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The portrayal of migrants and refugees during election campaigns

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr John GREENWAY and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Migration management is one of the greatest challenges facing Europe today. It is entirely appropriate that matters affecting migration should be debated during election campaigns. It is a matter of public concern, on which politicians are expected to give their views.

The media also have an important role to play in reflecting public concerns and providing a platform for politicians to clarify their policy. The Parliamentary Assembly has already underlined in its [Recommendation 1768 \(2006\)](#) the media's responsibility to reflect the positive contribution to society made by migrants, and to protect them from negative stereotyping. One can question whether this advice has been followed.

Public debates on migration issues, particularly during election campaigns, should be measured and avoid extreme language and the stirring up of anti-immigrant and racist sentiment by exploiting public fear about the impact of immigration on communities. The exploitation of such fear by populist messages designed to gain public support for political parties is deplorable and has a profound impact on society and undermines social cohesion.

The Council of Europe ardently supports all efforts to enhance intercultural dialogue, as a force for mutual understanding and one of the most effective means of preventing conflicts. Intercultural dialogue and measures to foster tolerance help immigrant communities to integrate into host societies

The Assembly, which regularly seeks to promote this approach, should look into the ways in which the theme of immigration has recently been manipulated in election campaigns. Politicians have a key part to play in this sphere, particularly members of the Assembly, as a result of their dual national and European mandate, and they must not let extremist parties monopolise the immigration debate. Member States should conduct debate on immigration based on clear facts to have a more mature debate.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left