

Annual Report on 2025

ECRE's priorities

In 2025, ECRE implemented the third and final year of its [Strategic Plan 2023-2025](#) with the objectives agreed by its members guiding its work. As demonstrated by the results of a 2024 survey, the membership's overall satisfaction with ECRE's work remained very strong. In addition, the membership remained stable: 125 members in 40 countries down from 128 in 2024.

Through a combination of litigation, advocacy and communications, ECRE aimed to achieve:

- access to fair and efficient asylum procedures for all;
- justice for those subject to human rights violations resulting from restrictive asylum policies, including at Europe's borders;
- support to refugees displaced from Ukraine;
- European foreign policies that do not generate displacement in the first place rather than being used as an anti-migration tool.

ECRE pursued these priorities and engaged with its members in 2025 through the organisation of seven policy events, the Annual General Conference, 10 training events on law and advocacy, and 17 meetings of working groups for ECRE members. In addition, ECRE staff members made 15 visits to ECRE members' offices and/or participated in their events, had more than 75 meetings with EU policymakers and gave presentations at more than 30 external events. They also received more than 90 requests from media organisations for comments on or information about asylum in Europe.

The political context and ECRE's response

Political work and negotiations on the Pact of Migration and Asylum ("the Pact") dominated 2025 even if its core had been formally adopted in 2024. Attention was particularly focused on three files.

First, an agreement was reached on the [solidarity pool](#) for 2026. However, the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation preserved the system where the allocation of responsibility largely rested with the EU member state (MS) of first entry. As a result, many of the structural problems of the current Dublin system (see [here](#)) were also maintained. ECRE continued to produce evidence-based analysis on the issue and the latest [statistical update on the implementation of the Dublin III Regulation](#) highlighted the various flaws.

Second, the "safe country" concepts (safe country of origin, safe third country and first country of asylum) were mainstreamed and expanded as instruments for harmonising and accelerating asylum processing across EU MS via amendments to the Asylum Procedure Regulation (APR). ECRE had already [warned against the proposed reform](#) as another effort by the EU to outsource responsibility for refugees to countries outside the EU. The adoption of the APR in the European Parliament (EP) was achieved via a coalition between the centre right Group of the European People's Party and far-right groups. This signalled a breach in the *cordon sanitaire* that had existed in the EP for decades and looks likely to become a regular feature of the current legislature. As shown by figures in this report, ECRE maintained the same level of outreach and advocacy in 2025 but the outcomes were unfortunately less favourable for refugee rights.

Third, EU MS agreed on a general approach to the draft Return Regulation that significantly lowered the standards of an already weak proposal from the European Commission (EC). [Together with more than 60 members and partners](#), ECRE underlined that a return system that disregarded fundamental rights would not only be unlawful but also unworkable, unsustainable and incompatible with the rules and values upon which the EU was founded.

EU MS also [adopted](#) the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Plan, a welcome step towards anchoring refugee resettlement at the heart of the EU's new approach to asylum and migration, and a genuine opportunity to embed safe pathways at its core. However, the commitments made are likely to result in a

dramatic reduction in the number of people who may be resettled in the next two years. In a [joint statement with partners](#), ECRE urged EU MS to fulfil and exceed their current pledges, and to ensure that protection needs would remain at the centre of the resettlement framework.

ECRE completed its [series](#) of analyses of the legislation that collectively forms the Pact with the publication of a [comments paper](#) on the Qualification Regulation (QR). The final text of the QR partially assuages some of the concerns that ECRE had raised. However, when it is read in conjunction with the other Pact legislation, it seems likely that it will also contribute to consolidating the trend towards negative harmonisation.

ECRE also undertook a comprehensive update of the [Asylum Information Database](#) (AIDA). Czechia and Slovakia were added to the list of 27 EU countries whose asylum procedures etc. were assessed while Egypt was added to the list of non-EU countries.

ECRE's response to Pact and other relevant EU developments also included numerous meetings, calls and other events intended to respond to the massive training needs of members, partners and stakeholders. In terms of legal support, ECRE responded directly to 43 legal queries from asylum lawyers while the ECRE-coordinated [ELENA Network](#) of asylum lawyers from across Europe responded to 24 legal queries through the ELENA Forum. In addition, ECRE worked with the Litigation Task Force to pursue nine interventions before the European Court on Human Rights.

ECRE actively engaged on a number of EU foreign policy developments that continued to reflect the EU's efforts to outsource responsibility for refugees to third countries. This included the publication of the first [AIDA Country Report on Egypt](#) which came a few months before the EU's first [summit](#) with Egypt. ECRE also closely followed the presentation of the new '[Pact for the Mediterranean](#)'.

