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Britain to hit bottom of the league on integration and cohesion

*In a response to the Green Paper Earning the Right to Stay – A New Points Based Test for Citizenship, the Runnymede Trustⁱ provides concrete evidence that the Government's proposals will have a negative effect on integration and cohesion.ⁱⁱ A commissioned assessment by the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)ⁱⁱⁱ reveals that **the proposals would make language and integration conditions for British citizenship one of the most onerous and complicated in Europe.***

In a recent BBC interview, Home Office minister Phil Woolas reverted to international comparison to justify the stringent proposals set out in *Earning the Right to Stay*. "This is what America does, it is what France does, it's what other countries do and we think we should do the same."^{iv} However, the MIPEX assessment commissioned by the Runnymede Trust contradicts this statements: "many elements of a points-system go way off the MIPEX scale, so far is this idea from any other country's citizenship practices or any international legal standard."

The Government claims that the proposals are about supporting prospective citizens "in integrating fully and enabling them to contribute to their new communities". Yet no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposals will achieve this. In its response, Runnymede provides a confirmation that the proposals will antithetical to the integration of migrants and prospective citizens, and challenges the government to provide evidence to support its proposals.

Contrary to the claim that the proposals are in line with the policies of comparable nations, the MIPEX assessment reveals: "The Green Paper's proposals would make the language and integration conditions for British citizenship and ILR [Indefinite Leave to Remain] one of the most onerous and complicated in countries of immigration. The UK's MIPEX scores would be less like Canada or France's and more like the most restrictionist practices in Germany, Greece, Lithuania, The Netherlands, or Switzerland."

Rob Berkeley, Director of Runnymede, said:

"In order to appear tough on immigration, the government seems to be forgetting the importance of social cohesion. Opposition parties have not put up much resistance. While wrapped in the language of support for the integration of migrants, the government's proposals would take us out of step with comparable nations and lead to the further marginalisation of many future British citizens."



NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Rob Berkeley, Director of Runnymede, is available for interviews and comment. To arrange an interview, please contact Rob Berkeley on 020 7377 9222 during office hours or 07764 935 770 outside of office hours.

ⁱ The Runnymede Trust is an independent policy research organisation focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society. Founded as a Charitable Education Trust, Runnymede has a long track record in policy research, working in collaboration with eminent thinkers and policymakers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Since 1968, the date of Runnymede's foundation, we have worked to establish and maintain a positive image of what it means to live affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse. Runnymede continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today. For further information visit www.runnymedetrust.org

ⁱⁱ The Runnymede Trust's response is available for download without charge at <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/policyResponses/EarningTheRightToStay.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ The MIPEX Index uses 140 indicators to compare the legal provisions in place across Europe to promote the integration of non-EU migrants. The index is based on normative framework derived from the highest European standards expressed in human rights, anti-discrimination, and social, economic and civic inclusion laws and practices – laws which the UK played active and leading roles in creating and to which we are signatory (with some notable derogations). Though benchmarking is commonly used in the private sector and attracting growing interest in the field of justice, security and freedom, the exercise remains a relatively new phenomenon for immigrant integration. Whilst there are a number of initiatives around where indicators are just starting to develop, the second edition of MIPEX, published September 2007, has established it as a constant and reliable biannual stocktaking with the ability to track policy advances and reversals.

^{iv} Available under <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8180749.stm>