

## **Community of Sant'Egidio**



**Pilgrimage to Auschwitz-Birkenau, 12 September 2008**

### **FINAL APPEAL**

Young Europeans, from Poland, Ukraine, Germany, Russia, Georgia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Romania, all gathered by the Community of Sant'Egidio, we are here together in Auschwitz for the memory of Shoah. In front of the Memorial of nazi extermination victims - six million Jews and half a million gypsy together with hundreds of thousands of people from all over Europe- we want to stand, to reflect and to remember.

We were born many years after that big evil, still, we believe it represents not the page of an old and distant story we have nothing to do with. No, we do believe it deeply affects us, since all that “has happened, has happened in Europe... has happened and thus can happen again”.

Any time a foreigner is affected by violence in our towns, any time a man is despised in front of us because of his origin, religious belief and diversity; any time it happens, the way of hatred and division in minds and hearts is prepared.

Therefore we want to bear witness of what we have seen and heard in these days. We want to learn communicating to our fellows and to the future generations that any form of racism, discrimination, contempt of human being and of life is to be opposed.

We stopped and made a gesture of memory to honour those who have terminated their journey in this very place being victims of the inhuman violence that destroys other people's dignity to the extent of taking their lives. We commit ourselves to a new way of living at peace, without hatred or contempt for the others.

Facing many and concerning events of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and violence reported by daily news in our countries, we young people who did not experience the tragedy of World war II, we learn how to keep its memory alive, to prevent such a big evil from coming again. Excluding minorities, justifying violence towards people appearing strangers or different, dividing humanity into “we” and “they” is more dangerous today than yesterday.

We address the youth and we say that in all our countries each one should contribute to make the world more human, with no divisions, with no contempt to the others. A world where all can live together is to be established. A world with no racism ! A world with no violence !

Today, in Auschwitz-Birkenau, we have made a pilgrimage on the railway of death. From here we want to start afresh on a new human way of love and peace. We commit ourselves to walk on it together with many people in all our countries.

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