

Minority Ethnic Matters Overview

*MEMO is produced by the **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities** in partnership with **BEMIS - empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities**. It provides an overview of information of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, including parliamentary activity at Holyrood and Westminster, new publications, consultations, forthcoming conferences and news reports.*

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Immigration and Asylum

Holyrood Parliamentary Questions

Asylum Seekers (Housing)

George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what recent discussions have taken place with local authorities regarding housing provision for asylum seekers. (S30-9889)

Reply from The Minister for Housing and Communities (Alex Neil): Housing for asylum seekers in Scotland is a matter for the United Kingdom Border Agency and Glasgow City Council, as it is the only local authority in Scotland to have a contract with the UKBA to provide accommodation to asylum seekers. However, Scottish Government officials regularly attend the multiagency move on group, which includes Glasgow City Council, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities' strategic migration partnership, Glasgow Housing Association, YMCA Scotland, the Scottish Refugee Council, and Jobcentre Plus. The group was initially set up in 2007 to address the issues resulting from the case resolution process. However, it continues to meet to discuss emerging issues in relation to asylum seekers and those recently granted refugee status.

George Foulkes: I thank the minister for his helpful reply. My question is also meant to be helpful. The minister has confirmed that Glasgow is still the only local authority that has an agreement with the Border Agency, through the Home Office, for the housing of

Immigration and Asylum Holyrood Parliamentary Questions (continued)

asylum seekers. That results in a huge burden being placed on Glasgow City Council and difficulty for refugees, as we have, sadly, seen recently.

Earlier this week, I asked Lord West, the Home Office minister, whether he would discuss with other Scottish local authorities the possibility of their sharing the responsibility for the housing of asylum seekers, which would also give the Home Office more choice. Will the minister take up that issue with local authorities and ask them to re-enter discussions with the Home Office, through the Border Agency, so that there can be some easing of the burden of responsibility that currently rests on Glasgow City Council?

Alex Neil: George Foulkes makes a valid point, and I appreciate the initiative that he has taken with Lord West. I am happy to raise the issue at my next regular meeting with COSLA to see whether something more can be done on this issue.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-10/sor0318-02.htm#Col24777>

Westminster Debate

Migrant Domestic Workers (Visas)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100317/halltext/100317h0001.htm#10031752000001>

Westminster Ministerial Statement

Immigration Rules

The Minister for Borders and Immigration (Mr. Phil Woolas): I wish to make the following statement.

Armed Forces

I am making a change to the Immigration Rules, laid before the House today, to change marriage visa age policy so that the age requirement is lowered to 18 for serving members of the armed forces and their partners. This recognises the role of partners in supporting those on the frontline. I believe that it is important that we give the armed forces special consideration to reflect the unique circumstances in which they operate.

Points-based System

Other changes I am making to the Immigration Rules today implement recommendations made by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to change tier 1 and tier 2 of the points-based system. The points-based system continues to provide a flexible means to better identify and attract those migrants who have the most to contribute to the UK, while enforcing our effective border controls against those with less to offer. Tier 1 is for the most highly skilled workers, and tier 2 for other skilled workers who have a job offer from a UK employer licensed to sponsor migrants.

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) provides the Government with independent, evidence-based advice on the economic case for managed migration. The MAC published its recommendations for tier 2 on 19 August 2009, and its recommendations for tier 1 on 4 December 2009. In arriving at them, it considered evidence from hundreds of organisations. The Government have also engaged with a wide-range of employers, trade unions and other organisations to ensure that the changes we make meet their needs and control migration in the best interests of the UK as a whole.

I can announce today that the Government are accepting all but two of the MAC's recommended changes to tier 1. The statement of changes to the Immigration Rules laid before the House today includes new points tables for both tiers, a simpler route for very highly skilled workers without master's degrees, greater flexibility for short-term transfers

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Ministerial Statement (continued)

by multinational companies, and more protection against such transfers being used to fill long-term vacancies that should go to resident workers. We have disagreed with the Committee in the awarding of points for professional qualifications held in addition to academic qualifications. We consider the approach would be complex, confusing for applicants and difficult to administer, and that operationally it would be very difficult to assess which combinations should attract particular points. So the Government have not accepted the recommendation at this time. Further, the MAC recommended that the Government commissions detailed analysis of the economic returns to studying at particular institutions and for particular degree subjects. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has already commissioned research which will shed more light on international students' experience of the post-study work route, the jobs they take on and whether or not the availability of post-study leave to remain was decisive in them choosing to study in the UK. The Government have therefore decided that any further consideration of this recommendation should await the outcome of that research.

