prompted by the impression that this phenomenon receives too little coverage in more general documentation of racism, and that there is far too little awareness about this form of racism. Antiziganist prejudices are particularly prevalent in media reporting on the immigration of people affected by poverty from other European countries.

Informing and advising those affected by antiziganism about their rights and their options for legal protection from discrimination is another important aspect. Self-organisation, as practised in Austria for around 20 years, is an important basis for bringing this information to potential victims and encouraging them to take legal action if they experience discrimination. Many people who are subjected to direct discrimination or abuse are ashamed and seek to suppress their experience or

play it down. Reporting such instances to the authorities often calls negative experiences back to mind, which many victims try to avoid. This is often accompanied by a fear that complaining or taking legal action will bring further difficulties, at work, at school or closer to home.

As far as possible, *Romano Centro* also takes legal action itself. In 2013, we took two cases to the public prosecutor: the first, a racist text in the calendar of the *Oberösterreichischen Seniorenbund* (Senior Citizens of Upper Austria); the second, a case of incitement on an open Facebook group in which an attack was planned on a group of Roma in Bischofshofen (Cases 66 and 61).

In other cases, we go straight to the source of the antiziganist remark; for example, to the broadcaster ORF (Case 9) or the Austrian Press Council (Case 6), and seek to sensitise them to the issue.

This report could not have been realised without broad support. We are particularly grateful to those organisations which documented antiziganist incidents and made them available to us in anonymised form: ZARA – Civil Courage and Anti-Racism, the Sinti and Roma organisation *Ketani*, the Roma *Volkshochschule* (evening school) of the Burgenland, the Documentation Archive of Austrian Resistance, the homeless magazine *Augustin*, and the Anti-Discrimination Centre in Styria. We are also grateful to Markus End, who wrote a text for this report.

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What is Antigypsyism?

Markus End

Antigypsyism denotes racism against people who have been determined to be „Gypsies“ by others. The term not only includes violent or bodily harm as well as the many discriminatory situations of daily life as described in this report, but also the ideological underpinnings which are the root and cause of such deeds and structural enabling factors. The vast majority of people who are regularly the targets of Antigypsyism do not call themselves “Gypsies” (see page 6). This foreign appellation has always been an indication of stereotyped attributions of “otherness” and “deviant” behaviour.

However, it is important to note that Antigypsyism has nothing to do with actual facts, whether, for example, the victim does, in fact, belong to a minority which is regularly targeted, such as Roma, Sinti, Yeniche, the Irish “Travellers” known as the “Pavee,” or any other minority. Those who are inclined to espouse Antigypsyism have their prejudicial image of “The Gypsy” in mind without knowing which name the people they have targeted have given themselves. This is, then, clearly attribution by others and a form of projection. Every described characteristic and each form of behaviour is thereby deemed – one-dimensionally – to be a “Gypsy” characteristic or behaviour. The rejection and hate which arise from these beliefs are aimed indiscriminately at whoever or whatever is perceived to be “Gypsy.”

This is the crux from which the fundamental debate about which term best describes this phenomenon arises. One position taken is that the term should be based on a word which mirrors the self-designation of the minority, such as “Romaphobia,” “Racism Against Roma and Sinti,” or “Anti-Romaism.” This position not only objects to the use of the word “Gypsy,” but also to the use of all words based on it. The reasoning behind this view is the idea that the word “Gypsy” can be deemed to be discriminatory and insulting, but also because such terms could bear the danger of being misunderstood, thereby legitimising the use of the word “Gypsy” in general.

The other position taken in this argument is that „Antigypsyism“ is a product of majority society and that therefore, the term denouncing it must be rooted –criticisingly– in the language of the majority society. This position argues for the use of the term „Antigypsyism“ because it denotes a phenomenon which can affect not only Roma and because the term makes the aspect of projection of the racist attributions clear. Terms which are based on self-designation are

criticised because they imply that racist prejudices might actually correlate somehow to the behaviour of the victims. Based on these concepts and arguments, the term “Antigypsyism” will be used in this report with all due care, consideration, reflection, and in full awareness of the linguistic perils involved.

“Antigypsyism” is closely linked to the history and the culture of European mainstream societies, which have all used it to carry out cultural and normative conflicts by attributing undesired social characteristics and behaviour to “Gypsies.” Consequently, it is irrelevant to the analysis and criticism of „Antigypsyism“ how „the culture“ of this or that minority or group really is. Roma who have never left their homeland are perceived to be just as “nomadic” as those who have lived in several countries or, for that matter, as circus owners who are not members of a Roma minority. Prejudices are not developed from real-life experiences; rather they are components of the cultures and traditions of European majority societies. The stereotypic knowledge of what “Gypsies” are like, how they live and what they think has its origin in the practice of securing and strengthening desired social norms. It was developed through centuries and evolved through many stages of differentiation until it became a cultural reference framework. Antigypsyism exists not only in the radical right fringe of society; rather, it must be understood as an unquestioned social consensus on what “Gypsies” are.

Antigypsyism is a specific form of racism which not only has its own history of persecution, but also its own, specific “Gypsy” stereotypes. At the core of Antigypsyism are attributions which imply that “Gypsies” are not “civilised” enough. The role given to the „Gypsies“ is always that of those who do not share, accept, won’t or have not yet internalised the norms and values of majority society. The ensuing images of “Gyp-

sies” are thus closely interwoven with the perception of the state of being “civilised” and with the the development processes of European majority societies.

At least three main components of prejudicial structures contained in „Antigypsyism“ can be described: 1. The attribution of a lack of identity which is expressed in prejudices such as “Nomadism,” “Homelessness,” (in the sense of lack of a homeland,) or “lack of religion” and “constant itinerancy.” 2. The attribution of parasitic behaviour as reflected in prejudices such as „begging,“ “confidence games,” “laziness,” and “abuse of social benefits.” 3. Stereotypes which include the attribution of a lack of discipline and rational thinking, such as the image of constant „dancing,“ „impulsive musicality,“ “fiery passion,” as well as “filth” and “refuse.” All of these prejudices have one thing in common: They have no basis in real experiences; they are merely interpretations.

Today, the increasing use of stereotypes which supposedly reflect admiration or benevolence is, for the most part, merely a new assessment of old stereotypes based on the same underlying core issues. It makes no difference whether one admiringly says that “Gypsies” live a carefree life or whether one says that they are “workshy,” as both statements basically imply that “they” don’t work as “we” do. By the same token, whether or not the word “Gypsy” is actually used in statements is irrelevant in determining whether they are examples of Antigypsyism or not. The use of terms such as „Roma“ or „Sinti and Roma,“ which are, in principle, self-designations, can also be antigypsyistic, depending on which meaning and intention they attempt to convey. If the word “Roma” or the words “Sinti and Roma” are merely used due to the fact that they are the politically correct version of the term “Gypsy” without reflection on the existing prejudices and stereotypes, their use can be an invaluable relief for those who may feel insulted

ted by the word “Gypsy,” however, they can still convey antigypsyistic meaning.

Ubiquitous antigypsyistic stereotypes in peoples’ minds do not necessarily lead to the exigency of political measures or the impulse to take concrete action against Roma. Those attitudes must rather be seen as latent patterns of interpretation, which can always be called upon when a certain situation is deemed to be antigypsyistic. For example, people who have grown up in Germany or Austria have learned that “begging” is typically “Gypsy,” but this does not necessarily mean that concrete action must follow. Such attitudes do become relevant to action taken at the moment in which begging people are encountered on the streets. These can, based on existing stereotypes, be perceived as being „Gypsies“ or „Roma.“ In this manner, the act of begging is no longer seen as a means of generating income often employed by poor people trying to secure their survival. Instead, it is implied that the act of begging is rooted in cultural traditions and serves dishonest and criminal machinations. The very process of the emergence and manifestation of previously merely latently existing stereotypes does not occur in isolated incidents concerning individuals, but rather is caused and magnified by a multitude of press reports and statements made by acquaintances and political figures which interact reciprocally. It is through this interactive process that views on “Roma who beg” and the terms “Roma” and “begging” come to be broadly understood as being connected and become influential in that they inform political decisions, press reports, acts of everyday discrimination and, in certain cities and regions, lead to acts of violence.

Based on these considerations, it is shown that in modern day society, „Antigypsyism” defined as the existence of latent “Gypsy” stereotypes, is the rule rather than the exception. Antigypsyistic thought and action are often not the result of conscious decisions: many people would say of themselves that they don’t “have anything against” Roma and yet their image of Roma is influenced by the same stereotypes. In order to overcome such patterns of interpretation which are often acquired over a period of many years and deeply rooted in society, reflection and conscious effort is needed. This effort is essential as antigypsyistic attitudes are at the root of discrimination and actions based on Antigypsyism. Of course, not

every stereotypic “Gypsy” image leads to discriminatory or violent actions. Nevertheless, prejudicial attitudes are at the core of such actions and deliver the arguments used by the perpetrators to explain and legitimise them as well as contributing towards making such actions seem understandable and legitimate to others, often by portraying them as harmless and thereby preventing them from being deemed unacceptable and appropriately denounced.

Comprehending the potential effects of Antigypsyism is hardly possible for people who have never been affected by racism. The author of these words is a member of majority society as well and would like to refrain from assuming that he can adequately report on this aspect. However, what can be ascertained is that innumerable victims’ reports concur in asserting that their lives are affected by this racism very regularly and in degrees of varying intensity.

The discrimination of people who are perceived as „Gypsies“ must be described as being pervasive, even if only a limited number of individual cases are documented in this report. (For Roma, equal opportunities do not exist on the real estate or labour markets, nor is the possibility of openly revealing their identity, origin or cultural background without fear of discrimination.) They are also often confronted with stereotypic attitudes on what defines “Roma” or “Gypsies.” Even the most well-meaning descriptions, press reports and statements in which “Roma” are one-sidedly portrayed as poor “Southeastern Europeans” who live in slums and are dependent on aid must be understood to be patterns of interpretation based on stereotypes.

Combating Antigypsyism begins with self-reflection. In order to do this, it is necessary to recognize social conditions for what they are and not look upon them as the result of supposed ethnic conflicts or insurmountable cultural otherness as informed by one’s own stereotypes. Lastly, it is necessary to identify and label, criticise and combat Antigypsyism where and when it occurs.

The history of the discrimination and persecution of people who are perceived to be „Gypsies“ has undoubtedly been too long. The gravest possible manifestation of Antigypsyism to date originated in Germany and Austria during the era of National Socialist persecution. In light of this histo-

rical fact, the continuing discrimination, marginalisation and persecution of Roma, Sinti and Jenische –even in these countries– can only be viewed with cynicism.

