

## Asylum Procedures: Report on Policies and Practices in IGC Participating States (2015)

### Description

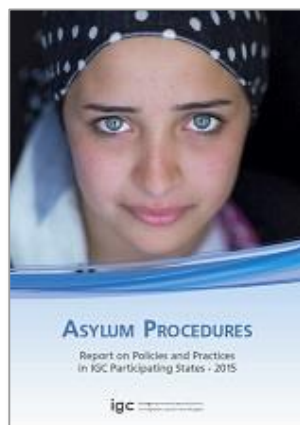
For the last three years, IGC Participating States have sought to adapt and improve their legal and procedural frameworks for asylum determination, while enhancing the quality, efficiency and integrity of asylum procedures. IGC States have also developed innovative approaches to managing increasing pressures on their status determination and reception systems, and renewed efforts to address abuses of the asylum system.

With information sourced directly from governments, the report provides an authoritative description of the procedure for receiving and processing asylum applications in the 16 States which take part in the IGC process, and contributes uniquely to the existing literature on these topics.

### Content

The report includes:

- An Introduction summarising the main developments in refugee protection and asylum systems at the national, regional and global level since 2012, with a focus on Syria and Eritrea, vulnerable caseloads and resettlement;
- 16 standardised Country Chapters on asylum policy and asylum determination practices as well as information on pre-entry measures, decision-making, reception, return and integration;
- Statistical data on applications and decisions in each country report;
- Annexes on comparative statistical data, and relevant extracts of international law instruments and UNHCR ExCom conclusions.



### Order

The 2015 report can be purchased at the IOM bookstore <https://publications.iom.int>. Free hardcopies of the 2012 and 2009 reports are also available.

## IGC Participants



### Belgium (Current Chair)

**Australia**  
**Canada**  
**Denmark**  
**Finland**  
**Germany**  
**Greece**  
**Ireland**  
**Netherlands**

**New Zealand**  
**Norway**  
**Spain**  
**Sweden**  
**Switzerland**  
**United Kingdom**  
**United States**

### IOM, European Commission & UNHCR



igc

- **Multidisciplinary, inter-regional consultative process**
- **Laboratory for migration management**
- **Strategic thinking based on practical and operational insights**
- **Sharing knowledge, best practices and operational efficiencies**

## The igc process

The **igc** is an informal, non-decision making forum for inter-governmental information exchange and policy debate on issues of relevance to the management of international migration.

### Participating States

The IGC brings together the following 16 Participating States:

- **Australia**
- **Belgium**
- **Canada**
- **Denmark**
- **Finland**
- **Germany**
- **Greece**
- **Ireland**
- **The Netherlands**
- **New Zealand**
- **Norway**
- **Spain**
- **Sweden**
- **Switzerland**
- **The United Kingdom**
- **The United States**

The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** and the **European Commission** also participate in the IGC process. The IGC also works closely with the OECD, Frontex and EASO.

**Belgium** currently holds the rotating IGC Chair (June 2015-December 2016). The Belgian theme for consideration under its Chair is *The Management of Borders in light of Contemporary Migration Challenges*.

## Background and History

The starting point for the IGC was a conference held in May 1985 under the auspices of UNHCR to consider "The Arrivals of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Europe". Thirty-five States and a number of international organizations, including the IOM and the Commission of European Communities, attended. There were follow-up discussions and seven States decided to launch an informal consultative process to study the challenges facing their asylum systems and possible solutions.

A coordinator for IGC was appointed within UNHCR headquarters in 1987 as head of a unit responsible for the preparation of meetings of senior officials. In 1990, this unit was reorganized as the IGC Secretariat. In 1991, the Secretariat became an independent entity with funding provided by States.