The UK Border Agency is also publishing a statement of policy for sponsors to ensure they have as much detail as possible about the Government's response to the MAC's recommendations, including those which do not require legislative action to implement.

Today's rules changes also make relatively minor changes to other parts of the points-based system. Under tier 4, we are making a number of changes that will support the introduction of the new highly trusted sponsor category from 6 April. We are also amending the rules to permit sponsored researchers, who are part-way through research projects at our higher education institutions, to make an application to extend their leave under the Government authorised exchange sub-category of tier 5.

ESOL/Knowledge of Life

We are also making some changes to the requirements concerning English language qualifications for migrants seeking indefinite leave to remain in the UK. It is important that immigrants seeking permanent residence in the UK have some understanding of one of the native languages of this country (English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic) and of life in the United Kingdom. This will help to ensure that they integrate more easily into the British way of life. I have today laid changes to the Immigration Rules which will ensure that all applicants relying on qualifications in English for speakers of other languages will study at accredited colleges; ensuring the quality of provision and preventing the possibilities of abuse of the provisions and exploitation of migrants. I have also clarified the progression which migrants are required to demonstrate before applying for permanent residence. Additional technical changes bring the rules into line with current terminology for the relevant qualifications. Equivalent amendments are also being made to the regulations governing applications for naturalisation as British citizens.

Protection/Asylum Rules

We are also making some relatively minor changes to the Immigration Rules on asylum in order to clarify existing practice and procedure in the UK. These changes will have the effect of preventing asylum applicants from claiming humanitarian protection where there are serious reasons for considering that they have engaged in undesirable behaviour as set out in the rules. We have also clarified interview procedures for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and have removed an unnecessary requirement for an asylum seeker to be asked to sign the interview record after their asylum interview to verify its contents. We have done this because we are satisfied that there are other procedures in place to safeguard the process.

Tier 5 Youth Mobility Scheme

I am pleased to announce that we will be adding Monaco to the youth mobility scheme.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100318/wmstext/100318m0001.htm#10031847000017>

Immigration and Asylum (continued)

Westminster Parliamentary Questions

Asylum Seekers: Support Payments

Lord Avebury: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will make a statement on the reductions in support payments to asylum seekers while they are awaiting a decision on their application.

Reply from Lord West of Spithead: My Lords, on 5 October 2009, we removed the distinction between rates of asylum support provided to single adults aged 18 to 24 and those aged 25 and over. The new unified rate was based on the lower rate provided to 18 to 24 year-olds, uplifted by 5.2 per cent. The rates paid to children and couples were also increased by 5.2 per cent. We continue to provide the over-25 rate to those who were in receipt of it prior to 5 October 2009, so no individual saw a reduction in their rate of support.

Lord Avebury: Is it still the Government's policy to provide for the essential living needs of asylum seekers awaiting their decisions? Can the Government give the calculation on which the reduction from £42 to £35 for an adult over 25 was based? Would the noble Lord agree that following the consultation on asylum support, the unfettered discretion of the Secretary of State to decide these amounts should be replaced by a process of scrutiny by Parliament to make sure that they are adequate to meet essential living needs?

Reply from Lord West of Spithead: My Lords, the reasoning behind the change was that asylum seekers who otherwise would be destitute are given access to rent-free accommodation, plus all utilities paid and council tax included. Therefore, we felt that the difference between being 24 and 25 was nothing-it was exactly the same. All of those things are provided, and this is an addition of money on top of that.

As regards the other point, it is fair to say that it is something that needs to be looked at. I cannot give a promise that we will do that, but I certainly believe it is something that should possibly be looked at.