While Europe was busy reshaping its protection framework, situations of conflict and displacement continued in various countries and regions, including Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Middle East. Although substantial, albeit fragile, progress was made towards the settlement of the conflict situation in Syria, ongoing conflict, deep humanitarian stress and continued instability prevented almost any form of dignified returns to the h country. In addition, the war in Ukraine remained active and the EU's temporary protection scheme was extended until March 2027.

The year was also characterised by a worrying backsliding of the rule of law. In this context, [ECRE joined more than 250 civil society organisations](#) in calling on UN MS to uphold, preserve and strengthen international refugee, human rights and humanitarian treaties, and to reject efforts to undo or undermine legal norms.

Finally, as in previous years, many of ECRE's members continued to face pressure from governments and operated in difficult environments, in the worst cases facing arrest or threats to personal security.

Activity 1: Legal Support and Litigation

Overall Objectives

- To ensure effective access to rights of forcibly displaced people through proactive, coordinated and needs-based litigation in Europe
- To strengthen the community of asylum lawyers across Europe through legal support and knowledge sharing

1. Legal Support and Litigation

ECRE's Legal Support and Litigation team continued supporting asylum lawyers who were at the forefront of providing legal counselling and mounting legal challenges, particularly relating to unlawful detention, access to asylum, family unity and temporary protection.

The [ELENA network](#) of asylum lawyers from across Europe is coordinated by ECRE. In 2025, ECRE directly responded to 43 legal queries from asylum lawyers. ECRE efficiently facilitated contacts between lawyers and provided them with relevant legal arguments, including in relation to unlawful detention, strategies on access to asylum and border, Dublin cases, temporary protection, child protection, cessation of international protection, revocation of residence permits and family reunification. It also supported lawyers with extensive information on procedural practice and practical questions of access to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Separately, ELENA lawyers replied to 24 legal queries using the ELENA Forum, including on legal counselling under the Pact on Migration and Asylum ("the Pact"), temporary protection, country policies and practices regarding Syria, Dublin returns and country-specific enquiries.

ECRE provided Greek lawyers working on a case involving the criminalisation of an asylum applicant with emergency litigation support, a relatively new tool used by ECRE to enable rapid action by lawyers. Emergency litigation support covered legal and judicial fees to enable legal challenges before the ECtHR, United Nations (UN) Treaty Bodies, the CJEU and domestic courts.

ECRE actively pursued interventions before the ECtHR, submitting nine interventions together with the Litigation Task Force. These included:

- *A.A.N. and others v. Greece* concerning a pushback from Greece to Türkiye and unofficial detention
- *A.B.A. and others v. The Netherlands* concerning the immigration detention of a family with three children
- *Al-Khalidi v. Bulgaria* concerning the detention of a national of Saudi Arabia and asylum seeker due to alleged threat to national security
- *M.S. v. Malta* concerning the prolonged detention, asylum rejection and return risks of a Bangladeshi transgender woman
- *D.H. v. Hungary* concerning the protection guarantees for vulnerable persons, including individuals benefitting from temporary protection and persons with mental health illnesses.

ECRE also continued its work related to the implementation of judgments and a collective complaint against Greece. In addition, it provided extensive litigation support in four strategic cases before the ECtHR and the CJEU. These cases addressed a range of issues, including the protection of Westernised nationals of Afghanistan, the return of Syrian nationals residing in Austria, the right of temporary protection holders to have their application for subsidiary protection examined on the merits, and the suspension of access to asylum in Greece. ECRE also supported Spanish legal organisations in a domestic legal challenge against newly adopted legislation restricting asylum applicants' access to residence permits.

Finally, ECRE prepared a [revised Legal Note on the cessation of international protection and review of protection statuses in Europe](#) which was an update of ECRE's [previous legal Note on the subject](#) in view of the need expressed by the ELENA Network following the developments in Syria.

2. The development of the ELENA Network

ECRE continued to manage and improve the ELENA Forum, an online tool where legal practitioners can exchange information and seek litigation advice. Almost 250 legal practitioners, academics and United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) officials from across Europe had access to legal support through the ELENA Forum with more than 2400 posts on almost 650 topics answered.

The ELENA Network also saw positive dynamics in national coordination. New coordinators joined in Hungary, Finland and Sweden. In addition to responding to more than 20 legal requests, the ELENA coordinators took on numerous individual cases at the request of their counterparts in other countries, provided testimonies in the domestic context and referred cases to other national lawyers. ECRE responded to numerous coordination requests supporting communication and collaboration among asylum lawyers in Europe.

In November, ECRE organised the annual coordinators meeting (in-person meeting in Malta with 29 participants). It featured updates and discussions the use of technology in asylum, litigating the Pact, and detention-related litigation as well as on ELENA needs, priorities and activities in 2026.

Finally, ECRE regularly provided information on legal developments across Europe via the ELENA Legal Update (ELU). 25 issues were published and sent to over 7,500 subscribers (7,000 in 2024). In October, ECRE also launched a LinkedIn version of the ELU which more than 15,000 subscribers by the end of the year.

