



# Protect

The Right to International Protection

Report

2022

## Symposium 2

### Attitudes towards refugee protection in Norway

[protect-project.eu](http://protect-project.eu)



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



NORCOM is funded by  
The Research Council  
of Norway



PROTECT has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 870761.

## About PROTECT-NORCOM

In January 2021, PROTECT received nearly NOK 1 million to create and run a 'Norwegian Dissemination and Communication Network on International Refugee Protection and the UN Global Compact on Refugees' (NORCOM). The funding is part of The Research Council of Norway's Supplementary Funding for Norwegian participants in Horizon 2020 projects. The project is led by Hakan G. Sicakkan, who is based at the Department of Comparative Politics at the University of Bergen.

### About the call

*The purpose of the Norwegian Research Council's Supplementary Funding is to encourage a greater number of Norwegian actors to take on a key role in Horizon 2020 projects and to give a wider range of Norwegian actors access to knowledge, developed through Horizon 2020 projects.*

The NORCOM-project is dedicated to disseminating and communicating PROTECT's research to Norwegian actors involved in refugee protection, relief aid, and asylum and migration as a policy field. With this funding, PROTECT can disseminate relevant results to the Norwegian government, as well as political and humanitarian actors. This significantly accelerates the transfer of knowledge between academia and politics and increases the impact of the Horizon 2020 project on research, society and trade and industry in Norway.

As part of the national dissemination ambition, NORCOM also developed a Norwegian dissemination and communication network consisting of Norwegian non-governmental organizations and researchers in Norwegian higher education and research institutions.

More information about PROTECT-NORCOM and the dissemination and communication network can be found [on the project-website](#).



## **The NORCOM-symposiums**

In order to make the research findings and recommendations from PROTECT more visible, between 2021 and 2023, NORCOM organizes three symposia and a final conference, where the different Norwegian actors come together and discuss about Norway's asylum and refugee policy, and Norway's work in relation to the implementation of the UN Global Compacts on refugees and migration. More information regarding the symposiums can be found [here](#).

The first NORCOM-symposium took place on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and focused on 'Norway and the United Nations' Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration', with presentations by Hakan G. Sicakkan (University of Bergen), Jan Paul Brekke and Erlend Paasche (Institute for Social Research), Jessica Schultz (University of Bergen), and Catherine Woollard (European Council for Refugees and Exiles). The report from the closed symposium can be found [here](#).

The second NORCOM-symposium on 'Attitudes towards refugee protection in Norway' took place on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022, between 13.00-14.30, with the participation of Norwegian research institutions, universities, NGOs and national authorities. The speakers included Hakan G. Sicakkan, Cornelius Cappelen and Pierre Van Wolleghem – all from the University of Bergen. They focused in particular on Norwegian citizens' support for international cooperation in helping refugees and Norwegians' attitudes to specific methods of protection. This was done in an international comparative perspective (26 countries). The event was held partly in Norwegian and partly in English and was open to the public as a Zoom-webinar. The participants included representatives from the University of Bergen, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI), The Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), Tønnsberg kommune, Grimstad kommune, Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger (SEIF), A Drop in the Ocean, Institute for Social Research (ISF) and other individual participants.

The third NORCOM-symposium is scheduled for October 2022 with a focus on 'The UN Global Compacts, the CEAS and international protection in Norway'.

The final conference will happen in the beginning of 2023.

## The second NORCOM-symposium

The symposium had the following program:



**NORCOM WEBINAR  
PROGRAM**

13.00-14.30 25. mai 2022

13.00 – 13.15	<i>Innledning</i>
13.15 – 13.30	<i>Norske holdninger til asylsøkere i komparativt perspektiv: Hvilken rolle spiller kultur, velferd og penger?</i> Cornelius Cappelen
13.30 – 13.45	<i>Norwegian attitudes to errors in decision-making on asylum applications: comparing bogus asylum seekers who get protection and real asylum seekers who don't get protection</i> Pierre Van Wolleghem
13.45 – 14.00	<i>Norske holdninger til internasjonal beskyttelse i komparativt perspektiv. Hvilken beskyttelsespolitikk foretrekker norske borgere?</i> Hakan G. Sicakkan
14.00 – 14.30	<i>Diskusjon og debatt</i> Ordstyrer Alida Rita Steigler

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The opening remarks by project communications coordinator, Alida Steigler (UiB), were followed by a presentation about PROTECT's survey research on citizens' attitudes to international refugee protection, by the leader of this work package Professor Cornelius Cappelen (UiB). Cappelen elaborated on why public support is key to the implementation of policies in general and why understanding the factors that affect citizens' views, with particular attention to their burden- and responsibility-sharing aspects is important. Sharing the burden and responsibility entailed by the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees rest on the principle that states jointly hold a moral duty to protect persecuted individuals. The WP investigates with survey experiments whether citizens think they have a moral duty to protect others and under what conditions this moral duty is evoked. Should they think they do, the project explores their preferred policy alternatives between financial support to the origin and host countries, resettlement of refugees in their own country or preventive measures.

