

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND VULNERABILITIES

Colloquium • 30 september 2022 • KBR, Brussels



PROGRAMME

8h45	Welcome
9h00	Introduction by <i>Kati Verstrepen</i> , President - NANSEN
9h15	Asylum and vulnerability – opening statement by <i>Véronique de Ryckere</i> , Head of Protection Unit for Belgium and Luxembourg - UNHCR
9h30	Perspective 1 • The refugee status of persons with disabilities <i>Dr. Stephanie Motz</i> , Barrister & Attorney at law - Rise, Zurich.
10h	Questions and answers
10h20	Perspective 2 • Linguistic vulnerability in refugee status determination <i>Prof. Dr. Katrijn Maryns</i> - Ghent University
10h50	Questions and answers
11h10	Coffee break
11h30	Perspective 3 • Credibility assessment of persons in a vulnerable position “Assessing the credibility of vulnerable persons: issues and challenges” by <i>Sophie Van Balberghe</i> , Adjunct Commissaire - Office of the Commissioner general for Refugees and Stateless persons (CGRS) “The judge and medical documents: challenges and prospects.” by <i>Marc Oswald</i> , First president of the Council of Alien Law Litigation (CALL) and <i>Audrey Pivato</i> , Legal Assistant (CALL)
12h	Questions and answers
12h30 - 13h30	Lunch break
13h30	Panel 1 • The needs of victims of torture Keynote speaker: <i>Prof. Em. Nora Sveaass</i> - University of Oslo, Norway Moderator: <i>Prof. Dr. Ellen Desmet</i> - Ghent University Panelists: <i>Alice Sinon</i> , Legal officer - NANSEN, <i>Prof. Nora Sveaass</i> - University of Oslo, <i>Marc Oswald</i> , First president (CALL) and <i>Audrey Pivato</i> , Legal Assistant (CALL), <i>Pierre Robert</i> , attorney at law - Kompas, Brussels
15h15	Coffee break
15h30	Panel 2 • Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Keynote speaker: “Queering Asylum in Europe: A short overview” by <i>Prof. Nuno Ferreira</i> , SOGICA Project leader - University of Sussex Moderator: <i>Benoit Dhondt</i> , attorney at law - Antigone, Antwerp Panelists: <i>Valérie Klein</i> , Legal officer - NANSEN, <i>Liselot Casteleyn</i> - Ghent University, <i>Valentine Audate</i> - Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, <i>Mohammed Kassab</i> - Civil society
17h10 - 17h30	Concluding remarks <i>Prof. Luc Leboeuf</i> , Head of Research Group - Law and Anthropology Department, <i>Max Planck</i> - Institute for Social Anthropology

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SPEAKERS

VALENTINE AUDATE

Valentine Audate has been the coordinator for gender-based applications for international protection at the CGRS (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons) for 17 years. Prior to that, as a protection officer at the CGRS, she had herself dealt with gender-related asylum applications (in particular cases based on a fear of honour crimes and cases related to sexual orientation). She has a degree in Psychology and Education Sciences from the ULB (Université libre de Bruxelles) and a postgraduate-degree in Development Cooperation (ULB). She has followed various training courses on gender issues, including the specific training module for future trainers on Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, from the European Union Asylum Agency, and training modules of the NGO “Le monde selon les femmes”. She is the author of the report “Les crimes d'honneur – Analyse de la problématique – Octroi de la protection internationale », written for the CGRS in 2004.

LISELOT CASTELEYN

Liselot Casteleyn (she/her) is a doctoral researcher at the Migration Law Research Group at Ghent University. She graduated as a Master in Criminology (2017) and in Conflict and Development (2019). During her studies, she discovered her passion for critical social research. Liselot briefly worked as a criminological researcher and for two socially engaged organisations. Her current doctoral research focuses on the complexity of the Belgian asylum procedure on the ground of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), using a (queer) ethnography.

