



Protect

The Right to International Protection

Deliverable 9.9 International Dissemination II

Events Academic and Policy Forums

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PROTECT CONSORTIUM

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Deliverable 9.9 International Dissemination Events II Academic and Policy Forums

SAFEGUARDING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Brussels, 6-9 March 2023

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The final conference of PROTECT was held at the nhow Brussels Bloom hotel, Brussels, on 6-9 March 2023. The conference included two elements; a policy forum and an academic forum, in line with the Grant Agreement (GA). To maximise interaction and impact between the two elements, these were mixed together, with keynotes offering by turns academic and practitioner-based insights and contributions. This report should be read in conjunction with Deliverable 9.7, which sets out the organisational aspects of the conference as a whole and details the keynote contributions.

On **Day 1** the theme was international protection as a social value.

The roundtable on citizens' attitudes was moderated by **Cornelius Cappelen** (Bergen), who together with **Pierre Van Wolleghem** (Bergen) presented key findings from Work Package 6. This starting with the observation that polling across Europe shows a large majority of respondents in support for protection for refugees. Survey experiments showed some limited support for states offsetting taking additional refugees in return for cash payments to those states who do take them, although this does seem to also produce some erosion of norms around protection and also removes agency from refugees themselves. **Tobias Heidland** (Kiel Institute) reflected that while a logical extension to this experiment would be dynamic pricing to offset norm erosions and state resistance, this would still not likely address the overall decline in willingness to accept refugees. He also observed that public opinion on protection is quite stable, once account is taken of survey effects.

Cappelen presented a second experiment on false negatives and false positives in protection (i.e. wrongly excluded a valid application or wrongly accepting an invalid one). The general pattern was that most people thought both issues were equally important to avoid, but with others more likely to be concerned about false negatives. **Violeta Wagner** (International Centre for Migration Development) spoke here about the central importance of language in framing such issues, a point echoed by Heidland who urged that asylum be discussed as a public good, rather than a politicised domain. Van Wolleghem noted that levels of support for protection are lower among nation-statists than among globalists and regionalists, suggesting that attitudes to globalisation shape views on protection: welfare chauvinism and nativism produce the strongest effects in the data.

The second roundtable of the day discussed the work of Work Package 7 on media and social media research. **Sara Hanke** (Stuttgart) introduced **Deniz Duru** (Lund) who spoke on the impact of media framing on refugees in Danish newspapers and Facebook. She observed a hierarchy of ‘deservingness’ across different categories of migrants, reinforced by the varying choices of stories in shaping narratives and frames. **Anamaria Dutceac-Segesten** (Lund) noted that social media presented a distinct contrast to traditional media debates, with similar language being used across European debate. This is due to the very active role of citizens in discourse formation, especially from globalists, rather in contrast to the usual representation of social media as a reactionary space. Notably, EU institutions were not at all prominent in the key networks on social media, suggesting a lack of relevance.

Boris Mance (Ljubljana) gave the counterpoint of traditional media, which remains highly segmented and makes much more use of relativisation of status, most recently when discussing Ukrainians displaced by Russia’s invasion. The language is that of cost and benefit with a securitised framing. **David Ongenaert** (Erasmus Rotterdam) connected this to the communications strategy of NGOs: these mirror public interest in particular cases, which in turn allows them to do more for those cases, leaving others suck in a vicious circle.

In discussion, Dutceac-Segesten noted that a flipside of high citizen involvement in social media discourse is that they are not familiar with (or don’t use) formal distinctions of status, which contributes to a blurring of debate, with ideology driving overall framing towards such individuals. Social media networks remain highly polarised, with little interaction between positive and negative clusters: the EU itself also does not engage at will with negative clusters. All panellists argued that media and social media matter in helping to understand the wider picture of public attitudes, in agenda setting and in representations of refugees.

On **Day 2** the theme moved to protection as a policy imperative.

The opening roundtable of the day considered the efficacy of policy, with insights from Work Package 3. **Frank Caestecker** (Ghent) led the discussion with his overview of the shifting management of refugees and asylum policy in Europe in the post-WWII period. Before the 1980s, ministries of foreign affairs were most likely to be charge in Western Europe, but from the 1990s this shifted across to ministries of the interior or of justice, as part of a centralisation of migration policy as a whole. Likewise, asylum offices have become largely integrated with immigration offices in these ministries, having previously been mostly stand-alones. **Francesca Longo** (Catania) showed how the EU’s toolbox of externalisation actions has become ever larger and complex, as reflected in a PROTECT [online resource](#). These tools have been more political or operational than legal in nature, especially the events of 2015, with a focus more on border control and returns than on protection itself, an approach she characterised as ‘prevention, not protection’. **Pierre Van Wolleghem** (Bergen) discussed variation in the rate of awarding refugee status among European states. Lower rates were associated with states that have access procedures that can deny applications on the basis of a lack of travel documents, that apply the first country of entry principle and that make use of detention. Higher rates were associated with systems with extensive procedural rights for applicants.

