

NGO Platform Members

- Amnesty International EU office (AI-EU) : www.amnesty-eu.org
- Association Européenne pour la défense des droits de l'Homme (AEDH): www.aedh.eu
- Caritas Europa: www.caritas-europa.org
- Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME): www.ccme.be
- Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE): www.comece.org
- EKD (Protestant Church in Germany) office Brussels as member of CCME: www.ekd-bruessel.de
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE): www.ecre.org
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR): www.enar-eu.org/en
- December 18: www.december18.net
- European Women's Lobby: www.womenlobby.org
- Human Rights Watch (HRW): www.hrw.org
- International Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe) : www.ilga-europe.org
- International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC): www.icmc.net
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH): www.fidh.org
- International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT): www.irct.org
- International Rescue Committee (IRC): www.theIRC.org
- Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Europe: www.jrseurope.org
- Justice et Paix Francophone de Belgique : www.justicepaix.be
- Médecins du Monde (MdM) : www.medecinsdumonde.org
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF): www.msf.org
- Migration Policy Group (MPG): www.migpolgroup.com
- Pax Christi International: www.paxchristi.net
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM): www.picum.org
- Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA): www.quaker.org/qcea
- Red-Cross EU: www.redcross-eu.net (as an observer)
- Save the Children: www.savethechildren.net/brussels
- Solidar: www.solidar.org
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): www.unhcr.org/eu (as an observer)

June 2009

NGO Platform

EU Migration and Asylum Policy

The NGOs Platform on EU Asylum and Migration Policy is an informal group of European non-governmental organisations and networks seeking to contribute to the development of asylum, refugee and migration policy in the European Union. The Platform was created in 1994 at the initiative of UNHCR. Meeting regularly to share information and to coordinate advocacy strategies, the group is politically neutral and independent. Its participants have an extensive knowledge and expertise on asylum and migration matters. Many have extensive networks within the European Union's Member States and beyond, with member organisations working at national and/or local level with refugees, asylum seekers or migrant communities, others being present in the field in regions of origin.

Platform Members

Currently 26 NGOs belong to the Platform. Membership is open to NGOs which are active in the area of asylum and migration, which are principally based in Brussels and have a European network. UNHCR contributes to the work of the Platform as a facilitator of coordination amongst the NGO members. The Red Cross/EU Office participates as an observer. New applications for membership are discussed and approved in the plenary session of the Platform.

Main objectives of the Platform

The primary purpose of the Platform is to discuss developments and issues of common concern within the EU asylum and migration area. In addition and where appropriate, it aims to coordinate lobbying approaches and information on key questions for decision at EU level. The aim of this exchange is to achieve better co-ordination between its members and establish common approaches, which can in turn better inform the institutions and Member States which benefit from the contributions.

Working methods

Plenary meetings take place approximately every three months, where member organisations share information on latest developments, particular campaigns and activities planned or undertaken on asylum and migration issues.

In addition to the plenary sessions, ad hoc or regular thematic sub-groups on migration and asylum meet between the plenaries. NGOs most active and particularly interested in one specific area join the sub-group for more in-depth discussion and elaboration of complementary strategies.

Minutes of the plenary sessions are taken by UNHCR while minutes of the sub groups are prepared by those NGOs responsible for the group.

Examples of an efficient Platform strategy

In 2004, the NGO Platform on Asylum and Migration worked effectively to align strategies relating to two key asylum directives. The Asylum Procedures Directive aims to establish, throughout the EU, minimum standards for asylum determination procedures. In particular, concerns emphasised by the Platform focused on safeguards for applicants, including in relation to safe third country and safe country of origin concepts; appeal procedures; access to legal assistance and other basic requirements for a fair process. While the directive was adopted by the Council in 2005, the European Parliament has reiterated some of the concerns raised by NGOs in its motion to take the directive to the Court of Justice of the EU. Another successful advocacy initiative is related to the Qualification Directive, which defines common EU criteria for refugee status or subsidiary protection. Negotiations remained deadlocked for some time because of Germany's resistance to extending protection entitlements to people threatened by persecution from non-state agents. Intensive efforts by

Platform members in Germany were coordinated with European-level activities and statements. This work was rewarded with the Council's decision to include non-state persecution in the EU's criteria for refugee protection. Between 2005 and 2008, advocacy regarding the EU directive on common standards for return has been a focus of the activities seeking to guarantee safeguards for deportees as well as limiting the wide use of detention for the purpose of removal.

What can the NGO Platform offer Members of the European Parliament or other EU institutions?

The Platform offers a wealth of experience on asylum and immigration law, policy and practice at the European and Member State level. Its members have dealt with asylum issues for many years and understand and provide expert advice, research and statistics on asylum and refugee as well as migrants rights. They have expertise in legal and political issues that concerns matters on asylum and migration, which will be particularly important as the EU moves into the third programme on migration and asylum to be adopted in the second half of 2009.

Contact members of the Platform

The following are available to discuss further issues and potential contact with the NGO Platform on EU Asylum and Migration Policy:

- CARITAS Europa
Tel: 02/280 02 80 or 02/235 03 96
Contact: Peter Verhaeghe (pverhaeghe@caritas-europa.org)
- CCME - Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
Tel: 02 234 6800
Contact: Doris Peschke (doris.peschke@ccme.be)
- ECRE
Tel : 02 2 212 0820
Contact : Anne Peeters (apeeters@ecre.org)
- UNHCR
Tel : 02 627 1747
Contact : Blanche Tax (tax@unhcr.org)