

## Role of the European Union in addressing climate change migration and protecting immigrants' rights

Joana Koçi\*

Master

University of Tirana

1010, 4 Mother Teresa Sq., Tirana, Albania

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9156-6509>

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to comprehensively assess the European Union's climate migration policy in terms of its compliance with international human rights standards. The research a structured qualitative methodology was applied, combining doctrinal legal analysis, comparative policy evaluation, and critical interpretation of official and non-governmental reporting. The study found that while European Union institutions demonstrate a growing recognition of climate change as a driver of migration, a significant gap persists due to the lack of a clear legal status for climate migrants within the European Union framework. Existing legal instruments were found to be inadequately adapted to the specific needs of those displaced primarily by environmental factors, creating a protection vacuum. Analysis of international reports confirmed the escalating scale of the issue, with, for example, 83.4 million internally displaced persons globally by the end of 2024, 9.8 million of these due to natural disasters. The European Union's practical measures, while including humanitarian aid and funding for adaptation, were often characterised as short-term and insufficient to address the root causes or long-term protection needs. It was established that the dominant European Union discourse frames climate migration primarily as a humanitarian or security challenge, rather than a comprehensive human rights issue, a stance that has drawn consistent criticism from non-governmental organisations for prioritising border control over humanitarian principles. The study identified this discursive framing as a central barrier to systemic legal reform and, based on a comparative legal analysis and institutional policy review, formulated concrete recommendations for transitioning to a humanistic paradigm in the European Union's climate migration policy, thereby determining the practical significance of the research

**Keywords:** international protection; environmental change; global warming; internally displaced person; legal norms

### Introduction

Climate migration has emerged as one of the most pressing and complex global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, driven by the escalating impacts of climate change on human settlements, livelihoods, and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, progressive desertification, water scarcity, and other environmental transformations compel millions to leave their homes in search of safer conditions. According to the IDMC (2025), climate-vulnerable regions are already witnessing the loss of livelihoods, displacement from ancestral lands, and erosion of access to essential services, including health care, housing, and education. By the end of 2024, approximately 9.8 million people were newly displaced by natural disasters, contributing to a global total of 83.4 million internally displaced persons, a significant increase from 75.9 million the previous year.

Despite the scale of this phenomenon, the current international legal system provides neither a universally accepted definition of "climate migrant" nor a coherent framework for their protection. The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), which remains the cornerstone of

international protection, does not recognise environmental causes as legitimate grounds for refugee status, as demonstrated in the study by S. Dutta and A. Basu (2025). This lacuna leaves climate-displaced individuals in a state of legal ambiguity, excluded from established protections and international support mechanisms. The inadequacy of legal protections has become increasingly evident in both developing and developed regions. For instance, K.S. Mahmood (2024) illustrates that even countries such as Bangladesh, which have incorporated international climate obligations into national law, continue to struggle with the effective implementation of protection measures for climate-displaced populations.

Moreover, the integration of scientific knowledge into policy design is increasingly seen as vital to addressing the structural drivers of climate migration. A. Koskina *et al.* (2024) argue that science-based policymaking, as mandated by the Paris Agreement, remains underutilised, particularly with regard to the governance of climate-induced migration. They note that while the use of empirical climate data has been promoted, its actual influence on shaping binding legal norms and operational protection mechanisms

### Suggested Citation

**Article's History:** Received: 29.02.2025 Revised: 19.05.2025 Accepted: 25.06.2025

Koçi, J. (2025). Role of the European Union in addressing climate change migration and protecting immigrants' rights. *Social & Legal Studios*, 8(2), 165-176. doi: 10.32518/sals2.2025.165.

\*Corresponding author



remains limited. The vulnerability of certain regions to climate-induced displacement has been thoroughly documented in the literature. A. Thomas *et al.* (2020) provide a comprehensive review of small island developing states (SIDS), which are among the most exposed to the multifaceted effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, habitat loss, and intensified extreme weather events. Their research shows that SIDS, despite their diverse geographies, share a common vulnerability and have consistently advocated for stronger international action and climate justice mechanisms. These findings underscore the urgent need for coordinated international efforts to address climate migration through both adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Within the European context, the European Union has acknowledged the connection between climate change and migration in strategic documents such as the EU Adaptation Strategy (2021), which outlines the need for smarter, faster, and more systemic adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change (Krasivskyy, 2024). However, the transformation of this recognition into binding legal instruments and robust protection frameworks for displaced populations remains slow and insufficient. Analyses by R. Negrón *et al.* (2025) underscore the persistent lack of a clear international legal definition of “climate migrant”, which severely hampers the development of coherent protection mechanisms. Their work also highlights that climate migration is often framed in legal and policy discourse as an emergent issue lacking epistemic consensus, which complicates both national-level responses and transnational coordination. These concerns are amplified in the European Union, where the current legal and policy frameworks are yet to offer a harmonised, human rights-oriented response to the increasing scale of climate-induced displacement.

The absence of a formal legal status for climate migrants in both international and EU law, as highlighted by D. Chotouras *et al.* (2024), contributes to systemic exclusion and marginalisation. They argue for a human rights-based approach, emphasising the importance of recognising a legally binding right to a healthy environment and integrating this principle into international migration governance. Similarly, K.W. Junker *et al.* (2022) propose a reparative justice framework that acknowledges historical responsibilities for climate degradation and advocates the use of existing financial instruments under the Paris Agreement to support displaced populations. Further, legal scholarship has begun to explore more radical interpretations of international law to address environmental harm. K.W. Brynzanska (2024) explores the legal possibility of qualifying certain types of environmental destruction as acts of genocide, particularly when they are intended to destroy a national, ethnic, or religious group. While this perspective is not directly operational in the context of climate migration, it broadens the conceptual horizon and stresses the urgent need for innovative legal thinking to confront the environmental crises of our time.

