

Doras

Press Release

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Doras express concerns with social welfare checks at airports

Limerick-based migrant and refugee support organisation Doras have expressed concerns with social welfare payment checks at airports and the subsequent cessation of pandemic unemployment payments to people who travel abroad. They are particularly concerned at potential racial profiling in the implementation of these measures, and at the manner in which they discriminate against people who are dependent on social welfare payments.

“We have serious concerns with this policy is implemented, and the rationale for it in the first place,” said John Lannon, CEO of Doras. “Many people need to travel for compelling reasons other than leisure or work, for example: urgent family matters including care or bereavement in another country. This can apply to the many Irish people with links abroad and to people from a migrant background in Ireland.”

“The risk of racial profiling of people from a migrant background is also very real,” said Lannon, “and it is easy to see how it can happen with this new social welfare policy, which is discriminatory in itself.”

Doras also refer to recent reports of increased numbers of people of specific nationalities being refused entry to Ireland by immigration officials.

“This follows another alarming policy implemented in Irish airports and points of entry in the past year - the movement of immigration checks to the steps of an aircraft rather than in a terminal building, effectively denying people the chance to seek asylum, a fundamental human right.”

“We call for the social welfare checks at point of entry to be ceased, and for immigration policies that could bar certain nationalities from seeking asylum to be reversed. We do believe that people should avoid travelling abroad if they can, in line with Government Covid-19 advisories, but to prohibit someone’s ability to travel or take punitive measures by stopping welfare payments is a cause for great concern.”

ENDS

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