

First ACMRL Conference on Migration Law

The Amsterdam Centre for Migration and Refugee Law (ACMRL) at VU Amsterdam is a leading hub for doctrinal, critical, and interdisciplinary research on migration and refugee law. ACMRL scholars work across asylum, family and labour migration, mobility, human rights, and the rule of law, and the broader political, societal and historical forces shaping the field. Combining legal analysis with socio-legal and empirical approaches, the Centre is deeply engaged in public debate and policy advice, informing discussions at national, European, and global levels.

We are pleased to invite you to the first ACMRL Conference on Migration Law, hosted at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam on **18–19 June 2026**.

The conference will explore six major themes that capture current directions in migration law research:

1. Human Rights Litigation and Migration Policy

Courts and treaty bodies are sites where migration governance is contested through human rights claims. This stream invites papers examining how human rights–based litigation shapes, challenges, and reframes migration policy. We welcome contributions analysing (strategic) litigation practices by migrants, NGOs, governments, and other actors. We particularly encourage legal-doctrinal and empirical work that explores how different actors develop and deploy litigation practices and strategies, how courts or treaty bodies respond to them, and case studies that illuminate these dynamics in specific jurisdictions, institutions, or areas of migration law.

2. Asylum and the New Pact

At the time of the conference, the EU-Pact on Asylum and Migration will have just entered into force, introducing ten new instruments to the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). We invite submissions addressing any asylum-related aspect of the new Pact. For example, we welcome papers examining the overarching goals and guiding principles of the Pact, in-dept analyses of any of the instruments, thematic studies on

areas of asylum undergoing reform, fundamental rights implications of the Pact, including how human rights safeguards are integrated into its mechanisms, or national perspectives and challenges related to the implementation in specific Member States.

3. *Rule of Law and Migration*

The rule of law—however contested in meaning—serves as a core constraint on state power, and is therefore of particular relevance to migrants, who depend heavily on state decisions, while general constitutional law doctrines are often considered not to apply ('exceptionalism'). This stream invites papers that theorise the relevance of the rule of law in migration contexts; interrogate exceptionalism in specific jurisdictions or legal fields; evaluate state practices in light of rule-of-law principles; or relate migration law to concepts such as autocratic legalism, domination, or arbitrariness.

4. *From Migration Law to the Law of Mobility*

This stream draws on mobilities studies to broaden legal analysis beyond the traditional figure of the migrant. We invite papers examining how law regulates a diverse range of mobile subjects—tourists, business travellers, 'expats', digital nomads, athletes, seasonal workers, diplomats, military personnel, and others—and the rationales underpinning their legal differentiation. We encourage contributions analysing how time, categorisation, and state logics shape which mobilities become visible or invisible within legal frameworks. We welcome work that explores the value of the 'mobilities turn' for rethinking migration law.

5. *Family and Migration law*

This stream invites papers examining how family relationships shape, constrain, and are reshaped by migration law and governance. We welcome contributions analysing the regulation of family reunification, marriage migration, children's rights, and transnational family life, as well as the evolving legal standards that govern these areas at national, regional, and international levels. Submissions may explore doctrinal developments, empirical studies of administrative and judicial decision-making, or the political and social forces influencing family-related migration policies. We particularly encourage work that highlights how legal norms, bureaucratic practices, and lived experiences intersect in the production of family migration law.

6. *Labour Migration Law and the Global Compact for Migration*

Labour migration is a central dimension of the Global Compact for Migration, which will undergo its second review at the International Migration Review Forum in May 2026. This stream invites submissions examining national or regional approaches to labour-

related aspects of the Compact. Contributions may analyse the Compact's influence on labour migration legislation, jurisprudence, and policy; evaluate the implementation of its objectives on migration pathways, ethical recruitment, and decent work; or explore the role of key stakeholders—including international organisations, civil society, trade unions, the private sector, and national human rights institutions—in the implementation of these objectives.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome panel and paper proposals from researchers at all career stages and disciplines whose work engages with migration law. Participants can contribute to one of the six themes through a variety of theoretical frameworks, empirical and doctrinal approaches, and comparative perspectives.

Individual Papers

Proposals for individual papers should consist of abstracts of up to 500 words, including the paper title, the author's affiliation(s), a short bio, and contact details.

Panel Proposals

Panel proposals may include **3–5 contributors** and should be submitted as a complete package. Each proposal should contain a panel abstract of up to **400 words**, along with the titles and abstracts of the individual papers and short bios of all panel contributors and the contact details of the panel organiser.

Please submit your proposal, indicating the relevant theme in the subject of your email, to acmrlconference.rch@vu.nl. Selected contributors will be invited to submit a draft paper (about 5.000 words) by 1 June.

Important Deadlines

- **Abstract submission:** 15 February 2026
- **Notification of acceptance:** 15 March 2026
- **Programme published:** 15 April 2026
- **Draft paper:** 1 June 2026
- **Conference:** 18–19 June 2026