The purpose of the study was to assess the legal and institutional framework of the EU’s climate migration policy and to identify systemic gaps, internal inconsistencies, and areas of legal uncertainty that hinder the effective protection of climate-displaced persons. The analysis focused on three key objectives: first, to examine the principal strategic documents and legislative initiatives of the EU that shape its policy responses to climate-induced migration between 2019 and 2025; second, to assess the practical measures undertaken

by the EU in this period, including funding programmes and humanitarian actions, in terms of their coherence, effectiveness, and alignment with declared policy goals; third, to conduct a legal analysis of the normative architecture of EU migration law, with emphasis on the identification of outdated legal provisions, regulatory lacunae, and inconsistencies between sectoral policies, thereby providing a foundation for targeted recommendations to improve legislative and procedural safeguards for climate migrants.

## Materials and methods

The documentary basis of this study was organised in a structured manner to ensure a comprehensive and systematic examination of the European Union’s climate migration policy. At the core of the analysis were foundational EU strategic frameworks, notably the European Green Deal (2019) and the Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024), which set the political direction for the Union’s climate and migration agendas. These high-level strategies were examined for their recognition of climate migration as an emerging policy issue situated at the intersection of environmental transformation, humanitarian concerns, and cross-border governance.

To assess how these strategic intentions are operationalised, the study conducted a detailed analysis of binding EU legal instruments that form the regulatory framework governing migration and asylum. This included Council Directive of the Council of the European Union No. 2001/55/EC “On Minimum Standards for Giving Temporary Protection in the Event of a Mass Influx of Displaced Persons and on Measures Promoting a Balance of Efforts between Member States in Receiving Such Persons and Bearing the Consequences Thereof” (2001), Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2011/95/EU “On Standards for the Qualification of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Beneficiaries of International Protection, for a Uniform Status for Refugees or for Persons Eligible for Subsidiary Protection, and for the Content of the Protection Granted” (2011), Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 604/2013 “On Establishing the Criteria and Mechanisms for Determining the Member State Responsible for Examining an Application for International Protection Lodged in One of the Member States by a Third-Country National or a Stateless Person” (2013), and Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/115/EC “On Common Standards and Procedures in Member States for Returning Illegally Staying Third-Country Nationals” (2008). Each of these legal acts was analysed in terms of its applicability and adequacy in addressing the specific vulnerabilities of climate-displaced populations, with a particular focus on definitional exclusions and implementation gaps.

Complementing this legal-analytical framework, institutional reports and policy evaluations issued by EU bodies, such as the European Parliament (2022), the European Council (2024), and the European Migration Network Inform (2023), were also examined. These sources provided insight into the internal discourse within the EU on climate migration and offered a narrative of how institutional awareness and political commitments are evolving in response to empirical pressures. The analytical value of these documents lies in their role as intermediaries between high-level strategic objectives and practical implementation, often revealing internal contradictions and the pace of policy development.

In addition to EU sources, the study included reports and datasets from international organisations with recognised expertise in forced displacement. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2023; 2024; 2025), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2023; 2024; 2025), and the World Bank (2021) were of particular relevance for understanding the quantitative scale and geographic dynamics of climate-induced mobility. Their empirical data and projections served as critical benchmarks for assessing the responsiveness and adequacy of EU policy in light of global trends and obligations under international law. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) was also used as a normative point of reference to highlight the limitations of existing international frameworks in protecting climate-displaced individuals.

Furthermore, the study drew on analytical reports produced by international non-governmental organisations including Amnesty International (2023; 2024), CARE International (2023), Oxfam America (2022), and the Child Rights Resource Centre (2024). These sources were selected for their contribution to highlighting overlooked human rights issues, regional vulnerabilities, and the operational failures of national and supranational responses. The Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (2022) was consulted specifically in relation to the risks of human trafficking and exploitation among climate migrants, especially in the Western Balkans region. The rationale for including these reports lies in their independent, often field-based assessments that offer a necessary critical lens and enrich the otherwise institutional policy perspective. Additional insight into the political and strategic dimensions of climate-induced displacement was derived from reports by the International Crisis Group (2023), which underscored risks of regional destabilisation linked to unmanaged migration flows. The Centre for European Policy Studies (2023) was used to evaluate the EU's financial and humanitarian commitments, while the European Council on Foreign Relations (2020) offered critical assessments of intergovernmental coordination. Finally, the gender dimension of climate migration was informed by the UN Women (2023) report, which provided data on the intersection of climate vulnerability and gender-based risks, particularly affecting women and girls during displacement.

## Results

The intensifying intersection of climate change and human mobility presents an unprecedented challenge for legal systems, humanitarian governance, and migration management in the European Union and beyond. As environmental disruptions increasingly compel people to leave their homes, the adequacy of existing legal and policy frameworks is brought into question. Despite growing political recognition of climate-induced displacement, significant inconsistencies persist between normative declarations and the practical protection afforded to those affected.

The European Green Deal (2019) recognises climate change not only as a global threat, but also as an existential crisis that has a cascading impact on various areas of life, including migration, security, economy, and social stability. The Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024), while not directly focusing on climate migration as a major category, identifies the need to comprehensively address external factors of migration, including climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters, as significant

determinants of migration flows. Numerous statements by the European Council on Foreign Relations (2020), European Parliament (2022), and the European Council (2024) have repeatedly stressed the urgent necessity of international cooperation to effectively address climate migration and the absolute need to protect fundamental human rights in the context of climate displacement.

Specifically, the European Migration Network Inform (2023) called for the urgent development of a comprehensive and integrated EU strategy on climate migrants, including a clear legal framework for their international protection, expansion of humanitarian aid programmes, and strengthening of international coordination. In this report, the European Migration Network emphasised the need to recognise climate migration as a separate category of forced migration that requires special legal regulation and protection. Despite the clear recognition of climate migration at a high political level, the EU legal framework is still critically under-adapted to the pressing needs of climate migrants, creating a major legal and protection vacuum.

