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Migration Opportunity Map Project (MOMP)



(28 page .pdf)

Migrants Rights News ~ No: 5

Welcome to the March 2008 edition of Migrants Rights News

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Dear Colleague

Welcome to this edition of Migrants Rights News. There are items here on:

- (1) a conference on *Immigration at the new borders of Europe*, organised by the Moroccan migrants' rights organisation ABCDS and the MRN, 1st April, London;
- (2) Wales Roundtable Discussion on "*The Next Steps in Immigration Control Policy - Responding to the Green Paper*", 9th April, Cardiff.
- (3) the Home Offices new Green Paper, *The Path to Citizenship: Next steps in reforming the immigration system*
- (4) the Home Office consultation on Compulsory Identity Cards for Foreign Nationals;
- (5) Preparations for the *Global Forum on Migration and Development* taking place in Manila, October 2008
- (6) Chinese Immigration Concern Committee launches a website on employment fines and workplace raids
- (7) News of meetings and events across the UK

(1) ABCDS/MRN conference: Migration & Human Rights: The war against migrants at the EU's new borders, London, 1st April 2008, at The Amnesty International Human Rights Action Centre

The MRN has been pleased to collaborate with the Moroccan migrants' rights organisation, Association Beni Znassen pour la Culture, le Développement, et la Solidarité - ABCDS - in the organisation of this event.

The conference will discuss the situation created in Morocco in recent years as the European Union has sought to export its borders to the adjacent countries of the Mediterranean. Speakers will include Mr Hicham Baraka, ABCDS President, Dr Hein de Haas, COMPAS, and Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell, co-ordinator of the international office of the Centre for Development and Democracy.

As well as hearing reports of the work done with migrants from across Africa currently in Morocco awaiting the opportunity to journey to Europe, the conference will consider ways of building a solidarity network in support of ABCDS, and of focusing its call for the reform of European border policy on the European governments, including the UK.

For more information about the conference, go to:

<http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/mrnevents/programmeconference01.04.08.pdf>

(2) Roundtable Discussion, Wales: "The Next Steps in Immigration Control Policy - Responding to the Green Paper" - Wednesday 9th April 1:30 - 4:30, at The Conference Centre @ Esis, T? Dysgu, Cefn Coed, Nantgarw, Cardiff CF15 7QQ

The MRN is organising this event for organisations in Wales interested in following developments in policy on immigration enforcement and the proposals in the new Green Paper (see below). Speakers will be available to talk on:

- " Immigration enforcement and the workplace;
- " Access to public services
- " Steps to citizenship.

For further information, and to book a place, email Cristina at c.andreatta@migrantsrights.org.uk.

(3) Home Office Green Paper: Paths to citizenship demands bigger contributions from migrants

The Home Office issued a Green Paper setting out its plans for the path to settlement or citizenship for non-EEA migrants to the UK. The Green Paper can be downloaded from:

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/pathtocitizenship/pathtocitizenship?view=Binary>

The MRN has produced a briefing paper on the Green Paper, which can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/briefingpaper/pathtocitizenship.pdf>

The Green Paper argues that the path to citizenship will require "migrants to demonstrate a more visible and more substantial contribution to Britain as they pass through successive stages."

A new "probationary citizenship" is to be created between the stages of temporary residence and citizenship will last from 12 months to 5 years. The status of permanent residence will no longer be granted to people who complete periods of temporary residence in categories that lead to settlement. It will instead only be available as an alternative to full British citizenship for those who do not wish to take out this status. The acquisition of permanent residence will generally take longer than that of acquiring British citizenship, and will involve sitting language and knowledge of British society tests.

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Prohibitions on public funds benefits and services will continue up to the point migrants become either full British citizens or permanent residents. The Green Paper suggests that extra taxes or visa charges will be levied on non-EEA nationals to create a fund intended to contribute towards the cost of the impact of migration in eligible areas of the country.

The MRN has criticised almost every aspect of the Green Paper's proposals. Its briefing paper states that:

"[I]t is a matter of concern that the measures advocated in this Green Paper should demand yet more from migrants than they have already provided through their work and enterprise. A Home Office strategy, which has little other rationale than the demand for greater contributions and more visibility in making them, will inevitably be seen as unjust by migrants as well as others at the progressive end of the political spectrum. This is a reason for questioning the most basic presumptions that lie behind the very conception of the Green Paper."

The briefing paper urges detailed consideration of the Green Paper's proposals on the part of migrant community organisations across the UK, and other organisations supporting the rights of migrants. A public consultation is currently underway, with the opportunity to submit comments to the Home Office extending until 14th May 2008.

(4) Identity cards to be compulsory for non-EEA non-British residents by the end of 2008

Home Office plans to make ID cards compulsory for non-EEA, non-British residents have been set out in a consultation published by the Home Office in February.