After Cappelen, PROTECT project leader Hakan G. Sicakkan (UiB) delved into deeper detail regarding the role and importance of this large-scale survey study in relation to PROTECT's overall objectives and the overall theoretical and conceptual framework behind it. More information about PROTECT and its research can be found, [here](#).

As the first presenter Cappelen started off by a presentation on 'Norwegian attitudes towards asylum seekers in a comparative perspective: What role do culture, welfare and money play?'. In order to assess the public discourse pressure on policymaking for international solidarity on refugee protection, the team (Cappelen, Sicakkan, Van Wolleghem) has conducted studies of citizen attitudes in 26 countries (21 European countries, United States, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey). Based on the survey-results, in the context of Norway, the following conclusions can be drawn: most Norwegians agree that all countries should cooperate and make every effort to protect the world's refugees. Norwegians are a little more sceptical when it comes to the question of whether Norway should accept more asylum seekers - but still almost 50 percent of the population agree, though to varying degrees. When it comes to which mechanism for division of responsibilities Norwegians favour, they are more in favour of accepting and relocating refugees than paying another country to do it for Norway (56%). The researchers have found no evidence that self-interest affect people's attitudes towards refugees in the Norwegian context, but peoples' notions of inclusive citizenship, welfare chauvinism, nativism, and their concerns about the national economy play a significant role. More details about the citizen survey can be found, [here](#).

Following Cappelen, Pierre Van Wolleghem (UiB) continued the round of presentations with his topic on 'Norwegian attitudes to errors in decision-making on asylum applications: comparing bogus asylum seekers who get protection and real asylum seekers who don't get protection'. During his talk, the main point of departure was deservingness and how that is at the basis of legal administrative decision making, also when it comes to decision-making on asylum applications. However, he points out that limited information may lead to deservingness being based on indirect indicators and thus an imperfect assessment, which can lead to two types of mistakes: 1) someone who deserves asylum will not be granted it or 2) someone who does not deserve asylum will be granted it. The researchers have conducted surveys in 26 countries in order to shed light on the trade-off between these two types of mistakes, knowing that any trade-off has serious implications for policy design: if policy is going to be more permissive or more conservative - in addition to having serious implications for asylum seekers, too. When asked what people think is worse, a larger share think it is worse not to grant protection to those who need it than to grant it to those who don't. The pattern of response is valid for Norway, Scandinavia and most countries in the European Union (except for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia and Hungary). These preferences are likely connected to support for international protection but also to welfare chauvinism.

The final presenter of the second NORCOM-symposium was Professor Hakan G. Sicakkan (UiB), who talked about 'Norwegian attitudes to international protection in a comparative perspective. Which protection policy alternative do Norwegian citizens prefer?'. Looking at whether and how global cleavages and international conflicts affect attitudes to refugee protection, Sicakkan again refers to the PROTECT survey conducted in 26 countries during June-July 2021. His starting point is the different methods of protection that have been used internationally: 1) direct measures (individual asylum, resettlement, relocation), 2) indirect measures (financial contribution, safety zones), 3) preventive measures (development aid, military intervention), 4) denying obligations (withdrawal from the international agreements). After asking people in which way one's country should protect those in need of protection against persecution, the results are as follows: there is support for both direct and indirect measures in all countries studied with a slight tendency in all but two (Croatia and Mexico) to favour indirect protection measures (i.e., creating long-term safe zones in conflict areas, supporting economic development abroad to prevent refugee movement, support military operations abroad to prevent refugee movements and/or withdraw from international agreements for refugee protection).

The average support for direct protection measures is slightly less than the support for indirect measures (i.e., admitting more asylum seekers, resettling more UN-recognized refugees, relocating asylum seekers from other states to relieve their burden and/or send money to overburdened refugee-hosting countries). Regarding support for indirect measures, Norway does not distinguish itself significantly from the other countries whereas the Czech Republic, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Slovakia, and the Netherlands significantly deviate from the general picture in favour of indirect measures. Read more about the conceptualization of the right to international protection via a cleavage theory approach, [here](#).

The symposium concluded with a Q&A session, during which the audience and the presenters shared their remarks, reflections and posed their questions.