Directive of the Council of the European Union No. 2001/55/EC (2001) on temporary protection, while providing a mechanism for temporary protection in cases of mass displacement, is not tailored for the specific needs of climate migrants, and its application to this category of migrants is limited and problematic. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its derivative Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2011/95/EU (2011) clearly define refugee status based on a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or association with a particular social group, which deliberately does not cover persons forcibly displaced purely as a result of climate-related factors and environmental degradation. Thus, climate migrants, in the absence of persecution under the Convention, do not fall under the formal legal definition of refugees under current international and European law, which creates a legal gap in the critical area of their effective protection. An in-depth analysis of the theoretical legal framework of EU policy revealed a fundamental internal contradiction between the political recognition of the growing problem of climate migration and the continued lack of sufficient legal mechanisms to effectively address it and protect vulnerable groups. Additionally, Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 604/2013 (2013), which is a key element of EU migration policy and establishes clear criteria and formalised mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for the initial examination of an application for international protection, contains absolutely no provisions that would in any way consider the climate factors or environmental vulnerability when allocating responsibility for the examination of asylum applications submitted by climate migrants, ignoring the specifics of their situation.

Further in-depth analysis revealed that the dominant EU discourse on climate migration is often limited to a general statement of the existence of a severe problem without providing concrete and effective legal solutions or practical protection mechanisms. A simplistic approach prevails in EU official documents, which views climate migration mainly as a humanitarian challenge requiring assistance to victims, rather than as a comprehensive issue of protecting the fundamental human rights of those in vulnerable situations. Such a one-sided approach inevitably leads to undesirable

fragmentation of the EU's common policy in the extremely sensitive area of migration and substantially complicates the development of truly comprehensive and effective measures aimed at protecting the rights of climate migrants in the long term. Specifically, the official reports of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex, 2023; 2024) conventionally focus exclusively on strengthening control over the EU's external borders and strictly preventing illegal migration by any means, which creates other, often insurmountable, challenges for potential climate migrants desperately seeking asylum and protection in the EU, ignoring the root causes of their forced migration. Analogously, Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/115/EC (2008) on return, which primarily establishes harmonised standards and clear procedures for the forced return of third-country nationals who are illegally present in the territory of the Member States, could potentially be applied to vulnerable climate migrants who have not been formally authorised to stay legally in the EU, with no regard for the specific and often tragic circumstances of their climate-related displacement and need for international protection. Critically, an in-depth analysis of various theoretical approaches to a comprehensive definition of climate migration revealed a persistent lack of consensus among leading scholars, international organisations, and policy makers on widely accepted terminology and objective criteria for a clear definition of the category of climate migrants. The prolonged lack of international consensus on the basic definition of a climate migrant significantly complicates international cooperation in this crucial area and creates major obstacles to the development of coherent

and effective mechanisms for the international protection of vulnerable groups.

According to the leading experts of the influential United Nations Refugee Agency (2022), it is urgent to intensify coordinated international efforts to reach a broad consensus on a working definition of a climate migrant and to expedite the development of fundamental international legal standards for the effective protection of their human rights. The extensive analysis of available empirical data from a wide range of authoritative sources helped to assess the real scale and clear trends of climate migration at the critical global and vulnerable regional levels. Detailed statistics from leading international organisations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2023; 2024; 2025), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2023; 2024; 2025), and the World Bank (2021), convincingly confirmed the steady increase in the total number of internally displaced people in the world, which was directly related to the increasing frequency of environmental disasters, extreme weather events, and progressive global climate change. The UNHCR (2024) unequivocally stated that natural disasters and increasingly extreme weather events were one of the principal causes of large-scale internal displacement of vulnerable populations, and in calendar year 2024, the total number of internally displaced persons due to environmental disasters alone reached an alarming 83.4 million people worldwide. Table 1 illustrates global and regional trends in population displacement directly related to climate change and natural disasters. The data highlights both the current scale of the problem and the alarming projections for the future, including a marked increase in internal climate-related migration in the world's most vulnerable regions.

**Table 1.** Global and regional trends in climate and disaster-related displacement

Indicator	Region/World	Value	Year	Units	Notes
Internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to natural disasters	World	9.8	2024	mn people	–
Total number of IDPs in the world	World	83.4	2024	mn people	–
Internal displacement caused by conflict and violence	World	73.5	2024	mn people	–
Number of new disaster-related displacements	World	9.8	2024	mn people	–
Number of people living in flood zones	World	189	2010	mn people	–
Number of people living in areas at high risk of flooding due to sea level rise	World	267	2020	mn people	Includes areas below the predicted water level for annual flooding
Number of people living in flood zones	World	406	2050	mn people	–
Forecast of internal climate migration	Africa (sub-Saharan Africa), South Asia, Latin America	Up to 85.7 (Africa), 40.5 (South Asia), 17.1 (Latin America)	2050	mn people	Separate forecasts for each region
Forecast of internal climate migration	World	216	2050	mn people	–
Number of people facing acute food shortages caused by extreme weather events	World	258	2023	mn people in 58 countries/territories	Different levels of acute food insecurity according to IPC/CH
Number of people living in food insecurity due to extreme weather events	Africa	146	2022	mn people	–
Internal displacement caused by natural disasters (selected countries/regions with high rates, example)	Philippines	5.8	2023	mn people	–

Table 1, Continued

Indicator	Region/World	Value	Year	Units	Notes
Internal displacement caused by natural disasters (selected countries/regions with high rates, example)	China	3.6	2023	mn people	–
Internal displacement caused by natural disasters (selected countries/regions with high rates, example)	Bangladesh	2.6	2023	mn people	–
Internal displacement caused by natural disasters (selected countries/regions with high rates, example)	India	2.5	2023	mln people	–
Internal displacement caused by natural disasters (selected countries/regions with high rates, example)	USA	1.8	2023	mln people	–