Lord Skelmersdale: Will the Minister confirm that by the end of next year, 2011, the UK Border Agency aims to conclude 90 per cent of new asylum cases within six months of application-in other words, to try and make this subvention as short as possible? There have been criticisms by the UNHCR and the Centre for Social Justice that six months is far too long. What is the noble Lord's response and what guarantees are in place to ensure that this target will be met?

Reply from Lord West of Spithead: My Lords, as the noble Lord says, our aim is that we will conclude all such cases within the six-month target. At the moment we have reached about 60 per cent, and we are marching towards achieving the target. Also, we are doing very well getting rid of the backlog that we had in these cases. It is very important that we look at these people very carefully and accurately, and I think we do that. The tightening of our borders has reduced the number of asylum seekers who are not real asylum seekers-people who are coming here because they want to work here and for other reasons-to about 24,000 in 2009 compared with 84,000 in 2002. This is a dramatic reduction in numbers. We have a very fair system. Real asylum seekers who deserve asylum are looked at very thoroughly and carefully and get asylum in this country. Those who come here for other reasons do not, as is appropriate.

To continue reading the lengthy question and answer session see
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100315-0002.htm#1003151000341>

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

Immigrants: Detainees

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children of each age group from each country have been held in immigration (a) detention and (b) removal centres at each location prior to deportation in each year since 1997. [319527]

Reply from Alan Johnson: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only by checking individual records over the period requested at a disproportionate cost.

National Statistics on children detained solely under Immigration Act powers on a snapshot basis are published quarterly. The information is published in Tables 9-11 of the Control of Immigration: Quarterly Statistical Summary, United Kingdom bulletins which are available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office's Research, Development and Statistics website at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration-asylum-stats.html>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100318/text/100318w0012.htm#10031851000146>

Westminster Early Day Motions

Fabian Hamilton (1103) Right to work of asylum seekers – That this House believes that asylum seekers looking for sanctuary in the UK should be granted the right to work from the day of arrival; further believes that this would afford such vulnerable people dignity as well as the ability to support themselves financially; and notes that this would also reduce the burden on the taxpayer.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=40738&SESSION=903>

Katy Clark (1128) Human trafficking and the sex trade – That this House condemns human trafficking; notes with dismay that human trafficking for the sex trade is a particularly brutal part of this criminal activity; further notes that this modern form of slavery includes domestic servitude, bonded labour and forced marriage; welcomes the attempts that have been made to crack down on trafficking and the Government's support for Council of Europe conventions on this issue; and calls for continued vigorous Government action to raise awareness and stamp out this appalling trade in human lives.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=40770&SESSION=903>

Press Releases

Volunteer opportunities with the Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Council is currently looking for volunteers to help support all aspects of its work with asylum seekers and refugees. There are a variety of roles available, such as working directly with those seeking asylum to more background roles looking at how the Scottish Refugee Council communicates, fundraises for and administrates its work. For information see http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/support/VRO_2010 (closing date for applications 9 April 2010).

Refugees' route to settlement

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsfragments/22-refugees-settlement>

New Rules for Tier 1 and Tier 2 and other changes to the Immigration Rules

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2010/255022/46-new-rules-for-t1-t2-and-ir>

Immigration and Asylum Press Releases (continued)

Report finds no evidence of systemic abuse by escorts removing individuals from the UK

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2010/255022/41-oloan-report>

An EU without borders - also for long-term visa holders

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/023-70530-067-03-11-902-20100312STO70499-2010-08-03-2010/default_en.htm

New publications

Report to the United Kingdom Border Agency on “Outsourcing Abuse”

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/oloan-report/outsourcing-abuse.pdf?view=Binary>

Living in limbo: forced migrant destitution in Europe

http://www.jrseurope.org/publications/JRS%20Europe%20-%20Report%20on%20Destitute%20Forced%20Migrants%20-%20finalmar10_compressed.PDF

News

Charity demands probe into deaths of three Russian asylum seekers who jumped from Glasgow tower block

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/2010/03/18/charity-demands-probe-into-deaths-of-three-russian-asylum-seekers-who-jumped-from-glasgow-tower-block-86908-22121238/>

