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Providing effective protection to refugees is in everyone's interest

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Creating more effective systems for refugees creates clear benefits for everyone involved, EU funded project concludes. Read the recommendations for policy-makers, journalists and more.

An international research partnership on refugee protection has concluded that creating more effective systems for these individuals creates clear benefits for everyone involved.

Not only does it mean refugees get access to timely and meaningful during what is often a highly distressing and uncertain experience, but host states can gain too, as refugees move more quickly to becoming individuals who can contribute to and be part of their new local community. This in turn lets them do more to support those who have not made the journey to escape oppression and to lead calls for change in their home countries.

By combining insights from legal analysis, surveys of public opinion and in-the-field study of life in refugee camps, the project offers a fully-rounded set of **recommendations to policy-makers, journalists and others involved in work on refugees.**

The project known as PROTECT, The Right to International Protection is led by the University of Bergen and brings together researchers from across the European Union, Canada and South Africa with funding from the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. The **Protect Final Conference in Brussels (6-8 March 2023)** will showcase the findings and discuss them with leading figures from policy-making, civil society and beyond.

The conference marks the culmination of a major international research project to understand the impact of political will and the international community as a whole in giving effect to the Global Compacts on Refugees and on Migration. These agreements were concluded in 2018 and were meant to strengthen protection for those moving across international borders, albeit with limited success to date.

Professor Hakan Sicakkan, project leader at the University of Bergen, Norway, said: "At a time when many countries are looking at how they handle increasing flows of refugees, our findings highlight the need for an integrated approach that puts refugees' needs first and foremost."

"Providing effective protection for refugees is not merely a humanitarian necessity, but is also likely to minimise impacts on host communities, as well as opening the door to longer-term solutions to the global inequalities that drive so much of the refugee flows in the first place."

Recommendations

The recommendations from the research, which are to be presented and discussed at the conference, include:

- Laws, international agreements, institutions, and procedures for implementing *refugee and asylum policy should be separated from those set up for running migration and border policy.*
- *Humanitarian visas and corridors* should be introduced to safeguard the rights of protection seeking migrants.
- *Asylum seekers should be exempt from general entry rules for foreigners*, including restrictions in times of pandemics.
- Asylum procedures should be run by *specialized autonomous bodies whose decisions are subject only to UNHCR review.*
- *Procedural rights*, including legal counsel, interpretation and appeal with suspensive effect, should be provided to all protection seekers.
- *UNHCR should be authorized to govern international burden-sharing in times of mass refugee flows.*
- Authorities' awareness *should be raised about the vulnerability practices that constrain protection seekers' access to rights.*

[Download the full Policy Brief with recommendations and references here](#)

For more on PROTECT, visit: <https://protectproject.w.uib.no/>. To discuss findings further, please contact **Prof. Hakan Sicakkan** (University of Bergen).

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https://protectproject.w.uib.no/files/2023/03/PROTECT_PolicyBriefing.pdf

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