Discussing these findings, **Nick Gill** (Exeter) noted the need to consider insights from ethnography, such as asylum case officers' concerns about autonomy of decision-making and the associated responsibility, the risks in overly quick assessment (before individuals have overcome any trauma of their experiences, and the cultures of metric-chasing in many parts of the system. **Jeroen Jans** (EUAA) further underlined the centrality of case officers in processing claims and the subsequent need to consider the environment in which they operate.

Christine Jacobsen (Bergen) opened the roundtable on protection at border zones by asking participants to reflect on the notions of vulnerability and collaboration in such places. **Marry-Anne Karlsen** (Bergen) spoke to Work Package 4 findings about experiences in refugee camps, where vulnerability was handled in a variety of ways by different people and systems, but always with similar effects of narrowing access to protection and to reception services. **Aliou Jalloh** (Association of users of PADA in Marseilles) saw a similarly instrumental use of vulnerability from his work with refugees and asylum-seekers, where navigating bureaucracy required people in effect to perform in line with others' expectations. **Idil Atak** (Toronto Metropolitan) brought insights from the Canadian experience, where border staff have minimal training in relevant matters, leading to a poor understanding of vulnerability as it might present among new arrivals. Jacobsen also noted that civil society groups have also struggled to provide effective support as many parts of (often rapidly changing) policy are not easily accessible or publicised.

On the question of collaboration, Jalloh argued that without an understanding of power dynamics, it is hard to build effective and durable relations: in his experience, there might be many smiles, but much less action. Karlsen suggested that the growing competition among civil society groups for funding also compromises the scope for building resilient communities of support, while Atak stressed that changing personnel, especially at the political level, can have a major impact on the relationship and collaboration with government at all levels.

The last roundtable of the day built on the previous one, by focusing on the role of civil society groups (Work Package 5). Moderator **Stefania Panebianco** (Catania) spoke of her experience of such groups as a key part of protection provision with solutions very much adapted to local user needs. **Simon Usherwood** (Open) drew on a survey of groups to suggest their key contribution in protection was a function of being bottom-up, organic organisations in form (and so connected to society and refugees in a way that states cannot be), with a very diverse and adaptable range of provisions; points that were echoed by the three NGO representatives on the roundtable. **Jean-Baptiste Metz** (A Drop in the Ocean) saw such groups as valuable for their independence, flexibility, advocacy for refugees and their consistency. Likewise **Charlotte Khan** (Care4Calais) stressed the action-oriented nature of these groups, clearly set apart from public authorities that often do not have the trust of those in need. **Brian Dikoff** (Migrants Organise) argued that any analysis of protection systems without looking at civil society was very incomplete.

At the same time, the panel identified a number of challenges to playing an effective role: Usherwood's survey had pointed to inconsistent funding, legal and political restraints on activity, and the costs of coordinating across multiple organisations. Metz felt that groups were essentially by-standers in decision-making and so in a power struggle with public authorities.

Khan noted that ever more problematic government policy meant that civil society groups have had to focus on the basics of protection, rather than the wider idea, not helped by often critical media coverage. Dikoff highlighted a central dilemma for all groups, namely whether they should be “doing the government’s job” and, if not, then whether “they should let it fail” in order to make the point, something that rubs up against the humanitarian instincts that motivate many in the sector.

The roundtable closed with the common observation that while the Global Compacts are seen as positive expressions of what an improved protection and migration system might look like, they have had minimal practical impact on civil society’s work. The ‘lack of teeth’ (Khan) and the need to ensure that the increasingly problematic application and enforcement of the (legally-binding) 1951 Convention meant that it was something that was low on the list of priorities.

On **Day 3** the daily theme was protection as a legal right, with two roundtables drawing on Work Package 2 before a final summative discussion.

