POLICY ON RACISM AND IMMIGRATION

SUMMARY

* People Before Profit declares itself completely opposed to racism in all its forms, including Islamophobia, anti-semitism, and anti-Traveller racism. In opposition to racism we regard the ordinary people of every nation, ethnic group and creed, as our sisters and brothers.

* All the mainstream political parties in Ireland and across Europe view immigration as a ‘problem’ to be dealt with more or less harshly. People Before Profit rejects this view. Without migration human development would have been impossible.

* Immigrants are welcome here. Their presence enriches our society. We seek to unite with them in the struggle for a better Ireland and better world.

* We are opposed to the politics of scapegoating minorities and all our public representatives and spokespersons combat it.

* We oppose the policy of ‘fortress Europe’. We believe that Europe should open its borders and that within Europe, Ireland has a duty to accept a proportional share of refugees from war, oppression and persecution.

* We should treat asylum seekers and refugees with decency and humanity. We stand for an end to direct provision. We oppose all deportations.

* People Before Profit supports the right of all residents to vote regardless of race and citizenship.

* People Before Profit opposes Islamophobia: we reject the idea that there is a particular link between Islam and terrorism.

* People Before Profit is against terrorism and we reject the demonisation of Muslims.
* We support the right of Muslim people, along with all other religions, to practice their religious beliefs and we defend the Muslim community against any discrimination or racist attack.

* People Before Profit supports the struggle of Traveller people against racism and for full equal rights. We call for:

  * The recognition of Traveller ethnicity by the Irish state;
  * A public enquiry must be conducted into the Carrickmines tragedy;
  * The establishment of an Independent national Housing Agency to oversee the delivery of safe and culturally appropriate Traveller Accommodation;

  * Travellers with relevant expertise and selected by the National Traveller organisations to be co opted into the Seanad to be represented on relevant government committees and to be visible within the relevant state departments;

  * The restoration of cuts to Traveller services and the improvement of those services, to include Education, Health, Employment and Equality programmes;

  * We oppose all discrimination and bigotry directed at the Traveller community and call for a policy of zero tolerance on racism where:

    * politicians who use the anti-Traveller card to win votes should be held accountable - expelled/banned for going for public office;

    * media bias which feeds prejudice and discrimination against Travellers will be challenged and offenders held accountable.
People Before Profit’s Policy on Racism and Immigration

Statement on Racism and Immigration

People Before Profit declares itself completely opposed to racism in all its forms, including Islamophobia, anti-semitism and anti-Traveller racism. Racism became a major force in the modern world first as a justification for slavery and empire and then as a weapon of divide and rule setting ordinary people against each other to the advantage of our rulers and rotten governments. In opposition to racism we regard the ordinary people of every nation, ethnic group and creed, as our sisters and brothers.

People Before Profit believe in No Platform for Fascists. We will not share platforms or debate with fascists.

Immigration

All the mainstream political parties in Ireland and across Europe view immigration as a ‘problem’ to be dealt with more or less harshly. People Before Profit rejects this view.

People have been moving across the world in large numbers since the dawn of history. With the exception of the Native Americans, for example, who arrived about 20,000 years ago, the entire population of North and South America have arrived at various points in the last 500 years. Without migration human development would have been impossible.

The Irish in particular have been forced, by poverty and unemployment, to emigrate to many different parts of the world where they have made a huge contribution to the culture and economy of their destinations as well as playing a crucial role in the development of the international labour and socialist movement. Just think of James Connolly as one example.

We absolutely reject the view that immigration causes unemployment or that immigrants ‘take our jobs’ or that immigrants are responsible for the housing shortage or the state of the HSE. These social problems derive from an economic system based on production for profit and successive governments that serve the interests of the rich. Where unscrupulous employers try to use migrants as ‘cheap labour’ our answer is to fight alongside those migrant workers for decent wages for all, NOT to object to the presence or employment of ‘foreigners’.

Our position is that immigrants are welcome here. Their presence enriches our society and brings both economic and cultural benefits. We seek to unite with them in the struggle for a better Ireland and better world.

We are completely opposed to the politics of scapegoating minorities and expect all our public representatives and spokespersons to combat it.
Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

People Before Profit is opposed to the policy and concept of ‘fortress Europe’ which is designed to keep out migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

We believe that Europe should open its borders and that within Europe, Ireland has a duty to accept a proportional share of refugees from war, oppression, persecution and other inhuman conditions for the creation of which Western imperialism bears a heavy responsibility.

