

ECRE Annual General Conference 2025

Thursday 5 June 2025

Hotel Gromada, plac Powstańców Warszawy 2, 00-030 Warsaw, Poland

Workshop Number: 3

Room: Jagoda

Time: 11.00 – 13.00

Title	EU migration partnerships with third countries: Update on recent developments – Case study: Egypt
Organiser	European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide participants with an overview of recent developments in relation to EU migration co-operation with third countries 2. Discuss the specific case of EU-Egypt relations, with a particular focus on the changes brought about by Egypt's new asylum law 3. Explore opportunities and discuss strategies for joint advocacy
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teresa Wilmes – Programme Office (Germany and Europe), Terre des Hommes Germany
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josephine Liebl – Head of Advocacy, ECRE • Nour Khalil – Executive Director, Refugees Platform in Egypt
Format	Following initial inputs on (1) recent developments in relation to EU migration co-operation with third countries focused on the case of EU-Egypt co-operation; and (2) changes brought about by the recent asylum law, there will be a facilitated discussion with all participants.
Description	Whether designated as solely migration partnerships or partnerships with a particular migration component, different forms of agreements – varying in format and formality – between the EU and third countries continue to be the EU's preferred modus for implementing its external migration policy. In recent years, the EU has concluded such agreements with Tunisia (2023), Mauritania (2024), Egypt (2024) and Jordan (2025). A Pact for the Mediterranean is also being developed.

	<p>These agreements have been criticised by civil society, members of the European Parliament, the European Ombudsman and the European Court of Auditors for their failure to assess their human rights impacts. They also usually lack oversight mechanisms, civil society involvement and are designed to be non-justiciable. As a result of the criticism, the European Commission has taken some steps to improve the human rights compliance of EU funding distributed in the framework of the agreements. However, the measures fall short of the significant risks that co-operation entails.</p> <p>The aim of this workshop is to provide an update on recent developments in the EU's migration co-operation with third countries, with a particular focus on the case of EU-Egypt co-operation. The EU describes Egypt as a key partner in migration management and border security. In 2025, the upgrade of EU–Egypt relations into a strategic partnership was formalised and the EU adopted a support package worth a total of €7.4 billion, including €5 billion in financial assistance through short-term loans. This built on years of EU financial support to Egypt on different aspects of migration, including support to the Egyptian coast guard and security authorities.</p> <p>Shortly before the announcement of the strategic partnership, Egypt enacted Law No. 164 of 2024. It represented Egypt's first national legislation to grant refugees the right to apply for citizenship and to formally regulate the legal status of refugees and people seeking asylum. It transferred the responsibility for registration and asylum management from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to the Permanent Committee for Refugee Affairs, which operates under the authority of the Prime Minister.</p> <p>The law was issued within a politically- and security-sensitive context, during which the Egyptian government adopted a restrictive approach towards people on the move that aligned with European policies focused on curbing irregular migration across the Mediterranean. Its enactment coincided with growing co-operation between Egypt and the EU on migration control. Although it ended a long period of absence of domestic legislation on this issue, it also dashed the hopes and demands of human rights organisations to amend the law, postpone its enactment and enable the participation of civil society and affected communities in the legislative process. A full analysis of the situation of asylum in Egypt prior and after the adoption of the law will be provided in an AIDA report on Egypt which is currently under preparation.</p>
Contact	For more information about this workshop, please contact Josephine Liebl .