

Emigrant Advice Press Release 30/08/2007

Further poor information provision by Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform responsible for current deportation situation

Emigrant Advice, a project of Crosscare (the social care agency of the Dublin Diocese), stated today that a lack of clear information from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is responsible for the current situation regarding the deportation threat to non-EU spouses of EU nationals.

Background

Ireland is the only EU country to require the non-EU spouse of EU nationals living and working here to have lived in another member state before they can be granted residence. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is proposing to deport the non-EU spouses who do not fulfil this requirement. However, the Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service¹ did not make information about this requirement available in any accessible fashion until July 2007.

Statement

Richard King, Information Officer with Crosscare's Emigrant Advice, stated that "the residency application form that must be submitted by non-EU spouses of EU nationals does not state anywhere that the non-EU applicant has to have lived in another member state. This form was the only accessible source of information up to last month. People applied in good faith, only to be refused because of a policy the Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service (INIS) did not inform people of until July of this year.

This lack of information is an ongoing concern we have with the INIS. As an agency that works with Irish emigrants as well as immigrants we see that other countries' immigration policies are much easier to access, and this means that people can make informed decisions. The INIS must take responsibility for the current problem, as it did not provide essential information in either a clear or timely fashion".

Request

Crosscare's Emigrant Advice calls on the Minister for Justice Brian Lenihan to cancel all deportation proceedings and to issue residency permission to all applicants who applied in good faith before the INIS made its policy publicly available. Emigrant Advice also calls on the Minister to ensure that all immigration information and policies are made clearly available so that similar problems do not arise in the future.

For further information please contact Richard King, Information Officer, at
Richard@emigrantadvice.ie or 01 – 873 2844

¹ The section of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform with responsibility for immigration matters.