**Source:** compiled by the author based on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023; 2024; 2025), World Bank (2018; 2021), Oxfam America (2022), World Food Programme (2024), Germanwatch (2025)

As presented in Table 1, the number of internally displaced persons due to natural disasters already reaches tens of millions per year, with World Bank forecasts indicating a potential increase to hundreds of millions in the coming decades. These figures demonstrate the urgent need to take measures to both mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to the inevitable changes, including ensuring the protection of the rights of climate migrants. International Organisation for Migration (2024) emphasised that anthropogenic climate change is markedly exacerbating existing global migration trends and creating fundamentally new, previously unknown forms of forced mass migration that require an immediate response.

World Bank (2018) published forecasts of a significant, unprecedented increase in internal climate migration in the coming 2025-2035, especially in the most vulnerable developing countries that are least prepared for such large-scale challenges. According to official forecasts by the World Bank, by 2050, internal climate migration could reach 143 million people in only three vulnerable regions of the world – sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and insecure Latin America – with humanitarian consequences. Notably, the updated, even more alarming World Bank (2021) forecasts directly indicated that the real scale of internal climate migration in the near future could be even more extensive and destructive, especially if urgent, unprecedented measures are not taken to radically reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and effectively adapt to the inevitable consequences of irreversible climate change.

The vulnerable Western Balkans region, which is a prominent transit area for mass migration to the EU, will already face rapidly growing and increasingly tangible migration pressure from the south and east by 2025. Analytical reports by reputable non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as CARE International (2023), Oxfam America (2022), and Child Rights Resource Centre (2024) unanimously point to a clear increase in the number of desperate climate migrants forced to cross the volatile Western Balkans region in search of asylum and protection in EU countries. The International Crisis Group (2023) in its analytical materials constantly draws the attention of the international community to the real potential destabilisation of the vulnerable Western Balkans region as a result of uncontrolled climate migration and the urgent need to strengthen effective regional cooperation between countries to jointly address this growing problem.

The Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) (2022) is conducting significant investigations into

the alarming risks directly related to the flourishing trafficking and brutal exploitation of vulnerable climate migrants in the fragile Western Balkans region, which requires an immediate response. A synthesis of the available empirical evidence confirms the criticality of climate migration as a serious global and regional issue that requires increased, coordinated attention from the European Union and the international community. A thorough study conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2022) categorically underlined that the Western Balkan countries are particularly vulnerable to the devastating effects of global climate change, such as prolonged droughts, floods, and large-scale forest fires, which will inevitably lead to a major increase in both internal and external forced migration from the region. Dangerous increases in average temperatures, dramatic changes in seasonal precipitation patterns, and accelerated sea level rise pose further, often insurmountable, challenges to the vulnerable region, which will inevitably increase the already considerable migration pressure on neighbouring European Union countries. Specifically, detailed research by the leading University of Belgrade (Andersen *et al.*, 2025) showed that Serbia, as a key country in the Western Balkans, is already facing rapidly increasing risks of devastating floods and prolonged droughts, which in the near future could lead to major internal displacement of vulnerable populations and further migration to relatively stable EU countries.

An extended analysis of the practical measures taken by the European Union in response to the growing global challenge of climate migration revealed the objective limitations and undesirable fragmentation of existing policy approaches and practical instruments. The European Union has consistently provided the necessary humanitarian aid to the affected regions and vulnerable populations through various financial instruments and mechanisms, including the European Humanitarian Aid Fund and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Centre for European Policy Studies (2023) officially allocated major funds, exceeding EUR 2 billion, to provide urgent humanitarian aid around the world, and a great part of these resources was deliberately targeted to respond quickly to the devastating effects of large-scale natural and environmental disasters that directly cause mass climate migration. Table 2 demonstrates the financial efforts of the European Union to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and migration. It covers both humanitarian aid and long-term investments in adaptation, research, and other related policy areas.

**Table 2.** EU funding, humanitarian aid, and policies related to climate and migration

Indicator	Year	Value	Units/Description	Notes
EU humanitarian aid (total)	2023	> 2	EUR bn	
Financing of climate change adaptation programmes	2007-2020	> 1	EUR bn	Total funding for the entire period
Financing of climate change adaptation programmes in developing countries	2021-2027	30% of EUR 2.3 tn	EUR bn (approximately EUR 690 bn)	Includes EU budget and NextGenerationEU
EU spending on climate goals (from the EU budget)	2014-2020	216	EUR bn	–
Target of EU spending on climate goals (from the EU budget and NextGenerationEU)	2021-2027	30%	Percentage of the total EU and NextGenerationEU budget	–
Number of climate change adaptation projects	2007-2020	> 800	various projects	–
Number of partner countries receiving EU climate support		> 70	countries	–
EU contribution to the Green Climate Fund		2.3 (as of 2020)	EUR bn	–
Investing in climate-related research and innovation (Horizon Europe)	2021-2027	35% (of EUR 95.5 bn)	EUR bn (approximately EUR 33.4 bn)	–

Source: compiled by the author

Table 2 shows that the EU is allocating resources to tackle climate change and its impacts, including migration. However, as noted later in the text, the amount of funding and the effectiveness of existing mechanisms continue to be a matter of debate and require further improvement. The European Union is also actively financing various programmes to adapt to the irreversible effects of climate change in numerous partner countries around the world through an extensive network of financial instruments, such as the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) (n.d.), which aims to increase the resilience of vulnerable regions. Within the framework of its coherent foreign policy, the EU actively supports various international initiatives aimed at comprehensively addressing the interlinked challenges of migration and global climate change, including through regular dialogues and partnerships with key countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which are most vulnerable to climate change. For instance, a significant EU Climate Diplomacy initiative deliberately aims to strengthen international cooperation at all levels in the critical area of global climate change and forced migration, facilitating the exchange of experiences and coordination of actions.