In the opening roundtable, the focus fell on the Global Compact on Refugees. **Maja Gundler** (Royal Holloway) presented the PROTECT [handbook](#) on using the CEAS in light of the Global Compacts, focusing on complementarity and compliance of the latter to existing refugee and human rights law. She pointed in particular to the way that the Compacts give guidance, help interpret and operationalise existing law and challenge restrictive practices. **Lena Donner** (Greens/EFA in the European Parliament) commended the handbook, even as she noted that the Compacts seem to be largely absent in the day-to-day work of the European Union: the main challenges in the field are implementation and enforcement, rather than reform. She argued that the New Pact contradicts the GCR/M, notably on the first country principle and mandatory border controls. She pointed to difficult debates on solidarity (where the focus is more on secondary movement than on responsibility-sharing), use of the external dimension to reduce movements into the EU, the continuing merger of migration and security policies, and the use of large scale detention at borders.

Stefan Maier (UNHCR) also applauded the PROTECT handbook and spoke of the potential of the GCR/M. While the EU system has made some advances under the New Pact, this was certainly not a blanket approval, especially with regard to the various planned derogations on responsibilities (e.g. on instrumentalisation). He again underlined the opportunity of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 to increase pledges and spread good practice: the EU, both in the political sphere and in civil society, has much more to offer. Following the questions from moderator **Idil Atak** (Toronto Metropolitan), the panellists suggested a number of concrete ways to implement the GCR: putting the non-regression principle more centrally in policy; eliminating detention wherever possible (especially for minors); and diversifying pledges. The handbook was seen as valuable in helping to supporting jurisprudential action to enforce the system and to demonstrate the value of the GCR system.

The second Work Package 2 roundtable concentrated on the Global Compact for Migration. Moderator **Jürgen Bast** (Giessen) argued that this represented a quantum leap in migration

governance, a point echoed by **Younous Arbaoui** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) who saw the incorporation of a human rights dimension grounded on the UN's Convention as vital. This has increased the visibility of such aspects among states and required them to revise their positions on the Convention itself. **Rachid L'Aoufir** (Transnational Corridors) see more work to be done on implementation of the GCM, coupled to a stronger sense of vision among contracting parties on the nature of migration itself: the complexity of the system has hampered implementation, while also leading to under-representation of the private sector as partners. **Pauline Endres de Oliveira** (Giessen) spoke on the widespread ignorance of the GCM in the legal sector, limiting the extent to which it could be embedded in practice. Given that the GCM is highly valuable in covering many gaps in GCR coverage (climate change-related movement, disaster situations, etc.) this is a concern.

Discussion in the panel focused on the challenges of implementation and enforcement. Bast argued that much would be learned from the practice of human rights law enforcement, while Arbaoui flagged the need to push back on selective application that is often a way to justify restrictive practices. As much as the GCM opens up spaces to discuss the various concepts involved, weaknesses in civil society representation make it hard for this to be an equitable and deep process.

The final roundtable of the conference asking the central question of how we can make protection work. As **Francesca Longo** (Catania) noted in her opening comments as moderator, it's easy to say 'never again' when a calamity occurs, but if nothing happens then the words lose their power. **Theofanis Exadaktylos** (Surrey) suggested that protection needs good policy, coordinated with civil society and making citizens part of the process, in order to build trust and buy-in. **Maja Grundler** (Royal Holloway) focused on the need to bring in human rights law to border control (in line with GCR objective 11), while **Nicholas Maple** (London) noted that border areas are intrinsically problematic spaces for state operation. **Alexander Aleinikoff** (New School) argued that while the Ukraine case had been seen as exceptional, it mirrored the Syrian civil war, where neighbouring states had opened borders and allowed secondary movement, underlining its value both practically and morally.

The tension between humanitarian and security tensions that Longo suggested as central in much of the conference's discussions was contextualised by Maple, who noted that while there was a global trend towards securitisation, local practices were more individuated. Exadaktylos argued that managing any tension was a necessarily political process even as the original, classical notion of asylum has been somewhat lost. Aleinikoff stressed that securitisation is not the same as security, and it is important to be mindful of the distinction between the two.

In trying to get governments to consider all aspects of policy, from arrival to integration, the panellists felt that there was a need on the part of academics to pick a selective focus, rather than try to do anything. Civil society was also seen as a key vector in this, supporting a move towards a more anticipatory policy approach rather than just fighting fires.

The conference reached a large and diverse group of international stakeholders including academics, students, policymakers, and practitioners. Many participants identified themselves

as affiliated with an academic institution and were predominately located in Europe (i.e. England, Norway, Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy, Slovenia) Further, a number of attendees were affiliated to institutions in Canada and South Africa.