Dealing with the code of practice to be adopted in relation to sanctions against individuals for not complying with the requirement to hold an ID card, the consultation paper suggests that a fine of £125 will be levied as a civil penalty against people who have failed in a 'secondary compliance' obligation, which concerns such matters as failure to inform the authorities of changes in personal circumstances recorded on the ID card, or when it has been lost or stolen.

The failure to meet obligations for 'primary compliance, such as to apply for an ID card and to provide correct information will result in higher penalties, rising to £1,000. Persistent failure to comply will result in the curtailment of leave to remain and the prospect of removal.

The consultation documents can be accessed at:

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/idcards/>

The closing date for responses to this consultation is 4th May.

(5) Plans for the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) , Manila, October 2008.

The second GFMD is scheduled to take place in Manila, Philippines, on 27-30th October. Following on from the inaugural meeting in Brussels in July 2007, the agenda in Manila intends to broaden the discussion by looking at the human rights of migrants. The Foreign Affairs Under Secretary of the Philippines, Esteban Conejos, in chairing a preparatory meeting for the Forum, explained that the theme of the Manila Forum, "Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development" reflects a growing understanding that the developmental benefits of migration are contingent upon the degree to which migrants are protected and empowered, by both the host and origin countries.

Manila GFMD 2008 will also look at how to open more legal avenues for migration while addressing the obstacles to regular, protective forms of migration, such as human trafficking and migrant smuggling. It will further consider the need for more reliable migration and development research and data and continue the debate on policy and institutional coherence in linking migration and development. Undersecretary Conejos stressed the need for continuity through implementation of the GFMD Brussels outcomes, and urged governments to focus actively on these recommendations and report on results at the Manila GFMD 2008 meeting.

The Brussels Forum meeting consisted of sessions organised for government representatives, and a parallel civil society event which brought representatives of migrant rights and development NGOs into the discussion. The Migrants Rights International, a network of independent organisations working to support migrants, sponsored a 'Community Forum' at the conclusion of the official event to allow civil society groups the opportunity to review proceedings and consider the gains which might be emerging from the process.

The MRI is planning a similar event for Manila and has issued an invitation to migrant organisations to travel to the Philippines in October to participate in the discussions and events which will take place around the Forum.

For further information about the organisation of the official Forum, visit:

<http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org/en/press-release/philippines-prepares-way-gfmd-manila-october-2008-report-first-fof-meeting>

For information about the MRI's plans for the Community Forum, go to:

<http://www.migrantwatch.org/>

(6) Chinese Immigration Concern Committee formed to monitor effects of workplace raids on Chinese businesses

Monday 3rd March 2008 saw the first mass rally of the Chinese community in Britain, which brought together around 1000 people from different parts of the country. Both Chinese employers and workers were present in large numbers to voice their concern about the detrimental effect of workplace raids on Chinese business.

To download the report of the rally, go to: <http://www.cicuk.org/downloads/information/rrenglish.pdf>

As part of the Campaign, the CCIC is encouraging people to sign a petition to ask the government to:

1. Stop all BIA raids on Chinese catering businesses
2. Work with the Chinese community to resolve its problem of skill shortages
3. Regularise undocumented migrant workers.

To sign the petition, go to: <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/ciccpetition/>

For more information about the CCIC Campaign, visit: <http://www.ciccuk.org/>

(7) News of meetings and events across the UK

Here are some events that we would like to bring to your attention:

- A seminar entitled Locating Migrant Workers in Debates about Racism will be held on Wednesday 2nd of April 2008 at the London Metropolitan University. Speakers will include Don Flynn from the MRN and Wilf Sullivan from TUC Race Equality Office. For more information about this event, go to: <http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/events.htm>

- As part of the Borderlines Film Festival (28 March - 13 April) on the 2nd of April will be on Migrants Stories, a series of two-minute digital shorts, in which workers, friends and employers tell their own stories. To find out more about this event, visit: http://www.borderlinesfilmfestival.co.uk/migrant_stories.shtml

- The organisation PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants) is organising a workshop on Protection of undocumented children in their basic social rights which will be held in Brussels on the 4th of April 2008. To find out more about this event, go to: <http://www.picum.org/>

A full list of upcoming events is available on our website at <http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/events.htm>

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TOWARDS A PROGRESSIVE IMMIGRATION POLICY - a new collection of essays on the principles which should underpin progressive immigration policies. Edited by Don Flynn and Zoe Williams and published by Compass, the Barrow Cadbury Trust and the Migrants' Rights Network. Copies available, price £5.00, from the MRN, address above (cheques payable to 'MRN'). Or download a free copy from the MRN website - <http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/progressivepolicy.pdf>

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