The European Union is also actively involved in numerous influential international forums and conferences, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), where urgent climate migration issues are regularly discussed at a high level and international strategies for a coordinated response to this global challenge are jointly developed. Furthermore, the European Union has consistently and actively supported various international initiatives directly aimed at substantially reducing the risk of natural disasters in developing countries (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2017), which can contribute to a notable reduction in the scale of forced mass migration caused by devastating environmental disasters in the future (European Union, 2024). However, despite considerable efforts, the real effectiveness of the EU's practical measures in climate migration continues to be limited due to negative factors and systemic shortcomings. The humanitarian

aid provided is generally short-term, deliberately aimed at quickly overcoming only the immediate consequences of disasters that have already occurred, rather than developing long-term strategies to comprehensively address the problem of climate migration and its root causes. The available funding for numerous programmes to adapt to the inevitable consequences of climate change, while extensive, is still insufficient to meet the rapidly growing needs of vulnerable developing countries, which are the first to experience the devastating impact of climate change (Kovach *et al.*, 2024).

The absence of a clear, coherent strategy for the European Union's action on climate migration as a separate phenomenon and special effective legal mechanisms to actually protect the rights of climate migrants substantially complicates the development of a truly comprehensive and systematic approach to a long-term solution to this complex global problem. Analytical reports by reputable NGOs such as Amnesty International (2023) consistently criticise the current EU policy for its apparent lack of attention to the urgent protection of the fundamental human rights of vulnerable climate migrants and for the undisguised priority of security aspects of migration control over humanitarian principles and obligations. Specifically, Amnesty International (2024) categorically emphasised that the EU's tough migration policy in general often completely ignored the crucial climate factor as the root cause of forced displacement and deliberately failed to ensure proper, effective protection of the rights of vulnerable climate migrants, which was unacceptable. The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) (2020) pointed out that the EU policy on climate migration was in dire need of substantial coordination between the various EU institutions and all Member States, and required much greater attention to fundamental issues of international justice and the necessary solidarity in complex international cooperation in this new area.

An expanded assessment of the real effectiveness of the EU's policy on the factual protection of the rights of vulnerable climate migrants shows that there are considerable systemic challenges, numerous shortcomings, and evident

gaps that must be addressed urgently. The current EU policy in this area is not comprehensive, systematic, consistent, and strategically oriented enough to address the problem of mass climate migration and protect human rights effectively and for the long term. The fundamental rights of climate migrants, as demonstrated above, are not fully protected within the existing fragmented legal and political system of the European Union, which is unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The social vulnerability of many climate migrants is still critically high, and their effective access to basic human rights and essential social services remains severely limited due to the lack of a clear legal status and targeted policies. The existing volumes of international humanitarian aid, while extensive, are insufficient to meet the rapidly growing humanitarian needs of vulnerable climate migrants around the world, especially in the most affected regions. The significant and underestimated gender dimension of climate migration requires substantially increased attention from the EU and the development of special, targeted measures of effective protection for particularly vulnerable women and girls as climate migrants, who often face multiple discrimination. A study conducted by UN Women (2023) reiterated that many female climate migrants systematically faced other, often hidden forms of gender discrimination, severe violence, and sexual exploitation during forced migration, which urgently required the development of specific gender-sensitive approaches to effectively protect their fundamental human rights. An independent assessment of the EU's current climate migration policy by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) (2023) pointed to the urgent need to substantially strengthen the EU's leading role in the overall international effort to comprehensively address the global climate migration challenge and to ensure much greater coherence and synergy between the EU's internal and external policies in this critical area in the future.

A generalised analysis of the EU's current climate migration policy leads to the unequivocal conclusion on the urgent need to substantially strengthen the EU's coordinated efforts to urgently develop a comprehensive, efficient, and strategically balanced policy to effectively respond to this growing global challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on the in-depth study, the following detailed recommendations are proposed to comprehensively improve the EU's climate migration policy and strengthen the human rights protection of vulnerable climate migrants. It is necessary to accelerate the development of a clear international legal definition of a climate migrant at the EU and global level. Coordinated international efforts should be immediately intensified to reach consensus on an agreed definition of a climate migrant and to accelerate the development of fundamental international legal standards for the effective protection of their human rights. The European Union, as a key global leader, must play a key role in this critical process by initiating international negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations and actively developing a legally binding international convention on the protection of climate migrants. Urgent creation of special legal mechanisms for the effective protection of climate migrants directly within the legal system of the European Union. The practical possibility of substantial adaptation of existing EU legal instruments, such as the updated Council Directive of the Council of the European Union No. 2001/55/EC (2001) on temporary protection, to accommodate the specific needs of climate migrants, or the

development of a fundamentally new, separate EU legal instrument specifically aimed at comprehensive protection of the rights of vulnerable climate migrants in the EU, should be considered in detail. It is essential to ensure that climate migrants have real access to fair procedures for granting international asylum, humanitarian visas, and other forms of legal migration to EU countries, avoiding discrimination. Consistent strengthening of international cooperation in the critical area of climate migration at all levels.