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Roma, Sinti or „Gypsy“ afterall?

The most glaring difference between the terms “Roma” and „Gypsy“ is that “Roma” is a term of self-designation whereas “Gypsy” is a foreign appellation. “Roma” derives from Romani, or Romanes, the language of the Roma, and actually means “men” (masculine singular: “Rom”). Women are called “Romnja” (feminine singular: Romni.) However, the use of these terms is limited to members of the ethnic group itself. The word “Roma” is an umbrella term for many varying groups of peoples who, although they share common ancestry, can differ greatly and often see those differences as lines of demarcation between the groups. To name but a few, these groups are, for example, the Lovara, Burgenland-Roma, Kalderas, Kale, Gurbet, Arlije, Manouches or Sinti (=masculine plural, singular: Sinto; feminine singular = Sintiza, feminine plural= Sintize.) In German, the terms “Roma and Sinti” or, especially in Germany itself, due to the fact that the Sinti population has positioned itself as an independent and unique group, “Sinti and Roma,” are commonly used together to describe peoples of Roma origin. The double-term is often used falsely however, for example, when speaking of a certain sub-group (who are not Sinti.) „Gypsy“ or „Gypsies,“ is a foreign appellation, i.e., a word used by others to denote people of –presumed– Roma ethnicity. The origin of the word is not clear. “Gypsy” may have evolved from the middle English dialect word „egypcien“, from the supposed origin of the people.

“Zigeuner” has a very strong negative connotation and is mostly used derogatorily, especially in the German language, and implies a range of stereotypic attitudes which have little basis in the real lives of Roma and Romnja. “Roma” and “Zigeuner” do not always mean the same thing, as “Zigeuner” always implies racist stereotypes. Furthermore, Roma and Romnja as well as people whose lifestyles were deemed to be “Zigeuner” in nature and people who were thought to belong to the “Zigeuner race” were persecuted and annihilated during the Second World War by the National Socialists and their allies. The Commission for Equal Treatment determined in a study that the term “Zigeuner” is discriminatory as defined by the Law of Equal Treatment (see case no. 3.)

Although there are Roma who consciously use the term “Gypsy” to describe themselves, this term should not be used by people who are not Roma. In 1971, participants of the World Congress of Roma meeting in London determined that all foreign appellations such as “Zigeuner” and “Gipsy” (or “Gypsy”) were no longer to be used and repudiated them. The word “Gipsy” (or “Gypsy”) is a relict of the medieval supposition that the Roma came from Egypt and were “Egyptian.” “Gipsy” is not a translation of the German word “Zigeuner” into the English language (or vice versa,) but rather derives from an entirely different word root and, in the German speaking world it is not felt to be quite as derogatory as “Zigeuner.” In fact, “Gipsy” is often used especially in the world of music –even by Roma musicians– to describe a certain style of music, as in “Gipsy-Swing.”

as being “partially” or “often” discriminating.) In the autumn of the year 2012, ZARA pointed this out and asked for a correction to be made, which the editorial staff refused to undertake and the Ombud for Equal Treatment took action.

1 Racist Reactions to a Photo Campaign

In the spring of the year 2012, the musician Harri Stojka started a campaign entitled “I Am Against the Use of the Word Zigeuner” which generated a lot of interest and caused hefty discussions about the use of the word “Zigeuner.” As well as receiving acclaim, Harri Stojka, his family and other activists were attacked in various online fora, on Facebook and other media and became the targets of racially motivated comments and abuse.

2 In the current edition of the „Austrian Dictionary” used in schools, the term “Zigeuner” and other discriminatory terms can be found without adequate indication of their discriminatory meaning. (They are described

3 „No Room for Gypsies”

In August 2005, the manager of a camping site in East Tyrol put up a sign at the reception desk reading, “Kein Platz für Zigeuner“ (No Room for Gypsies.) The Commission for Equal Treatment of the Austrian Chancellery drew up a report to this incident and came to the conclusion that the sign was discriminatory as well as a nuisance and that the term “Zigeuner” is discriminatory according to the Equal Treatment Law.

4 “Zigeuner” products in Austrian supermarkets

In Austrian supermarkets there are still a number of products which are labelled with or use the word “Zigeuner” in their names. Such names can also be found on restaurant menus in the form of “Zi-

geunerschnitzel” or “Zigeunerskewer.” These names do not have their origin in culinary tradition; rather, they indicate the stereotype of the “fiery” and “passionate” “Gypsies” and their imagined preference for spicy food. In this way, products labelled with the addage “Zigeuner” are understood by all to be hot and spicy, and the use of the word “Zigeuner” is proven to be a marketing strategy for spicy foods.

Just how much use is made of stereotypic images is illustrated by the example of the product sold as “Zigeunerräder” (Gypsy wheels) by the company Kelly. The product description on the company website reads, “Kelly’s Zigeunerräder Paprikan Style. Have you got passion in your blood? Enjoy fiery dances! Enjoy vivacity! Then get ready for a spirited culinary delight: Kelly’s Zigeunerräder – 100% taste to tickle your taste buds.”

Media

The portrayal of Roma and Sinti in the Austrian media is strongly linked to the public discourse on begging. Other themes are the poverty of Roma/Romnja in Eastern Europe and the problem of human trafficking in connection with begging and prostitution. Reporting over the last years has created a situation whereby the terms “Roma” and “beggar” have almost become synonymous, even though only a tiny share of Roma/Romnja living in Austria engage in begging, and not nearly all people engaged in begging belong to this group. Although the individual reports of the mainstream media are rarely racist, the one-sided portrayal of Roma/Romnja as “problem cases” (see e.g. the *Kurier*) has contributed to an increase in antigypsyist sentiment. This is particularly evident in the numerous racist comments which can be found below reports in online newspapers (see chapter on Internet). In this context, it is striking that editors evidently have little sensitivity when it comes to antigypsyist stereotypes and comments. It is only too rare that the media present Roma/Romnja or Sinti/Sintize who do not fit the stereotypical image, but rather who have gone to university or enjoy professional success.

5 “Aggressive windscreen cleaners”

On 7 July 2013, the daily newspaper *Heute* published an article about “aggressive windscreen cleaners” who were trying to earn money by washing windcreens at a junction. It was emphasised that a “group of Roma” were involved. A few days later, another article appeared on the subject, in which the windscreen cleaners were presented as belonging to a “begging mafia”. But the controversy surrounding this group appeared to be exaggerated. A police spokesman was quoted as saying: “As yet, we have not received any complaints”. In the online edition of the newspaper, the first article attracted racist comments, including one which called for violence against Roma/Romnja.

6 “The real characteristics of the Roma community”

Against the backdrop of the Steiermark regional parliament’s decision for a general ban on begging, the *Kleine Zeitung* newspaper carried an article on 16 February 2011 by Dr Hans Magenschab with the title “Third World in the Centre of Europe”. The article propagated a number of antigypsyist stereotypes: “*The real characteristics of the Roma community are: high birth rates, low life expectancy, poor or no education, unemployment, high crime rates, living in poor districts. But also: a high level of musicality.*” Unnecessary and erroneous statements of this kind amount to a racist defamation of all Roma/Romnja; the fact that they are explicitly presented as the truth at the

start of the sentence makes the accusations worse. Hans Magenschab goes on to imagine a threatening scenario involving Roma migrants following the opening of the Austrian labour market for Eastern Europe: “*What will we do if even only a small part of the Roma collective decides to move here?*”. It is worth noting in this context that the same rhetoric regarding the migration of Roma/Romnja was used by FPÖ leader Heinz Christian Strache during the EU’s eastern enlargement (see also Case number 24). The drifting of such statements from the political far-right margin into the “middle of society” in media reporting is notable, and shows how little Austria is sensitised to the problem of antigypsyist. Romano Centro lodged a complaint with the Austrian Press Council (Presserat) which was sustained at second consideration. In an out-of-court mediation process, Romano Centro and the *Kleine Zeitung* agreed that the newspaper would publish an article on the migration of Roma/Romnja by an author designated by Romano Centro. The article by Stefan Benedik, Wolfgang Göderle and Barbara Tiefenbacher appeared in the *Kleine Zeitung* of 9 December, and carried the title “Not travelling with violins”.

7 In March 2008, the *Neue Kronen Zeitung* carried two articles claiming that **Crown Prince Rudolf** had contracted a sexually transmitted illness from a “gypsy”, and that Roma did not mind being referred to as “gypsies”.

8 In May 2011, a professional dancer involved in the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) show “**Dancing Stars**” said of his female partner: “*Only a gypsy praises his horse*”. ORF did not respond to the subsequent complaint.

Austrian Press Council

The Austrian Press Council monitors the observance of the code of conduct for the Austrian press. It is responsible for the print media and its online offerings. The code of conduct prohibits “blanket suspicion and blanket denigration of persons and groups of people” as well as “any discrimination based on race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or otherwise”. The media observe this monitoring voluntarily, with the prominent exception of the *Neue Kronen Zeitung*. There are two ways to complain to the Press Council e.g. about a racist article. An *independent procedure* can be launched by any individual reporting a breach of media ethics; the Press Council then submits its decision. The institution of a *complaint procedure* requires the plaintiff to be personally affected. For media which are subject to the arbitration of the Press Council, it is possible that the wording of the decision then be published in that media. As in Case Number 6, an alternative view can also be published.

9 Disparaging statement in “Willkommen Österreich”

On the TV show “Willkommen Österreich” (Welcome Austria) on 8 September 2011, the actor Ben Becker said that the prevailing view towards people in his profession was: “*They are a bunch of gypsies who shit behind the bushes*”. In response to e-mail complaints, the ORF customer service pointed out that Ben Becker had been reprimanded by one of the presenters and that it was not ORF’s role to censor its guests. It was noted that the late-night show “Willkommen Österreich” was not subject to the usual political correctness at ORF and that presenters and guests would therefore express themselves “in a relaxed way”.

