

Annual Report on 2025 – Summary

ECRE at a glance (December 2025):

- Staff: 10.6 (14.4 at the start of the year)
- Members: 125 (128 at the start of the year)
- Areas of work: (1) Legal Support / Litigation; (2) Advocacy; and (3) Communications
- Annual expenditure: EUR 1.57 million
- Reserves: EUR 257.000
- Office: Mundo Madou, Brussels

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.

Legal Support and Litigation

ECRE's Legal Support and Litigation team continued working on legal support and litigation in line with the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan 2023-2025, prioritising detention and Pact-related developments and needs as well as responding to emerging needs such as cases involving the cessation of international protection. ECRE's litigation work continued to use different legal avenues, intervening in cases before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and supporting lawyers litigating before the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) and national courts. Targeted training and legal support was provided in accordance with the demands of the [ELENA](#) Network of asylum lawyers.

The following activities were undertaken:

- *Publications:* A [revised legal note on the cessation of international protection and review of protection statuses in Europe](#);
- *Legal queries:* Responses to 43 legal requests from lawyers in the ELENA Network, with over 50 additional queries referred to the ELENA coordinators;
- *Direct interventions:* Interventions in nine cases before ECtHR on issues ranging from detention and non-refoulement guarantees at the border to the protection of LGBTQIA+ asylum applicants and obstacles to legal representation in expulsion cases;
- *Litigation support:* Provision of emergency litigation support in two impact cases, including involving criminalisation of asylum applicants;
- *Legal training:* Organisation of the Advanced ELENA Course in Malta; co-organisation of workshops in Belgium and Greece; contributions to 10 training seminars and seminars/strategy events on asylum in Europe (ECRE's legal training activities reached approximately 300 legal professionals across Europe).
- *Case summaries:* Management of the European Database of Asylum Law (EDAL): 65,000 users benefited from 35 case summaries; while more than 7,500 subscribers received 25 issues of the ELENA Legal Update (ELU).
- *Legal support:* Management of the ELENA network (which brings together over 500 asylum lawyers from across Europe), including organisation of an annual consultation for ELENA coordinators and maintaining the online forum for ELENA lawyers.

Advocacy

The focus of ECRE's advocacy work was to:

- *Provide analysis of the adopted Pact files and follow implementation of the Pact:* ECRE completed its detailed analysis of all Pact files, regularly updated an internal overview of the state of play of Pact implementation in co-operation with members and published a related [Policy note](#).
- *Equipping members and others with relevant information to prepare for the application of the Pact:* ECRE organised an in-person training seminar on the Pact and delivered multiple training seminars in different countries to a variety of audiences. ECRE also organised a policy event on the solidarity mechanism.
- *Provide input to the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA):* ECRE reviewed 35 training materials in order to adapt them to Pact legislation which also covered other topics, including gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings. In addition to reviewing training materials, ECRE also provided three in-person training seminars on different topics for officials from different EU MS.
- *Promote displaced peoples' rights in EU external policies:* ECRE channelled its members' analysis to the EU accession process and published the first ever Asylum Information Database (AIDA) report on a country outside Europe (Egypt) following the adoption of its first national asylum legislation and its intensified partnership with the EU.
- *Provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on asylum in Europe via AIDA and expand the database:* The 24 AIDA reports were widely cited in more than 2,220 national court cases, 300 policy/academic reports, and 20 external media articles while the AIDA website had over 732,872 page views.
- *Promote ECRE's position and recommendations:* ECRE had over 75 meetings with MEPs and their advisors, and officials from 10 EU MS, the EC (Directorate-General (DG) for Migration and Home Affairs, DG for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf and DG for Justice and Consumers), the EEAS, the EUAA, European Ombudsman and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. ECRE staff members also gave presentations in more than 20 events reaching a diverse audience of over 700

policy-makers, civil society representatives, engaged citizens and others, and organised three in-person policy meetings that were well attended by relevant stakeholders.

- *Ensure continuous involvement of member organisations in ECRE's work:* ECRE held 13 working group meetings (including one in-person meeting), three meetings of Brussels-based members and one meeting with AIDA experts. It also produced five internal advocacy briefings and a discussion paper to support members' advocacy and collect their feedback on ECRE's work.

Communications

The implementation of ECRE's Communication Strategy 2023-2025 entered its final year. 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.

ECRE's outreach grew during the course of the year. There were increases in the number of followers on its various social media platforms and in the number of subscribers to its newsletters. 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 was the introduction of two separate clusters: 'News' and 'Campaigns'. This change 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)