



# CEE Digital Democracy Watch

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## Public Comment regarding Criticism of EU Migration Policies and Immigrants

### 1. Whether “murzyn” should be considered a slur term for the purposes of Meta’s Hate Speech policy

The term "murzyn" has a complex and fraught history in Poland, where it has been used as a derogatory term for Black people. While the term may not have the same connotations in other European countries, its use in Poland contributes to the marginalization and discrimination of racial minorities. The Polish Language Council has issued [an official opinion](#) emphasizing that; in Polish language dictionaries, it is also described as a pejorative phrase. When used on social media, it is most likely used in a harmful manner, in content that could be classified as hate speech. There is a very limited scope for ironic use of the word and the idiomatic uses are being phased out according to current interpretations by the Polish Language Council. The word is also heavily used in popular historic literature.

### 2. The sociopolitical context in Poland, Germany and Europe more broadly, in particular attitudes to immigration and how it is discussed politically.

Across Europe, the political discussion around immigration has become highly charged, with anti-immigrant rhetoric often fueling discrimination and even violence against migrants and ethnic minorities.

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, a renowned Polish NGO, published a report in 2024 ["Polityka migracyjna. Wielka nieobecna kampanii."](#) that describes discourse around immigration, especially during election periods.

The Law and Justice (PiS) party, which has dominated Polish politics since 2015, has taken a hardline stance, portraying immigration as a threat to Polish identity and security. They have opposed EU migration quotas and pushed policies to limit immigration. This rhetoric has resonated with many Polish voters, fueling the growth of far-right, anti-immigrant political movements. Since summer 2021 (beginning of Belarus-Poland border crisis) there has been an increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric and hate speech, often fueled by politicians, which has contributed to a climate where discrimination and violence against migrants and ethnic minorities can thrive.

The previously mentioned report documents several instances of explicitly racist and dehumanizing publications by prominent right-wing Polish politicians, including sharing photos of non-white individuals in public spaces accompanied by alarmist captions.

At the same time, there are activists and organizations that push for humanitarian relief for migrants on the East border and advocate for human rights and obeying of international law.

Overall, the report paints a picture of a highly politicized and polarized environment around the issue of immigration in Poland, where anti-immigrant sentiment is being leveraged for political gain, leading to the marginalization and endangerment of vulnerable migrant populations.

It needs to be noted that this polarization is often attributed and amplified by foreign malign actors.

It is crucial that access to communication tools, humanitarian support and targeted positive campaigns is secured for the marginalized groups, also in the Meta ecosystem. Meta should work to white-label credible support groups and foras for exchange of potentially life-saving information.

Given the current European Commission formal proceedings regarding the visibility of political content at Meta, the company should transparently inform on whether the human rights related content is not demoted in the recommender systems of Instagram and Facebook.