10 “Roma clans”

On 24 February 2013, the German daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* carried an interview with the Director of the *Drehscheibe Augarten* (crisis centre for Eastern European minors in Vienna), Norbert Ceipek. Under the title “Roma clans: poverty as a business model”, Ceipek spoke about children and human trafficking. The interview was notable for its generalisations and lack of differentiation. Human trafficking was presented as a “Roma problem”. Ceipek painted a picture of a group characterised by criminal “Roma clans”, mafia-like structures, the exploitation of women and children, and families hostile to education. In May, a (partly public) dispute erupted after the Office of Youth and Families asked Ceipek to refrain from commenting on this topic. Ceipek mainly stood behind his views, but suggested that “Roma clans” were mainly involved in begging rather than prostitution, thereby contradicting his own statements in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Speaking to the *Kurier* newspaper, however, he returned to the subject: “*Roma villages are ruled by clan bosses. They have money. And those who have money, buy (...) The bosses have proper building yards, with wood for heating or construction material.*” The *Kurier* added: “*Anyone who needs anything finds themselves in debt. The currency is: children*”. The debate showed little understanding for the fact that it is extremely problematic and of little help to attribute certain forms of crime to a certain ethnic group. Both the interviews and the reporting on the debate on “censorship” were a defamation of all Roma/Romnja and suggested that certain forms of crime are Roma-specific or even part of their culture.

11 “Wave of beggars”

An article in the magazine *Sezession* on local council elections in Graz in 2008 sought to trivialise the BZÖ’s (Alliance for the Future of Austria) xenophobic slogan “We’ll clean up Graz” (i.a. from beggars), and pointed out that there was an “*organised wave of Slovakian gypsy beggars*” in Graz.

12 “Roma invasion” in St. Pölten

On 27 July 2013, the daily newspaper *Österreich* reported on a “Roma invasion” in St Pölten. A number of families had moved into a house before it was demolished in July. The expression “Roma invasion” suggests a danger or serious disruption to the public order, where, in fact, poverty was the only motivation. On enquiry by the Romano Centro, the town of St Pölten said there were no indications that the people involved were Roma/Romnja.

13 “The pickpockets are back”

An article in the *Salzburger Nachrichten* reported on the increase in pick-pocketing in Austria. Explicit reference was made to the ethnic background of the perpetrators: “*According to experts, they are mainly Roma. Most are women and children who arouse no suspicions in their subsequent victims at first glance. They are unable to find work in their homeland and are sent to Austria by clan bosses specifically for the purpose of criminal business*”. Exactly who these “experts” were is not mentioned; only a police spokesman is cited in the report. Romano Centro sent him an enquiry about the article. The initial response was disturbing: the police spokesman explained that not only pick-pocketing, but all manner of petty tricks, such as the “carpet trick”, the “leather jacket trick” or the “uncle-nephew” trick were being developed and carried out by “Roma”, and that it was necessary to say this publicly and pass it on to colleagues. He claimed that he had learnt this in police school. Investigators could tell if the perpetrators were “Roma” if they needed interpreters for Romanian and Bulgarian and they “always came from the same village”. He was not able to present a plausible explanation as to how ethnicity was established or whether ethnic background was documented (which it would need to be, in order to make such statements). A short time later, his superior explained that the claim that the perpetrators were Roma/Romnja certainly did not come

from his division. Furthermore, the Ministry had issued strict provisions that the ethnic background of suspects or offenders should not be made public.

14 “Problem cases” and “social scroungers”

On 26 April 2013, the *Kurier* reported on a letter which Interior Minister Mikl-Leitner and three of her counterparts from other European member states had addressed to the European Commission, in which they called for tougher laws on so-called “poverty migration”. The letter specified neither certain ethnic groups nor countries of origin. For the *Kurier* and other media, however, it was clear that the letter could only refer to “*Roma migrants as social scroungers*”. A picture caption in the online edition of the *Kurier* ran: “*Problem cases, in France too: Roma from Bulgaria and Romania*”. The authors put neither the expression “problem cases” nor “social scroungers” in inverted commas and did not take a critical view of these accusations in the article. The article is a good example of the permanent negative reporting in the media which is contributing to an increasing sentiment of rejection.

Police and media

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommends that the member states of the Council of Europe “ensure that the police express itself to the media and general public in a way which does not exacerbate hostile attitudes and prejudices against those belonging to minority groups”. For this reason, information on the ethnic background of a suspect or group of offenders cannot be published unless absolutely necessary, for example in the case of a public manhunt.

Right-wing populist/right-wing extremist media

Racist articles about Roma/Romnja can consistently be found in FPÖ-close media, parts of which have been classified as right-wing extremist by the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance. Frequent use is made of the pejorative terms „Zigeuner“ (“gypsy”) or „Fahrende“ (“travellers”). Roma/Romnja are portrayed as a “threat” or “plague”, with terms such as “infiltrate” and “invasion” adding to the effect. Compared to other media, the right-wing media give lots of space to the subject of “Roma” or “gypsies”, in the form of special editions, for example.

15 Supporting racist statements

Die Aula reported on the immigration debate in Germany in its April 2013 edition. It supported the racist statements of an SPD politician in Bremen, who had spoken “*openly about the social and intellectual backwardness of gypsies*”. The “*poverty immigrants*” were also accused of “*anti-social behaviour*”.

16 Racist reporting on Hungary

Also in *Die Aula*, an author named Johann F. Balvany has made several racist statements over the past few years. In his articles, he speaks of “*gypsy crime*”, “*gypsy plagues*” and “*gypsy terror*”, accuses the Roma/Romnja in Hungary of being violent, and suggests that “*a majority of travellers*” are “*chronically and massively anti-social*”. He explains a violent dispute by saying “*gypsy boys are only considered ‘men’ when they have distinguished themselves with the knife*”. He describes Roma/Romnja in Hungary as a threat to “*Magyar culture*” and repeatedly stresses that “*gypsies*” have “*infiltrated*” or “*nestled in*”.

17 “Impending poverty migration”

In March 2013, the magazine *Fakten* published an article by Alois Gründl on the topic of free movement within the EU, in which he spoke of “*impending poverty migration*”. Gründl accused the Austrian and German authorities of being “*too kind to foreigners due to accusations about their past*”, and the “*travelling folk*” of gaining access to social benefits “*through cunning and malice*”. He warned of a “*mass invasion*” of a “*precarious mobile underclass from Southeastern Europe which has nothing to lose and poses a threat to social peace as it infiltrates Central Europe*.”

18 “The unloved minority”

In both 2010 and 2013 (see also Case number 25), the weekly magazine *Zur Zeit* had special features on “gypsies”, once under the title “*Die ungeliebte Minderheit*” (edition 40/2010), and once under “*Zigeuner-Zuwanderung: Ungeliebte Randgruppe*” (edition of 22-28 March 2013). In both editions of the magazine, the authors insist on using the pejorative term „Zigeuner“ (“gypsy”), even though – as is repeatedly stressed – they are clearly aware that Roma/Romnja do not want to be labelled this way. The articles contain numerous racist stereotypes; Roma/Romnja are frequently accused of having an “*archaic*” or “*different concept of property*”. Other attributes are “*having numerous children*”, “*social benefit tourism*”, “*lack of continuity*”, particular musical talent, and crime. The deportation of Roma from France to Romania is defended and presented as a model for other EU countries. Helge Morgengrauen writes: “*They had and have problems, they were and are a problem – for the majority societies in the countries where they appear*”. Erich Körner-Lakatos speaks of an “*archaic way of life*” which is “*incompatible with the needs of the labour market*”.

Incitement

Incitement is regulated in Austria in Section 283 of the Criminal Code, where it is defined as follows:

“(1) *Anyone who, in a way which could endanger the public order, or anyone who, clearly and for the benefit of a wide public, calls for or incites violence against a church or religious society or another group of people defined by the criteria of race, skin colour, language, religion or world view, nationality, origin or national or ethnical origin, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation, or against a member of this group explicitly because of his or her attribution to this group shall be punished with up to two years in prison.*”

(2) *Also punishable is anyone who incites a broad public against one of the groups described in paragraph 1 or insults them in a way which violates their human dignity and seeks to make them an object of contempt.*”

The law was last amended in 2012. It is a matter of contention whether it provides adequate protection from all forms of hate speech, as the threshold for a conviction for incitement is very high.

Politics

Like the majority of the public, politicians also show a lack of sensitivity when it comes to antigypsyist statements. Unsurprisingly, members of the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreich* (FPÖ) are the most prominent. FPÖ-close media in particular, such as the weekly newspaper *Zur Zeit* (published by EU parliamentarian Andreas Mölzer), contain insulting and racist articles which were written by active politicians themselves. In the various debates about banning begging, problematic statements have been heard - not only from FPÖ members. Unfortunately, the Green Party is so far the only party which is taking action against antigypsyist and raising awareness of this form of racism in Austria.

19 No pocket money

In August 2010, then Interior Minister Maria Fekter (ÖVP) said that the requirement for asylum seekers to present themselves at processing centres (“Mitwirkungspflicht”) was needed so that “*basic asylum provision doesn’t become temporary pocket money for Roma from the southern European countries*”. Romano Centro wrote to the Minister to complain about this statement, but did not receive a reply.

20 “Begging tourists”

On 15 February 2011, Landesrat Dr. Kurzmann (FPÖ) said the following about a ban on begging during a debate in the Styria regional parliament: “*It is mainly Slovakian gypsies from Hostice who are coming here as begging tourists. I have already drawn attention to this. It is an organised and calculated business to exploit the sympathy of the people of Styria*”.

21 Insulting the political competitors

In an article of 30 July 2013 concerning the debate about a special session of the regional parliament in Carinthia, the ÖVP’s parliamentary leader Ferdinand Hueter referred to the other parties thus: “*They should box the gypsies around the ears with the special session*.” The derogatory description was clearly meant as an insult to the political opponents.

Back in 2008, Carinthian parliamentary leader Jörg Haider said: “*Red (Socialists) and black (Christian Democrats) are arguing like gypsies about a different subject every day*”.

22 “Band of gypsies”

The local newspaper of the FPÖ *Wienerwald* (7/2008) warned of a “*band of Hungarian gypsies*”, who were currently on a “*thieving tour*” of the area.

23 Dangerous beggars

The parliamentary leader of the FPÖ Vienna Johann Gudenus wrote an article in the right-wing magazine *Die Aula* with the title “*Begging mafia*”, in which he spoke of a “*monstrous system of begging*” involving “*mainly Sinti and Roma from Romania*”. He outlined the horror scenario of a begging mafia and described beggars as a threat to security. He also claimed: “*Furthermore, beggars are often seriously ill and highly infectious, bringing in TB, for example*.”

24 Strache causes panic

During a strongly xenophobic speech in Linz on 24 June 2006, FPÖ party leader Heinz-Christian Strache spoke of a “*fight for survival*” for Austrian people in their own country and promised “*Rache mit Strache*” (Vengeance with Strache). In conclusion, he issued a warning about the then imminent accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU: “*Hundreds of thousands of gypsies (...) are waiting to come to us*.”

