

## **Anti-migrant violence and small resources stop migrants from electoral success (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/111003>)**

**This year's local election saw not only a doubling of the number of migrant candidates running than in 2019, but now also double the amount of migrant candidates getting elected to city and county councils across the country, with 21 candidates of a migrant background elected.**

However, with this increase there was also an increase in violence and harassment towards candidates of a migrant background. 1 in 10 (10%) election candidates of a migrant background didn't canvass during their campaign out of fear of anti-migrant violence, outlined in "[Strength in Diversity II](https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2024-09/Strength%20in%20Diversity%20II%20Final.pdf)" (<https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2024-09/Strength%20in%20Diversity%20II%20Final.pdf>), the research launched today by the Immigrant Council of Ireland. A further 18% said they limited canvassing due to racism and harassment they received at the doors of their constituencies.

The research also found that candidates of ethnic minority and migration backgrounds have smaller resources that impend their ability to implement the most successful electoral strategies. The purpose of this research was to further advance the knowledge of what factors may advance or diminish the electoral success of candidates of a migrant background.

**Brian Killoran, CEO, Immigrant Council of Ireland** said: "Although migrant communities in Ireland are formally empowered through inclusive electoral legislation, and can present a rich pool of suitable candidates, they experience barriers limiting their electoral success. Removing those barriers through effective policymaking is essential for supporting the cohesion of our communities and the health of our democracy."

International research shows that increasing ethnic diversity in politics creates more trust amongst migrant communities in the governing bodies. It also improves the relationship between the policing authorities and migrant communities. Despite the record high number of candidates of a migrant background, the gap in ethnic representation in local politics is still wide. 15% of Irish society are migrants whereas only 2.2% of newly elected councillors are people of a migrant background.

Speaking at the launch of "Strength in Diversity II", **Teresa Buczkowska, Political Participation Coordinator at the Immigrant Council of Ireland** and author of the research said: "Why is it that if you are a candidate of a migrant background your chances of being elected drop by 62%? Why independent contestants are overrepresented amongst candidates of a migrant background? How can we address the challenge of violence and harassment on the campaigning trail? These are some of the questions we need to ask to find solutions to the democratic marginalisation of migrant and ethnic minority communities."

"As much as racist violence is a major barrier, we also need to look beyond that. Effective electoral campaigning requires a fair public narrative, skills, budget, institutional support, parties' commitment to affirmative actions, and many more. We need to discuss what policy interventions are needed to make our democracy truly representative" further states **Teresa Buczkowska**.

The report offers a rich inside into the experiences of the election candidates of a migrant background ranging from discussing the candidates' motivation and their electoral strategies to analysing differences in their experiences based on gender and party membership. The report also offers a set of recommendations for key stakeholders on how to improve policy and practice to support ethnic diversity in politics.

Brian Killoran continues "The simple fact of a person migrated to Ireland does not diminish in any way their fundamental right to be treated fairly, equally, and with dignity nor it should limit their ability to participate and contribute to the community around them and the country overall. We publish this report with an aim to achieve meaningful and proportionate representation of all within our communities and society, and with the belief that this empowers and benefits all of us who call Ireland home in 2024."

**Region**  
Nationwide

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