

6th National Integration Conference Held to Discuss Future of Migrant Integration (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/115774>)



Experts on migration integration gather to discuss the future of integration at the 6th National Integration Conference on 21st May.

The Immigrant Council of Ireland hosted its 6th National Integration Conference “*Stronger & United – Building the future of migrant integration together*”. The event which brings together experts in the field of migrant integration focused on the question of how to plan for the future of migrant integration.

The conference which takes place in the context of greater negative attention being brought to the issues of migrants in Ireland, serves as great reminder not only of the positive impacts that migrants have in their communities across Ireland but also of the need for positive momentum and political leadership on this issue.

Providing the keynote address for the event was **Minister of State for Migration, Colm Brophy** said: “I am delighted to attend this year’s National Integration Conference in my role as Minister of State for Migration. This yearly event is a great reminder of the importance that migrants play in Irish society, the work we have already done and what is still to be done to ensure that migrants are fully integrated across all parts of Irish society. Migration is vital to the Irish economy, and while there are challenges, migrants in Ireland make our country a more diverse, thriving and vibrant place to live. We all have a part to play in ensuring that migrant integration happens and I am committed as Minister to playing my part in this.”

Speaking about today’s conference, the new **CEO of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Teresa Buczkowska** said: “This is a challenging moment for migrant rights in Ireland, with the emergence of organised hostility and hate. However, today’s conference has been inspiring, bringing together people from all over Ireland and highlighting the amazing work that is being done across the country. We also heard that more can and should be done. We need to invest in social cohesion, fighting racism and ensuring real inclusion of migrant communities through thorough planning and engagement. If we can do this, we will see that Ireland moves further away from divisiveness and corrosive attitudes. Now is the time for this investment.”

Speaking about the National Integration Conference, **Valeria Aquino, Integration Manager, ICI**, said: “When we look at how far Ireland has come on integration the story is inspiring, from the great work that local authorities are doing, to the grassroots organising that is going on all over the country, together we are working and making Ireland a stronger place. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. For four years we have been waiting for an update to the Migrant Integration Strategy, and it has not come. This conference shows that there is such great work being done and we need a government strategy in place as soon as possible. We hope with the new mandate in Minister of State for Migration, that some progress can be made on this soon.”

During the conference, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, with the support of the Community Foundation of Ireland, gave awards to two organisations in recognition of the great work that each organisation does in service of migrant communities, migrant integration, tackling racism and promoting inclusion. These awards were presented to the **Donegal Intercultural Platform** and **Clonturk Community College**, for the positive work that they are doing.

Accepting the award of behalf of the Donegal Intercultural Platform (DIP), **Paul Kernan, Coordinator of the Platform** said: “The Donegal Intercultural Platform provides that place of welcome, that inclusive and respectful platform to promote human rights, build relationships and value real solidarity within and between communities. The DIP are about to embark on a number of challenging local and cross-border initiatives with a range of partners to challenge racism and create the conditions for intercultural engagement with resources from the new Peace Plus programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). All our work hugely benefits from the support and recognition of colleagues, organisations and

communities and reflects our belief that we are Stronger Together.”

Accepting the award on behalf of Clonturk Community College were teacher Nadja El-Kaisy Friemuth-Cassidy, and students Khadija Muhammad and Warda Sajid. Speaking about the importance of the work that her school is doing to promote diversity, **Khadija Muhammad, Clonturk Community College student said:** “As a young Muslim girl living in Dublin, who wears a hijab, I have had people say things to me when I am walking on the street or on public transport. It can make me feel very unsafe and anxious. People do not understand why I wear a hijab, what it means to me and to my faith. I got involved in the Diversity Committee in school because I wanted to make sure that in my school it would be different. We have done so many things to help everyone understand what it means to wear a hijab. This was really important for me.”

The conference also saw the **launch of the Migration Policy Index (MIPEX) report**, led by the Migration Policy Group (MPG), an evaluation of integration policies in Ireland during the period 2020-2024. The latest report shows that Ireland’s once-promising trajectory on migrant integration has reversed, with the country’s score dropping by 5 points compared to previous years, reflecting the absence of a renewed national integration strategy. The launch today, led by MPG’s head of research, Dr. Başak Yavçan, explored how Ireland can regain its leadership on integration policy and ensure equal rights and opportunities for migrants in all areas of life.

Region

Nationwide

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