25 Racist EU parliamentarian

In its edition 40/2010, the FPÖ-close weekly newspaper *Zur Zeit* carried a special report with the title: “*Gypsies: the unloved minority*”. The editor, Andreas Mölzer, an FPÖ member of the European Parliament, wrote of the “*tendency of ‘gypsies’ to simply ignore (...) applicable laws*” and that it was “*well known*” that it was “*part of the culture of travellers to interpret the concept of property differently than conventional European societies*”. He went on to compare the income situation in Romania with social welfare in Austria, coming to the conclusion that this would be a motivation for immigration, particularly for “*population groups such as the gypsies, whose culture dictates that they lead a semi-nomadic life*”. Mölzer then outlined a threatening scenario: “*Imagine if hundreds of thousands of Romanian gypsies thought of coming to*

Austria, (...) settling there illegally, setting up their caravans there, and then going the same day to the authorities to claim what they are (...) apparently entitled to: namely, all Austrian social benefits”. He expressed his fear of conflict on account of the “*social behaviour previously outlined*”, by which he meant “*theft, trickery, muggings, sexual attacks and similar*”. He concluded with the words: “*A catastrophe!*” and “*not something we can allow the native population to put up with*”. In this article, Mölzer not only propagates racist stereotypes, but also deliberately spreads false information about entitlements to social welfare in order to present Roma/Romnja as a threat to the social welfare state. Already in 2007, he had called in a press release for a distinction to be made “*between ethnic Romanians and ethnic Roma when it comes to crime tourism*”, with the racist justification that “*The ethnic Romanians, who are valuable guest workers, are culturally European, where as the Roma have lived in Europe for centuries, but, due to cultural idiosyncrasies, still haven’t accepted European legal traditions*.” This was particularly evident in the case of “*property law and its observance*”. Writing in the German weekly newspaper *Junge Freiheit* in June 2011, Mölzer called for border controls at the Bulgarian and Romanian borders in order to stop “*even more of them coming to Western and Central Europe*”. He said there were “*problems inherent to their nature and their culture*” and that “*travellers are naturally suited to social benefit tourism*”. He spoke of a “*lacking ability for social integration*” and described the deportation of Roma/Romnja from France to Romania, which raises considerable questions of fundamental rights, as an “*emergency measure against Europe’s completely failed policy of anti-discrimination*”.

Access to Goods and Services

Racism and discrimination can be encountered in many situations in daily life, for example when shopping, in public spaces or when searching for an apartment to rent. Contrary to the cases mentioned in the sections Politics and Media, the incidents of discrimination in daily life are more difficult to document as they are hardly ever reported by the victims or witnesses. The Austrian Equal Treatment Law does provide the legal basis, albeit small, for defending oneself against such incidents with regard to equal access to goods and services. However, the fines for offenders are minimal and compensation for victims is negligent. The cases reported here make shockingly clear how people going about their normal business in daily life can suddenly become the targets of racially motivated abuse and discrimination.

26 „I know people like you”

In April 2011, a woman walked into a toy store in Vienna and wanted to exchange a toy she had bought there the day before for a different one. In spite of showing the original receipt, the salesperson suspected her of having just taken both toys off the shelf. The salesperson said, „I know people like you.“ The customer wanted to lodge a complaint and asked to see the manager but her request was denied. A second salesperson also refused to exchange the toy and said to the customer, „The race you belong to steals.“ A call was put through to the main branch and at last the customer was able to exchange the toy. In spite of having told the employee in the main office what had just happened to her in the shop she was in, the customer never received an apology of any sort.

27 No Coffee

In April 2012, a lady witnessed how a Roma was refused service –on orders of the manager– when she asked for a coffee at a fast food chain outlet near the railway station in Salzburg. When the lady asked why this had happened, she was told that it was forbidden on principle to sell anything to “Romanian Roma.” The witness turned to ZARA and together they asked the management in writing to explain this policy. The management replied that only individuals were refused service and that the incident was not due to discrimination. Two weeks later, the same witness reported that a five year old child had been refused service when it wanted to buy toast. Again she asked why the child had been refused service and again the fast food chain’s management asserted that only individuals who had been barred from entering the shopping mall were refused service.

28 “We don’t sell anything to Gypsies anymore”

At the railway station in Salzburg, Ms. R. discovered a sign bearing the signature of the manager outside a food shop which read, „Wir verkaufen den Zigeunern absolut nichts mehr“ (“We don’t sell anything to Gypsies anymore”). One of the waitresses of the store explained that the sign had been put up following an initiative started by the fast food chain outlet across from her stand. ZARA filed charges on behalf of Ms. R. with the Magistrate of the City of Salzburg for lack of access to services due to discrimination.

29 „They should all be rooted out”

In March 2012, a Roma family was verbally abused and shouted at by the cashier of an electronics shop. There had been some confusion about the redemption of vouchers. The cashier said, among other things, “I hate you. I hate you all,” and,

EGVG: Discriminatory Denial of Services

The Introductory Law to the Laws of Administrative Processes (*Einführungsgesetz zu den Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetzen, EGVG*) provides the legal basis to defend oneself against discrimination with regard to access to goods and services; when shopping, for example, or gaining access to a restaurant or café. Racist discrimination in these cases can be reported to the municipal magistrate and offenders can be fined up to 1.090 Euros. The refusal of a service on the grounds of ethnicity is also subject to the Equal Treatment Law (see page 17).

“They steal money from the State. They should all be rooted out.” It was only after a witness to this incident lodged a complaint that the cashier apologised.

30 Name-calling in the local cafe

A couple were in their local, a café in the 2nd district of Vienna one day in July of 2012. The wife was on her way to the ladies’ room when the café owner, who was inebriated, began calling her names. He called her a “dirty, bloody Gypsy” and a “stinking ‘Tschuschin’ ” (=Viennese slang for Eastern Europeans, usually from the countries which used to form Yugoslavia.) Shortly thereafter, the café owner physically attacked her husband. The police, who had been called to the scene, said that they couldn’t press charges as there were no physical injuries. The couple contacted ZARA and received support in filing a complaint on the grounds of discriminatory practices with regard to access to services as laid out in the EGVG (=Introductory Law to the Laws of Administrative Processes.) A report on the facts of the case was also drawn up due to the suspected occurrence of dangerous threats and racist abuse. The case against the café owner was later dropped following his death in the same year.

31 A woman who was shopping asked for a sales discount. The saleslady then refused to sell her the dress in question on the grounds that she was „bargaining like a Gypsy.“

32 Mobbing in a Therapy Facility

A father reported the following case to ZARA: His son, who had been convicted of a crime, was taking part in a narcotics rehabilitation programme in a therapy facility but broke off the therapy due to constant antigypsyistic mobbing and abuse by other patients. Because he broke the parole rules by leaving the therapy, the son had to return to prison to sit out his sentence.

33 Bank Account Denied

In October 2010, a Slovakian Rom wanted to open a bank account together with his father. The bank employee refused to open an account for them after she had seen the father and son –without any explanation. Complaints lodged with the manager of the branch and with the bank's own ombudsman were unsuccessful.

34 No Admittance

In March 2007, a woman wanted to go to a discotheque in Oberwart with her friend, who is a Rom. The manager of the club refused to let them in and said that he didn't need to tell them why. Following this incident, it was reported in several media outlets that the discotheque in question was known not to admit Roma in general. The manager said that the reason for this was that he had been threatened by Roma on the occasion of the opening of the club and that he didn't want to let his club be „*smashed to bits by Gypsies*.“ Verein Roma, a Roma association in Oberwart and ZARA filed charges with the local executive administration based on the EGVG, the Introductory Law to the Laws of Administrative Processes.

35 „I'm Not Having Gypsies in My House”

Ms. M. and her daughter were looking for an apartment. At a private viewing of a possible rental, the owner of the apartment looked at the mother and daughter and said, “*No, I'm not having Gypsies in my house!*” and without another word, showed them out.

36 Racist Abuse from Neighbours

In 2011, a Sinti family contacted Ketani (a Sinti association), in Linz, Upper Austria, because the family members were constantly being called “Gypsies” by other neighbours living in the same house. The situation had escalated and the conflict had led to physical abuse. The family suf-

fered greatly from the verbal abuse, especially the grandmother, who was a concentration camp survivor and, due to the events, no longer left the apartment for fear. The situation was clarified and calmed down through the combined efforts of the police, Ketani and representatives of the housing cooperative, who had many discussions with the parties involved.

37 Fear of Neighbours

The administrator of a housing cooperative in Wels, Upper Austria, contacted Ketani in 2012 because one of the inhabitants of the apartment building felt disturbed by a Roma family and had already lodged many complaints about them. Through mediation and discussion, it became clear that the woman was scared of the Roma family on account of the colour of their skin and their foreign origin. She was also the only inhabitant of the whole building to complain about them. After Ketani's intervention there were no more complaints.

38 Rental Denied

A housing cooperative in Linz refused to rent an apartment to a man on the grounds that it didn't rent out to Roma in general in order to avoid complaints by neighbours as these didn't want “Gypsies” living in their neighbourhood. The association Ketani contacted the housing cooperative and was able to negotiate with the responsible employees, securing an apartment for the man.

39 In the year 2009, a member of the “Yeniche Culture Union” was attacked in his apartment by employees of the housing cooperative “New Homeland Tyrol.” Leading up to the incident, the employees had provoked an argument about shoes left in the hallway outside his apartment.

Discrimination in Housing

If a rental is denied on grounds of ethnicity, the aggrieved party can file charges with the courts according to the Law of Equal Treatment and can demand compensation. However, it is not possible to enforce the signing of a rental contract.

Apartments owned by the states (for example social housing) fall under the Antidiscrimination Laws of the state governments. In Vienna and Lower Austria, these disputes are settled by arbitration.

It is only when arbitration does not lead to a settlement and this is officially acknowledged that the case can be taken to court. If agreement is reached, both parties can demand that the courts enforce the agreement. In Vienna, inhabitants of social housing units are supported free of charge in all matters relating to conflicts with neighbours by *Wohnpartner* (www.wohnpartner-wien.at).