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Race Relations

Press Releases

John Denham announces £1million fund to help faith groups have their voices heard

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1507453>

John Denham speech to the Faith and Social Action Conference

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/faithsocialaction>

David Miliband sends Norouz Festival wishes

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=21919273>

New publication

Ensuring a level playing field: funding faith-based organisations to provide publicly funded services

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/15073411.pdf>

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Westminster Parliamentary Questions

Equality and Human Rights Commission

1. Mr. Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con): What recent representations she has received on the recommendations in the Fifteenth Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, on the Equality and Human Rights Commission, HC 124. [322776]

2. Richard Ottaway (Croydon, South) (Con): What recent representations she has received on the recommendations in the Fifteenth Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, on the Equality and Human Rights Commission, HC 124. [322777]

4. Mr. Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con): What recent representations she has received on the recommendations in the Fifteenth Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, on the Equality and Human Rights Commission, HC 124. [322779]

Reply from Harriet Harman: Since the report was published on 4 March I have not received any representations about its recommendations. The Government's response to the report will be set out in due course, in the way that the Government respond to reports by the Public Accounts Committee, which is through a Treasury minute.

Robert Goodwill: The Committee revealed that several staff members of the legacy commissions left through an early exit scheme, and were subsequently rehired by the new commission at a cost of £338,708. Does the Minister agree that that represents a shocking waste of taxpayers' hard-earned money?

Reply from Harriet Harman: The hon. Gentleman, and the House, will know that there is a system for monitoring the finances of non-departmental public bodies. They are subject to the scrutiny of accounting officers, and there is a framework to ensure that public money is properly spent and everything is kept in order. We are concerned for two reasons. First, we want to ensure that every pound of public money that comes from taxpayers is properly spent, wherever in the public sector it is spent. We are also concerned to ensure that the Equality and Human Rights Commission works well, because we-unlike his good self, no doubt, and many Opposition Members, unfortunately-are concerned about equality.

Richard Ottaway: Following on from the earlier point, is the Minister aware that the transition team, comprising 83 people employed over an 18-month period, received on average £100,000 each? Does she think that that was good value for money?

Reply from Harriet Harman: As I have said, there are proper frameworks for arranging for non-departmental public bodies to spend money, which they do independently. They are not Government Departments and are subject to a framework, and to scrutiny and accountability. Obviously, we want to make sure that they spend all that money wisely, but individual payments are the responsibility of accounting officers and the chief executive, not my responsibility as Minister for Women and Equality-although obviously, we are concerned to ensure that every pound of public money is properly spent, and that the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which is an important organisation, does its job properly.

Philip Hollobone: That framework and accountability mechanism seems to have broken down, because in July 2009 the commission itself found that it was employing some 574 full-time equivalent staff when it was authorised to employ only 525. Is not that another shocking waste of public money?

Reply from Harriet Harman: Where there have been concerns they have been pointed out, and the commission has taken steps to address them. That is part of the process of transparency: where public money is being spent, there is scrutiny to make sure that it is being spent in the right way, in order to meet the important public policy objective of pursuing equality. That is what is happening.

Equality

Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

Evan Harris (Oxford, West and Abingdon) (LD): The Joint Committee on Human Rights, of which I am a member, also reported on the Equality and Human Rights Commission. It asked the Minister why she reappointed the chairman of that body without putting the appointment out to open competition. How is that transparent and accountable?

Reply from Harriet Harman: As I said to the Joint Committee on Human Rights when it called me in to give evidence, the chief executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission had left her post. Especially because the Equality Bill was going through the House of Commons and the House of Lords, I felt that we needed continuity of leadership, and therefore that it was right to reappoint the chair and vice-chair. Obviously, we were then going to need to find new commissioners and a new chief executive, but we did not want a wholesale change of personnel in this important organisation at a critical time.

Hon. Members should look at the substance of the work that has been done by the commission. They should look at the important inquiry into sex discrimination in the financial sector; the important legal challenge to the apartheid constitution of the British National party; the work on the unfairness to agency workers in the meat packing industry; and the important evidence the commission gave on the question of the default retirement age. The question is this: are hon. Members-I exclude the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Dr. Harris), who asked the question, from this, because I accept his good faith-interest in discrimination against people on the ground of age, discrimination against agency workers, and discrimination against women in the financial services sector? Members from the official Opposition are having a go at the commission as a proxy for the fact that they do not like the onward march of equality.