VÉRONIQUE de RYCKERE

Véronique de Ryckere has been working for the UN refugee agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since 1992. She is based since 2000 at the UNHCR Representation for EU Affairs, Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, in Brussels, where she heads the Protection Unit for Belgium and Luxembourg. Before, she worked for UNHCR in France, in Kosovo, in Argentina (covering for the South of Latin America) and in Zambia. She started her career in Belgium at the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons. Véronique de Ryckere is Belgian and was born in 1967. She undertook her studies at the Namur University and at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, as well as at the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom. She obtained a law degree in 1990 and a Master of Science in International Political Economy in 1992. Véronique de Ryckere is a native French speaker, she is fluent in English, Spanish and Dutch.

ELLEN DESMET

Ellen Desmet is an Associate Professor of Migration Law at the Faculty of Law and Criminology of Ghent University. She founded and heads the Migration Law Research Group (MigrLaw). Her research is situated at the intersection of migration law, human rights and legal anthropology. She teaches migration law and 'Law and Society', and coordinates the migration law component of the Human Rights and Migration Law Clinic.

BENOIT DHONDT

Benoit Dhondt is lawyer. He graduated in 2008 as Master of Laws at the University of Ghent. Subsequently, he completed a preparatory programme in Political Sciences. In 2010 he obtained a Master after Master in Conflict and Development at the same University of Ghent and in 2011 he graduated as Master in Theory and Practice of Human Rights at the University of Essex.

In 2011, he worked as a lawyer for the Belgian Committee for Aid to Refugees on the detention project.

Mr Benoit Dhondt is a member of the management board of NANSEN asbl. He also sits on the editorial board of the Tijdschrift voor Vreemdelingenrecht.

NUNO FERREIRA

Nuno joined the University of Sussex as a Professor of Law in 2016. Previously, he was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Liverpool (2012-2016) and Lecturer at the University of Manchester (2006-2012). He has also been a Visiting Professor at Wuhan University (China) and the School of Law of the University of Lisbon (Portugal).

Nuno has been a Horizon 2020 ERC Starting Grant recipient, leading the project SOGICA - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum (2016-2020, www.sogica.org), and is a co-director of the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr/>).

MOHAMMED KASSAB

Mohammed Kassab is a student in social cultural work. He is 22 years old and fled Gaza, in Palestine 4 years ago. Mohammed is active in various civil society organisations : çavaria, weljong, merhaba.

VALERIE KLEIN

Valérie Klein has been working as Legal officer at NANSEN asbl since July 2019. She is specialized in matters relating to asylum and detention. She is also the reference person when it comes to statelessness related questions. Before joining NANSEN, Valerie worked ten years as attorney at law specialized in immigration law at the Bar of Brussels. She holds a L.L.M. in International Law and the Law of International Organizations, University of Groningen, Netherlands.

LUC LEBOEUF

Luc Leboeuf is a Head of Research Group in the Law and Anthropology Department of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, where he leads the VULNER research project, which is financed by the EU under the Horizon 2020 work programme (www.vulner.eu). He is also a visiting Professor in the Law faculty of the Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain), where he teaches courses in asylum law and EU law.

Prior to joining the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in 2017 as a postdoctoral researcher, Luc obtained a PhD in EU law at the Catholic University of Louvain, and he practiced migration and asylum law at the Bar of the Walloon Brabant. Luc held various visiting research and teaching positions in the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University, the Max Planck Institute Luxembourg for International, European and Regulatory Procedural Law, the Law Faculty at the University of Antwerp, the Unesco Chair at the University of Burundi, and the law faculty at the Catholic University of Bukavu.

KATRIJN MARYNS

Katrijn Maryns is associate professor in the Department of Translation, Interpreting and Communication at Ghent University. Her linguistic-ethnographic research examines multilingual practices and linguistic inequality in institutional contexts of asylum and migration. She is the author of “The asylum speaker: Language in the Belgian asylum procedure” (Routledge 2006) and co-editor of the book series “Translation, Interpreting and Social Justice in a Globalised World” (Multilingual Matters). She is supervising several projects.

STEPHANIE MOTZ

Stephanie Motz is a Swiss- and UK-qualified lawyer and barrister and co-founded the Zurich-based law firm RISE Attorneys at Law. She is specialized in migration and criminal law and international human rights procedures and litigates both domestically and at the international level. She is a Lecturer in International Migration Law at the University of Lucerne and regularly publishes on issues at the intersection between international human rights law and migration law. She has published several studies on the compatibility of domestic law with international law, including a recent study for UNHCR on the implementation of the refugee definition in Switzerland.