Internet/Cyber Hate

In fora and online newspapers, in social media such as Facebook and on various other, partially right-wing and radical right-wing homepages there are innumerable antigypsyistic comments and insults. The Internet is a hotbed of agitation against Roma and Sinti which not only allows for the exchange of racist opinions, but also forms the breeding ground for calls to physical violence as the attack on a group of Roma passing through Bischofshofen shows (see case no. 61.) Postings in online media illustrate very well how biased reporting and racist opinions can create an impression of problems surrounding an issue which would otherwise go unnoticed. Such comments and postings are not penned by the editorial staff, but are read by many people –as a quasi appendage to the article. Racist postings are mostly not removed from the list of comments. The cases reported in this section are merely a fraction of what can be found on Austrian Internet websites. It can be noted that racism in the Internet is generally increasing, as studies have confirmed. This development is worrying, since racist agitation in the virtual world can lead to discrimination and violence in the real world.

Racist Postings

40 Many of the comments posted under an article found on *kurier.at* („Roma-Garde gegen Ungarische Garde“, 06.09.2012 = “Roma-Guard Against Hungarian Guard”) are racist. In one of the comments the writer falsely claims that there are illegal Roma settlements in Vienna and in Burgenland. It is claimed that the inhabitants of the camps make a living by means of prostitution and theft. Another user posted the following: “*It is simply a fact that Gypsy villages are full of anti-social, lazy, uneducated people who always stick together with their own kind and refuse education of any kind. Just look at the way they live: running water and electricity is an exception. The terrible thing is not that these conditions exist, it is that they don’t even try to change them.*”

A large number of the racist comments (more than half of the 34 postings) posted to this article were online for nearly a year. Even after Romano Centro informed the editors about this, some of the postings still remained online. This case shows very well that the moderation of the fora and the regulation of the fora through the users themselves (through the reporting of inappropriate postings, for example,) doesn’t work and proves that Austrian online media, even those of journalistic quality and which are widely read, have become platforms for the exchange of antigypsyistic rhetoric.

41 Under an article on the website *krone.at* dated June 18, 2011, the following comment was posted: “*To be perfectly clear: we don’t want any riff-raff such as Roma, Turks, Muslims, Nigerians, and other Blacks. We are Europe. They can’t be seen as equal to us. BASTA!*”

42 In July 2012, *derstandard.at* reported that the legal proceedings against the weekly publication *Weltwoche* on account of a controversial cover picture had been suspended. The following commentary to the article was posted: “*Have only had little contact with Gypsies, but it was enough to understand what’s likely to happen to areas where they show up in great numbers. Can well imagine that people in such areas lose their patience.*”

43 In December 2011, *derstandard.at* reported on the controversial project called “Bioknoblauch Romanes” (Romani Organic Garlic) which is partially financed by Styria and which aims to secure an income for Roma living in several countries by growing and selling garlic. The following comment was posted under the article: “*People who train their children to beg instead of sending them to school (one only has to look at the large number of Gypsy beggars in the big cities) have lost their right to portray themselves as poor and marginalised all the time. And of course our own left-wing helpers of the beggar-mafia are against this project. It could force people to do actual work.*”

44 A user posted the following comments to an article about begging on *kurier.at* dated June 4, 2012: “*simply deport them and slap them with a three year prohibition of re-entry! and as far as the constant whining is concerned, who’s forcing the roma to multiply like rabbits? instead of continuously having more children they should learn how to read and write, that kills time as well and improves their chances at finding a job greatly! the problem is that these people want to live the way they live at present but in Austria and not in Slovakia! In the winter in vienna, one “gruff” (=night*

refuge) after the other has to be opened because it’s well known that life in vienna in the winter is super! and caritas always denied that there would be bum tourism! and what do we have now?” The posting was reported by Romano Centro. It was deleted and the user was blocked.

45 *krone.at* reported on September 2, 2013 about the argument between a farmer in Salzburg and a group of travelling Roma who were passing through and the following day reported on the ensuing violent excesses against the group of Roma in Bischofshofen (see case no. 61.) Over 1500 comments were posted to the articles and many of them were insulting and racist. The violence against the families involved was positively commented, many users agitated against Roma and the more radical comments were the ones which received the most acclaim by other users. (In a forum, users and readers can agree with a comment written by someone else.) Romano Centro reported such comments as inappropriate to the editorial staff of *krone.at*. The editors emphasised the fact that they couldn’t read all comments and asked Romano Centro to report all racist postings but didn’t accept the suggestion to close the forum (which is often done in such cases.) The editors assured Romano Centro that they would check all comments again, however, to date all comments are still online.

46 „Like a Gypsy Camp” This saying is often used to imply that something is disorganised, filthy and/or not well taken care of. In a video produced for the Viennese Public Transport company introducing a new cleaning service aimed at keeping public transportation facilities tidy, and which could be seen on the official website, *wien.gv.at*, the necessity for the cleaning service was underlined by the statement of a customer who said, “(...)

und vorne schaut's aus wie bei den Zigeunern.“ This translates roughly to, „(...) and up front it looks like a Gypsy camp.” It was only after a member of the public complained that the video was taken off the website in August 2011 and re-edited.

47 Facebook-Agitation Against Roma in Oberwart

In April 2013, there was an incident of agitation against Roma in a Facebook group. A picture of Hitler was shown accompanied by the following text: “*Since when is there a bomb testing site in Oberwart?*” as well as another picture of Hitler with the call to “clean” the park. In several other postings, there were comments directed against Roma. Oberwart was the site of the 1995 bomb attack which killed four Roma. Charges were filed with the police and the incidents are now being investigated on the grounds of suspicion of incitement in accordance with the Law Against Incitement (§ 283 StGB.) The racist postings have since been deleted. Under an article about the incidents on *news.at*, the following comment was posted: “*Yeah, well then look at certain websites in Africa or Asia in which Christians are defamed. Nothing is done about them because we're so tolerant. But if anybody says that a Roma lied somewhere, sometime, then there's an investigation on the grounds of suspected incitement and charges are brought immediately. That's how we dig the grave of our Western society.*” This posting was reported to the editors by Romano Centro but it was not removed.

48 “Dogs from Gypsy Villages”

An animal rights organisation active in Austria and Slovakia advertises dogs and cats for sale on the website *willhaben.at*. Several of the animals are described as having been rescued from “Gypsy villages.” When a member of the public asked what that meant, a representative of the organisation replied aggressively, alleging cruelty to animals in general and denouncing Roma as a “*partially malignant ethnic group.*” (“Malignant” is a term used in medicine to denote aggressive and dangerous tumors.) It was emphasised that the dogs had to be rescued “*before they wound up in the Gypsies' cooking pots!*”

Racism in the Internet

Racist abuse and threats posted on the Internet are subject to prosecution, just as those voiced in the non-virtual world, and can be reported to the police or the public prosecutor's office. Fora of online media outlets are moderated and the contents of users' postings and comments are checked. The terms of use of online media forbid racist comments. For example, on *derstandard.at*, the terms of use read, “*Discriminatory and defamatory contributions will not be tolerated. Especially racist, sexist, anti-semitic comments or those which deride a religion or a sexual identity or are directed at other groups (cultural, national) and defame them are forbidden. Also, postings which disseminate content which agitates against parts of the population and incite violence, or which are disdainful of others, anti-social or in bad taste and immoral are also unacceptable. This includes content which is available through links posted by users.*” Users can also report inappropriate or racist postings. Unfortunately, the editorial staff of the media does not always react to such reports and cannot fulfil their controlling function properly due to the sheer volume of postings. In social networks and on other Internet sites there is the option of addressing the owner of the site directly and demanding that the offensive content be deleted if it comprises a violation of the terms of use, for example, if it is insulting.

Right-wing Populist Internet Pages

The webpages of right-wing groups are full of articles and postings of antigypsyistic nature, especially on the website *unzensuriert.at* (=uncensored.at). This right-wing populist platform, founded in the year 2009, is believed to have been started by the FPÖ politician Martin Graf, whose parliamentarian staff members also maintain the website according to the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance.

49 Subsidies for “Gypsies from the Balkan”

In September 2012, the website *unzensuriert.at* published an article titled, “888.000 Euros for Gypsy Project with Nightclub Advertisement,” in which the Volkshilfe Österreich (Austrian NGO) labour market project for Roma and Sinti was criticised. The article alleged that, “Gypsies from the Balkan” received “generous financial support” and that the project was geared towards “the increasing number of Gypsies entering the country” who “came to Austria from the Balkan in order to relax in the social security hammock.” Under the article there are racist comments: “Excuse me...Gypsies? Working??? Where please? Zigeuner = ziehende Gauner (Gypsies = itinerant crooks). The term doesn’t come from nothing, everybody who has (great) grandparents who lived in the countryside should ask them about it. There’s a Gypsy standing in front of every supermarket selling the printed idiocy one can find in Augustin, Bunte Zeitung etc. Whoever looks closely can see that the so-called ‘poor newspaper seller’ only has one or two old magazines in his hands and should check the date because mostly the stuff they sell is old rubbish and all they’re really doing is begging for money. We don’t need Roma in Austria. We don’t need Roma in Austria, deport them back to Romania! Not one cent for the Roma, who are asylum abusers and cost us Austrians money. Deport them! Now! Immediately! Right now!”

50 Article About France

On September 16, 2012 *unzensuriert.at* published an article about the eviction of Roma from a camp in France. The article contained racist stereotypes, above all the quoted comment by former Minister of the Interior, Claude Gueant. He is quoted as saying that Roma are a “very criminal” minority “inclined to a very cruel form of criminality which distinguishes them from other groups: they instrumentalise their children for criminal purposes.” Several racist comments

were posted to this article. ZARA sent a copy of the comments to the Report Office for National Socialist Offences within the Austrian Ministry of the Interior/BVT and urged it to press charges.

51 „No Interest in Work and Education“

In May 2012 *unzensuriert.at* published an article about „Roma-Criminality” in Duisburg. The following comments were posted: „Roma –Who doesn’t sow, shouldn’t reap. These itinerant people have roamed around for centuries. They have no interest in work or education; they are a strain on the nation and hard-working citizens. They steadfastly refuse to live a bourgeois lifestyle and have no qualms earning a living with all sorts of criminal activities. So, off to work or off to the desert where they can maintain their lifestyle. Pity is inappropriate.” “Integrate them with loads of money? Integrate Gypsies? How can that work? This leftist vermin would sell decent citizens. Not only do they have to fear theft, robbery, rape, assault, etc., but they also have to foot the bill for this pleasure. Deport them! According to the EU agreement it should be possible in cases where criminal activity and/or no income is the case.”

