



ESIL Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law

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

(1 September 2025 – 25 September 2026)

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Activities of the Interest Group (2025-2026)	4
3. LinkedIn Account	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. Communication	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Contacts	6

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 nine years. The Co-ordinating Committee of the Interest Group consists of four co-conveners: Giulia Raimondo (University of Fribourg), Sissy Katsoni (Ruhr-University Bochum), Jonathan Hafetz (Seton Hall University) and Sara Arapiles (Lund University). Following the elections of April 2026, Jonathan Hafetz joined the previous list of IG conveners, while Sara Arapiles was re-elected for a 4-year term.

The IG currently counts 307 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, three key areas of intervention had been identified ahead of last year's Annual Report. First, the replacement of our IG webpage (<https://migreflaw.wordpress.com/>) with a more active social media account on LinkedIn. This will allow us to better and more directly connect with our members, who are more familiar with these new forms of communication than with checking the IG webpage from time to time. Second, and linked to the first point, we aim to connect with our members more regularly via online workshops on current developments in the field of migration and refugee law. Third, the intensification of our collaboration with European and international research groups and networks dealing with migration and refugee law.

We further aim to collaborate more with other academic partners and networks not only within ESIL (namely other ESIL IGs), but also outside ESIL (including, international blogs such as Völkerrechtsblog) to intensify our cooperative efforts further.

The IG MigRefLaw Coordinating Committee,

Sara Palacios-Arapiles, Jonathan Hafetz, Giulia Raimondo, Sissy Katsoni

2. Activities of the Interest Group (2025-2026)

20th ESIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Berlin

On the occasion of the 20th Annual Conference of the ESIL, held in Berlin from 10 to 13 September 2025, the ESIL IG on Migration and Refugee Law, in partnership with the Refugee Finance: Histories, Frameworks, Practices (Ref-Fin) Project (Lund University) and the Community Sponsorship for Migrants in Europe (CoSME) Project (Tuscia University) organized a pre-conference workshop on 11 September 2025, on “De/Re-Constructing Asylum: New Actors, Processes and Spaces”, with on-site 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 ‘Spaces’, consisted of presentations on the changing landscape of global migration management, Panel 2 explored new ‘Processes’ in asylum and refugee law, and Panel 3 focused on new ‘Actors’ in migration and refugee law. Following the presentations and relevant discussions, the workshop ended with the conveners’ concluding remarks and outlook.

Further details were included in our previous report.

WORKSHOP ON HAMOUDI V. FRONTEX – Online

On 27 January 2026, a little over a month after the issuance of the CJEU Grand Chamber’s judgement on the landmark case *Alaa Hamoudi v. Frontex*, our Interest Group organised an online workshop, bringing together refugee law experts and members of the Appellant’s legal team to reflect on the judgment’s significance for challenging Frontex’s de facto legal immunity. The workshop was attended by a large online audience joining from Europe and beyond, and addressed insightful topics relating to accountability gaps in international law, the inequality of arms in pushback litigation and the litigation strategy of the Appellant’s legal team.

21st ESIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Malaga

On the occasion of the 21st Annual Conference of the ESIL, held in Malaga from 3 to 5 September 2026, the ESIL IG on Migration and Refugee Law organized a pre-conference workshop on 3 September 2025, on “Asylum in Times of Conflict: Unsettling the Boundaries of Refugee Protection”, with on-site participants from all over Europe and abroad.

The workshop was divided into two panels, with ample time for discussions. Following a brief introduction by the co-conveners, the first panel, which was focused on the theme of

protection under pressure in times of conflict featured four presentations examining how refugee and international protection law responds to situations of armed conflict and heightened pressure on protection systems. The presentations addressed the evolution and intersection of international protection regimes, emerging forms of asylum protection in Europe, humanitarian visas and access to protection beyond territory, and gender persecution in the context of Palestinian displacement.

Subsequently, the second panel, shifted the attention to the contested boundaries of refugee law featuring three presentations on how conflict and territoriality challenge established boundaries of refugee protection. The panel considered the relationship between persecution and territory, the transformation of borders into “grey zones” and its implications for refugee protection, and effective remedies and procedural externalisation for refugees fleeing conflict. Following the presentations and relevant discussions, the workshop ended with the conveners’ concluding remarks and outlook.

For further details, please see the [Final Program](#) and the initial [Call for Papers](#).

3. LinkedIn Account

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 had a WordPress [website](#) which includes the requisite information at <http://migreflaw.wordpress.com/>. However, the website contains info that is rather outdated, and upon reflection and discussion within the group, more direct online ways of sharing our activities and of communicating with our members seemed more appropriate.

Upon reaching the conclusion that the Interest Group’s Twitter/X-account ‘ESIL MigRefLaw Group’ ([@ig_migreflaw](#)) is no longer the right platform for our IG to share its news and activities, we decided to launch a LinkedIn profile for our IG in January 2026. This profile contains updates on the group’s activities, information about how to become an ESIL (IG) member and information about upcoming events and projects of our group. Our [LinkedIn profile](#) now has 345 connections and seeks to keep the migration and refugee law community and its followers updated on the Interest Group’s activities.

4. Communication

During the past year, the Interest Group also prepared quarterly Newsletters which reached our subscribing IG members via e-mail sent out by the ESIL Secretariat. The Newsletter updated our members on the activities of the IG and contains further info on upcoming events and conferences, calls for papers, new publications, vacancies, etc. However, due to the limited capacity of the IG conveners, we have decided to discontinue the quarterly newsletters and instead share relevant information directly via email.

Specifically, we will circulate Calls for Papers and Event Announcements that are submitted by our members. This information will be sent to the ESIL Secretariat as such requests are received, and the Secretariat will distribute it accordingly.

5. Contacts

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

Giulia Raimondo	giulia.raimondo@unifr.ch
Sissy Katsoni	spyridoula.katsoni@rub.de
Sara Palacios-Arapiles	sara.arapiles@jur.lu.se
Jonathan Hafetz	jonathan.hafetz@shu.edu

September 2026