3. Legal training

In November, ECRE organised the Advanced ELENA Course in Malta. It brought together lawyers, court officials, members of intergovernmental organisations and academics for an in-depth exchange on key developments in asylum law. The programme covered a wide range of topics, including recent jurisprudence and litigation related to the Pact and emerging issues around digital rights and artificial intelligence (AI).

In addition, ECRE co-organised workshops in Belgium and Greece on access to asylum at the border and unlawful, de facto detention, with a strong focus on building strategic litigation capacity through direct engagement with practising lawyers. Beyond these activities, ECRE contributed to nine further legal training seminars and seminars or strategy events on asylum in Europe. Overall, ECRE's legal training activities reached approximately 300 legal professionals across Europe.

4. European Database of Asylum Law (EDAL)

ECRE maintained EDAL, an online database containing more than 1,500 case law summaries from 22 European states and from the ECtHR and CJEU. EDAL is currently being redeveloped. ECRE has worked with an external consultant to design and develop a new website for the EDAL database whilst also creating new content and exploring potential AI tools for users. The redesigned EDAL website should be launched in 2026.

Relevant facts and figures relating to EDAL include:

- Approximately 65,000 users benefitted from EDAL
- 35 summaries were drafted and edited with the legal clinics that support EDAL (i.e. Gent Law Clinic and Cologne Law Clinic)
- 13 volunteers were trained on EDAL summaries and/or jurisprudence research through ECRE's collaboration with legal clinics
- Content from the EDAL website was referenced in 21 publications, including civil society reports, research papers, academic articles in international journals and dissertations.

Activity 2: Advocacy

Overall Objective 1: To influence EU policy and practice on protecting asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people by developing targeted recommendations and tailored advocacy.

1. A functioning asylum system in Europe

ECRE completed its analysis of the Pact legislation by publishing detailed comments on the [Screening Regulation](#) and the [Qualification Regulation](#).

ECRE also followed up on the successful online training seminars on the Pact by organising an in-person training seminar on the Schengen Border Code, Asylum Procedure Regulation, Screening Regulation and Crisis Regulation for 90 participants from civil society and asylum authorities. ECRE also delivered a wide range of capacity building activities on the Pact, including training seminars for civil society organisations (CSOs) across five countries, sessions in academic settings and targeted briefings for political actors and foundations. It also contributed expertise through interventions in European Parliament (EP) committee hearings and by engaging with activist networks.

For the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the Pact, ECRE created a resource that documented the state of play in each EU member state (MS) to which member organisations provided input. It used the Annual General Conference (AGC) in June to engage with members about the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation of the Pact, specifically in relation to legal counselling, monitoring mechanisms, contingency plans and preparedness. In October, ECRE published a [policy note](#) in which it summarised its assessment of Pact implementation and made recommendations to both the European Commission (EC) and EU MS.

In October, ECRE and the International Rescue Committee co-convened a round-table meeting on the solidarity related aspects in the Pact which coincided with the negotiations in Council on the launch of the solidarity mechanism. The meeting was well attended by representatives from EU MS, EU institutions, CSOs and academia, and was the only civil society event on the subject to take place in Brussels.

In addition to its work on Pact implementation, ECRE closely followed and engaged on proposals for further legislative reform aimed at further restricting access to asylum in Europe through changes to the safe third country and safe country of origin concepts (via amendments to the Asylum Procedures Regulation). ECRE published its analysis of the proposals in the form of a [policy paper](#), and carried out advocacy towards the European Parliament (EP) and EU MS in 15 bilateral meetings. ECRE also produced an internal advocacy briefing in order to further support advocacy in EU MS.

ECRE continued to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on asylum in Europe in the [Asylum Information Database](#) (AIDA).

- The 24 AIDA [country reports](#) have been widely cited in reports and publications, including by courts, the EUAA, EP, Council of Europe, UNHCR, academic researchers and think tanks.
- The AIDA website registered a total of 732,872 page views.
- AIDA outputs were cited in more than 2,220 national court cases (only counting the cases in countries that publish decisions), 120 policy/academic reports and 20 media articles.
- AIDA reports were used to provide information to the EUAA before publication of its annual asylum report.
- ECRE also tested the application of the AIDA methodology to a context outside Europe and published a [country report on Egypt](#) in both English and Arabic.
- An expansion of the database began with a view to including two additional countries (Czechia and Slovakia) in 2026.

In addition to the country reports, ECRE published [key asylum trends](#) and the [Dublin statistical update on 2024](#). In March, ECRE also undertook a fact-finding visit to Romania with a particular focus on the application of special procedures (notably border and accelerated procedures). A [report](#) of the visit was published in August.