The European Union should immediately intensify comprehensive cooperation with key international organisations, such as the UNHCR and IOM, as well as with all countries directly affected by mass climate migration, to jointly develop coordinated international strategies for an effective response to this global problem. It is vital to ensure a fair international distribution of responsibilities among all countries of the world in terms of acceptance, adaptation, and effective protection of the rights of vulnerable climate migrants, based on the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility. Major increase in targeted funding for international programmes of adaptation to the irreversible effects of climate change in developing countries and humanitarian aid programmes directly to climate migrants. The European Union should initiate an extensive increase in targeted financial aid aimed at actively supporting large-scale climate change adaptation programmes in the most vulnerable developing countries, which will greatly reduce the scale of forced climate migration in the dangerous long-term perspective by addressing the root causes. At the same time, it is necessary to significantly increase the volume of urgent humanitarian aid directly to vulnerable climate migrants, especially in remote regions most affected by devastating environmental disasters and climate change. Consistent integration of the fundamental aspect of human rights protection into all EU policy areas that are directly or indirectly related to climate migration.

The protection of fundamental human rights should be a priority in all EU measures and initiatives aimed at comprehensively addressing the complex issue of climate migration. All climate migrants must be guaranteed full access to impartial justice, necessary social services, quality education, and prompt medical care without discrimination. It is necessary to actively combat any manifestations of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia against vulnerable climate migrants in the EU and consistently promote their full social integration into the host society based on equality and mutual respect. Unconditional gender equality and women's empowerment in EU climate migration policy at all levels. It is necessary to systematically factor in the crucial gender aspect of climate migration and urgently develop effective gender-sensitive approaches to the comprehensive protection of the rights of particularly vulnerable women and girls as climate migrants. It is essential to provide them with guaranteed access to specialised programmes of effective protection against gender-based violence and discrimination in all forms, as well as to actively promote their economic independence, social adaptation, and full participation in society.

## Discussion

The key conclusion of the study was the significant discrepancy between the political recognition of the problem of climate migration at the level of the European Union and the existing lack of effective legal instruments to address it

effectively. An analysis of EU strategic documents such as the European Green Deal (2019) and the Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024) has shown a growing understanding by EU institutions of the interconnections between climate change and migration processes. However, this political recognition has not yet translated into a clear and comprehensive legal framework to ensure the protection of climate migrants. Existing legal instruments, specifically Council Directive of the Council of the European Union No. 2001/55/EC (2001) on temporary protection and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), do not objectively accommodate the specific needs of persons displaced solely due to climate-related factors and environmental degradation. This legal gap creates a major vacuum in the protection of climate migrants, who are left outside the current international and European legal systems. The widespread approach in the EU, which treats climate migration primarily as a humanitarian challenge rather than a human rights issue, exacerbates this problem by preventing the development of long-term and systemic solutions. These conclusions correlate with the research of leading scholars who emphasise the lack of a clear international legal definition of the concept of “climate migrant” and the need to develop a new legal framework to protect this vulnerable population. J. McAdam (2012), in his study on the legal status of climate migrants, emphasised that international law developed in an era when climate migration was not such an evident problem is not sufficiently adapted to modern challenges. Similarly, B. Šedová *et al.* (2021) in their studies of EU migration policy pointed to the fragmented and reactive nature of the EU’s response to new migration challenges, including climate migration, emphasising the need for a more strategic and proactive approach.

Statistics from leading international organisations, such as the UNHCR (2023), the IOM (2023; 2024; 2025), and the World Bank (2021), convincingly confirm the growing scale of climate migration as a global and regional trend. The number of internally displaced persons due to environmental disasters reached 9.8 million in 2024 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024), and World Bank forecasts (2021) indicate a potential increase in internal climate migration to 143 million people by 2050 in the most vulnerable regions of the world. These figures illustrate the scale of the challenge and the urgent need for action by the international community, including the EU. G. Vince (2022) emphasised that climate change is a powerful new factor exacerbating existing migration trends and posing unprecedented challenges to the international community. Unlike economic migration, which is often voluntary and regulated, climate migration is mostly forced and unpredictable, requiring the development of special response and protection mechanisms.

Particularly noteworthy is the vulnerability of the Western Balkans, a transit region for migration flows to the EU that is already experiencing increasing climate migration pressures (Oxfam America, 2022; CARE International, 2023; Save the Children, 2024). This regional vulnerability poses extra challenges for EU migration policy and calls for enhanced regional cooperation to effectively manage migration and protect migrants’ rights. Analytical reports by NGOs such as CARE International (2023), Oxfam America (2022), Child Rights Resource Centre (2024) unanimously pointed to a clear increase in the number of climate migrants forced to cross the volatile Western Balkans region to seek asylum and

protection in EU countries. This trend confirms the predictions of leading experts about the potential destabilisation of vulnerable regions of the world as a result of uncontrolled climate migration. Specifically, analysts of the International Crisis Group (2023) warn of the risks of increased social tension and political instability in the Western Balkans region caused by the growing migration pressure associated with climate change. Research by the OCCRP (2022) indicated an increase in criminal risks associated with human trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable migrants in the region. In contrast to studies focusing on the macroeconomic aspects of migration, these reports emphasised the humanitarian dimension of climate migration and the need to protect the human rights of vulnerable populations in challenging situations. An analysis of the EU’s practical measures in the area of climate migration revealed their limited effectiveness and fragmentation. The European Union provides humanitarian aid, funds climate change adaptation programmes, and supports international initiatives (Klymenko, 2024). However, these measures are often short-term, reactive, and not systematic enough to address the problem in the long term. The absence of a clear EU action strategy on climate migration as a separate phenomenon and specific legal mechanisms to protect the rights of climate migrants is a critical gap. NGOs such as Amnesty International (2023; 2024) have consistently criticised EU policies for their lack of attention to the human rights of climate migrants and the priority given to security aspects of migration control. This criticism is echoed by M.J. Uddin (2023), who emphasised the need to move from a response to the effects of climate migration to preventive measures aimed at reducing vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable regions. Analysing different countries’ policies on environmental migration, E. Piguet (2021) and J. Doering-White *et al.* (2024) pointed to a general tendency towards fragmentation and lack of an integrated approach, emphasising the need to develop more coordinated and systematic strategies at the international level. In contrast to the EU’s approach, which focused mainly on humanitarian aid and foreign policy, a series of researchers (van der Vliet & Biermann, 2022; Baldwin & Waters, 2024; Alsina-Pujols, 2025) call for a more comprehensive strategy that would include elements of internal policy, including the adaptation of migration legislation and social policy to the needs of climate migrants.

