



ESIL Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law

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## **Report on the activities of the ESIL Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law**

(1 September 2023 – 25 September 2024)

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## 1. Introduction

The Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law (IG MigRefLaw) is one of the 21 interest groups of the European Society of International Law (ESIL/SEDI). The Interest Group focuses on the law and policy of States and international organisations with regard to people who seek entry to their communities. The movement of people across borders is a defining reality of our time. The IG MigRefLaw aims to provide a forum for discussion on the (international) legal principles and processes governing the movement of people as well as their reception in host communities. By doing so, the group hopes to build a shared knowledge base among ESIL members interested in international migration and refugee law.

The IG MigRefLaw has been in existence for more than eight years now and following the call for candidates in April 2023, the Co-ordinating Committee of the Interest Group welcomes two new co-conveners: Giulia Raimondo (University of Fribourg), and Sissy Katsoni (Ruhr-University Bochum). Alongside the new co-conveners, the previously appointed conveners Daniela Vitiello (University of Tuscia) and Sara Arapiles (Lund University) continue their mandate as members of the IG's coordinating committee.

The IG currently counts 297 members from all over Europe and beyond. Our IG membership is highly diverse: both young PhD students and more experienced/senior academics, alongside with practitioners, judges and staff from international organisations and EU bodies follow the IG and contribute to its newsletter, blogs and various other activities.

With a view to making the IG an attraction pole for research spill-over while enhancing its visibility and audience, four key areas of intervention had been identified ahead of last year's Annual Report. First, a more active posting activity on social media and sharing platforms, including revitalising our twitter account ([https://twitter.com/ig\\_migreflaw](https://twitter.com/ig_migreflaw)). Second, and linked to the first point, some changes on the IG webpage are needed (<https://migreflaw.wordpress.com/>) to make it catchier and more user-friendly. Third, we will work to unleash new synergies with national and European research groups and networks dealing with migration and refugee law. Fourth, we have invited all members to have their say on the governance of the IG.

While we have had increased activity on social media, continued to collaborate with other academic partners and networks also outside ESIL (including, more recently, the Odysseus Network, the Human Rights Research League and the Völkerrechtsblog), and received, albeit limited, feedback from members, the revamping of our website has not been achieved yet.

However, we still believe working along the lines depicted above will make a difference.

The IG MigRefLaw Coordinating Committee,

*Sara Palacios-Arapiles, Daniela Vitiello, Sissy Katsoni, Giulia Raimondo*

## 2. Activities of the Interest Group (2023-2024)

### 18th ESIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Aix-en-Provence

On the occasion of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ESIL, held in Aix-en-Provence from 31 August – 2 September 2023, the ESIL IG on Migration and Refugee Law, in partnership with the [Odysseus Network](#) and [Human Rights Research League](#) organized a pre-conference workshop on 31 August 2023, on '(Un)Fairness in Migration and Refugee Law: Past and Present Realities', with on-site as well as online participants from all over Europe and abroad.

Further details were included in our previous report.

### 19th ESIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Aix-en-Provence

On the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ESIL, held in Vilnius from 4 to 6 September 2024, the ESIL IG on Migration and Refugee Law, in partnership with the [Human Rights Research League](#) and CoSME Project organized a pre-conference workshop on 4 August 2024, on 'Advanced Digital Technologies in Migration Management: A Means to What End?', with on-site as well as online participants from all over Europe and abroad.

The workshop was divided into three panels, with ample time for discussions. Following a brief introduction by the co-conveners, Panel 1, entitled 'Advanced digital technologies shaping border/migration control and human mobility', consisted of presentations on interoperability and artificial intelligence, on profiling based on high-epidemic risk indicators, on maritime surveillance and migration in the Mediterranean Sea, and on the data protection concerns in the framework of EUROSUR.

Panel 2, on 'Automated and data-driven decision-making in migration, asylum and citizenship policy', discussed quality control for predictive models of humanitarian action, explored the intersection between artificial intelligence and refugee status determination in the EU legal framework and identified technical standards for introducer-based remote onboarding in global contexts of statelessness, nomadism, displacement and refuge. For further details, please see the [Final Program](#) and the initial [Call for Papers](#).

Following the discussions and concluding remarks, all paper presenters were invited to submit their contributions to an envisaged **blog series in collaboration with and hosted by the Völkerrechtsblog** to capture the outcomes of the workshop. We expect to receive the revised blogposts from those interested in publishing their contributions with the Völkerrechtsblog soon. These will undergo a peer-review process by members of the Völkerrechtsblog and the Co-Conveners and will be published on the Völkerrechtsblog in the context of a symposium. The Co-conveners will draft an introductory post and a

closing contribution for this symposium.

### 3. Website & Twitter/X

In accordance with paragraphs 5, 9 and 10 of the ESIL Interest Groups Policy Guidance, each Interest Group is required to set up a website which includes information about the group's activities, the names of the members of the Coordinating Committee (including their contact details), the Group's past and future activities and information about how to become an ESIL member. The IG MigRefLaw has a WordPress website which includes the requisite information at <http://migreflaw.wordpress.com/>. The website contains info regarding the IG's activities (past events and newsletters), the members of the Coordinating Committee and on how to become a member.

Since September 2018, the Interest Group also has a Twitter-account 'ESIL MigRefLaw Group' ([@ig\\_migreflaw](https://twitter.com/ig_migreflaw)) in order to promote its activities and to share information relevant to the field of migration and refugee law. The Twitter account is managed by the members of the Coordinating Committee.

### 4. Newsletter

The Interest Group also prepared a quarterly Newsletter which reached our subscribing IG members via e-mail sent out by the ESIL Secretariat. The Newsletter updates our members on the activities of the IG and contains further info on upcoming events and conferences, calls for papers, new publications, vacancies, etc. As we are revamping our website and rethinking ways to better and more efficiently interact with our members, the Newsletter will morph into occasional communications sent out whenever significant development or news need to be shared in a timely manner.

### 5. Contacts

If you have any questions, please contact us at our group's e-mail address: [migreflaw@gmail.com](mailto:migreflaw@gmail.com), or individually at:

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