In addition, the final conference included a considerable number of practitioners and participants representing civil society, non-governmental as well as intergovernmental organizations operating internationally, in Europe and beyond. These included: journalists and practising immigration and refugee lawyers and representatives from legal clinics in Europe; several representatives from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Red Cross Norway, Nansen; civil society representatives from groups such as Circulos de Hospitalidade (Brazil), Boat Refugee Foundation, Care4Calais, Transnational Corridors, A Drop in the Ocean, the Association of users of PADA in Marseille, Road of Hope, European Council for Refugees and Exiles, Migrants Organise; thinktanks such as the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Kiel Institute for the World Economy; Norwegian Centre against Racism, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bavarian Research Alliance and Migration Policy Institute Europe.

The conference also attracted a number of policymakers and governmental representatives including from the European Commission, European Parliament, Brussels municipality, Flanders government and the Canadian government.

The rest of this report includes the programme of the event, as delivered, and the list of registrants.

Protect Final Conference
Safeguarding the Right to International Protection
Programme, as run
now Brussels Bloom hotel, Brussels
6-9 March 2023

Monday, 6 March: International Protection as a Social Value

0900-1700 Central European Time

0900-0910: Welcome by Simon Usherwood, The Open University, Conference Coordinator

0910-0920: Pre-recorded welcome and comment by Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR, and Assistant Secretary-General, UN.

0920-0945: Hakan Sicakkan, PROTECT Principal Investigator, University of Bergen: “Lost in Migration: Which policies are needed to safeguard the international protection system?”

0945-1030: Natasha Bertaud, Deputy Head of the Cabinet of European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas: “Firefighters and architects: Meeting daily challenges whilst renewing the EU’s asylum framework”

1030-1100: Break

1100-1200: Catherine Woollard, Director of the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE): “Law versus politics: Europe’s role in protection of the global protection system”

1200-1315: Lunch

1315-1445: Roundtable: Do citizens support international protection?

Moderator: Cornelius Cappelen, University of Bergen

- Pierre Val Wolleghem, University of Bergen
- Tobias Heidland, Kiel Institute for the World Economy
- Violeta Wagner, International Centre for Migration Policy Development

1445-1530: Break

1530-1700: Roundtable: International protection as a topic in traditional and social media

Moderator: Sara Hanke, University of Stuttgart

- Anamaria Dutceac-Segesten Lund University
- Boris Mance, University of Ljubljana
- David Ongenaert, Erasmus Rotterdam University
- Deniz Duru, Lund University

Tuesday, 7 March: International Protection as a policy imperative

0900-1700 Central European Time

0900-1030: Roundtable: How effective is policy?

Moderator: Frank Caestecker, University of Ghent

- Francesca Longo, University of Catania
- Jereon Jans, Head of Asylum Processes Sector, EUAA
- Nick Gill, University of Exeter
- Pierre Van Wollegham, University of Bergen

1030-1100: Break

1100-1230: Roundtable: Protection at the border zones

Moderator: Christine Jacobsen, University of Bergen

- Alieu Jalloh, Association of PADA Users
- Idil Atak, Toronto Metropolitan University
- Luc LeBoeuf, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
- Marry-Anne Karlsen, University of Bergen

1230-1345: Lunch

1345-1445: Madeline Garlick, Chief of Protection Policy and Legal Advice Section, UNHCR:
“Committing to international protection: Expectations of the Global Forum on Refugees”

1445-1530: Break

1530-1700: Roundtable: Civil society as a motor of protection

Moderator: Stefania Panebianco, University of Catania

- Brain Dikoff, Migrant Organise
- Charlotte Khan, Care4Calais
- Jean-Baptiste Metz, A Drop In The Ocean
- Simon Usherwood, The Open University

Wednesday, 8 March: International Protection as a legal right

0945-1700 Central European Time

0945-1115: Roundtable: The Global Compacts and the international protection regime

Moderator: Idil Atal, Toronto Metropolitan University

- Lena Donner, Advisor of Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs, Greens/EFA in the European Parliament

- Maja Grundler, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Stefan Maier, Head of Policy and Legal Support Unit, UNHCR

1115-1130: Break

1130-1300: Roundtable: The Global Compacts and global migration governance

Moderator: Jürgen Bast, University of Giessen

- Pauline Endres de Oliveira, University of Giessen
- Rachid L'Aoufir, Transnational Corridors e.V.
- Younous Arbaoui, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

1300-1400: Lunch

1400-1445: T. Alexander Aleinikoff, The New School for Social Research: "Protecting the unprotected: Do the Compacts provide a path?"

