

## **Independent & Green Party Debate (S4M-12677) – “Celebrating Scotland’s Diverse Communities”**

*“That the Parliament believes that Scotland’s diversity should be celebrated and rejects the negative attitudes expressed in the media and politics toward immigration and immigrants; also notes with concern the impact of these attitudes in the context of the approaching general election; believes that there should be recognition of the very real and positive contribution made by immigrants from all over the world to Scottish society, culture and history; also notes that the Scottish population is comprised of a rich mix of peoples and cultures from all over the world and believes that all immigrants and their descendants are an integral part of the Scottish identity; calls on politicians and the media to stop the demonisation of immigrants, and calls on media outlets to take a more responsible approach toward their reporting of immigration to Scotland and the UK.”*

“Demonisation of immigrants” in the media is clearly to be deplored and expressions of support for diverse communities are positive and necessary. To that extent, the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) welcomes the Independent and Scottish Green Party debate to be held tomorrow.

On the other hand, we are disappointed that the focus of the motion is restricted to attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. Of course, it is not necessarily racist to talk about immigration. But much of the discussion *is*, with ‘immigrant’ all too often used as a code word for ‘other’ – and we should not shy away from calling out racism when we see it.

Are the ‘descendants’ referred to in the motion always to be seen as ‘other’? The 2011 Census showed that almost 58% of the population of Pakistani origin living in Scotland was born in the UK<sup>1</sup>, and no doubt a large percentage of the rest have lived here for a long time, have been through school in Scotland and would consider themselves as Scottish as any other person.

By failing to call racism out and by seeing this only as an immigration issue, we risk a disservice to our black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in Scotland. So, while a motion in support of migrants in Scotland is welcome, we continue to be of the view that this must go hand in hand with *action* to tackle the racism and race inequality faced by Scotland’s BME *and* migrant communities.

Scotland’s BME communities now comprise over 200,000 people – that’s roughly 4% (and growing) of the population as a whole, and at least 11.6% in Glasgow, 8.3% in Edinburgh, and 8.1% in Aberdeen. Across a huge range of areas BME people – whether immigrants or born and bred in Scotland - continue to face inequalities, discrimination and racism. We set out some examples below. If celebration of our diverse communities is to be meaningful, then we need meaningful action to overcome racism and prejudice in Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-analyser/jsf/tableView/crosstabTableView.xhtml>

**Hate crimes and prejudice** - More than 4,600 racist incidents were recorded by the police in 2012/13 – around 90 per week<sup>2</sup>. That’s likely just the tip of the iceberg. Rather than welcome diversity, 28% of Scotland’s people think there is sometimes good reason for prejudice against certain groups, and 10% would be unhappy if a black or Asian person joined their family circle<sup>3</sup>.

**Poverty** - Black and ethnic minority communities are significantly more likely to live in relative poverty – at 25% for 2012/13, compared to 14% for the “White-British” group<sup>4</sup> and at greater risk of severe and extreme poverty<sup>5</sup>.

**Education** - As noted by the Commission on Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce and Scottish Government Youth Employment Strategy, there is strong evidence that young people from BME communities “encounter significant inequalities within education and employment” – they are more likely to embark on a narrower range of vocational pathways, more likely to experience prejudice and stereotyping and more likely to experience unemployment<sup>6</sup>.

**Employment prospects** - Despite forming over 4% of Scotland’s population, only 1.1% of local authority staff, and 0.8% of fire service staff are from BME communities<sup>7</sup>. And only 1.1% of Modern Apprenticeship starts in 13/14 were BME.<sup>8</sup> In 2011/12, while 7.1% of white applicants for public sector posts were appointed, only 4.4% of non-white applicants were successful. For local authorities the figures were even starker: 6.1% V 2.1%.<sup>9</sup> This supports DWP-commissioned research that showed a person with a ‘BME name’ had to send an application away 16 times to achieve a successful response compared to the 9 times for someone with a ‘white name’ - even though they were submitting the same application<sup>10</sup>.

**Underrepresentation** - Only 32 out of 1,222 of our elected councillors – or 1.4% - are from BME communities, and in 25 of our 32 local authorities there are no BME representatives at all.<sup>11</sup>

### **Action as well as words**

We know and we welcome the fact that the political parties in the Scottish Parliament support racial equality in Scotland. And there is some welcome work underway – for example, the Parliament’s Equal Opportunities Committee is to conduct an inquiry into employment and race, while the Scottish Government’s Youth Employment Strategy aims to increase the number of BME Modern Apprenticeship starts to reflect population share by 2021.

So while CRER welcomes the Green party motion and support for immigrant communities, we should also take this opportunity to think about what further *action* we can take to overcome racism and race inequality in Scotland. For example:

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/TrendRac>

<sup>3</sup> [Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2010](#)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/Poverty>

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Government “[Severe Poverty in Scotland](#)” (March 2015)

<sup>6</sup> The [Wood Commission](#) and Scottish Government [Youth Employment Strategy](#)

<sup>7</sup> CRER - “The State of the Nation: Race & Racism in Scotland – [Employment](#)” (2014)

<sup>8</sup> Skills Development Scotland “[Modern Apprenticeship Statistics](#) – Quarterly Report” (June 2014)

<sup>9</sup> “The State of the Nation: Race & Racism in Scotland – Employment”

<sup>10</sup> DWP, “A test for racial [discrimination in recruitment practice](#) in British cities” (Research Report No 607).

<sup>11</sup> CRER – “[Minority Ethnic Representation](#) in the 2012 Scottish Local Government Elections” (August 2012).



- Ensure the action to tackle inequality in the Scottish Government's programme for government includes action to tackle race inequalities;
- The Scottish Government is expected to renew its strategic approach to race equality in the near future - ensure it includes robust measures to support racial equality across Scotland;
- Let's look again at the public sector equality duties – and put emphasis on requiring public authorities to take *action* to tackle inequalities, instead of simply reporting;
- Make sure race equality is always part of committee work programmes – think about making equalities an agenda item to be considered on a recurring basis;
- Ensure ministers are always working to promote racial equality.

#### About CRER

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights works to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial justice across Scotland. Through capacity building, research and campaigning activities which respond to the needs of communities, our work takes a strategic approach to tackling deep rooted issues of racial inequality. CRER has experience of anti-racist work covering areas such as community engagement and empowerment, research and resource development, practical training and equality mainstreaming support for Public and Voluntary Sector organisations.