



Undocumented Migrants – Immigration system at fault says Crosscare

8/11/07

Crosscare Migrant Project has stated that aspects of the current immigration system are actually contributing to migrants becoming undocumented. CMP's statement comes after Department of Justice comments that a regularisation proposal¹ for exploited and undocumented workers was 'extremely problematic'

Joe O'Brien of CMP stated that:

'The Department's suggestions that a limited programme to regularise exploited and undocumented migrants would encourage illegal immigration is simply baseless and is shirking responsibility for a situation that they are partly responsible for. What the Department needs to focus on is how the immigration system actually contributes to people becoming undocumented. Lack of prompt, clear and accessible information from the Department of Justice on various types of applications for status is contributing the problem of undocumented in Ireland.'

CMP which is part of the Social Care Agency of the Dublin Diocese have clients that have huge difficulty in ascertaining what exactly they need to do to renew or apply for different types of immigration status. Mr. O'Brien states that: *'There is an ongoing and long standing failure of INIS to issue clear, timely and accessible information for immigrants. This causes huge confusion and is ultimately the cause of people falling out of status'*.

As an example Mr. O'Brien outlined a recent decision by the Department of Justice to create another hurdle for immigrants who wish to stay in Ireland. Well over a year after thousands of immigrants applied for a status called 'long term residency' the Department of Justice have retrospectively raised the bar by requesting applicants to produce (sometimes unattainable) police clearance certificates from every country the person has lived in. This new hurdle is above and beyond what is required to become a naturalised Irish citizen. He states that, *'this ad-hoc and very poorly communicated development has meant that some workers who left exploitative employers with the expectation that they would be granted long-term residency now have not option to become regularised'*.

¹ This is a proposal by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland for migrant workers who become undocumented through no fault of their own. The 'bridging visa' would grant undocumented workers 6 months permission to remain in the country in order for them to regularise their status.

For more information contact Joe O'Brien, Crosscare Migrant Project, 1 Cathedral St.,
Dublin 1. jobrien@crosscare.ie Phone: +353-1-8732844, 087-9608540