Stephanie Motz studied at King's College London and the University of Oxford (BCL) and wrote her PhD on "The Refugee Status of Persons with Disabilities" (published at Brill and Nijhoff Publishing, 2021). She is a member of the editorial board of the Swiss asylum magazine ASYL and an advisory board member of two Swiss asylum and human rights NGOs (AsyLex and CSDM).

MARC OSWALD


Marc Oswald has been appointed as the First President of the Council for alien law and litigation (CALL) in september 2022. Prior to that, he was 1st auditor within the Council of State.

AUDREY PIVATO

Audrey Pivato has been a legal assistant within the CALL since 2014. She holds a degree in human rights and a LLM in European and International Law (Maastricht University).

PIERRE ROBERT

Pierre Robert holds a law degree from the Catholic University of Leuven (1998) and a degree in communication and media from the University of Ghent (1999). He has been a member of the Brussels Bar since 1999. He has been recognised as a specialist in the law of foreigners by the Bar Association and practices all aspects of it (including asylum, family reunification, regularisation, economic migration, nationality, etc.).



He has brought several important cases before national and international courts, including the European Court of Human Rights, *Singh and others v. Belgium* (ECHR, 2.10.2012, 33210/11), concerning the examination of an asylum application and the obligation of the asylum authorities in this case. Pierre Robert is member of the management boards of Syndicat des Avocats pour la Démocratie and of NANSEN asbl.

NORA SVEAASS

Professor emerita, Department of Psychology, University of Oslo, Norway. Worked clinically with traumatized refugees. Publications on rehabilitation of victims of torture; psychology and human rights; gender-based violence in conflict and transitional justice. Member of UN Committee Against Torture (2005–2013) and currently member of the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture. Sveaass is initiator of the Mental Health and Human Rights Info, an NGO providing information on health and human rights. Served as chair of the Human Rights Committee for the Norwegian Psychological Association (1998–2019).

ALICE SINON

Alice Sinon has been working as Legal officer at NANSEN asbl since April 2022. Her main focus is the treatment of victims of torture within the asylum procedure. Before joining NANSEN, Alice was coordinating the Rosa Parks Legal Clinic for Human Rights, established in 2018 within the Faculty of Law at UCLouvain. She also worked as coordinator of the Vigilance Committee on Counter-Terrorism (Comité T) within the Belgian Ligue des droits humains. She finished her law studies in 2014 at UCLouvain and completed her education with an additional master's degree in European law, focusing on human rights and migration law at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

SOPHIE VAN BALBERGHE

Sophie Van Balberghe has been Deputy Commissioner for Refugees and Stateless Persons since 2012. The common thread of her career has always been asylum law in its different facets.

Sophie Van Balberghe studied law at the Catholic University of Leuven (UCL). After obtaining her law degree, she completed a master's degree in human rights.

When she graduated she started working for the CGRS in October 1993. Over a period of seven years, she worked as a protection officer, supervisor and geographical coordinator ad interim. Later, she worked as a lawyer and for a ministerial cabinet.

After a period working for Fedasil, where she was appointed head of the legal department, she returned to the CGRS as a protection officer in December 2011. She then joined the legal service.

KATI VERSTREPEN

Mrs. Verstrepen became a member of the Antwerp Bar in 1988. During her traineeship with Prof. Jean Laenens she established her own office in the Rotterdamstraat. From the very beginning Mrs. Verstrepen focused on immigration law. After more than 30 years she now has a thorough command of this subject.

Since 1998, Mrs. Verstrepen has also been very active at the Bar. From 2014 to 2016, she was President of the Bar Association of Antwerp. Mrs. Verstrepen has been a lecturer in immigration law at the Antwerp Bar's internship school for more than 15 years and has several publications on the subject to her name.

Mrs. Verstrepen was elected president of the Human Rights League in November 2017. She is also president of the non-profit organization NANSEN asbl.