Symposium “75 Years of the 1951 Refugee Convention: Human Rights, Effectiveness, and Enforcement”

Date: Wednesday, 16 December 2026, 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: WU Vienna, Gallery,
Library and Learning Center (LC),
Welthandelsplatz 1, 1020 Vienna

Organisers: Vienna Centre for Migration and Law (VCML), UNHCR Austria and the Research Institute for Migration and Forced Displacement Management (FORM)

Please register until 1 December 2026:
Registration

Programme

2:00 PM: **Opening and Welcome**

2:15 PM: **Opening Panel**

“Humanrightization” and Effectiveness of International Refugee Law

Jürgen Bast
Undoing the „Humanrightization“of the Refugee Convention?

Cathryn Costello

Exploring the Effectiveness of International Refugee Law (in the graveyard of international law?)

4:15 PM: **Coffee Break**

4:45 PM: **Roundtable**

Challenges in the Enforcement of Refugee Protection

- *Hanaa Hakiki*
- *Nadja Lorenz*
- *Bettina Maurer-Kober*
- *Suad Sheikh Mohamed*
- *Helmut Tichy*

6:45 PM: **Closing Remarks**

7:00 PM: **Reception**

VIENNA CENTRE FOR MIGRATION AND LAW
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency
WU VIENNA | FORSCHUNGSINSTITUT FÜR MIGRATIONS- UND FLUCHTFORSCHUNG UND -MANAGEMENT
universität wien

Topic

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and echo Human Rights Day on 10 December, the Vienna Centre for Migration and Law (VCML), UNHCR Austria and the Research Institute for Migration and Forced Displacement Management (FORM) host the symposium "75 Years of the 1951 Refugee Convention: Human Rights, Effectiveness and Enforcement".

The symposium focuses on human rights-based, effective refugee protection and explores the practical and legal challenges of enforcement. The symposium consists of two panels: An opening panel sets the thematic framework, exploring the "humanrightization" and effectiveness of international refugee law. A subsequent roundtable brings together perspectives from legal practice, the judiciary, and refugee law practice to discuss challenges in enforcing international protection standards.

Speakers

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Bast, Professor of Public Law and European Law at Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany

Prof. Cathryn Costello, PhD, Professor of Global Refugee and Migration Law at the Sutherland School of Law, University College Dublin

Hanaa Hakiki, Directress of Border Justice, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)

Mag. Nadja Lorenz, Lawyer based in Vienna, specializing in asylum law, victim protection and proceedings concerning police violence

Dr. Bettina Maurer Kober, Vice President Justice at the Supreme Administrative Court

Dr. Suad Sheikh Mohamed, Founder of the Global Health Club, Member of the UNHCR Refugee Team Austria

Prof. Dr. Helmut Tichy, Ambassador and Professor (ret.), former Legal Adviser of the Austrian Foreign Ministry and former Deputy Head of the Vienna Office of UNHCR

With kind support from:

ZukunftsFonds der Republik Österreich