1445-1500: Break

1500-1630: Roundtable: How to make protection work

Moderator: Francesca Longo, University of Catania

- Alex Aleinikoff, The New School for Social Research
- Hakan Sicakkan, University of Bergen
- Maja Grundler, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Nicholas Maple, University of London
- Theofanis Exadaktylos, University of Surrey

1630-1700: Closing remarks

- Leiv Marsteintredet, University of Bergen
- Hakan Sicakkan, University of Bergen
- Simon Usherwood, The Open University

PROTECT FNAL CONERENCE LIST OF REGISTRANTS

Name	Institutional affiliation
Francesca Fortarezza	Scuola Normale Superiore
Hakan G. Sicakkan	University of Bergen
Bruna Kadletz	Círculos de Hospitalidade (Brasil)
Stein Kuhnle	University of Bergen
Stefania Panebianco	University of Catania
Theofanis Exadaktylos	University of Surrey
Alena Koslerova	UiB
Blessing Mukuruva	African Centre for Migration and Society
Luc Leboeuf	Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
Jan Oskar Engene	Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen
Pierre Van Wolleghem	UiB
Leiv Marsteintredet	Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen
Boris Mance	University of Ljubljana
Simon Usherwood	The Open University
Anamaria Dutceac Segesten	Lund University
Sara Hanke	University of Stuttgart
Eva Ecker	Ghent University
Claire Linley	TMU Toronto (formerly Ryerson)
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Raphael Heiberger	University of Stuttgart
Alia Middleton	University of Surrey
Pauline Endres de Oliveira	Protect Team University of Gießen
Danilo Di Mauro	University of Catania
Nicholas Maple	ACMS/University of London
Idil Atak	Toronto Metropolitan University
Julie Kim	Toronto Metropolitan University
Jamal Nasir Kohistani	University of Kerala
Marry-Anne Karlsen	SKOK, University of Bergen
Janna Wessels	VU Amsterdam
Francesca Longo	University of Catania
Frank Caestecker	University of Ghent
Maja Grundler	Royal Holloway, University of London
Bernd Parusel	Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS)
Stefan Maier	UNHCR
Lena-Brid Donner	European Parliament
Anna Schmidt	European Commission
Tuva Schroder	Boat Refugee Foundation
Jona Zyfi (?)	University of Toronto
Deniz Duru	Lund University
Tobias Heidland	Kiel Institute for the World Economy and Kiel University
Charlotte Khan	Care4Calais
Vivian Brattsti Sørensen	The Norwegian centre against racism
Rachid L'Aoufir	Transnational Corridors
Alieu Jalloh	Association of the users of pada in Marseille

Jean-Baptiste Metz	A Drop in the Ocean
Violeta Wagner	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
Aliya GG	Vienna University
Frøydis Patursson	Senior legal advisor at Red Cross Norway
Pietro Nuotatore	Vebode Consult
Martin Mande	South Africa Refugee Led Network
Martin Tobias Schmitt	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Mustafa Kanafani	Former accredited representative to IMO - UN
Atsbha Teklehaymanot	Road of Hope
Ellen Desmet	Ghent University
Trude Jacobsen	Dråpen i Havet
Younous Arbaoui	Assistant professor, VU University Amsterdam
Michel Bafondoko	SEIF
Sebastian Kägler	Bavarian Research Alliance
De Meerleer Anja	Government
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Catherine Woollard	ECRE
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Jürgen Bast	Justus Liebig University Giessen
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Ziya Guliyev	Law Society of Azerbaijan
Saeede Mokhtarzade	FAU university
Giuseppe Cannata	Scuola Normale Superiore
Lucia Salgado	Migration Policy Institute Europe
T. Alexander Aleinikoff	New School of Social Research
Cathryn Costello	University of Oxford, Hertie School
Ssekatawa Everest	None
Melissa	ADB
Kyriaki	European office of Cyprus
Thierry vancrombrugge	federal authority
Jean-Michel Richez	Suez Environment
Nick Gill	University of Exeter
Bulto	K city
Mario Parrot	Member
Antonio Pietropolli	Canadian government
Carmen Caruso	University of Surrey
Evgeny Shtorn	Araminta gUG
Jeroen Jans	EUAA
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LEROY Josiane	Vlaamse gemeenschapsonderwijs
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charlotte eide	UiB Brussels Office
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Giulio D'Arrigo	UNICT
Er Cumhur	Brussels Municipality
Sakly Hatem	Media
Romina Dose	VUB
Movrie Wandy	NSF
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