52 Camping Forbidden

After an attack on a group of Roma families who were passing through Salzburg in Bischofshofen, (see case no. 61,) Martina Berthold, a member of the Green Party and of the state government, demanded the creation of short term camping sites for travellers. The article about this on the website *unzensuriert.at*, published on September 9, 2013, repudiates the suggestion. In the article, it is alleged that such an idea would attract a „horde“ and lead to an „invasion.“ It also alleges that Roma clans are involved in criminal activities. The article proposes to prohibit camping in general, thereby diverting „the problem“ to other European countries. This would lead to „a situation which could have a positive impact on the crime statistics.“ There are many racist and insult-

ing comments posted under the article.

53 „Gypsy Lobby“

In the spring of 2012, a group of Romanian citizens camping in tents under a bridge in Terfens, Tyrol caused great excitement. Local politicians and administration officials demanded they be evicted, while several Roma associations and religious organisations called for support for the poverty stricken people and did, in fact, offer some support and aid to them. *unzensuriert.at* reported about this and denounced the charities, calling them a „Gypsy lobby group.“

54 In the right-wing Internet forum *forum-politik.at*, there are innumerable racist and abusive articles and comments published under the headline, „Roma respectively Gypsies: Why they will soon be hunted down and chased away GLOBALLY.“

55 „Stealing Children“

In May 2010, a user posting on the webpage *sosheimat.wordpress.com*, wrote that “Gypsies steal children to refresh their blood.” The same author continued, “What I want to say: 1938 we voted for a man who, in our time of need, rid us of this vermin. This will happen again if someone with courage and charisma stands up. You will experience it. I most likely won’t.”

Racist and neo-nazi content found on the Internet can be reported to:
The Report Office For National Socialist Offences within the Austrian Ministry of the Interior/
BVT (ns-meldestelle@bvt.gv.at).

Public Space

Especially in the urban setting, public spaces are the locations in which people of varying interests, diverse backgrounds, religions and languages meet. It is in the public space that diversity is practised and conflicts of interest can occur between the different groups of people who use it. These conflicts of interests are increasingly being “settled” by means of legislation which targets “fringe groups.” Bans on begging and alcohol, camping regulations, rules regulating access to certain areas and the restriction or prohibition of busking as well as the illicit application of the laws regulating traffic have all contributed towards making the public space attractive for tourists and paying customers. But increased policing and fines have made the same public space a very uncomfortable space for poverty stricken people who previously used it to make a living. Attitudes fuelled by Antigypsyism play a role in this development insofar as poor people from other European nations are often regarded as being Roma – whether that is the case or not – and especially if they are begging, selling magazines or working as musicians. The discussion surrounding the prohibition of begging in some cities only began after a group of people who were perceived to be Roma (and part of the “Begging Mafia”) were deemed to be a problem. Non-foreigners or “indigenous” people who beg do not spark similar discussions. Incidents of Antigypsyism do occur in rural areas as well, and they sometimes turn violent. This particularly affects groups of people who are travelling through the country and who reside in areas for short periods of time, often with the permission of local authorities. The two incidents described below document such attacks which occurred in Ainet and Bischofshofen and which show how quickly the fundamental attitude of Antigypsyism can lead to acts of violence as soon as the group has been identified as “Roma.”

56 Verbal Abuse Against a Family in Oberwart

Early March 2013, a young mother, her four children and their grandmother went for a walk in Oberwart. The children were running around on a remote path next to the street alongside a meadow. At the far side of the meadow there was a house and it was not evident to the family that the meadow belonged to the house as there was no fence. Suddenly a man appeared and yelled, “*You filthy Gypsies, get off my property!*” The family called the police but the police said that there was nothing they could do. The grandmother of the family informed the policeman that she would contact the media. When the family returned home, the policeman called and said that there was something he could do after all. The grandmother was told to come to the police station and report the incident, and charges were pressed. The family’s children were upset and frightened by the incident and didn’t understand why the man had called them names and why they had been the victims of a racist attack.

57 „You Gypsies Are All Mafia!“

Mr. A. is a street musician and was performing in the city centre of Graz with his musician colleague when, quite suddenly, two men approached them and threateningly asked, “*What are you doing here?*” When Mr. A. replied that he and his colleague had a permit to perform, one of the men said, “*You Gypsies are all mafia!*” The situation threatened to get out of hand and Mr. A. and his col-

league packed their instruments and left.

58 „Gypsies Out“ of Ainet

In the night of August 1, 2009, a racist attack occurred in the village of Ainet, East Tyrol. The incident was made public when the newspaper *Kleine Zeitung*, in its regional edition, reported it on August 13. Apparently, on August 1, late in the evening, a group of Roma families from France stopped in Ainet for the night with their 13 caravans. After having spoken to the mayor and paid a deposit, they had been allowed to spend the night on site next to the stadium.

That same evening, the Sportunion (a sports club) was staging an event (which had permission to go on til 3 in the morning) at the sports field nearby and at which a rock band from Carinthia, the Foxcocks, was playing a gig. After the concert ended, very late in the night, and allegedly after the band had worked up the visitors, a group of youths made their way to the campsite of the Roma families armed with metal rods. They banged their fists against the caravans and smashed them with their metal rods. One window was broken. They shouted, “*Gypsies out!*” and “*We don’t need you vermin!*” The men, women and children, who were woken by the attack, called the police. The police escorted the families to Lienz, where the families spent the rest of the night near the train station before continuing their voyage the next day.

The mayor of Ainet, Karl Poppeller, regretted the incident but denied any racist background leading up to it. The police

chief of the district of Lienz, Mr. Wolsegger, went one step further when he said that the incident was not liable to prosecution. He denied having heard rumors that sons of policemen had been among the perpetrators. After the story of the incident had been broken by the *Kleine Zeitung*, SOS Mitmensch and Romano Centro condemned it and criticised the lack of action by authorities, demanding a full investigation and disclosure of the events. Charges filed with the public prosecutor’s office in Innsbruck were without result. Romano Centro tried to locate the families who had been driven out, but neither the mayor nor the police could provide it with any information (like names, phone numbers or licence plate numbers,) even though they had had contact with the families only a short while before. Due to this lack of information, it was not possible to record the testimony of the involved or inform them of their legal rights.

59 Racism Towards Hungarians?

The artist and filmmaker Marika Schmiedt presented an exhibition in Linz in April 2013 called “Thoughts Are Free” in a public space, mounted on a construction site fence. The exhibition was opened by the director of cultural affairs of Linz and hosted by *Stadtwerkstatt* and the gallery *Hofkabinett*. The theme of the 31 posters was racism in Hungary and Europe. The posters criticised recent political developments and the aim of the exhibition was to confront the viewers with those developments. The day before the official opening, however, the exhibition was attacked by a woman passing by. Marika

Schmiedt then was called a racist and the woman tore down a poster and threatened to press charges against her. Two days later all the posters were gone: they had been removed and destroyed by the police acting on instructions from the Federal Agency for State Protection and Counterterrorism. Evidently, the police had believed the accusations of the lady passer-by – a Hungarian nationalist – when she alleged that the posters were insulting to Hungarians and racist in content. The fact that the posters were manifestations of political art meant to criticise increasing Antigypsyism in Europe was not considered. The public prosecutor's office investigated the background of the artist on suspicion of agitation. Since then, the case has been dropped. An official parliamentary inquiry into the affair launched by the Green party addressed to the Minister of the Interior was only partially answered. In the official reply, it is emphasised that the charges had not been filed by an angry citizen, but rather by a journalist working for the newspaper *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*. However, the weekly publication *Falter* researching the matter found this not to be the case and that the police had believed the racist arguments and allegations of the Hungarian nationalist, and removed and destroyed the 31 works of art without even consulting the artist or the organisers of the exhibition. In the autumn of the same year, the posters were shown again in an exhibition in Linz even though the Hungarian ambassador tried to have the exhibition cancelled by lodging a complaint with the President of Austria.

60 In April 2009, a woman reported to ZARA that a Romani begging on the street had been spit at by a passer-by.

61 „Beat up that grubby, filthy vermin“ – Attack in Bischofshofen

In the night of September 2, 2013, according to reports in the media, about 20 young adults attacked a group of families who were travelling through Austria and who had stopped for the night to camp – with permission – at the ski-jumping area in Bischofshofen. The police had to step in to protect the families and their caravans until the early hours of the morning. In spite of this, some of the vehicles were damaged. Before and during the attack, youths were communicating with each other via an open Facebook group called “Rennleitung Pongau.” According to Facebook, the aim of the group is to exchange information about police acti-

vities. The group had about 2500 members. Several members of the group called for violent action to be taken against the families on the campsite. “*Everybody to come to the ski-jumping area tonight, with boards, stones, sticks, rods, etc.... and all storm the site from all sides und beat up that grubby, filthy vermin.*” There were also calls to set fire and threats were made to attack the families with firearms. Individual members of the group demanded the families be “*annihilated,*” one of them even said, “*Here we need the final solution.*” The comments were posted the same night the attacks were taking place and in the following days, group members chatted to each other about how they could further harm the families involved and what should be done in the following year if they returned. Romano Centro drew up a report of the incidents and sent it to the public prosecutor's office. The incident was also reported to the Report Office for National Socialist Offences within the Austrian Ministry of the Interior/BVT. At the time this publication was finalised, investigations against 12 people were still on-going.

62 Football Fans

The *Neue Kronen Zeitung* reported an incident which had occurred in the centre of Vienna on June 20, 2012. A group of football fans returning from a game their team had lost encountered a Serbian man and his son. The nine year old boy was wearing the football shirt of the Serbian team. The football fans accosted the boy: one of them said, “*Look at him, the little Gypsy.*” They grabbed him, threw him onto the ground and urinated on him. The father was thrown to the ground and beaten as well. Romano Centro tried to find out more about the incident through the *Kronen Zeitung* but was unsuccessful.

„Who are the „Beggar-Mafia?“

People who don't come from Austria and earn some money begging on the streets are frequently called „Beggar-Mafia“ by politicians and the media. Mostly it is also emphasised that the members of these „gangs“ are Roma. The existence of such gang-like structures in which women, children and handicapped people are exploited was the main argument brought forth to justify the prohibition of begging, but to date studies have not proven the exploitation theory. Although the possibility that exploitation does exist cannot be denied, especially where poverty stricken people are involved, the generalisation that beggars are members of a „mafia,“ (victims and perpetrators are always confused) arises from stereotypic views rather than factual evidence. For people who resort to begging, this portrayal is not only defamatory and criminalises them through the prohibition of begging, but also results in a further worsening of their situation as it increases their rejection by passers-by and the heavy fines imposed on them are a financial burden.