2. European external policies advance the rights of displaced people and reduce forced displacement

ECRE continued its engagement on the EU accession process by preparing a submission from its members and others to the EC's enlargement package which assessed questions related to asylum and forced displacement to inform the country reports on Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Ukraine.

ECRE co-operated with the Refugees Platform in Egypt (RPE) to prepare the first [AIDA country report on Egypt](#) in both English and Arabic. The report was written following the adoption of Egypt's first national asylum legislation and the intensified partnership between the EU and Egypt. It coincided with the proposal by the EC to declare Egypt as a safe country of origin. In addition to the report, a series of advocacy activities were carried out with RPE including speaking at a hearing of the EP Sub-committee on Human Rights, meetings with the Directorate-General (DG) for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), the DG for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG MENA), the European External Action Service and civil society as well as a Chatham House exchange with EU MS representatives. A workshop to discuss the EU's external migration partnerships, including with Egypt, was organised as part of the ECRE AGC to enable civil society participants to discuss different strategies and approaches.

ECRE engaged with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants in support of his work on the externalisation of migration governance. This included providing input to an expert exchange in June in preparation of his first report on the subject and the submission of written input in December to inform his second report that should be published in 2026.

The changed context in Syria and the premature and flawed response to it in several EU MS led ECRE to publish a [policy note](#) that called on EU MS to maintain international protection for Syrians during the transition period. The situation of Syrians in Europe was regularly discussed in meetings of ECRE's External Affairs Working Group.

Similarly, the treatment of people from Afghanistan who are seeking asylum in Europe continued to be a priority for ECRE. ECRE published two internal advocacy briefings to update members about the situation and coordinate advocacy on this issue in EU MS. In response to deportations to Afghanistan from some EU MS, ECRE increased its communications activity on the issue, including by inviting an Afghan expert to share their [analysis](#).

3. Countering the disproportionate focus on return and deportation

Return was a significant priority for ECRE's advocacy work. Ahead of the publication of the EC's proposal for a reform of the Return Directive, ECRE organised a Chatham House round-table meeting in January to provide input during the preparation of the proposal. Participants included the EC officials who were drafting the proposal, the EU Return Coordinator, representatives from 13 EU MS and relevant political groups in the EP and provided space for an engaging and constructive discussion on a policy area that is usually divisive.

Following the publication of the EC's proposal for a Return Regulation, ECRE published a [comments](#) paper as well as a shorter [policy note](#). The advocacy approach included a public round-table meeting and a series of bilateral meetings with EU MS representatives and with the EP members (MEPs) who were responsible for the file). ECRE prepared two internal advocacy briefings to support members' advocacy work on the issue and organised an AGC workshop. In addition, ECRE mobilised broader civil society by giving an online briefing for more than 90 representatives of migrant- and refugee-led organisations briefing targeted to refugee advocates in co-operation with the Greek Forum for Refugees in November, and by coordinating a [joint civil society statement](#) in response to the negotiations on the Council's position on the proposal in December.

4. Preventing measures to restrict asylum, use of non-entry policies and human rights violations at EU borders

ECRE published a [comment paper](#) on the revised Schengen Borders Code which included analysis of the key provisions of relevance to the right to asylum and provide recommendations to the EC, EP and EU MS.

ECRE continued to publish AIDA reports which highlight the persisting issue of violations at the EU's borders and serve as a reference point for civil society advocacy.

Following the publication of the EC's proposal for the next long-term EU budget (Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)) in July, ECRE analysed the relevant provisions regarding asylum, migration and inclusion in Europe. It produced a discussion paper to inform members and collect their input in autumn and organised an online meeting with interested members. A detailed analysis, including recommendations to inform the negotiations on the next EU MFF is foreseen for early 2026.

5. Inclusion through rights, respect and regularisation

The end of dedicated funding to support ECRE's work on inclusion in 2024 meant that no proactive advocacy work on inclusion took place.

At the request of the Council of Europe office in Chisinau, ECRE conducted an assessment of the possibility of establishing a multifunctional integration centre to support the inclusion of third country nationals in Moldova. ECRE members contributed their analysis and expertise in order to inform the assessment.

6. Advancing rights of refugee women and girls¹

ECRE expanded its work on the rights of refugee women and girls. It continued its strand of analysis of legislative frameworks and experience of refugee women in practice, focused on [gender-responsive reception conditions](#) and the recast Reception Conditions Directive, and recommendations on gender-sensitive measures to [address human trafficking and support survivors seeking asylum](#). The latter followed an exchange in an online meeting that ECRE co-organised with France terre d'asile included an exchange with representatives from DG HOME and the Council of Europe.

ECRE also organised study visits on the rights of refugee women and girls in Sweden and Luxembourg. The visits were organised in co-operation with ECRE members in the two countries and included meetings with key interlocutors from civil society, academia and authorities, and involved representatives of nine ECRE members.

