



Job Title: Senior Legal Officer – EU Asylum Law

Job purpose: to lead ECRE’s advocacy work on EU asylum law.

ECRE is an alliance of 104 NGOs in 41 European countries which works to defend and promote the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons in Europe and in European external policies. ECRE has existed for more than 40 years but there has never been a greater need for its work.

Following staff changes, ECRE is creating new positions including that of Senior Legal Officer – EU Asylum Law. The position holder will play a central role in developing and managing ECRE’s legal and political advocacy work on the right to asylum in Europe. The work aims to influence the EU’s legal framework on asylum and its implementation in the EU Member States, associated countries, and Accession countries. As well as sound legal knowledge, the position-holder needs to have good political instincts. The position-holder will work closely with ECRE’s large and diverse membership. There will be opportunities for promotion and assumption of additional responsibilities, depending on performance and funding.

Start date: January 2020

Line management: Reports to ECRE Director; line manages two staff members.

Place in ECRE: the Senior Legal Officer will be part of ECRE’s advocacy team, working with the Head of International Advocacy and with policy officers. They will use the same

Key Responsibilities

The Senior Legal Officer – EU Asylum Law will deliver the following specific tasks:

1. To lead ECRE’s work to influence the EU’s legal framework on asylum (CEAS+)

The SLO will lead ECRE’s work on the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), including liaising with the co-legislators on existing legislative proposals, analysis of future proposals, and provision of legal analysis on the existing legal framework and on ECRE’s alternatives to it.

2. Monitoring compliance with EU law – management of the AIDA database

The SLO will oversee the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) which in 2020 will focus on the production of country reports for the 23 countries that are part of the database. Tasks will include overseeing the work of the Legal Officer – AIDA, reviewing the updates prepared by national experts, drafting elements of the reports as required, and ensuring quality control on the bulk of the reports. The SLO will lead on development of tools for the extraction of information from the database for use in advocacy.

3. Influencing policies on asylum and migration in Europe

In particular, the SLO will lead on particular EU asylum policies as decided by the ECRE Director including coordination of ECRE's work on the proposed Pact for Asylum and Migration. The SLO will also assess and influence efforts to reform and integrate the Schengen area and asylum matters. The SLO will provide analysis on the legal implications of short-term measures, including the EU-Turkey deal, crisis response measures and mechanisms, and relocation measures. Topics and initiatives may be added depending on the expertise of and opportunities identified by the SLO, and ECRE's organisational needs.

4. Staff management

The SLO will initially manage the Legal Officer – AIDA and a consultant working part-time on AIDA. They will be responsible for the recruitment and management of a Legal Assistant in early 2020 and for additional staff should funding allow. Management includes recruitment, preparation of job descriptions, performance evaluation, and workplanning. The SLO will support and work with staff to ensure that ECRE's advocacy on EU asylum law is strategic (contributes to meeting pre-defined objectives), effective (influences law, policy and practice) and collective (involves working with ECRE members).

5. Work with ECRE teams; accountability to Board, members and donors

From 2020, ECRE's work will be divided into three areas, (1) Legal Support/Litigation, (2) Advocacy and (3) Communications. The SLO will liaise with staff working on the other areas to ensure that advocacy uses and builds on ECRE's litigation work and links to other advocacy, and that it contributes to ECRE communications work.

The SLO will ensure accountability to the ECRE Board and the ECRE membership using the planning and reporting tools developed for the advocacy team in order to demonstrate results. The SLO will liaise with the ECRE Board in order to receive their input and views on ECRE's work on EU Asylum law.

As required by the ECRE Director, the SLO will contribute to proposals and reports required by ECRE's donors.

Person Specification

Education/Qualifications

- First and advanced degrees in law.
- Additional practical training in asylum law will be an advantage.

Experience

- Minimum ten years' experience of legal or advocacy work in a non-profit organisation or comparable policy environment or in legal practice; working for an institution responsible for asylum policies will be considered as equivalent;
- Strong record of developing and delivering strategies for influencing EU policymakers;
- Extensive experience of drafting and revising legal and advocacy publications, including policy papers and short briefing papers for different audiences;
- Some experience of managing staff, including supporting development of objectives, reporting, and work planning; performance evaluation and recruitment;
- Experience of strategy development, objective setting, and delivery of agreed results;
- Experience of collective advocacy work – work experience in a membership organisation or network is particularly advantageous.

Subject knowledge

- Excellent knowledge of contemporary EU asylum law and its historical development;

- Excellent knowledge of related and intersecting areas of international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and the Law of the Sea;

Skills

- Excellent drafting and oral presentation skills;
- Ability to work within a complex civil society alliance, including negotiation skills, and the ability to draft and promote compromises;
- Ability to work independently when needed and to lead a small team;
- Ability to organise own workload and that of a small team and ability to prioritise based on organisational needs;
- Ability to work with limited administrative support and within the staffing and financial constraints faced by NGOs;
- Fundraising and donor reporting skills are an advantage;
- Excellent IT skills.

Languages

- Fluent written and spoken English and fluency in at least one other EU or UN language – ideally French or German.
- Knowledge of other languages is an advantage especially Spanish, Arabic or Turkish.

Personal Qualities

- Inter-personal skills and the ability to support and to motivate others;
- Confidence and resilience to criticism;
- Ability to engage in dialogue, to develop and support compromises and to work with those with different views in order to get things done;
- Patience, pragmatism and a constructive problem-solving approach;
- Flexibility and willingness to work outside of office hours when necessary.

Terms and Conditions

Fixed-term contract for 24 months from starting date with the possibility of renewal and transition to a permanent contract (subject to delivery of results specified). Salary range: EUR 2800 to 3800, plus additional holiday pay, insurance, transport and meal allowances.

ECRE is committed to diversity in its staffing. It strongly encourages candidates with a refugee background to apply and, other factors being equal, gives preference to candidates belonging to groups under-represented in its staffing.

ECRE will consider part-time, job share and consultancy options. Please indicate in your cover letter whether you are interested in these options.

Starting date: January 2020.

Please send a copy of the application, your CV (maximum two pages) and a cover letter (maximum 2 pages) explaining why you are qualified for the position and the date you are available to start work to Omar al Tarsheh (oaltarsheh@ecre.org) by 25 November, stating “Senior Legal Officer” in the subject heading.