



ESIL Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law

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

(1 September 2016 – 25 September 2017)

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1. Introduction

The Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law (IG MigRefLaw) is one of the 15 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 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 migration and refugee law.

The IG MigRefLaw has been in existence for more than four years now. The period covered by the current report (Sept. 2016 – Sept. 2017) has been a successful year and has also been the first full year of the new Coordinating Committee of the IG, elected in spring 2016.

Our membership has been expanding over the years, with 282 members as of 7 September 2017. 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. For the coming year (until autumn 2018), we plan to embark upon a number of new activities in the area of international and European migration and asylum law.

With this report, we would like to present an overview of the IG activities over the last year, highlight some of its achievements and give a glimpse of what is to come.

The IG MigRefLaw team,

Kristof Gombeer

Tamás Molnár

Tom Syring



Panel 2 at the IG pre-conference workshop, Naples. Left to right: Tom Syring (NCHR/Oslo), Ana Beduschi (Exeter), Gail Lythgoe (Glasgow), Ralph Wilde (UCL).

Future activities:

The 14th ESIL Annual Conference in September 2018 will be hosted in Manchester (UK) addressing the theme of 'International Law and Universality'. The Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law will again set up a pre-conference event in coordination with UK based migration and asylum law practitioners and academics who have already approached the Coordinating Committee with their ideas and support. A possible topic in light of the overall conference theme would be a discussion and appraisal of the two UN Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, which are currently under preparation, and their possible implications on the global migration governance.

In addition to the annual pre-conference workshop, which we hope will become a strong IG MigRefLaw tradition, the IG contemplates organizing and/or supporting more specific workshops, conferences and blog symposia.

The IG is also preparing a qualitative upgrade of its website (<http://migreflaw.wordpress.com>), including a new section containing a user-friendly database on ongoing academic research in the field of European and international migration and refugee law.

3. Website

In accordance with paragraphs 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 members (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 has had 7481 clicks and 1648 unique visitors since it was launched.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Interest Group on Migration and Refugee Law. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, About & contact, Newsletter, Past events, and a current page indicator for a 6 September 2017 workshop. Below the navigation is a large banner image featuring the ESIL logo and a colorful abstract pattern of birds. The main content area features a recent publication by IG member Nikolaos Sitaropoulos, titled 'Migrant ill-treatment in Greek Law Enforcement', with a brief summary of the article. To the right, there is a search bar, a 'Recent Posts' section listing recent activities and publications, a 'Categories' section with various tags like 'Blogs', 'Books', and 'Case law', and a 'Links' section with external organization links.

Snapshot from the IG home page.

In addition to short descriptions of new publications by IG members, our website includes *inter alia* various blog entries written by members of the Interest Group. For instance, Nikolaos Sitaropoulos blogged about the Ill-Treatment of Migrants in Greek Law Enforcement, Tom Syring wrote on the Kinshasa Flooding and the UN Development Goals, and Cristiano D’Orsi contemplated the drafting of an African Protocol on Mass-Influx of Refugees.

4. Newsletter

The Interest Group also prepares a quarterly Newsletter which reaches our subscribing IG members via e-mail and which can also be found on our website: <https://migreflaw.wordpress.com/newsletter/>. 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. In addition, they provide a useful e-platform to introduce new members.



IG MigRefLaw members at the ESIL Annual Conference, Naples. Left to right: Rebecca Thorburn Stern (Uppsala University), Dana Schmalz (Max Planck Institute), Kristof Gombeer (VUB/Leiden University), Giovanni Carlo Bruno (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche), Tom Syring (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo), Daniela Vitiello (Roma Tre University), Ana Beduschi (University of Exeter).

5. Elections

In accordance with paragraph 4 of the ESIL Interest Groups Policy Guidance, each Interest Group elects a Coordinating Committee, of at least three members, to conduct its business. Elections are to be held at intervals of no longer than two years and must allow for effective participation by all members of the group. The Coordinating Committee elects one or more of its members as Chairperson(s). Further practicalities are set forth in the Guidelines for the Elections of ESIL Interest Group Conveners.

Given that the Interest Group had earlier held elections in October 2013, new elections were needed in the beginning of 2016. The Interest Group thus held new elections for a Coordinating Committee in January 2016. On 31 January 2016, in silent procedure, a new coordinating committee was elected amongst the members of the IG. Since spring 2016, it consists of Kristof Gombeer (VU Brussel/ Leiden University), Tamás Molnár (Corvinus University Budapest/ EU Fundamental Rights Agency) and Tom Syring (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo). This Coordinating Committee was preceded by founding members Evelien Van Roemburg, Lisa-Marie Komp and Isabelle Swerissen. They functioned as the Coordinating Committee by virtue of paragraph 3 of the ESIL Interest Groups Policy Guidance.

New elections for the IG Coordinating Committee will be held in January 2018. At the ESIL Annual Conference in Naples, several IG members indicated their interest in contributing to the Coordinating Committee. Aside from being a member of the IG and thus the ESIL, there are no extra eligibility criteria. The call for candidates will allow for at least two weeks for IG members to put forward their candidature. More info on the elections will appear in our autumn newsletter and on our website.

6. Contact:

If you have any questions regarding the Interest Group or want to contribute to our website or events, please contact us at:

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