The International Migration Law (IML) Series

The IML Series seeks to promote the understanding and awareness of the legal norms and principles that govern the movement of persons today, with regard to both rights and obligations of migrants and States’ responsibilities. It provides in one source definitions for terms used in the migration domain, and offers thematic analysis of specific migration law issues. The IML Series is coordinated by IOM’s International Migration Law and Legal Affairs Department.

N°1 Glossary on Migration (2004)
The “Glossary on Migration” attempts to serve as a guide to the mire of terms and concepts in the migration field. Migration is increasingly being acknowledged as a issue that needs a global approach and coordinated responses. States are discussing migration issues at the bilateral, regionally and lately in global arenas. A commonly understood language is indispensable for such coordination and international cooperation to be successful.

N°2 Glossary on Migration (Russian, 2006)
After the publication of the “Glossary on Migration” in English, IOM prepared a translation of the Glossary into Russian. The translation was first used at training seminars for government officials on international migration law in Astana, Kazakhstan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in December 2004. The comments received at these seminars helped to improve the translation and found their way into the official publication in March 2005. The Glossary in Russian has been widely distributed in the CIS and Baltic countries and served as background document in various seminars and workshops.

This work contains an analysis of legal norms and principles at a global and regional level relating to the protection of the rights of migrants. The instruments in question are spread out in various branches of law (human rights law, humanitarian law, migrant workers law, refugee law) but, taken as a whole, they constitute “international migration law”.

Only available in French.

N°4 Migraciones y Protección de los Derechos Humanos (2005)
This volume analyses the various sources of human rights law applicable to all the persons involved in migration and provides information on specific migration situations: internal conflicts and displacements, as well as labour migration. Moreover, it covers the issue of refugee protection and the asylum regime within the international human rights protection system.

Only available in Spanish.
N°5 Biometrics and International Migration (2005)
This publication examines the type of biometric applications available and the potential they provide for greater security in migration management. It outlines the developments in the use of biometrics as a result of September 11, and looks at the impact of such systems on the rights of individuals. The publication seeks to highlight legal issues for consideration in the implementation of biometric systems, and the increasing need for legal frameworks to govern their use, proposing issues that such a framework could address.

Only available in English.

N°6 Glossary on Migration (Arabic, 2005)
The Glossary on Migration in Arabic was published in April 2006 and first distributed during a special meeting on international migration law at the forty-fifth session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization in New Delhi, India (3-8 April 2006).

N°7 Glossary on Migration (Spanish, 2006)
Increasing awareness of the significance of international migration for today’s society has put migration issues on the agenda of various bodies and fora. The Glossary on Migration responds to the need to better understand the migration terminology used in the debates and thus facilitates a common understanding of migration issues.

N°8 Glossary on Migration (Slovenian, 2006)
Migration is increasingly being acknowledged as an issue that needs a global approach and coordinated responses. States are not only discussing migration issues at the bilateral level, but also regionally and lately in global arenas. A commonly understood language is indispensable for such coordination and international cooperation to be successful.

N°9 Glossary on Migration (French, 2006)
After the publication of the “Glossary on Migration” in English, IOM prepared a translation of the Glossary into French. This version takes into account comments and suggestions presented by readers on other versions.

N°10 Glossary on Migration (Albanian, 2007)
After the publication of the “Glossary on Migration” in English, IOM prepared a translation of the Glossary into Albanian. This glossary aims at providing a useful tool to the furtherance of such international cooperation and the common understanding of migration issues.
N°11 Glossary on Migration (Bosnian, 2007)
After the publication of the “Glossary on Migration” in English, IOM prepared a translation of the Glossary into Bosnian.

This study aims at providing a legal perspective on migration health in Europe through a review of European Community Law and Council of Europe instruments. As will be seen, numerous instruments exist at the European level recognizing that the right to health is a fundamental human right for nationals and non-nationals alike: their goal is to ensure protection of health and equitable access to health services of appropriate quality for all. Nevertheless, health inequalities between host populations and migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking in persons and others in need of international protection and assistance persist in the region, both in terms of health status as well as in access to health services of equal quality. This study seeks to highlight the challenges to migration health within Europe, both in law and in its application. It is hoped that it brings us one step closer to ensuring respect for the right to health for all those who migrate, regardless of their status.

Only available in English.

N°13 Glossary on Migration (Chinese)
After the publication of the “Glossary on Migration” in English, IOM prepared a translation of the Glossary into Chinese. This glossary aims at providing a useful tool to the furtherance of such international cooperation and the common understanding of migration issues.

N°14 Compendium of International Migration Law (French)
Cette publication a pour objet de guider le lecteur au travers des diverses normes et principes internationaux applicables aux migrations internationales. A cet effet, le Compendium réunit des instruments internationaux de valeur juridique variable, tel que des traités internationaux, des principes et des lignes directrices, qui quoique non impératifs sont cependant pertinents et peuvent contribuer au développement progressif du droit dans des domaines non encore couverts par le droit positif.

N°15 The Rights of Migrant Children
This report gives an overview of the international legal framework containing norm relevant to the protection of child migrants. Particular focus is on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), since this widely ratified instrument constitutes the most all-encompassing basis for the protection of children, including children who are outside their State of origin. The report provides a detailed examination of the rights found in the CRC which are of a particular relevance to migrant children. Furthermore, a review of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in the context of working children, and of other Human Rights and International Criminal Law instruments are included.
The report aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the international norms which form the legal basis for the effective protection of children on the move, taking into consideration the specific situation of these children: their resourcefulness and their vulnerability alike.

Only available in English.

Migration and International Legal Norms provides a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the source and scope of international law on migration. Chapters written by experts from around the world explore international norms on state authority to regulate migration, freedom of movement, forced migration, human rights, family unification, trafficking and smuggling of migrants, national security, rescue at sea, health, development, integration, and nationality.

Migration and International Legal Norms shows that, despite the absence of a comprehensive legal instrument governing international migration, there is a wide range of legal norms relevant to migration embodied in multilateral treaties and conventions, regional agreements, and customary international law. The volume also identifies some significant gaps in international law, recommending areas for further cooperative efforts.


This book encapsulates the law of international migration, including emerging issues such as the protection of human rights where tension between anti-terrorism legislation and immigration measures increases. The human rights of vulnerable groups of migrants, such as migrant workers, women, victims of trafficking, and stateless persons are also addressed. Forced migration warrants a consideration of the International Migration Law relating to groups such as internally displaced persons, as well as the international community's response to secondary movements of asylum-seekers. Questions of state responsibility concerning, for example, stranded migrants and provision of consular protection and assistance to migrants are also discussed. Moreover, the expansion of regional legal frameworks concerned with migration, such as EU immigration and asylum law and policy and the growing case law on European citizenship, as well as developments in free movement regimes, are added to the analysis of the growing body of international migration law.


This volume is a companion to International Migration Law: Developing Paradigms and Key Challenges (edited by R. Cholewinski, R. Perruchoud, and E. MacDonald., T.M.C Asser Press 2007) bringing together a comprehensive compilation of universal instruments relevant to international migration. The compilation includes instruments with varying degrees of legal force - such as international treaties, customary international law, and "soft law" - covering the human rights of migrants, labour standards, diplomatic and consular protection, and the movement of service providers under GATS. The core documents regulating nationality and statelessness, trafficking and smuggling, State security, detention, and forced migration are presented, in addition to relevant legal instruments from international humanitarian law and international maritime law.

Forthcoming in 2009:

- Glossary on Migration in Greek, Italian and Turkish
- Migration and the Right to Health: A Review of International Law in English
- Comparative study of the laws for legal immigration in the 27 EU Member States in English and French