Lynne Featherstone (Hornsey and Wood Green) (LD): This is an apposite moment to come into this debate, because my charge is that the EHRC is not doing the work that it should be doing. Does the Minister agree that it should spend less time pontificating on what organisations should and should not do, and far more time using its powers and legal challenges to hold businesses and public bodies to account, and on enforcing the legislation that already exists, which it is not doing to any great degree?

Reply from Harriet Harman: The commission is making sure that it plays its part in enforcing existing legislation, and works with us to help to shape future legislation. It is also making sure that it looks at all the places where inequality exists, works with all the organisations-business, trade unions and voluntary organisations-and helps individuals. I know that the hon. Lady shares my concern that where there is inequality, it needs to be tackled. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is an important part of the process for making that happen.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100318/debtext/100318-0003.htm#10031848000031>

Press Releases

Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Human Rights raises concerns about the human rights work and leadership of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://news.parliament.uk/2010/03/concerns-raised-over-equality-and-human-rights-commission/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights report

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/our-response-to-the-joint-committee-on-human-rights-report/>

Equality (continued) New publication

House of Commons and House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights: Report on the Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200910/jtselect/jtrights/72/72.pdf>

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Racism and Religious Hatred

Westminster Parliamentary Questions

Anti-Semitism

David Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take in the next six months to protect the Jewish community from anti-Semitic attacks; and if he will make a statement. [321840]

Reply from Alan Campbell: The Government take attacks on the Jewish community very seriously and provide a co-ordinated and continual response.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) National Community Tension Team (NCTT) carries out community impact assessments and identifies particular Jewish communities for reassurance activity. The NCTT also coordinates a national operation to ensure security and reassure Jewish communities during High Holy Days.

The Community Safety Trust (CST) was a recipient of funding from the 2009-10 Hate Crime section of the Victims Fund to allow them to improve both their reporting of anti-Semitic incidents and the support provided to victims. In addition, in London, the Metropolitan Police's Operation Rainbow Team, the uniformed policing response to counter-terrorism, has been working with the CST on the security of Jewish buildings.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100316/text/100316w0007.htm#10031682000003>

Higher Education: Anti-Semitism

David Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take to deal with anti-Semitism (i) on university campuses and (ii) in student unions; what recent discussions he has had on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [321837]

Reply from David Lammy: This Department has set up a group on Anti-Semitism and higher education to facilitate discussions between the Jewish community and higher education stakeholders, which I chair. This group covers all issues relating to anti-Semitism on campus and plays an important role in helping to tackle anti-Semitism in higher education. The two meetings that have taken place have resulted in practical actions to be taken forward by higher education stakeholders and Jewish Community representatives working collaboratively.

I also attended the recent Jewish student Lobby of Parliament in February 2010 where I heard from students about their experiences at university and made clear once again the Government's strong opposition to anti-Semitism and any form of racism in higher education.

I was appalled at the rise in total anti-Semitic incident figures shown in the recent Community Security Trust annual report, in particular the very disturbing 38 incidents against one academic.

However, the overall trend in HE showed a 13 per cent. decrease from 2008.

Racism and Religious Hatred Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

David Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what meetings have been held of the higher education sub-group of the cross-government working group on anti-Semitism since January 2009; who from each Civil Service grade attended each meeting; what was discussed at each meeting; what further meetings are planned; and if he will make a statement. [321838]

Reply from David Lammy: There have been two meetings of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) anti-Semitism and higher education group, in April 2009 chaired by me and in November 2009 chaired by my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Postal Affairs and Employment Relations and by Martin Williams, the Director for Higher Education in BIS. At each meeting a ministerial private secretary was present and also a policy official (higher executive officer). A further meeting is due to be arranged for spring 2010. The first meeting discussed anti-Semitic incident monitoring in higher education (HE), and how this was reported by students. The second meeting included updates from members of the group on their wider work on equality and diversity, including tackling anti-Semitism, and on the recent guidance for students, "A Student's Guide to Antisemitism on Campus", produced by the Union of Jewish Students and the Community Security Trust. Both meetings resulted in agreement to a number of practical actions which are being taken forward by HE stakeholders and the Jewish community.