Police and Judiciary

The following cases show clearly that antigypsyistic thought patterns exist within the police and judiciary. This institutional racism influences their dealings with Roma and undermines confidence in the institutions of a state under the rule of law. An example of the prevalence of racist attributions within the police is the case of a policeman who wrote a racist text and whose inappropriate words were then defended by a public prosecutor. This case (no. 66) involving a calendar for a senior citizen association (*Seniorenbund*) is a good illustration of the lack of sensitivity and awareness for existing Antigypsyism in the police and the judiciary.

63 No charges pressed

A woman reported the following incident, which occurred on May 15, 2012 on the Mariahilfer Street in Vienna, to Romano Centro: she had witnessed how a man had chased a woman and then how he assaulted her. First, he pulled her hair and then he punched and hit her shoulders and upper back several times with his fists and hands. He then pulled her across the street into a courtyard and into a ground floor room. He was aided in this by another man, who told the first man not to hit the woman. The woman had been accompanied by three other young women. All the women spoke Romanes according to a witness. The assaulted woman cried out in pain. Several passers-by watched the incident as it was happening and also followed the group into the courtyard. The two men closed the door to the ground floor room so the witnesses couldn't see what happened to the woman in the room. Shortly thereafter, two police cars arrived with five policemen and one female officer. They took all four Romnja along. A witness told the officers about the two men and their extreme violence against the woman and said she was willing to make an official report about it. In spite of telling the police several times that she wanted to press charges against the man for assault, none of the police officers responded. She later found out that the perpetrator was a shop detective and worked for a drug store.

64 Police Abuse

A woman reported the following incident to ZARA: on June 28, 2009, her friend, a rose seller, was called a „Gypsy“ by a policeman.

65 „This is Your Last Day in Austria“

In the year 2008, in the course of a police check, a serious racist infringement occurred. A family from Slovakia which was selling newspapers on the Karlsplatz (a large park area) in Vienna was stopped and asked to show their identification. During the procedure, the police was very

rough with the family members; they pushed the 18 year old son around and called him names. One policeman told him to get lost and when the young man didn't react right away, the policeman used his baton to push him away. The officer said to the father, *“Today is your last day in Austria, I guarantee you that!”* The parents were taken to the police station where they had to strip naked. The man was threatened he would be beaten and was asked, *“Are you afraid, you filthy Gypsy?”* He was called *“filthy Gypsy”* several times by one of the police officers and was told to repeat the words. The police officer insulted him multiple times and told him that he should remain quiet and that he would never be allowed to return to Austria again. The policeman made fun of the man's stomach and shoved him around repeatedly. The father was told to agree with all the insults and always to answer, *“yes”* –even to the statement, *“Ugh, you stink, you filthy Gypsy.”* After this humiliating treatment the family was allowed to dress. The family was fined for eight delicts including smoking, disturbing the peace, making noise and offending common decency, and had to pay 168 Euros. According to the fines, all these delicts were committed simultaneously, namely at 12:55 on the same day. After the incident was documented in the office of the street newspaper Augustin, the Office for Internal Investigation investigated the case but the family's testimony was not believed.

66 Agitation in the “Seniorenbund” Calendar

The senior citizen association “Seniorenbund” in Upper Austria published a text in its 2013 calendar in which it warned its readers about the “grandson-nephew-trick,” a confidence game. The alleged perpetrators of the confidence game were mentioned at the beginning of the text and identified as, *“mainly Roma and Sinti.”* In the following sentence, the ethnic group was portrayed as being generally dangerous: *“This ethnic group is particularly unscrupulous and exploits its victims to the point of financial ruin.”* After this

text became known to the public through media exposure, the Seniorenbund apologised and explained that the text had been written by the police. This fact is shocking and illustrates how influential antigypsyistic sentiments are in police work. The Green Party initiated a parliamentary inquiry and Romano Centro reported the facts of the case to the public prosecutor. The public prosecutor's office in Linz investigated on the suspicion of incitement, but soon dropped the investigation on the grounds that the policeman who had written the text had merely relied on his own experiences and had fulfilled his duty to warn the public. This reasoning offered by the public prosecutor confirmed the racist statements of the police officer. Romano Centro then demanded that the investigation be re-opened. The public prosecutor, however, saw no need for further investigations. Romano Centro was asked to respond and again argued for a continuation of the investigation. The court lastly decided that the request to continue investigations had been filed too late. No further legal steps were possible.

67 Racist Text on the IPA Website

In September 2011 there was a link on the website of the International Police Association of Austria, www.ipa.at, to an extremely racist text about “Gypsies” in which they were described as cowardly, workshy and devious. The text was uncommented, and was not described as being antiquated or racist. ZARA lodged a complaint with the responsible administrators. The text was deleted from the website, but the response from the responsible administrator showed an evident lack of understanding and criticised ZARA's work. The relevance of that particular text for visitors of the website was also never explained.

The World of Work

68 Waiter dismissed

During a counselling session at the Romano Centro, a young man told the counsellor the following: he had been working in a restaurant as a waiter up until a year previously, but when his employer found out that he was a Rom, he fired him and refused to pay the outstanding wages. The waiter then turned to the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour for advice and help. After the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour intervened, the man received his outstanding wages in full and proceedings were initiated against the employer. The damage caused as a result of having lost his income was grave, as the man hadn't been able to pay the rent for his apartment and he and his family had been forced to live in his grandfather's caravan for a year. Such precarious living conditions make finding a new job difficult. The young man did not take up Romano Centro's offers to help him and hasn't contacted Romano Centro since then.

69 Mobbing at Work

For a man who had been working for many years in a company in Upper Austria and was a shop steward, life at work became unbearable in the year 2012. He was increasingly given nasty jobs and was called a "Gypsy" by his colleagues. A dead mouse was put into his lunch box. The company managers didn't take the incidents seriously. The continuous humiliation caused a serious depression and the man took sick leave. After a lengthy sick leave, his contract was consensually terminated. The man has received support from Ketani, a Roma association, in the form of psychological therapy.

Discrimination in the World of Work

The Equal Treatment Law protects people from discrimination in the World of Work. This includes job advertisements, reasons given for the termination of an employment contract and all areas related to employment such as training, further education, internships and traineeships as well as the services of the employment agency and access to self-employment opportunities. Persons concerned can contact the Ombud for Equal Treatment, the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour or other advisory institutions. There are two methods of enforcing equal treatment rights; either in legal proceedings or before the the Equal Rights Commission. In legal proceedings, compensation can be awarded and the Chamber of Labour or labour unions can help and support the victim. Procedures before the Equal Treatment Commission can only determine whether discrimination has taken place. However, the decision is non-binding. Furthermore, the Commission can suggest that the perpetrator compensate the victim.

Education

There are only a few documented cases in the field of education, although racism and discrimination incidents in this area are numerous. In a study published in 2013 by the Institute for Political Science of the University of Vienna called, "Interethnic Violence and Children's Rights in the School Environment", the authors come to the conclusion that children of Roma and Sinti origin are often the targets of racism and discrimination and often choose to hide their ethnicity. The conclusion confirms what Romano Centro has experienced in various educational programmes. Discrimination occurs in schools just as it does anywhere else but victims are particularly fearful of exposing it as parents are afraid it would have a negative impact on their children's schooling and also because parents are often extremely respectful of teachers and school directors.

70 The following sentence was on a handout distributed to the pupils of a class in the 7th district of Vienna, „*After the incident the properties were sold to Gypsies and Croats and the area deteriorated. Later the little houses without gardens were extremely unhealthy to live in.*“

71 A staff member of a Roma association presented a school project at a conference in the autumn of 2012. He was asked by an attending teacher whether there were any „civilised Roma.“ The school has several dozen Roma pupils.

72 In July 2008, ZARA was told that during a class outing to a concentration camp memorial, some teachers had made derogatory remarks such as, „*The shitty Gypsies, the vermin.*“

Miscellaneous

73 In July 2012, a woman who wanted to help a pregnant woman from Romania turned to Romano Centro. She reported a conversation they had had with an employee of the MA 11 (Youth and Family Welfare Office) of the City of Vienna. Instead of advising the woman on available support, the employee cynically said, *“They’re all so well interconnected that they soon find out how to get financial support.”*

74 A family whose 11-year-old son lived in a flat-sharing community run by the MA 11, (Youth and Family Welfare Office) complained to Romano Centro in September 2013 about one of the social workers of the flat community. The social worker undertook nothing to stop another boy who was continuously directing racist abuse at her son. The social worker also made derogatory remarks about “foreigners” to the family and a friend. This was officially reported after the racist abuse led to a scuffle and bodily harm between three boys on the street. Romano Centro informed the Youth Advocacy about the the case. To date, the the investigation has not yet produced any result.

75 Attack in Salzburg

In June 2012 an attack on groups of Roma beggars in Salzburg was reported in the media. Groups of youths were alleged to have intimidated them and chased them off and in doing so, caused minor bodily harm. The media spoke of pogrom-like attacks but this was later exposed to be wildly exaggerated. According to the police commander in charge, a group of seven youths had had an argument with neighbours living in the same house. A report on the facts of the case was filed. However, the victims could not be questioned as they had fled and couldn’t be found.

76 Personal insult

In May 2011, a woman from Slovakia turned to ZARA and reported that she was often called a „Slovakian Gypsy“ by her neighbour, who shouted out this insult over the garden fence.

77 In February 2013, an Austrian Roma musician was sent an email containing racist insults. Aside from the personal insults, it was also alleged that he „whined about supposed racism“ and didn’t do „any decent work.“ The author of the email could be the same person or

group who also insulted the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Company) journalist Armin Wolf and who alleged that Adolf Hitler hadn’t started the Second World War, as the emails bore the same signature.

78 The newspaper *Kurier* reported on December 8, 2012 on the methods employed by the house administrator and former FPÖ (Austria Freedom Party) politician Elmar Dirnberger. One of the people concerned, in his function as a representative of the owners of the house, tried to clarify financial irregularities which had occurred. Dirnberger sent him the following email, *„Whoever steals geese from us Germans was beaten, if someone like that now brews beer, he should look after his skin! Nothing will happen to that skin just yet, we just want to see the Roma pilloried.“* Dirnberger signed the email, which was sent to several dozen recipients, among them the third presiding officer of the Austrian Parliament, Martin Graf, and several student fraternities, with the words, *„with armed students‘ salutation.“* Furthermore, in the email, Dirnberger denies the person addressed his right to what the author calls „Daseinsqualitätschance“ (sic!) which can only be translated as „existence-quality-chance.“ The recipient of the email pressed charges against Dirnberger on the grounds of agitation. Dirnberger explained his lapse saying, *„I have nothing against Roma. But in this case, several of them got together to ruin my firm.“* He also mentioned ex-employees from Burgenland of Croatian origin.