ECRE also provided input to the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence's (GREVIO) first baseline evaluation of the E U by coordinating a [joint shadow report](#) that was focused specifically on the situation of the survivors of gender-based violence in the asylum context.

Within the framework of GREVIO's country thematic evaluation procedure, ECRE also participated in GREVIO's country visit to Belgium in February and provided inputs on the specific challenges and good practices affecting asylum-seeking and refugee women's and girls' access to their rights. Some of the recommendations submitted by ECRE and other CSOs were reflected in GREVIO's final report on Belgium.

ECRE, together with its members, also submitted a [report](#) to the EC in response to the call for contributions to its upcoming Gender Equality Strategy.

Overall Objective 2: To strengthen ECRE's advocacy team and support influential and effective advocacy

ECRE's various working groups had four or five meetings each (Total: 13, including one in-person meeting) while its Brussels-based members had three meetings). The level of participation in the working groups remained stable and members continued to contribute actively.

ECRE continued to ensure that refugee advocates and refugee-led organisations were included in its advocacy work. It regularly informed them about its work, invited them to policy events and included them in joint advocacy activities. It also organised an online briefing on the Return Regulation proposal was for them in November (see above).

ECRE had over 75 advocacy meetings with MEPs and their advisors, and officials from 10 EU MS, the EC (DG HOME, DG MENA and DG JUST), the EEAS, the EUAA, the European Ombudsman and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

The Advocacy Team gave presentations in more than 20 events, reaching an audience of over 700 people, and responded to more than 25 requests for information about EU advocacy and policy developments.

¹This objective was introduced in 2024 and covers ECRE's work under the AMAL project managed by France terre d'asile.

Activity 3: Communications

The implementation of ECRE's Communication Strategy 2023-2025 continued in 2025. The Strategy included three objectives and five guiding principles for ECRE's communications activities and provided a framework against which the Communications Team reported on a quarterly basis.

- **OBJECTIVE 1: Implement joint strategic workshops, campaign development, training seminars and visits with relevant ECRE members and refugee led-organisations and refugee advocates, and the funding needed to do so**

The Communications Team organised a workshop on ECRE's external communication activities as part of the 2025 ECRE AGC.

Although there were no visits to ECRE members or other refugee-led organisations and advocates, the Communications Team hosted two online meetings with members of the ECRE Media Officers Network (February and September).

In April, ECRE submitted an application to receive EU funding for a campaign aimed at supporting the political participation in EU-level democratic processes of EU citizens with refugee backgrounds. However, the application was unsuccessful and, as a result, the campaign was not implemented.

- **OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure that ECRE continues to be a key reference for its current audience and increases its outreach in new target audiences defined as 'Future Experts' and 'Potential Counter Voices'**

ECRE maintained its status as a key reference point in the ongoing debates over EU, EU MS' and other countries' policies in the areas of asylum and migration. ECRE's published content continued to be shared with and quoted by a wide range of actors from both the existing and new target audiences. Recipients and sharers of ECRE's published content included refugee advocates and other activists, local, national and international NGOs; academics, human rights and legal experts, and politicians and officials from local and national governments, the EU institutions and other international organisations.

- **OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure that the content flow across ECRE's portfolio of platforms and outlets reflects the aim of providing breaking news and inspiring campaign material**

ECRE's 'News Cluster' (i.e. Press Review, Weekly Bulletin, website newsfeed, X account and Bluesky account) continued to feature breaking news on a wide range of topics at both the EU and national levels in 2025.

- **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: While ECRE adapts its communication according to key external developments, the organisation should not lose track of the fundamental and lasting challenges**

ECRE continued to maintain a strong focus on long-term areas of concern in 2025 (e.g. preparations for the entry into action of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum). In addition, it also highlighted other relevant issues at specific moments during the year (e.g. publication of a proposal for an EU Return Regulation, publication of the proposal for the next EU MFF, launch of Council of Europe MS' discussions about possible revision of the European Convention on Human Rights etc.).

- **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: ECRE should be an authoritative source of legal and policy analysis and, at the same time, an efficient messenger towards segments of the public**

ECRE continued to publish high-quality legal and policy analysis. It also used its various social media platforms to highlight its long-form publications and to bring them to the attention of non-expert audiences.

- **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: ECRE should base its strategic communication on a clear analysis of potential and challenges in the changing discourse on asylum and displacement**

ECRE's published content continued to be consumed by a wide range of actors, including some with different or even fundamentally opposing views. It also continued to highlight problematic policies and/or rhetoric, and to acknowledge positive developments insofar as they could be identified.

- **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: ECRE's key messages should define the communication across platforms and outlets under its portfolio**

ECRE's key messages continued to provide the basis for its communication activities. The Communications Team was able to ensure consistency in ECRE's external communications due to its continued close co-operation with both the Advocacy Team and the Legal Support and Litigation Team, and the wider membership.