We are committed to encouraging higher education institutions to ensure discrimination has no place in any of their policies or practices and to act swiftly when incidents or complaints are brought to their attention. One of the most important ways of tackling any form of racism in our universities is to ensure there is a dialogue between the universities, students and minority communities and this Department has been instrumental in fostering communication between the Jewish community and higher education. An important part of this work has been the establishment of the BIS anti-Semitism and higher education group, which brings together student representatives, representatives of the Jewish community and key HE sector bodies.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100315/text/100315w0030.htm#10031538000032>

Westminster Early Day Motion

Diane Abbott (1079) Muslims in Britain – That this House opposes the increased demonisation of Muslims in sections of the media; expresses its deep concern at the recent visit to the House of Lords by the far-right politician Geert Wilders; condemns the English Defence League demonstration outside Parliament in support of Geert Wilders and its slogans and placards inciting hatred, such as its demand for the closure of the East London Mosque, that will only lead to a climate of fear, division and disharmony; welcomes the participation and contribution of Muslims in British society, including in politics; and believes that the full participation of all communities in the forthcoming general election is in the interests of democracy.

Press Releases

Joint statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Library/PressReleases/62-21_03_2010_en.asp

Racism and Religious Hatred

Press Releases (continued)

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=PR233%282010%29&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE>

News

Police battle to control EDL and UAF protest in Bolton

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/8577777.stm>

Anti-fascist charged after Bolton protests

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/8578558.stm>

Police arrest 60 people amid clash of extremes

<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/politics/Police-arrest-60-people-amid.6168718.jp>

Mass arrests at far-right rally

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/crime-courts/mass-arrests-at-far-right-rally-1.1014940>

English Defence League and anti-fascist protesters clash in Bolton

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/7489008/English-Defence-League-and-anti-fascist-protesters-clash-in-Bolton.html>

Scores arrested as English Defence League and anti-fascists clash in violent street protests

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1259409/Police-attack-right-wing-group-anti-fascists-clash-violent-street-protests.html>

Tories 'airbrushed' ethnic minority candidates from campaign leaflets

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/mar/21/tories-airbrushed-ethnic-candidates-bnp>

We must trust in basic British decency to beat the racist BNP

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/mar/21/bnp-elections-dudley-ian-austin>

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Other Westminster

Parliamentary Questions

Forced Marriage

Lord Lester of Herne Hill: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any forced marriage protection orders have been made in cities with large British Asian populations such as Blackburn, Bradford or Leicester. [HL2417]

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action is being taken further to their assessment of the initial impact of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 to reach Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and to encourage them to respond to the object and purpose of the Act. [HL2418]

Other Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

Reply from Lord Bach: Since implementation of the Act on 25 November 2008 and up to 28 February 2010, a total of 123 forced marriage protection orders (FMPOs) have been made, including in the areas of Blackburn, Bradford and Leicester county courts. This well exceeds the projected number of 50 orders per annum.

The initial impact of the legislation was set out in the policy paper One Year On. The policy paper highlighted the need for continuing publicity especially within the communities, for training, and for better interagency co-operation. One of the recommendations of that paper is to liaise and work with the Forced Marriage Unit to maintain awareness of the provisions of the Act and to reach "closed" communities.

The Forced Marriage Unit undertakes around 80 outreach events a year to both professional groups and communities to raise awareness of forced marriage and appropriate responses. This work includes raising awareness of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act and forced marriage protection orders.

The paper also highlighted the need for action balanced with caution and understanding of the impact of an application on a young person who then loses family and community and will need long-term protection and support. The policy paper is online at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/10508.htm>.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100315w0003.htm#10031553000788>

Gypsies and Travellers

Baroness Whitaker: To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have decided not to implement the provision in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 to extend security of tenure on local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites to that enjoyed by other caravan dwellers under the Mobile Homes Act 1983.

