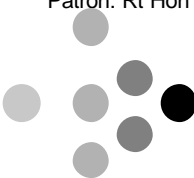


The Foreign Policy Centre



Press Release

New Directions in Global Thinking

Asylum Dispersal Policies “exacerbate racism” and “isolate the vulnerable”

*Thinktank report calls on British Government to learn migration and
integration lessons from Europe and Canada*

Embargoed 00.01 Monday January 14 2002

The Foreign Policy Centre today launches *Migration and Citizenship: An End to Paranoia*, a pamphlet exploring the lessons from abroad that the British government can learn on questions of migration and integration.

The publication will be launched at a high-profile conference, *Managing Migration*, to be held on Tuesday 15 January. Home Secretary David Blunkett will be joined his counterparts in Canada and the Netherlands, as well as leading figures from Business, to discuss examples of successful integration policies. They will also examine the controversial questions of citizenship lessons and obligatory language tuition.

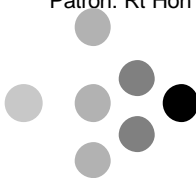
A discussion paper to be launched at the event by the Foreign Policy Centre will argue that the Government's policy of dispersing asylum seekers in communities around the country is seriously flawed. It will claim that their effect has been to exacerbate racial tensions, leave asylum seekers isolated without community support and stigmatize refugees. The policy was introduced in 1998 following racial incidents in seaside towns on the South coast, where a high proportion of asylum seekers had been housed.

***Managing Migration* sets out clear trends that underline the need for change:**

KEY FINDINGS:

- **The dispersal system is unlikely to work unless more planning and resources are made available to assist asylum seekers and refugees.** There is often little or no provision for English language or other appropriate training for asylum seekers. 2,500 refugee children are unable to get places at school.
- **Britain is suffering from severe skill shortages.** Migrants fill 70 per cent of catering jobs in London, though 40 per cent of hospitality firms still reported recruitment difficulties in 2000. A BBC report stated that “literacy, numeracy, skill levels in the UK are so poor that a quarter of employees struggle to fill job vacancies”. The IT industry alone needs to recruit 540 000 new workers before 2009.

**For briefings, interviews or more copies of the pamphlet,
call Rob Blackhurst on 0961 362 271**



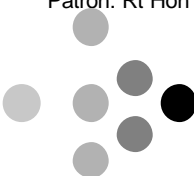
- **Asylum-seekers and refugees often have qualifications that are not recognized in Britain.** In Oxford many asylum seekers in the region have completed the training to become bus drivers, but lack appropriate identity documents. There are thought to be several hundred refugees and asylum seekers in Britain who have a medical training, but aren't allowed to work.
- **Those entering Britain illegally are not predominantly the low skilled.**
- **A lack of leadership by successive Governments has hardened public opinion against migration.** MORI polling found that 54% of respondents felt that there were too many immigrants in the UK. This is in comparison to countries where there are long established immigration programs such as Canada and Australia where 44% and 42% believe there are too many immigrants.
- **Government lacks detailed evidence on the asylum system.** There is not enough qualitative data on newcomers arriving in the UK. In countries such as Canada and Australia the skills, qualifications, age, sex, work experience, language ability are all vital elements that should be documented.
- **Current UK initiatives fail to tap the expertise of charities, NGOs and local communities.** In Canada the voluntary sector has resettled 175 000 between 1979 and 2000 through the "Private Sponsorship Programme". Individuals, families, faith communities and benevolent associations guarantee to subsidize a migrant through their first year in a country, neutralising public fears that new arrivals will impose a "burden" on the state.

Recommendations:

- **The Government should offer free language tuition for migrants.** In Australia the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides up to 510 hours of basic language tuition to migrants and refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds
- **Create a Private Sponsorship Refugees Program** which would create a partnership between IND and UK sponsors in resettling refugees from abroad in UK communities.
- **Create a Joint Assistance Sponsorship** that would be jointly undertaken by Central government (income support) in resettling refugees, which may involve a two year sponsorship for special needs cases.
- **Build a database of recognized skills** that can be earned abroad, and provide a comparative basis to the UK.
- **Place a legal duty on employers to promote and teach language skills.** This could be achieved if the employers had a statutory duty to provide 2-3 hours per week of training courses for those with non-functional English.

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- **Build a database that effectively monitors the asylum system in the UK.** The British Government should follow the example set by the Government of Australia who build up valuable data on labour market experiences, housing, health and education.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Asylum applications have risen in the UK from 22 000 in 1993 to 80 000 in 2000
2. The Foreign Policy Centre is an independent thinktank set up in 1998 to explore the impact of globalization.
3. The *Managing Migration Conference* will be held on Tuesday 15 January between 9.00am and 2.30pm at Canada House, (Cockspur Street entrance), Trafalgar Square, London, SW1Y 5BJ.
4. The discussion paper, *Migration and Citizenship: An End to Paranoia*, will set out the remit of a major Foreign Policy Centre research project. The research findings will be published at the end of 2002.

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