

Moderator's notes

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As we come together today to shine a spotlight on migration, these are dark times for those of us who care about the human rights of migrants. Today, migration is the subject of furious – even frenzied - debate in the media, in political circles and in public discussions. And to an absolutely shocking extent, the public narrative on migration is deeply polarised, and often openly xenophobic.

In the first place we must avoid those inaccurate descriptors that are used to debase and alienate; terms such as ‘illegal alien’, ‘bogus asylum seeker’, and ‘economic migrant’, and insist that the conversation about migration must be evidence-based.

But generating rigorous evidence on migration is only part of the picture. It is all too easy to use migrants as scapegoats. Migrants as well as the communities into which they arrive deserve better and more responsible political leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This panel has made clear that all of us, migrants and citizens, deserve a more accurate picture of migration, not a series of caricatures. We deserve better from politicians and the media than scare stories about hordes of migrants laying siege to their communities. We deserve the truth, as complex as it may be, for only the truth can counter toxic narratives. Migrants are rights-holders, and have a right to live in dignity.