Reply from Lord McKenzie of Luton: My Lords, Her Majesty's Government remain committed to bringing security of tenure to local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites and to do this by implementing Section 318 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Statutory instruments will be laid as soon as parliamentary time is available.

Baroness Whitaker: I thank my noble friend for that Answer. I know he intends to be helpful, but does he agree that the promise to give security of tenure-crucial to the education and health of Gypsy children-has just been dropped off the list of things to be done before the election because no one thinks that it matters enough? My noble friend has got two other statutory instruments under the same Act this afternoon. Does he also acknowledge that a very simply statutory instrument, a quarter of a page long, could speedily be brought in to cover just this one point, thus incidentally, also satisfying the letter from the Joint Committee on Human Rights?

Lord McKenzie of Luton: My Lords, I acknowledge the role that my noble friend plays as an effective and consistent campaigner for the rights of Gypsies and Travellers. I share her disappointment that it is not going to be possible to bring forward this statutory instrument before the general election but emphasise that the Government remain committed to doing so. As to the alternative proposition, that we could achieve what is required by a fairly straightforward and shorter instrument, the Government's view is that it would not have allowed the changes to assignment and the others requested in the consultation we undertook to be applied retrospectively to existing agreements once the Mobile Homes Act was applied to those agreements. We do not believe that the alternative is effective.

Lord Graham of Edmonton: My Lords, does the Minister acknowledge that there continue to be great disparities between those who live in bricks and mortar houses and

Other Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

those who live in mobile homes or on caravan or Gypsy sites? Can he give an assurance that despite the pressures on the department the interests of those who live on Gypsy sites will be borne in mind? Will he give a commitment to try to iron out the disparities between those who live in bricks and mortar houses and those who find their housing by other means?

To continue reading the lengthy question and answer session see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100317-0001.htm#10031747001035>

Press Release

UK Government and Catholic Bishops welcome state visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom

<http://www.scotlandoffice.gov.uk/scotlandoffice/13644.html>

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New Publications

Free to believe: religious freedom in a liberal society

<http://campaigndirector.moodia.com/Client/Theos/Files/TheosFreetoBelieve.pdf>

Making good society: Final report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland

<http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/files/main/Makinggoodsociety.pdf>

How to establish an effective dialogue between the EU and civil society organisations

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Participatory_democracy/SocialPlatform_EffectiveCivilDialogue.pdf

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Other News

Bid to boost Muslim officer numbers

<http://breakingnews.heraldscotland.com/breaking-news/?mode=article&site=et&id=B511325411268793925A0>

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Bills in Progress ** New or updated this week

Holyrood

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

Bills in Progress

Holyrood (continued)

**** Public Services Reform Bill**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/26-PubSerRef/index.htm>

proposed amendments

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/businessBulletin/bb-10/bb-03-15g.htm>

and

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/businessBulletin/bb-10/bb-03-17g.htm>

and

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/businessBulletin/bb-10/bb-03-19g.htm>

Supplementary Financial Memorandum

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/businessBulletin/bb-10/bb-03-19g.htm>

Scottish Parliamentary Information Centre briefing

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-10/SB10-21.pdf>

**** Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Bill**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/39-SPCC/index.htm>

Subordinate Legislation Committee Stage 1 Report

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/subleg/reports-10/sur10-19.htm>

Scottish Parliamentary Information Centre briefing

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-10/SB10-20.pdf>

Bills in Progress

Westminster

**** Equality Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/039/amend/am039-c.htm>

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Consultations

(closing date)

** new or updated this week

Equality Bill: Draft Codes of Conduct (2 April 2010)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/equality-bill-codes-of-practice-consultation/#1>

Options for future charity appeals route in Scotland (5 April 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/48453/0093191.pdf>

Inquiry into Migration and Trafficking (9 April 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/equal/inquiries/migration/mtcallforev.htm>

Inquiry into the Budget Strategy and Equality Groups (9 April 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/equal/Budget%20process%202011-12/BSPcallforev.htm>

Consultations (continued)

Equality Bill: Draft Guidance (16 April 2010)

