FLÜCHTLINGSRAT
BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG
... engagiert für eine menschliche Flüchtlingspolitik

Autumn Conference 2026

November 14 2026 – 10 am – 5 pm
Location: Bürgerräume Stuttgart-West at Bebelstraße 22, 70193 Stuttgart (accessible for people living with disabilities)

We warmly invite you to attend this year's spring convention on Saturday, November 14 2026 in Stuttgart.

We have put together a varied programme this time. In the keynote lecture, Prof. Dr Natalie Welfens will take a critical look at the implications of the increasing use of artificial intelligence in the context of displacement and asylum. During two thematic sessions, you will also be able to choose between the topics of European external borders, vulnerable refugees within the CEAS, the criminalisation of human rights organisations, and a workshop on combating racism. In between, there will be plenty of time for networking and discussion, particularly at a 'market of opportunities'.

The convention is free to attend and is aimed at everyone active in the field of refugees and asylum.

There will be a vegan lunch meal, on-site childcare as well as interpretation for non-German speakers.

We seek to create a space that is safe for all participants. To ensure this, we ask all attendees to read our Code of Conduct and to embrace these guidelines.

Timeline:

09:30 am: Registration and arrivals

10:00 am: Introduction

10:15 – 11:30 am: Keynote speech: Artificial intelligence in the context of displacement and asylum

Worldwide, digital technologies are increasingly being developed and deployed to manage refugee and migration flows, monitor borders and assess asylum applications. In Germany, too, a current draft bill aims to establish the legal framework for the use of artificial intelligence – with the promise of making asylum and residence permit procedures more efficient, secure and cost-effective. At the same time, new technologies can also be used to expand and potentially improve counselling and integration services for refugees.

But what impact does the increasing use of algorithmic technologies have on people fleeing their homes and those going through the asylum process? What risks arise in terms of legal protection, new forms of discrimination or even the exacerbation of social inequalities? And what role should artificial intelligence play at all in a sensitive area such as asylum and residence law?

Prof. Dr Natalie Welfens is currently conducting research into technological changes in migration and asylum policy and will critically examine these questions in her lecture. There will be ample time for questions and discussion.

Speaker: Prof. Dr Natalie Welfens, University of Frankfurt am Main

11:30 am: Break

11:45 am – 1:15 pm: Workshops - Phase I

Choose a topic from the following four options.

1st Topic: Europe's external borders, the absence of legal protection and the shift to the right in Europe

In June 2026, following more than a decade of debate, the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) came into force. In doing so, the European Union has institutionalised a border regime that prioritises deterrence over protection. However, the already repressive reform agreements were immediately superseded by legislation – namely the Return Regulation, which provides for so-called 'return hubs' in third countries. When, at the end of July, tens of thousands of people in the Spanish exclave of Ceuta attempted to find a way to a better life, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Magnus Brunner declared that Europe had passed a 'stress test'. In reality, however, the applicable law was largely ignored – much as it is at most of the EU's external borders, where pushbacks have become an everyday occurrence. This lecture provides an overview of the European border regime following the CEAS reform, the ongoing lack of legal protection, and the link to the shift to the right in European politics.

Speaker: Valeria Hänsel, migration researcher and advisor on displacement and migration at medico international

2nd Topic: Civil society under political pressure – strengthening capacity for action, protective structures and networks of solidarity

Migrant organisations and other civil society actors play an active role in shaping social and political debates. At the same time, they face the challenge of

remaining capable of taking action and safeguarding structures based on solidarity, even as the political environment becomes increasingly difficult. Drawing on experiences from Saxony-Anhalt and the work of LAMSA e.V., the workshop will examine the political role of civil society organisations, the development of protection and support structures, and the question of how regional and cross-state networking can be strengthened in practice. Using specific scenarios, participants will work together to develop strategies for action aimed at bringing about potential political and social change.

Speaker: Mahdi Osmani, Project Manager at LAMSA e.V. (Network of Migrant Organisations in Saxony-Anhalt)

3rd Topic: Vulnerable refugees in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

This workshop focuses on refugees with special protection needs. We will take a critical look at the legal framework and the practical implementation of protection for vulnerable refugees within the reform of the Common European Asylum System. Who falls under the definition of vulnerable groups, and what specific rights does this entail for asylum seekers? How is the procedure regulated in reception centres? How is vulnerability actually assessed in practice, and where are the gaps in implementation to date? We aim to explore these questions from both a legal and a practical perspective.

4th Topic: Workshop on critical engagement with racism

Whiteness is not a neutral norm, but a social position associated with privileges that often remains invisible unless one questions it. In this workshop, we will explore together how racism manifests itself in everyday life, within institutions and in our own thinking, and what role whiteness plays in this. Through insights, discussion and practical exercises, you will discover ways to recognise racism, take responsibility and actively bring about change in your own environment.

Speaker: Prof. Dr Isabelle Ihring, Chair of Youth and Social Work, Protestant University of Applied Sciences Freiburg

1:15 pm: Lunch

2:15 – 3:15 pm: Market of Opportunities

Various organisations and initiatives working in the field of refugees and migration will be presenting their work and key areas of focus. At the various information stands, visitors will have the opportunity to find out more, strike up conversations and network.

3:15 pm: Break

3:30 – 5:00 pm Workshops - Phase II

Choose a topic from the following four. This is a repetition of the topics in the morning phase. You can choose a different topic for the afternoon.

- 1st Topic: Europe's external borders, the absence of legal protection and the shift to the right in Europe
- 2nd Topic: Civil society under political pressure – strengthening capacity for action, protective structures and networks of solidarity
- 3rd Topic: Vulnerable refugees in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)
- 4th Topic: Workshop on critical engagement with racism

The conference is part of the "Being Active for Social Participation" Project, supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour and Health from state funds approved by the Baden-Württemberg State Parliament. Co-sponsorship is provided by the German Postcode Lottery.