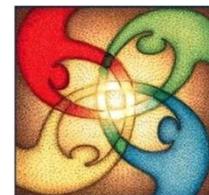


Donegal Intercultural Platform calls on communities to reject the politics of division and hate

The committee of the Donegal Intercultural Platform stands in solidarity with the Traveller community in rejecting the negative anti-Traveller and anti-Welfare recipient statements that have surfaced during the recent Presidential election campaign and which have been repeated and given air-time and credence by the national media.



**DONEGAL
INTERCULTURAL
PLATFORM**
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We believe there is no place in our society for hate speech and scape-goating of groups of people on the basis of their ethnicity, ability, income or employment status.

As an Intercultural platform we work tirelessly for unity of all the people living here, for respect and recognition of our variety and diversity. We do not fear difference, rather we celebrate it because it enriches everyone's life and experience.

A very great and serious wrong has been done to the Traveller community by the belittling of their hard-won recognition as a distinct part of Irish society. We particularly condemn the vicious suggestions that there should be a re-education concentration camp for Travellers in the Phoenix Park!

We are reminded of the famous poem by Martin Niemöller (1892 – 1984) who was a prominent Lutheran pastor, where he warned against failure to stand up for your neighbours...

***First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a communist.***

***Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a trade unionist.***

***Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.***

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Donegal is becoming a much more multi-cultural place, with many staff employed in local shops, care facilities, hospitals and larger companies coming from every corner of the world; our Platform energy focuses on building links and bridges between communities, nurturing respect and developing understanding.

The Donegal Intercultural Platform has been supported and accommodated by the voluntary commitment of Donegal Travellers Project and members of the Traveller community across the county. The Traveller organisation delivers intercultural training along with Platform members across the county promoting diversity and respect in the community and the workplace for all Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

The Donegal Intercultural Platform rejects all statements and comments made by Peter Casey and on Social Media that harm and damage positive relations between Travellers and the majority population.

The Intercultural Platform believes that organisations across the county must now take a stand to support an ethnic minority – the Traveller Community – and to help heal the hurt caused.

We ask the public to join us in building relationships and understanding – not walls and division. Join us in refusing to nourish a climate of suspicion, fear and hate; together we can build communities based on Peace and Reconciliation.

Billy Banda & Paul Kernan

Co-Chairpersons of Donegal Intercultural Platform.

Ends...../

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