<http://ehrc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Death Certification, Burial, and Cremation (Scotland) (21 April 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300112/0093686.pdf>

Scotland's Future: Draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill (30 April 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/303348/0095138.pdf>

Publication of monthly asylum application statistical data (30 April 2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-2009-asylum-stat-data/asylum-consultation2835.pdf?view=Binary>

**** Self-directed support: A National Strategy for Scotland** (7 May 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/301424/0094007.pdf>

Call for Evidence on the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill (12 May 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/currentInquiries.htm>

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (14 May 2010)

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/preparations/consultation-and-research/formal-consultations/spring-10-consultation.html>

Refusing entry or stay to NHS debtors (28 May 2010)

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/nhs-debtors/>

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Job Opportunities

[Click here](#) to find out about job opportunities advertised in MEMO+ Recruitment

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Events/Conferences/Training

** New or updated this week

**** this week!**

Sustaining and Reinventing Community Regeneration

24 - 25 March 2010 in Edinburgh

SURF annual conference to explore the realities of delivering regeneration in Scotland's most disadvantaged communities. In doing so, we will showcase the assets and resources that are at hand to support and sustain regeneration. For information see <http://www.scotregen.co.uk/events/default.asp?ItemID=1099> or contact Derek Rankine derek@scotregen.co.uk / 0141 585 6879.

Events/Conferences/Training (continued)

**** this week!**

Domestic Abuse and BME Children & Young People

25 March 2010 in Edinburgh (9.30 – 12.30)

Shakti training providing an opportunity for staff working with children and young people to gain greater understanding of how domestic and culture-based abuse affects black minority ethnic (BME) children and young people. For information contact info@shaktiedinburgh.co.uk / 0131 475 2399.

An Introduction to the Needs and Experiences of Refugee Women

9 April 2010 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course for people working with asylum seekers and refugees who need a comprehensive understanding of the core issues affecting women seeking sanctuary in Scotland. For information contact Jamie Spurway jamie.spurway@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 248 9799 or see <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/training/forms/Notes?formID=77>

**** Self-Directed Support: A National Strategy Consultation for Scotland**

13 April 2010 in Glasgow (10.30 – 1.00)

BEMIS consultation event in association with the Scottish Government . Self-directed support is a way for people to get the support they need to be part of their community and to stay fit and healthy. This can be disabled people, older people, or people who are ill or dying. Self-directed support can help people to stay healthy and independent for longer. For information contact Tanveer Parnez 0141 548 8047 / tanveer.parniez@bemis.org.uk

An Introduction to Working with Asylum Seekers & Refugees

23 April 2010 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course is for people working with asylum seekers and refugees who need a comprehensive understanding of the core issues affecting those seeking sanctuary in Scotland. It is particularly relevant to people working in social work, housing, welfare, education, employment, health, community development or the justice system. For information contact Jamie Spurway jamie.spurway@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 248 9799 or see <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/training/forms/Notes?formID=82>

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Useful Links

Scottish Parliament <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/home.htm>

Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Home>

Westminster Parliament <http://www.parliament.uk/>

Directgov (links to UK Government Departments)

http://www.direct.gov.uk/DI1/Directories/AToZOfCentralGovernment/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=10013528&chk=8b2gQw

European Parliament <http://www.europarl.eu.int/parliament/public.do?language=en>

One Scotland Many Cultures <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>

Useful Links (continued)

Scottish Refugee Council www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Scottish Inter Faith Council <http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>
Scotland Helpline 0845 604 5510

Scottish Human Rights Commission <http://scottishhumanrights.com/>

ACAS www.acas.org.uk

SCVO <http://www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/Home/Home.aspx>

Volunteer Development Scotland www.vds.org.uk

Social Economy Scotland <http://www.socialeconomyscotland.info/content/index.asp>

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) <http://www.oscr.org.uk/Index.stm>

Central Registered Body for Scotland (CRBS) <http://www.crbs.org.uk/>

Disclosure Scotland <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>

BBC News24 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/default.stm>

BBC Parliament online
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/bbc_parliament/default.stm

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The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charity SC029438) <http://www.scojec.org/>



BEMIS is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. <http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>