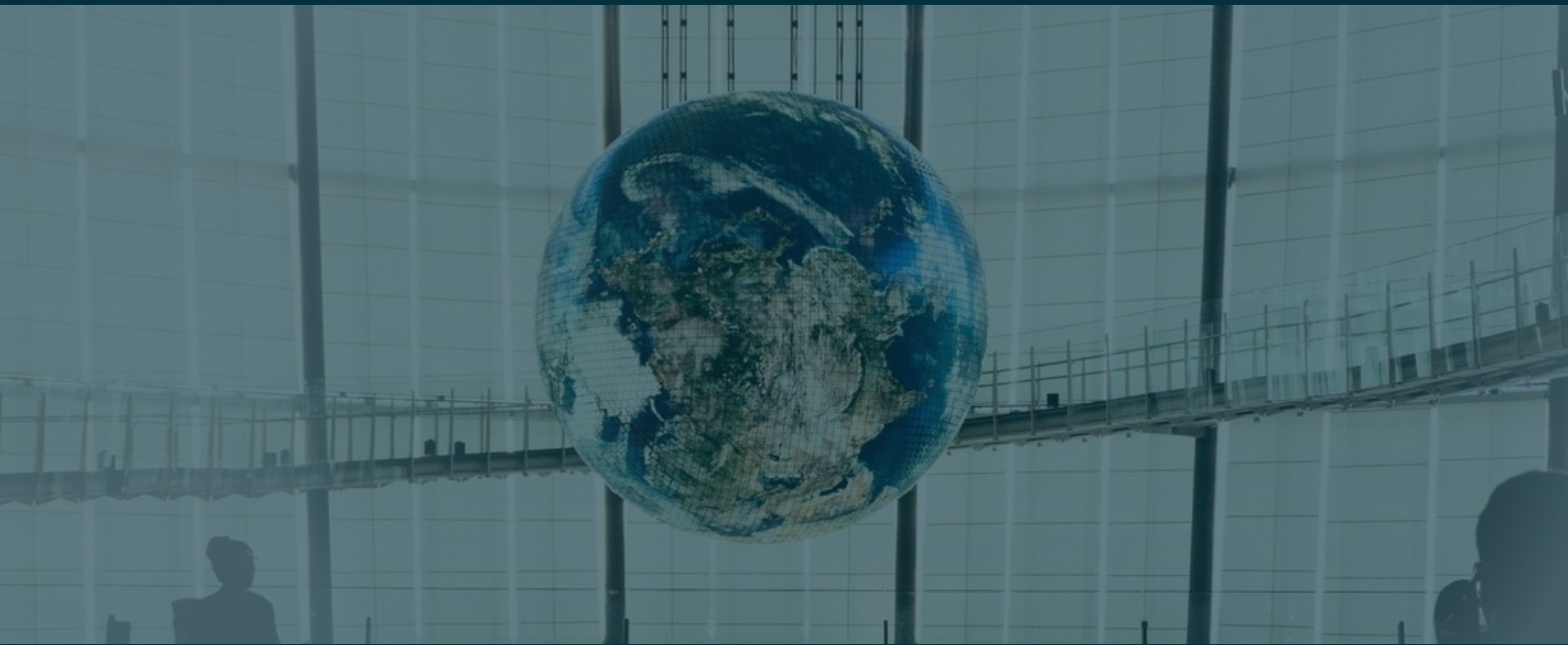




Human Rights & Migration

Why does it matter?

Global human rights and migration governance are increasingly contested. The rise of authoritarian tendencies challenges established norms and restricts civil society, while also weakening existing frameworks and cutting necessary funding across the board.

For the EU, the stakes are high. The UN human rights regime helps advance core EU values and priorities. Weak protections for human rights and poor migration governance could lead to egregious violations against vulnerable communities, fuel political tensions between member states, and complicate cooperation with partner countries.

Where is reform possible?

Geopolitical tensions limit prospects for reform. Global migration frameworks will likely remain forums for discussion rather than action, with states prioritising unilateral and bilateral cooperation. Meanwhile, UN human rights mechanisms face pushback but continue to uphold existing standards.

Progress will depend on practical measures: strengthening implementation and follow-up on agreements as well as reducing administrative burdens. Protecting civil society participation remains critical. Further steps include reforming complaint procedures, strengthening membership criteria, and ensuring adequate funding of the UN human rights institutions.



What can the EU do about it?

- Advocate for a voluntary peer review mechanism at the 2026 International Migration Review Forum, modelled on the UN Universal Periodic Review and achievable without renegotiating the non-binding character of the Global Compact for Migration.
- Coordinate EU and member-state contributions to UNHCR and IOM, targeting operations in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Western Balkans. When UNHCR loses capacity in Libya or Sudan, irregular onward movement towards EU borders increases directly.
- Shift development-cooperation conditionality from migration-control numbers to refugee-protection standards, and operationalise this through NDICI-Global Europe programming to build credibility with Plural South partners sceptical of European double standards.

Key Outputs



[“The UN Human Rights Council: Challenges and Opportunities for Reform”](#) by Samuel King, Inés Pousadela



[“Transforming Global Migration Governance Through and Beyond the Global Compacts”](#) by Felix Peerboom, Lilian Tsourdi, Kai Michael Kenkel



[“The Global Governance of Sex and Gender: Women's and LGBTQI+ Rights Amid Regress, Reform, and Resilience”](#) by Ha Eun Choi and Andrea Liese