



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 105 NGOs in 39 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 45 years but there has never been a greater need for its work.

ECRE is currently seeking a 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 asylum *acquis*. The work aims to influence the EU's legal framework on asylum and its implementation in the EU Member States and associated 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: May 2022

Line management: Reports to ECRE Director or Head of Advocacy (tbc); line manages up to two staff members.

Place in ECRE: the Senior Legal Officer will be part of ECRE's advocacy team, working with the Head of Advocacy and other policy officers.

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 Common European Asylum System (CEAS), covering reform and implementation, including monitoring compliance and provision of legal analysis on the existing legal framework, liaising with the co-legislators on legislative proposals, analysis of future proposals, and developing ECRE's alternatives to reforms and the current legal framework.

The SLO will lead on particular EU asylum policies, including certain elements of the legislative reforms included in the Pact and in the "instrumentalisation" package, to be decided based on experience and priorities. They will work closely with colleagues covering other elements of the legal framework and the reform package. Where relevant, the SLO will provide analysis of the legal implications of short-term measures, such as crisis response measures and mechanisms, relocation and the current response to events in Ukraine. Topics and initiatives may be added depending on the expertise of and opportunities identified by the SLO and ECRE's organisational needs.

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

The SLO will oversee the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) which entails the production of country reports on asylum systems for the 23 countries that are part of the database. Country reports are produced by national experts and reviewed to ensure quality by a team of ECRE staff members and consultants.

Tasks will include overseeing the work of the Legal Officer and consultants, reviewing a small number of the country updates prepared by national experts, and identifying and extracting information for use in advocacy.

3. Staff management

The SLO will manage a Legal Officer, Legal Assistants, and consultants working part-time on AIDA. 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).

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

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

- Degree in law.
- Additional practical training in asylum law will be an advantage.

Experience

- Eight 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 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, Turkish or Russian.

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 3000 to 3925 (paid 13.92 times per year, including holiday pay and bonus), pension and health insurance, transport and meal vouchers (cEUR200 per month additional benefits). Staff begin towards the lower end of the scale.

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.

The position is based in Brussels. ECRE's work regime is based on presence in its office; however, staff may work from home up to 2 days per week (with no obligation to do so).

Starting date: May 2022.

Please send a copy 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 cwoollard@ecre.org by 12 April 2022, stating "Senior Legal Officer" in the subject heading. Interviews: 19-26 April.