

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

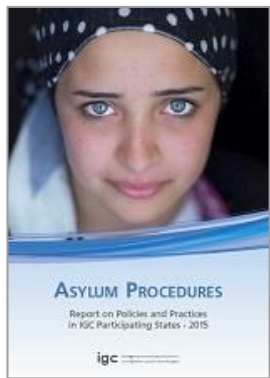
Description

IGC States adapted and improved their legal and procedural frameworks for asylum determination, while enhancing the quality, efficiency and integrity of asylum procedures. IGC States 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.

The 2015 report can be downloaded at the IOM bookstore <https://publications.iom.int>.

Free downloads and hardcopies of the 2012 and 2009 reports are also available.



IGC Participants



Canada (Current Chair)

Australia

Belgium

Denmark

Finland

Germany

Greece

Ireland

Netherlands

New Zealand

Norway

Poland

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

United Kingdom

United States

IOM, European Union, UNHCR and OECD



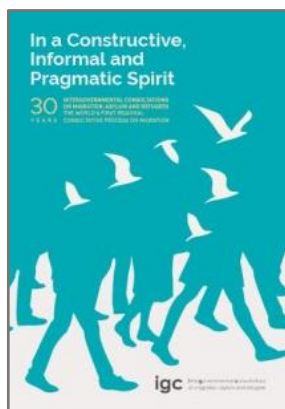
In a Constructive, Informal and Pragmatic Spirit (2018)

Description

To commemorate thirty years of work and cooperation on migration, asylum and refugee issues, this publication explores the history, operating methods and impact of the IGC process. It gives the reader a thorough understanding of the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the IGC, its evolution, how it operates today, and the impact that it has had on the migration, asylum and refugee policies of its States.

The report mounts a powerful argument for the role of inter-governmental cooperation in improving migration, integration and protection outcomes, and the IGC as a place for innovation and exchange of information in these fields.

The publication can be downloaded at the IOM bookstore <https://publications.iom.int>.



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 17 like-minded countries of destination, facing common migratory issues and sharing similarities in the management of immigration, including asylum and legal migration systems.


The current Participating States are:

- **Four states from North America and Oceania:** Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States
- **Eleven Western European states who are Member state of the European Union:** Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
- **Two non-EU Western European states:** Norway and Switzerland.

Portugal and the Republic of Korea are currently associated to the IGC work as observer countries.

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

IGC Chair

 **Canada** currently holds the rotating **Chair of IGC** (June 2019 – May 2020). The Canadian theme for consideration under its Chair is *Game-changing Solutions: Applying Innovation to the Migration Management Continuum*.

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 reorganised as the IGC Secretariat. In 1991, the Secretariat became an independent entity with funding provided by States.

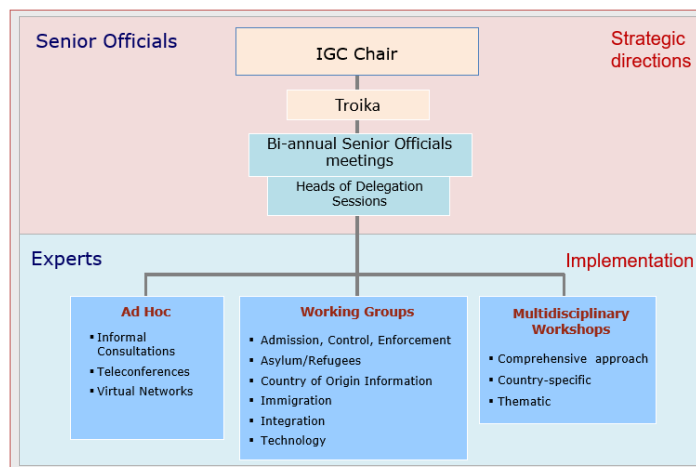
Following a strategic review in 2006, IGC States decided to expand activities to immigration and integration policies, given States' interests in these topics, and to focus on multi-disciplinary analysis and discussions.

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 www.igc.ch (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.

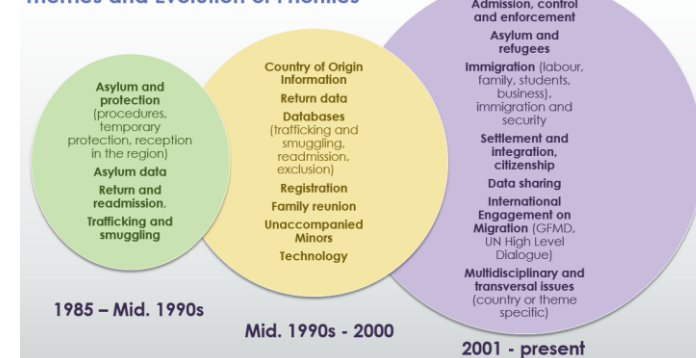
On the basis of these principles all consultations enable IGC States in a frank and confidential setting to:

- 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 biannual **Senior Officials Meetings**. 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 parliaments.

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 (www.igc.ch) is restricted to government officials, approved by the Participating States.