Additionally, the analysis results were consistent with the findings of Q. Han *et al.* (2024), who highlighted the insufficiency of the international legal framework for the protection of climate migrants and emphasised the need for international cooperation to address this issue. M.C. Waters (2024) also emphasised the significance of preparing host countries for the integration of climate migrants and suggests policy solutions, particularly regarding visa policies, which echoes the need for a stable legal status identified in the present study. J. Freihardt’s (2025) empirical findings on the impact of environmental shocks on migration in a study of the Bangladeshi population further confirmed the significance of climate factors as a driver of migration, which was also found in the EU climate migrant survey. The analysis of the current EU policy on climate migration suggests an urgent need to substantially strengthen the coordinated efforts of the European Union to promptly develop a comprehensive, efficient, and strategically sound strategy to effectively respond to this growing global challenge of the

21<sup>st</sup> century. The findings of the study underlined that the European Union is taking certain steps towards addressing the problem of climate migration, but there remains a significant gap between political recognition of the issue and the existence of real legal and practical mechanisms for its resolution. This observation is aligned with the conclusions of Rajshree *et al.* (2025), who emphasise that despite the evolving discourse on “climate refugees”, international legal frameworks still fall short in formally recognising and protecting those displaced by climate-induced events. Their analysis highlights the urgent need to redefine legal categories and obligations under international environmental and humanitarian law to bridge this normative vacuum. Thus, the issue of climate migration continues to represent one of the most pressing and complex challenges of the twenty-first century, necessitating the consolidation of international efforts to develop effective, rights-based, and equitable solutions for vulnerable populations. Further research in this area is essential to deepen the understanding of climate-induced displacement and to inform the development of more coherent and enforceable policy instruments both within the EU and across international legal systems. In contrast to optimistic scenarios that assume that existing migration systems can adapt to new challenges, the findings suggest the need for a radical transformation of the international migration regime to effectively respond to the growing scale of climate migration and ensure the protection of human rights of vulnerable groups.

### Conclusions

The European Union demonstrates a growing understanding of the relevance and scale of the climate migration challenge, which is reflected in a series of policy documents and policy initiatives. However, despite the existence of political will and certain practical steps, the EU’s policy in this area, as the theoretical study found, continues to be fragmented and insufficiently comprehensive. The key qualitative indicator identified in the study included the lack of a coherent legal framework at the EU level that would clearly define the status of climate migrants and guarantee them adequate protection. The emphasis is often placed on the security aspects of migration flows rather than on humanitarian aspects and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups. This approach can lead to restrictions on climate migrants’ access to international protection and increase their stigmatisation. At the same time, the study highlighted the need to move towards

a more humanistic approach based on the principles of human rights and international solidarity. The European Union should abandon the perception of climate migration as a security threat and recognise it as a humanitarian challenge that requires adequate legal and policy solutions. Considering the findings, the study helped to formulate a series of practical recommendations for improving the EU’s climate migration policy. First of all, it is necessary to develop a clear legal definition of a climate migrant at the EU level and create a special legal mechanism to ensure their protection. This mechanism should accommodate the specific needs of climate migrants and guarantee them access to asylum, basic social services, and opportunities for adaptation in new conditions. Furthermore, the EU should strengthen international cooperation on climate migration, particularly with developing countries that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and the key sources of climate migration. A prominent area is to provide financial and technical aid to these countries to implement adaptation measures and reduce the vulnerability of the population to climate disasters.

Further research in this area could focus on an in-depth analysis of the effects of climate migration on various aspects of the lives of host communities and migrants themselves, including social integration, economic adaptation, and psychological well-being. Another notable area involves the study of regional aspects of climate migration within the EU, particularly in countries bordering regions vulnerable to climate change. The issue of gender aspects of climate migration warrants a separate investigation, as women and girls are often the most vulnerable to the effects of climate displacement. A limitation of this study was its focus on European Union policy. Further research could expand the geographical scope to include the policies of other regional groupings and individual states on climate migration, which would provide a more comprehensive picture of global efforts to respond to this challenge and identify best practices and innovative approaches.

### Acknowledgements

None.

### Funding

The study was not funded.

### Conflict of interest

None.

### References

- [1] Alsina-Pujols, M. (2025). Warming with borders: Forced climate migration and carbon pricing. *Economics Working Paper Series*, 25, article number 397. doi: 10.3929/ethz-b-000718656.
- [2] Amnesty International. (2023). *Amnesty International report 2022/23: The state of the world’s human rights*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/amnesty-international-report-202223-state-worlds-human-rights-enar>.
- [3] Amnesty International. (2024). *Climate-related human rights harm and the right to effective remedy*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/IOR4077172024ENGLISH.pdf>.
- [4] Andersen, Z.J., Badyda, A., Tzivian, L., Dzhambov, A.M., Paunovic, K., Savic, S., Jacquemin, B., & Dragic, N. (2025). Air pollution inequalities in Europe: A deeper understating of challenges in Eastern Europe and pathways forward towards closing the gap between East and West. *Environmental Epidemiology*, 9(3), article number e383. doi: 10.1097/ee9.000000000000383.
- [5] Baldwin, A., & Waters, R. (2024). Calculating ‘climate migrants’: An emerging topology of power. *Security Dialogue*, 56(1), 21-37. doi: 10.1177/09670106241269714.
- [6] Brynzanska, O. (2024). Damage to the environment as a sign of genocide. *Scientific Journal of the National Academy of Internal Affairs*, 29(3), 42-52. doi: 10.56215/naia-herald/3.2024.42.
- [7] CARE International. (2023). *The role of youth in food and water systems: The right to food, water and nutrition annual report*. Retrieved from [https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/RFWN-2023-Annual-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/RFWN-2023-Annual-Report_FINAL.pdf).