- **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5: ECRE's tone of voice and vocabulary should reflect the criteria of being balanced, based on realities, respectful of the people we aim to protect and relevant to an external audience!**

ECRE continued to pay special attention to the importance of appropriate language in its communications and to remind the targets of its advocacy about their responsibilities in this area. It also continued to focus on substance, to provide positive recommendations for improvements, and to highlight both the agency and value of people with refugee or migrant backgrounds in the ongoing debates on asylum and migration.

Outreach

ECRE's outreach grew throughout 2025. There were increases in the number of followers on its various social media platforms and in the number of subscribers to its newsletters. In addition, the ECRE website continued to receive numerous visitors and the ECRE Secretariat continued to receive regular requests for interviews and briefings from leading European and international media organisations.

One of the features of the Communication Strategy 2023-2025 was the introduction of two separate clusters: 'News' and 'Campaigns'. This was intended to enable the Communications Team to improve its engagement of different target audiences. As shown below, there have been increases in ECRE's outreach under both clusters:

1. **News Cluster: "What's Breaking?"**
 - **Press Review:** 49 issues (49 in 2024), 5,300 subscribers (5,100 in 2024) and 39% open rate (43% in 2024)
 - **Weekly Bulletin:** 37 issues (38 in 2024), 15,500 subscribers (15,200 in 2024) and 23% open rate (32% in 2024) (23,200 subscribers to new LinkedIn version (33 issues))
 - **Bluesky:** 1,100 followers
 - **X:** 41,100 followers (41,200 in 2024)
 - **Press:** 94 media requests (116 in 2024)
2. **Campaign Cluster: Running Work and Joint Initiatives**
 - **Facebook:** 29,200 followers (29,400 in 2024)
 - **Instagram:** 4,800 followers (3,600 in 2024)
3. **Supporting both clusters**
 - **LinkedIn:** 71,600 followers (56,900 in 2024)
 - **Website:** 737,000 page views (681,000 in 2024)

Organisational Objectives

Organisational support aims to ensure that ECRE is able to function effectively across the three substantive areas of its work, and that it meets the appropriate and legally stipulated standards of governance and accountability. The underlying objective is to ensure that ECRE performs effectively, meeting objectives in each of the three areas of its work is efficient and provides value for money, including compared to other organisations applies its strategic priorities in all areas of its work.

In late 2024, ECRE carried out a survey to hear members' views on ECRE's work overall, on three specific areas of work, and on particular activities. The survey included both multiple choice questions and open questions that allowed members to provide more detailed input and suggestions for improvement. Some of the highlights included:

When asked to rank ECRE's work overall on a scale of 1 to 5:

- 63% found it 'Excellent' (5/5 score)
- 37% found it 'Very good' (4/5 score).

Regarding ECRE's legal support and litigation work:

- 80.4% found it 'Very important' and 76.7% found it is 'Very effective' or 'Effective'.

Regarding ECRE's advocacy work:

- 87.5% found it 'Very important' and 77.1 % found it 'Very effective' or 'Effective'.

Regarding ECRE's work on communications:

- 71.4% described the Weekly Bulletin is a 'Very efficient communication tool' and 25.1% described it as an 'Efficient communication tool'
- 67.3% described ECRE's social media accounts as 'Very efficient communication tools' or 'Efficient communication tools'.

The most common responses to the open questions were to thank ECRE for its work and to praise ECRE with "excellent" being the most common adjective used.

Strategic priorities

ECRE continued to make progress towards its strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: To promote visions of an inclusive Europe where people seeking protection are welcome and their rights protected, including proposing legal and policy alternatives.

ECRE presented alternative policies, legal frameworks and practices in all its publications and presentations, rather than simply criticising the situation or proposals.

Strategic Priority 2: To mobilise ECRE as an alliance to advocate collectively for change.

ECRE maintained a high level of member involvement in its work. It organised 17 meetings of ECRE working groups /networks for members, five board meetings and one General Assembly (GA) and one Extraordinary GA. In addition to the various online and in-person meetings, members were also frequently contacted for purposes of communication but also of sharing information and insights.

The ELENA network, which includes members as well as independent asylum lawyers, had training events and coordination meetings both online and in-person. 29 ELENA coordinators participated in the annual coordination meeting and the annual ELENA advanced legal training in Malta was well attended despite the budget cuts affecting most of ECRE members, impacting on their capacity to attend in person events.

Strategic Priority 3: To empower refugees, channel their views into the policy and practice that affects them, and promote their inclusion in ECRE's work and across the sector.

- ECRE's board includes two people with a refugee background
- ECRE's membership includes 13 refugee-led organisations
- ECRE has continued to include people with a refugee background as experts in all its events, including in high-profile roles and as keynote speakers during the Annual General Conference.

