

**Workshop on Elements of Refugee Law and the Role of the Judiciary and International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ) European Chapter Conference**

18 -20 May 2016

Scandic Holmenkollen Park Hotel  
Oslo, Norway



On 18-20 May 2016, a delegation of 21 judges from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan participated in in the [International Association of Refugee Law Judges European Chapter Conference \(IARLJ Europe\) in Oslo, Norway](#). The conference was precluded by



a one day workshop on various aspects of refugee law, facilitated by three European asylum judges and key figures in the IARLJ, Judge Bernard Dawson (UK) – Vice-President of the European Chapter of IARLJ, Judge Sebastiaan de Groot (NL) – immediate past President of IARLJ, and Judge John Bouwman (NL) – IARLJ Treasurer.

During the pre-conference workshop organized by UNHCR under the auspices of the [Quality Initiative for Eastern Europe and South Caucasus \(QIEE\)](#), the judges in attendance had an opportunity to participate in active discussion and share their knowledge and practical experience on application of Article 1(A) of 1951 Convention with specific emphasis placed on the notions of credibility assessment, internal flight alternative, relevant Country of Origin Information used as evidence in refugee status-related cases. The lively discussion around cases offered as case studies and for moot court exercise was ensured during the two-day Conference of the [IARLJ European Chapter](#), co-organized and hosted by the [UNE-Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board](#).

The Conference, opened by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway, devoted to the theme of “European Asylum Law - Protection Amidst Crisis” featured prominent scholars in the field of refugee protection, such as Professor James Hathaway and Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz, as well as distinguished judicial scholars and practitioners such as Dr. Hugo Storey, President of IARLJ-Europe. The conference explored the implications of the ongoing migration crisis in Europe, which put the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to its biggest yet test. Among the subjects discussed were the possibility of finding protection by one’s failed or weak state. The exploration of the term protection was presented by Dr. Storey and Prof. Hathaway. The problem of human trafficking and its nexus to 1951 Convention was discussed by Professor Piotrowicz. The participants also had an opportunity to further examine and discuss the notion of issues of credibility in sexual and religious cases as well as get an update on the most important for asylum adjudication decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. In addition to these themes, the UNHCR and the EU provided their views of the current crisis and way forward.