79 In September 2009, the Organisation “Bund Deutscher Jugend” (BDJ = Union of German Youth) wrote to ZARA. The writing contained two racist remarks. One statement was that the blood of “Gypsies” was “alien” and the other was a reference to *“Masses of dark-skinned foreigners, niggers, gypsies and jews who are infecting our country.”*

80 In 2012, in an information brochure for a language study trip to Spain, under the heading “Security” there was a warning about “Gypsies”

81 In an online petition against racism in the football stadium, the Viennese football club “Austria” called upon the fans not to make racist remarks using megaphones. Previously, the fans of the Austria club had shouted: *„Zick-Zack Zigeunerpack!“* (which translates *„Zig-Zag Gypsypack“*).

Defamation

An insult based on ethnicity is a so-called „qualified“ insult according to § 117 Abs 3 StGB (Penal Code Law) if it comprises abuse, a threat or “an infringement of human dignity or ridicule.” People affected by racist insults can write to the public prosecutor. This will lead to an official investigation and prosecution. The risk to the victim of having to pay for the cost of legal proceedings in a case of insult on the grounds of ethnicity does not apply, contrary to legal proceedings in a civil law suit on the grounds of a “simple” insult.

82 Against Anti-Racism Work

ZARA, the anti-racism NGO, received the following message through their contact form: *“I was in Vienna a short time ago where my handbag was stolen (I’m from Weiz.) A gang of criminal Gypsies asked me what time it was and suddenly my handbag was gone. There are more Eastern Block (East European) scumbags in Vienna than in any other city. Now I’ve read that you (ZARA) are supporting these criminals. You are making yourselves guilty as well by helping them and I’ve already pressed charges against you. Best regards, an appalled visitor to Vienna.”*

Executive Summary

This report is the first of its kind: never before have cases of antigypsyism been recorded in Austria. The cases included here are, however, probably only a fraction of the actual occurrences which can be attributed to Antigypsyism. This is partially due to the fact that cases of discrimination which impact victims directly by, for example, hindering their access to services and goods or influence their schooling and employment situation, can only be documented if they are reported by the victims or witnesses. Antigypsyism in the public sphere, i.e., in politics, the media and the Internet is relatively easy to find as there are a wealth of sources available which document it. Protocols, journalistic reports in the media and activity on websites are plentiful and relatively easy to find. However, monitoring antigypsyist activities and statements on the Internet is impossible for a relatively small editorial staff: there are literally thousands of racist postings and statements, the documentation of which would fill tomes. The case numbers in the segments of this report dedicated to the various areas in which Antigypsyism has been documented therefore do not allow for any conclusions on the frequency of the occurrence of such incidents in the areas mentioned. It is equally impossible to determine where in Austria the most such incidents occur. Most of the incidents in this report happened in Vienna, which is due to the fact that Vienna has a rather large Roma population and, probably even more importantly, due to the work of ZARA, a victim counselling project which is specialized in documenting cases of racially motivated discrimination. There are, however, also documented cases from the Austrian provinces Burgenland, Carinthia, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria and Tyrol. Roma/Romnja and Sinti/Sintize are affected by discrimination in the form of insults, disadvantage and in some cases, physical attacks on a daily basis in Austria. Antigypsyist stereotypes are commonplace in Austria and there is little sensitivity in the general popula-

tion, public institutions, political life and the media for this form of racism. In comparison to its neighbours Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, however, Austria's track record is relatively good as there are no Neo-Nazi demonstrations or paramilitary "Guards" which terrorize Roma settlements and create Apartheid-like conditions. It would be wrong, however, to think that the lack of such extreme manifestations of Antigypsyism imply the absence thereof in Austria. The socio-economic and demographic situation of the countries mentioned above make a big difference and, of course, the fact that the right-wing political parties in Austria have chosen Muslims and asylum seekers as their targets of choice has had the effect that their aggression against "Gypsies" has, until now, largely been confined to their own internal media. How quickly the wrath of extreme elements can turn into physical violence was, however, impressively illustrated by the attacks on Roma campers in the city of Bischofshofen in September 2013. Several youths had posted defamatory remarks in the Internet which snowballed and led to a real-life attack on a group of Roma-families who were travelling through Bischofshofen and had set up camp nearby. Luckily the police intervened in time and prevented a serious incident. This event was no ordinary quarrel; it was racially motivated. The Bischofshofen incident was not singular, as a similar case occurred in Ainet, East Tirol, in 2009. The media play an important role in the representation of Roma/Romnja and Sinti/Sintize in the public sphere. Most of the reports are focused on topics such as begging, immigration due to poverty, human trafficking and, less often, criminal activity. This choice of topics tends to attribute social problems which are perceived as a "nuisance" by the public to a certain ethnical group which only serves to intensify the already existing rejection of the group. This can be readily demonstrated by the fact that the words "beggar" and "Roma" have become practically

synonymous even though many beggars are not Roma/Romnja and the majority of Roma and Sinti living in Austria has never begged. Reports which identify social problems as being a consequence of "Roma culture" or reproduce antigypsyist stereotypes represented by labels such as "Sozialschmarotzer" (social leeches), "miserable Schulbildung" (uneducated), "hohe Musikalität" (great musical talent). Certain forms of criminal activity such as pick-pocketing or human trafficking are often attributed to "Roma" in media reports which, in turn, perpetuate the existing stereotypes connected to criminal activity. In the political landscape, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) is particularly conspicuous in this regard, especially its MEP Andreas Molzer. As the editor of the weekly newspaper *Zur Zeit*, Molzer is at least partially responsible for many racist articles and has personally written several articles of antigypsyist content for this and other publications. Generally, politicians rarely address the topic of "Roma" and when they do, it's usually within the context of prohibiting begging. "Roma", (or rather the prejudices against them), are ideal for all kinds of instrumentalization, whether it be the often stated existence of a "begging-mafia" in order to prohibit begging and thereby increase the attractiveness of major shopping streets, or whether it be to portray the immigration of Roma/Romnja into Austria as a looming danger and call for the introduction of stricter border controls and asylum laws. The Internet plays a major role in the dissemination of antigypsyist rhetoric and agitation. Social media sites, blogs, fora and digital publications are used by right-wing populists and extremists to defame Roma/Romnja. Racially motivated cyber hate is extremely difficult to combat due to the sheer mass of data, websites and often anonymous authorship of the content. A deplorable lesson learnt through researching the topic of Antigypsyism in Austria is the fact that even some mainstream media such as *krone.at* serve as a plat-

form for defamation. In the online fora of some of the more sophisticated Austrian papers such as *derstandard.at* and *kurier.at*, defamatory comments are not uncommon and often remain online unchecked due to a lack of editorial supervision and sensitivity for the issue of Antigypsyism in general. In right-wing populist and extremist media and fora, which are often connected to the FPÖ in one form or another, Roma and Sinti are mentioned often. The texts and comments are usually racist and insulting and “Zigeuner” (Gypsies) are frequently depicted as a threat to Austria and other nations. It is stated that the “travelers” are neither willing nor capable of integration into „European societies” due to their cultural otherness. The tone of the entire discussion is generally racist and insulting. The segment of this report which deals with the topic of discrimination pertaining to the access to goods and services describes cases which deal with housing issues and this is probably no mere coincidence. The notion that Roma or Sinti families are not desirable renters or neighbours is tightly intertwined with racist images and perceptions: they’re loud, they steal, they ruin everything, have lots of children etc. The cases documented also show that Antigypsyism isn’t just a phenomenon which appears on the right-wing fringe of society or in the Internet, but one which is ever-present in daily life: the toy saleslady, the disco owner or the shop manager of a bistro, all of them insult and discriminate Roma/Romnja openly and as a matter of course. The bistro in the Salzburg train station which exhibits a sign saying, “We don’t sell anything to gypsies anymore” is a self-explanatory case in point. In the segment of this report dealing with employment and the labour market there are very few documented cases even though it is very likely that many persons are also discriminated against in this area. It is especially important to inform victims of possible forms of discrimination in the labour market of their rights and the benefits of being aware of existing anti-discrimination laws. Institutional racism is

demonstrated most dramatically by the case of the calendar published by the “Oberösterreichischer Seniorenbund” (Senior Citizen Association) in which the racist text of a police officer was printed and later defended by a public prosecutor dismissing the case against him. Antigypsyism also has its effect on the police force which is illustrated by the few, but unmistakably recognizable cases reported. Concerning education and schooling, the low number of cases in the report contradicts a study¹ which comes to the conclusion that Roma and Sinti children in Vienna are the most likely of all ethnic minorities to be the targets of discrimination. The disadvantages they experience are often of a subtle nature and not easily identifiable as being racially motivated. Additionally, it is the case that families with little education are less likely to defend the interests of their children in school against discriminatory practices. Racism in general and Antigypsyism specifically are just as widespread among teachers, the police force, the judicial system or any other public institution as they are in the population in general. This has grave negative effects on the concept of equal opportunity in our society. The need for education on the subject of Antigypsyism is evident when compared to the relatively high level of awareness of and sensitivity for Anti-Semitism. In the case of Antigypsyism there is great potential for reducing prejudice by offering information and encouraging reflection on the subject. Many people feel they “know” about Roma/Romnja and do not realize that this “knowledge” is nothing more than a racist prejudice (e.g., “they don’t understand the meaning of private property”, or, “education is not valued by Roma families”). As a result of one-sided reports in the media, there is also very little information about the history of the Roma and Sinti or about Antigypsyism itself readily available in the public domain, so that informing oneself about these topics calls for the initiative and determination of the individual and involves questioning one’s own acquired

prejudices. As to the victims of Antigypsyism, it is important that they develop a knowledge of and awareness for the legal options at their disposal for combatting cases of discrimination. It is towards this end that specific information and counselling must be provided in far greater capacities than exist now. In Europe, the social situation of the Roma/Romnja and the massive increase of discrimination and violence against them in many countries is one of the greatest challenges for decades to come. These challenges are no threat for Austria, but it must be said that they are also pertinent here and now and that their scope is likely to increase in the future. Widespread and unquestioned Antigypsyism in the population in general, in the media and especially in public institutions will only hinder, if not prevent a constructive approach to the issues at hand. It is for this reason, that preventative measures should be implemented where possible.

1) Birgit Sauer/Edma Ajanovic: Exploring Interethnic Violence and Children’s Rights in the School Environment. 2012