- ECRE is regularly in touch with refugee advocates across Europe and provides updates on advocacy developments, analysis and opportunities for engagement via emails.
- In addition, ECRE has organised a webinar on the return regulation that was particularly tailored for refugee advocates. It was met with a lot of interest with almost 100 people participating and requests for more similar events.
- ECRE maintained the level of at least 25% of its staff being people with a refugee background or from a situation of displacement.

The organisational objectives are divided into general objectives and financial objectives:

Area	General Objectives
Strategic Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renew UNHCR Strategic Partnership every year for 2023 – 2025. 2. Maintain partnership in the form of framework contract with the EUAA 3. Develop strategic partnerships with other EU agencies and institutions.
	<p>Unfortunately, UNHCR ended the Strategic Partnership with ECRE in 2022 after six years due to a lack of funding and the cuts taking place across the agency. ECRE continued to work with UNHCR on specific events and activities.</p> <p>The contract with the EUAA continued in 2025, with extensive co-operation taking place.</p> <p>ECRE successfully bid on a tender launched by the European Institute for Gender Equality.</p> <p>ECRE met representatives from FRA including at the launch of the FRA Brussels Liaison Office and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) with the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer attending the AGC in Warsaw and one meeting with Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer representative in Brussels.</p>
Organisational structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a clear organisational structure capable of being expressed in an organisational chart with teams and line management.
	See Annex 2 (available on request)
Membership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reach and retain at least 110 members. 2. Confirm that a majority of members demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with ECRE’s work as per membership surveys or other consultation.
	<p>ECRE had 125 members in 40 European countries at the end of the year (3 additions and six withdrawals)</p> <p>The survey of ECRE’s membership showed a high level of satisfaction with ECRE’s work, with 63% finding ECRE’s work ‘Excellent’ (5/5 score) and 37% deeming it ‘Very good’ (4/5 score).</p>
Partnership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work in co-operation other networks working on asylum and migration issues, including the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) and refugee-led networks 2. Co-operate with European think tanks working on asylum and migration with at least four invitations to present at think tank events per year 3. Co-operate with academic networks, including participation in one research project per year and invitations to at least two academic conferences per year.
	<p>ECRE continued to co-operate closely with PICUM and with refugee-led networks.</p> <p>ECRE received four invitations to present its work at think tank events.</p> <p>ECRE participated in the INNOVATE research project which was funded under the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme and led by the European University Institute. ECRE staff members received 10 invitations to academic conferences.</p>
Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain diversity of the Board to reflect ECRE’s membership, taking into account geographic diversity, ethnicity, refugee background, and SOGIESC (sexual orientation gender identity and expression and sex characteristics) and any other factor that may be relevant. 2. At least three Board members should be female.

	<p>3. Ensure that the Board plays a consistently active role in ECRE's governance as per ECRE's statutes, and effectively represents the interests of membership in its decision-making.</p>
	<p>The Board operated with five members (four women and one man), including two members with refugee backgrounds, and good levels of diversity in terms of racial, religious and geographic factors.</p> <p>The Board met five times and contributed effectively to ECRE's governance. Board members also organised regional meetings and consulted ECRE members directly.</p> <p>2025 was a year of transition, with a new Chair and two new Board members appointed in June 2025. The Board prepared plans for transition after June 2025 taking into account not only the change in Chair but also the change in Direction as Catherine Woollard, Director of ECRE for the last nine years resigned. Julie Lejeune took over in October 2025.</p>

Financial Objectives

In 2025, a new Strategic Plan was adopted for the 2026–2028 period, including financial targets. From 2026 onward, the new targets will be used for planning and accounting purposes.

The following results were achieved in relation to the 2023–2025 targets:

1. Set an annual budget of at least EUR 1.3 million.

ECRE's 2025 budget was set at EUR 1.39 million in June 2024. Its forecast expenditure for the year was EUR 1.54 million. The final financial results were positive with 4.500 euros.

The structural factors identified previously by the Board to decide on staffing reduction do still define the financial landscape. Those are the changing donor policies and the cost-of-living crisis (in Belgium, employers must apply obligatory cost of living increases to staff salaries, and these amounted to +20% over 2 years). Certain donors that have funded ECRE for many years have ceased, reduced or are withdrawing funding to the sector as a result of strategic reviews and changing priorities. This includes JRCT, EPIM and OSF.

2. Maintain a positive asset position with reserves of at least EUR 250,000.

In 2025, the reserves are augmented with the positive result at the closed of the financial year. However, even if ECRE reduced staffing expenditure in 2024, there is no clear perspective to increase them at all in 2026.