At present this is not the case for Europe or Ireland. We call for the EU and our own government to do much more in this regard.

We also believe that Ireland has a duty to treat asylum seekers and refugees who arrive here with decency and humanity. This means first and foremost ending the disgraceful system of direct provision and allowing all asylum seekers the right to work and the equal right to third level education. We are for the normalisation (i.e.‘legalisation’) of undocumented migrants. We oppose all deportations.

People Before Profit supports the right of all residents to vote in all elections and referendums after a suitable period of residency in Ireland as we believe everyone should be able to have their say regardless of race or citizenship.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is one of the main forms of racism in the contemporary world.

It has been systematically cultivated by the US and European ruling elites since ‘Muslims’ replaced ‘communists’ as the enemy of choice with the end of the cold war.

We note that just as racism was used to justify slavery and empire in the 18th and 19th centuries so Islamophobia has been used to justify Western wars, interventions and occupations in the Middle East, particularly with a view to protecting oil supplies.

People Before Profit opposes Islamophobia: specifically we reject the idea that there is a particular link between Islam and terrorism. People Before Profit is against terrorism and we reject the demonisation of Muslims.

We also reject the idea that Islam is a peculiarly backward or reactionary religion. Like the adherents of all major religions, Muslims come in all political shapes and sizes ranging from right wing and reactionary to left wing and revolutionary.

We support the right of Muslim people, along with all other religions, to practice their religious beliefs and we defend the Muslim community against any discrimination or racist attack.

Travellers’ Rights

Travellers are Ireland’s indigenous minority who have lived as a distinct ethnic group for upwards of a thousand years. They have long been subject to massive racist discrimination and bigotry, resulting in major economic, social and political deprivation and disadvantage.
Statistics on life expectancy, health, employment, educational attainment and poverty all confirm the fact that Travellers are one of the most oppressed groups in Irish society. This oppression has been added to in recent years by huge cuts in services to Travellers. Over the period 2008-2013 when overall government spending was cut by 4.3%, programmes for Travellers were cut as follows: Education -86%, Accommodation -85%, Equality initiatives -76.3%, National Traveller organisations -63.6%, FAS special initiatives for Travellers -50%, Traveller Interagency activities – 100%. This level of cuts was vastly disproportionate to any other section of society and demonstrated a clear disinvestment by the State in the Traveller community which has had detrimental impacts.

There is an established and deep rooted institutional racism against Travellers which is quite complex. It is racism from the top down, backed through the institutions of the state, the capitalist system and the media where government policies create the conditions for racism to take root and grow.

Equality legislation from 1998 formally made discrimination against Travellers an offence. Contrary to this, the rise of anti-Traveller racism among arms of the state has been alarming. The Irish government has obligations in line with various human rights treaties that it has signed up to, yet, the protracted refusal by consecutive governments to recognise Traveller ethnicity is a barrier to the realisation of Travellers human rights in Ireland.

Until Travellers are recognised as an ethnic group in Ireland, as recommended unanimously by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Traveller Ethnicity (in April 2014) the situation for Travellers will remain stark and continue to manifest in poor health, intolerable living conditions, low educational attainment and high unemployment.

People Before Profit supports the struggle of Traveller people against racism and for full equal rights. We call for:

- The recognition of Traveller ethnicity by the Irish state;
- A public enquiry must be conducted into the Carrickmines tragedy;
- The establishment of an Independent national Housing Agency to oversee the delivery of safe and culturally appropriate Traveller Accommodation;
- Travellers with relevant expertise and selected by the National Traveller organisations to be co-opted into the Seanad to be represented on relevant government committees and to be visible within the relevant state departments;
- The restoration of cuts to Traveller programmes and services and the improvement of those services, to include Education, Health, Employment and Equality programmes;
- We oppose all discrimination and bigotry directed at the Traveller community, and call for a policy of zero tolerance on racism where:
  a. politicians who use the anti-Traveller card to win votes should be held accountable - expelled/banned for going for public office;
  b. media bias which feeds prejudice and discrimination against Travellers will be challenged and offenders held accountable.