

Communication from the Conference of INGOs on

“Migration and electoral context”

Prepared by the Committee on the rights of persons who are migrants; discussed and approved by the Conference at its Spring 2024 session (Strasbourg, 8-10 April 2024)

The Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (CINGO) of the Council of Europe welcomes the adoption by the Parliamentary Assembly of Resolution 2525 (2024) ***The theme of migration and asylum in election campaigns and the consequences on the welcoming and rights of migrants*** on the basis of the Fridez report adopted by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Council of Europe (PACE).

The Resolution and report draw timely political attention to the issue and the consequences of instrumentalisation of migration and asylum in an electoral and pre-electoral context. It can no longer be denied that political polarisation is steadily creeping into public opinion, into electoral behaviour of citizens and into the political party landscape in many European countries; and neither can it be denied that the issue of migration and asylum constitutes a driving force of major importance in this development. Field workexperience and civil society observation clearly point out that a considerable segment of Europe’s public opinion favours more restrictive immigration and asylum policies, vocally ventilated in the discourse of certain political parties.

Hate speech, stigmatisation of migrants and refugees, xenophobia and exclusion, but also incidents of violent or militant rejection of the host country’s history-based culture and ways of life are increasingly worrying challenges; all these phenomena are outright threats to the ethical values in which our European societies are rooted by historical nature and, inter alia, also by means of multiple Conventions, Recommendations and other legal instruments and monitoring mechanisms of the Council of Europe.

Further to the analysis presented in the Fridez Report, CINGO also emphasises that the weakening socio-economic security of a growing segment of European population and the growing number of European households in poverty or at risk of poverty, feed and enhance all sorts of negative perceptions about refugees and migrants and about the support network to which these people are simply entitled on the basis of elementary human solidarity. Combatting xenophobia, hate speech and exclusion of refugees and

migrants can therefore not be seen as an isolated objective, but must be embedded in just and equilibrated socio-economic policies and measures responding to the needs of our wider society. Particular attention is due in this respect to children, the most vulnerable members of our society, whether in a migration context or not.

CINGO considers that the resolution based on the Fridez Report identifies several significant avenues to take up the challenge. It also strongly believes that social and economic inclusion of refugees and migrants in our societies can only be achieved through a dynamic two-way process of intercultural education and genuine dialogue reflecting all stakeholders, required to create mutual empathy and understanding.