



Protect

The Right to International Protection

WP6 Policy briefing on how to gain
public support to international
responsibility-sharing in refugee
protection



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WP6 POLICY BRIEFING ON HOW TO GAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT TO INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING IN REFUGEE PROTECTION

- Public support for international collaboration to protect the world's refugees constitutes compelling evidence for policymakers: pursuing the goals established in the UN's Global Compact on Refugees and in the EU's New Pact on Asylum and Migration will not lead to popular backlash.
 - **Policymakers need to strengthen their engagement to collaborate to protect the world's refugees, be it in the framework of the UN's Compact or the EU's New Pact.**
- People's preference for admitting asylum seekers over paying financial contribution to another country that hosts them clearly points to the sustainability of responsibility-sharing through relocation programmes. Most people choose admitting over paying, a share that increases as the cost of financial contributions rises.
 - **Policymakers should adopt responsibility-sharing mechanisms that guarantee the best possible protection standards, even if it entails admitting more asylum seekers. The public supports it.**
- While some people may be concerned about "bogus" asylum claims, a larger share of the population considers it is more problematic not to grant protection to someone who needs it. Even those who worry over claims lodged under false pretences may support the principles of international protection.
 - **The principles underlying international protection receive support in the population. Policymakers must improve their effort and provide a counter-narrative to the "bogus" refugee one.**
- People who are most critical towards refugee protection, regardless of what aspect of it is considered, are those who display welfare chauvinist and nativist traits. They also present a preference for the autonomy of the state with regard to international governance bodies such as the UN and the EU. These characteristics are the reflection of deeply anchored beliefs and require a long-term perspective to be adequately addressed. Punctual communication campaigns, although useful in many ways, may not tackle the issue.
 - **Policymakers need to plan long-term strategies to improve the image of asylum seekers and refugees in public opinion. This implies sensitising citizens to otherness and human rights more generally at an early stage in the formation of their beliefs (e.g. primary school, sport and other extra-curricular activities, etc.) and continuously towards adulthood.**
- People in some countries, notably in the EU, display significantly more critical views towards refugee protection. This is the case in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and, to a lesser extent, in Estonia and Hungary. These countries also display high levels of welfare chauvinism and nativism.
 - **Commitment to international protection is an integral part of the values of the EU as enshrined in the treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Particular efforts shall be made in these countries to increase people's adherence to said values.**



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- Due to pervasive political globalization, it may no longer be possible to resolve controversies on international refugee protection through political processes within individual countries. Policymaking is now more challenging and complicated than before as it requires both an in-depth knowledge of the global political landscape and a know-how of how to strategically navigate in it to achieve one's policy objectives.
 - **To earn input legitimacy to policymaking on international protection, governments must also address and appeal to transnational ideological groups operating in global arenas, to which their national constituencies are closely connected to. This must be done by using social media and other channels innovatively and in technologically advanced ways.**

For more information, please refer to the research working papers and academic articles listed below:

Cappelen C., Sicakkan H.G. and Van Wolleghem P.G. (2022) The trade-off between admitting and paying. An experimental analysis of people's attitudes toward responsibility-sharing in refugee issues. *Protect Working Paper series*. Soon to be available.

Cappelen C., Sicakkan H.G. and Van Wolleghem P.G. (2022) The Trade-off Between False Negatives and False Positives in Asylum Policies. *Protect Working Paper series*. Soon to be available.

Cappelen C., Sicakkan H.G. and Van Wolleghem P.G. (2023) The trade-off between admitting and paying: Experimental evidence on attitudes towards asylum responsibility sharing. *European Union Politics*. Soon to be available.

Sicakkan H.G. and Van Wolleghem P.G. (2022) Political globalization and citizens' support for international Refugee protection. *Protect Working Paper series*. Soon to be available.

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