3. Ensure diversification of funding sources, with at least 40% of funding to be in the form of core grants.

ECRE's income in 2025 was received in the form of core grants for 43%. Other unrestricted funding, including membership fees, made up 12% of ECRE's income – this is slightly less than in 2024 and was the result of the financial struggles that were experienced by a number of members.

4. Ensure grants from at least four core donors.

In 2025, ECRE retained funding from five core donors: Adessium, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Oak Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

5. Ensure 60% of the following year's budget is covered by end of June when preliminary budget is approved in the General Assembly and 80% by the end of November.

When the 2026 budget was approved in June, 58% was covered. By the end of November, 80% was covered.

Annex 1: ECRE Publications in 2025

ECRE Policy Notes

- ECRE Policy Note 50: [Towards a point of no return for fundamental rights? The EC's proposal for a Return Regulation](#), October 2025
- ECRE Policy Note 49: [All Packed-Up and Ready? Assessment of the State of Play on Pact Implementation](#), October 2025
- ECRE Policy Note 48: [A Gender-sensitive Approach to Combating Human Trafficking and Support Asylum-seeking Survivors in the EU](#), July 2025
- ECRE Policy Note 47: [Reception Conditions: Protecting Women and Girls in EU Asylum Systems](#), May 2025
- ECRE Policy Note 46: [Maintaining International Protection in Europe During Syria's Transition](#), March 2025

ECRE Policy Papers

- ECRE Policy Paper 15: [Creating More "Safe" Countries and Frontloading the Pact](#), July 2025

ECRE Comments Papers

- ECRE [Comments on the Qualification Regulation](#), December 2025
- ECRE [Comments on the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council introducing the screening of third-country nationals at the external borders and amending Regulations \(EC\) No 767/2008, \(EU\) 2017/2226, \(EU\) 2018/1240 and \(EU\) 2019/817](#), February 2025
- ECRE [Comments on the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation \(EU\) 2016/399 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders](#), March 2025

ECRE Legal Notes

- ECRE Legal Note 17: [The Cessation of International Protection and Review of Protection Statuses in Europe](#), April 2025

ECRE intervened in the following cases:

- [L.B. v France](#), Application No. 11013/24, December 2025
- [D.H. v. Hungary](#), Application No.42008/23, October 2025
- [T.F. v Switzerland](#), Application No. 17088/23, October 2025
- [M.A. v Sweden](#), Application No. 6559/25, September 2025
- [M.S. v. Malta](#), Application No. 30737/24, July 2025
- [Al-Khalidi v. Bulgaria](#), Application No. 26364/24, May 2025
- [A.B.A. and others v. The Netherlands](#), Application nos. 27637/23 and 1954/24, March 2025
- [A.A.N. and Others v. Greece](#), Application No. 38203/20 and 7 other applications, March 2025
- [M.A.E. v. Poland](#), Application No. 7463/23, March 2025

Other publications

- ECRE et al., [Joint Shadow Report on GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Procedure for the EU](#), December 2025
- ECRE et al., Joint Statement: [Council's position on the Return Regulation Proposal](#), December 2025 ([Croatian](#)) ([Dutch](#)) ([Filipino](#)) ([German](#)) ([Greek](#)) ([Italian](#)) ([Portuguese](#)) ([Spanish](#)) ([Ukrainian](#))
- Open Letter: [Upholding Not Undermining International Law](#), September 2025
- Open Letter: [Call for donors to support civil society to prevent a crisis of asylum reception and inclusion in Europe](#), April 2025

AIDA Country Reports

- Austria: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), July 2025
- Belgium: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), June 2025
- Bulgaria: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), March 2025
- Croatia: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), August 2025
- Cyprus: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), April 2025
- France: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), June 2025
- Germany: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), June 2025
- Greece: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), September 2025
- Hungary: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), May 2025

- Ireland: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), June 2025
- Italy: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), July 2025
- Malta: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), August 2025
- Netherlands: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), May 2025
- Poland: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), July 2025
- Portugal: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), September 2025
- Romania: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), August 2025
- Serbia: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), June 2025
- Slovenia: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), August 2025
- Spain: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), April 2025
- Sweden: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), May 2025
- Switzerland: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), May 2025
- Türkiye: [Update on 2024](#), July 2025
- Ukraine: [Update on 2024](#), June 2025
- United Kingdom: [Update on 2024](#) and [Annex](#), April 2025
- [Egypt](#), July 2025

Other AIDA reports

- AIDA Statistical Report: [The Implementation of the Dublin III Regulation in 2024](#), November 2025
- AIDA Overview Report: [Asylum in Europe: The situation of applicants for international protection in 2024](#), September 2025
- AIDA Comparative Report: [Access to Socio-Economic Rights for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection: 2023 Update](#), January 2025
- AIDA Factfinding Visit Report: [Preparing for Reform: Romania's Asylum System Ahead of the EU Pact](#), August 2025