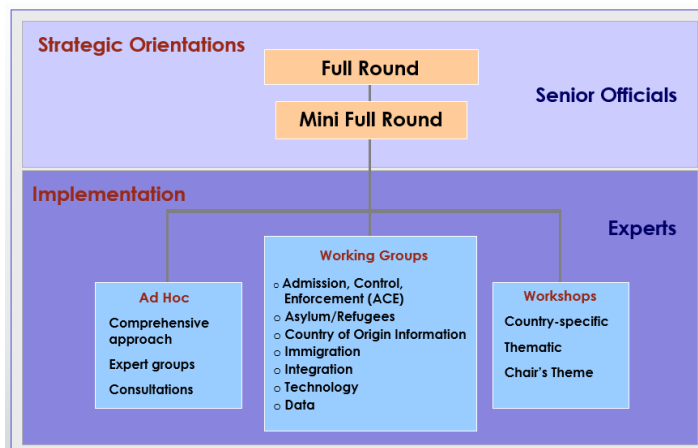
Following a strategic review in 2006, IGC States decided to expand activities to immigration and integration policies, given States' interests in these topics, and focus on multi-disciplinary analysis and discussions.

## Organisational framework

IGC engages on issues across the migration spectrum and supports strategic thinking and the development of policy options by:

- organising meetings, roughly 20 senior official and expert meetings per year,
- fostering policy and operational expert networks across the globe,
- providing access to state-owned policy guidance, analytical reports and studies, and
- developing and maintaining on-line information exchange tools and statistical databases.

Most IGC products and knowledge are hosted on a secure website (one-stop shop).



## Working Methods – Essential Elements

### Informality

IGC is not an institution but a process that allows for informal information exchange and discussion.

### Openness

IGC activities do not require participants to reach common positions or be bound by resolution or decision. Issues can thus be explored in a climate of openness and confidentiality.

### Efficiency

IGC has a very light administrative structure, with emphasis on ease and directness of communication among participants rather than adherence to formalised procedures.

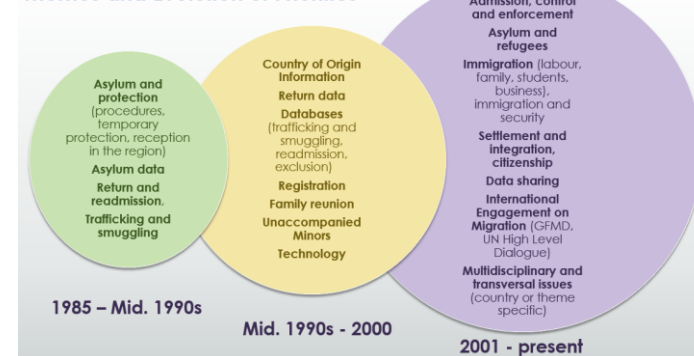
On the basis of these principles all consultations enable IGC States in a frank and confidential setting to:

- Test ideas
- Ask questions
- Share successes
- Confess failures

## Areas of interest

Major subjects dealt with since 1985 have included asylum procedures and data, smuggling and trafficking, return, country of origin information, illegal migration, technology, immigration and integration. A multidisciplinary approach is applied to topics such as unaccompanied minors, specific outflows, national security, interception and processing in the region.

### Themes and Evolution of Priorities



## Activities

Senior IGC officials meet annually at a **Mini-Full Round** and a **Full Round of Consultations**. Senior officials discuss major issues and developments, policy and operational challenges, recent trends in international migratory and refugee movements, and areas of cooperation. Senior officials also discuss the overarching theme selected by the Chair every year.

In the **Heads of Delegation meeting**, senior officials meet twice a year to review the IGC activities (working groups, workshops) over the last program year and set new directions for the next two semesters.

**Experts meet in Working Groups** on thematic issues: Admission, Control and Enforcement, Asylum and Refugees, Country of Origin Information (COI), Data, Immigration, Integration, and Technology.

States convene **workshops** and **ad hoc meetings** on specific themes/countries as necessary.

### Information and Data Collection

Participating States obtain valuable statistical data, ideas, and information from the IGC website and/or other IGC countries. States use this data to conduct analytical review and comparisons and to brief cabinet officials or parliamentarians.

IGC statistical data on asylum is the most complete and accurate of any product available to its Participating States. Work is underway to improve the collection of return-related data. Data can be accessed and customised by Participating States through a business intelligence tool. Specific requests for information can be made to other Participating States and compilations of answers are available on the IGC website.

Access to the website is restricted to government officials approved by the Participating States.