

UNCHR

2nd ANNUAL REFUGEE INTEGRATION CONFERENCE- day 1

The role of the anti-refugee sentiment in undermining legal frameworks and refugee integration policies

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Policy: declared and undeclared

Anti-immigrant and anti-refugee ideology and practice →

- An intentional policy that generates a hostile environment
- Undermines the basic principles of a rights-based democracy and integration, i.e. equal participation, access and belonging.

Lack of policy and absence of regulation → unintended and intended consequences of marginalisation, exclusion, dehumanisation and exploitation.

Long term regional and national policy failures

- Blockage of legal routes and possibilities for legal migration eg. LTR, FR, single permits.
- ‘Student’ visa schemes → debt bondage and exploitation
- Inefficiency in backlog, absence of political will
- Ideology and prejudice (‘bogus’ asylum seekers, welfare chauvinism)
- No substantial integration policy, only supply side measures to absorb EU funding
- Route of refugee and migration flows via Turkey, mediated by ‘Cyprus problem’ sensitivities and prejudices.

Key events in 2020 - A

- The pandemic – a ‘perfect storm’ for fundamental rights. A new “hygiene” state of exception. Push through of new anti-immigration policies.
- Pushbacks at sea and at land.
- New immigration policy restricting rights to appeal and establishing long list of ‘safe countries’.

Key events - B

- Pournara converted into a detention camp
- New practice of refusing access to procedure.
- Poverty and homelessness.
- Unaccompanied minors left unprotected
- Hate speech has become rampant
- New integration action plan- largely absorption of EU funds for existing structures. Does not address the real problems.
- Labour trafficking and extreme exploitation widespread. Framework inadequate. Eg. Cypra, delivery workers, farm workers.

MIPEX integration benchmarks

EU tool measuring basic benchmarks of social life

1. Labour access and mobility
2. Family reunification
3. Education
4. Civic participation
5. Right to long term residence
6. Access to citizenship
7. Combating discrimination

Rank	Country	Change since MIPEX	
		III*	II**
1	Sweden	83	▼ (-1)
2	Portugal	79	▲ (+5)
3	Canada	72	▲ (+1)
4	Finland	69	■ (0)
5	Netherlands	68	■ (0)
6	Belgium	67	▲ (+4)
7	Norway	66	▼ (-1)
8	Spain	63	▲ (+3)
9	USA	62	■ (0)
10	Italy	60	▼ (-1)
11	Luxembourg	59	▲ (+8)
12	Germany	57	▲ (+1)
	United Kingdom	57	▼ (-10)
14	Denmark	53	▲ (+2)
	EU Average	52	■
15	France	51	■ (0)
16	Greece	49	▲ (+10)
	Ireland	49	▲ (+1)
18	Slovenia	48	■ (0)
19	Czech Republic	46	▲ (+4)
	Estonia	46	▲ (+2)
21	Hungary	45	▲ (+3)
	Romania	45	■
23	Switzerland	43	■ (0)
24	Austria	42	▲ (+3)
	Poland	42	▲ (+1)
26	Bulgaria	41	■
27	Lithuania	40	▲ (+1)
28	Malta	37	■ (0)
29	Slovakia	36	■ (0)
30	Cyprus	35	■ (0)
31	Latvia	31	▲ (+3)



Key Findings

- 0 Critically unfavourable
- 1-20 Unfavourable
- 21-40 Slightly unfavourable
- 41-59 Halfway favourable
- 60-79 Slightly favourable
- 80-100 Favourable

Just 50%:

Halfway favourable
Political will counts,
more than tradition

Policies across EU
more similar and
strong with ***EU law***



Migrant worker at construction site near the Green Line

Picture by Narges Abdi (*Limbo*, edited by David Officer
and Nicos Philippou)

Anti-immigration & anti-refugee xenophobia



Racial hate speech

1. The concept of “illegal immigrants” and “illegal immigration” («λαθρομετανάστευση» και «λαθρομετανάστης»).
2. Normalisation of conflation of refugees with “illegal migration”.
3. Regular violations of journalistic ethics code by media outlets
4. Moral panics, hysteria and scapegoating
5. Distortions, exaggeration and fake news - Gustav Le Bon “the larger the lie the more often you repeat it”.
6. Legal framework inadequate. No convictions
7. Racial crime unreported and unaddressed.

'Culture' as new ground of discrimination and hate speech

- Police, government ministers, employers (Cypra), media, eg. Violence in the inner city of Nicosia
- Headscarf issue reinforces perception of 'backwardness' of Muslims. Incident at school dealt with inadequately. Headmaster got promoted and family of student never received the result of the investigation.
- Neonazi party tabled bill for prohibiting all Muslim signs.