- [8] Centre for European Policy Studies. (2023). *Annual report 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/annual-report-2023/>.
- [9] Child Rights Resource Centre. (2024). *Children's report 2024*. Retrieved from <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/childrens-report-2024>.
- [10] Chotouras, D., Fragkou, R., & Tsadiras, A. (2024). Environmentally induced human displacement and human rights: Bridging legal gaps through a human rights-based approach. *International Human Rights Law Review*, 13(2), 412-441. doi: 10.1163/22131035-13020001.
- [11] Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. (1951, July). Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-relating-status-refugees>.
- [12] Directive of the Council of the European Union No. 2001/55/EC "On Minimum Standards for Giving Temporary Protection in the Event of a Mass Influx of Displaced Persons and on Measures Promoting a Balance of Efforts between Member States in Receiving Such Persons and Bearing the Consequences Thereof". (2001, July). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/55/oj/eng>.
- [13] Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/115/EC "On Common Standards and Procedures in Member States for Returning Illegally Staying Third-Country Nationals". (2008, December). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/115/oj/eng>.
- [14] Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2011/95/EU "On Standards for the Qualification of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Beneficiaries of International Protection, for a Uniform Status for Refugees or for Persons Eligible for Subsidiary Protection, and for the Content of the Protection Granted". (2011, December). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/95/oj/eng>.
- [15] Doering-White, J., De León, A.D., Batista, C.A., & Flynn, K. (2024). Humanitarian aid and the everyday invisibility of climate-related migration from Central America. *Climate and Development*, 17(1). doi: 10.1080/17565529.2024.2312829.
- [16] Dutta, S., & Basu, A. (2025). Climate change and human displacement: Towards validation of rights. *Law of Justice Journal*, 38(3), 51-71. doi: 10.5335/rjd.v38i3.16158.
- [17] EU Adaptation Strategy. (2021, February). Retrieved from [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy_en).
- [18] European Council on Foreign Relations. (2020). *Migration and climate change: What can European cooperation achieve?* Retrieved from <https://ecfr.eu/event/migration-and-climate-change-what-can-european-cooperation-achieve/>.
- [19] European Council. (2024). *European Council conclusions on EU in the world, resilience, preparedness, crisis prevention and response, migration and other items, 19 December 2024*. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/12/19/european-council-conclusions-on-eu-in-the-world-resilience-preparedness-crisis-prevention-and-response-migration-and-other-items/>.
- [20] European Green Deal. (2019, December). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52019DC0640>.
- [21] European Migration Network Inform. (2023). *Displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation*. Retrieved from [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/EMN\\_Inform\\_climate\\_related\\_migration\\_final\\_May2023\\_090523.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/EMN_Inform_climate_related_migration_final_May2023_090523.pdf).
- [22] European Parliament. (2022). *The future of climate migration*. Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729334/EPRS\\_ATA\(2022\)729334\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729334/EPRS_ATA(2022)729334_EN.pdf).
- [23] European Union. (2024). *Towards a climate-neutral Europe*. Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/general-report-2024/en/chapter4.html>.
- [24] Freihardt, J. (2025). Environmental shocks and migration among a climate-vulnerable population in Bangladesh. *Population and Environment*, 47, article number 6. doi: 10.1007/s11111-025-00478-7.
- [25] Frontex. (2023). *2023 in brief*. Retrieved from [https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/In\\_Brief\\_2023/frontex\\_-2023-digital-leaflet.html](https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/In_Brief_2023/frontex_-2023-digital-leaflet.html).
- [26] Frontex. (2024). *2024 in brief*. Retrieved from <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/2024-in-brief/>.
- [27] Germanwatch. (2025). *Climate Risk Index 2025*. Retrieved from <https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/Climate%20Risk%20Index%202025.pdf>.
- [28] Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+). (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/global-climate-change-alliance-plus\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/global-climate-change-alliance-plus_en).
- [29] Han, Q., Kumar, R., & Kumar, A. (2023). Climate change and human migration: Perspectives for environmentally sustainable societies. *Journal of Geochemical Exploration*, 256, article number 107352. doi: 10.1016/j.gexplo.2023.107352.
- [30] IDMC. (2025). *Displacement, disasters and climate change*. Retrieved from <https://www.internal-displacement.org/focus-areas/Displacement-disasters-and-climate-change/>.
- [31] International Crisis Group. (2023). *Watch list 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/watch-list-2023>.
- [32] International Organisation for Migration. (2023). *Annual report 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.iom.int/msite/annual-report-2023/>.
- [33] International Organisation for Migration. (2024). *World migration report 2024*. Retrieved from <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive/>.
- [34] International Organisation for Migration. (2025). *Global appeal 2025*. Retrieved from <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/global-appeal/globalappeal2025.pdf>.
- [35] Junker, K.W., Münster, S., & Shinde, M. (2022). Climate-induced migration: The need for a reparative legal regime. *Environmental Policy and Law*, 52(5-6), 473-485. doi: 10.3233/EPL-219053.

- [36] Klymenko, V. (2024). Public administration of environmental safety in Ukraine and EU countries. *Law, Human, Environment*, 15(4), 9-30. doi: [10.31548/law/4.2024.09](https://doi.org/10.31548/law/4.2024.09).
- [37] Koskina, A., Georgantas, E., & Plionis, M. (2024). Climate crisis and human migration: The emergent sociolegal parameters of a science-based policymaking. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 6, article number 1468711. doi: [10.3389/fpos.2024.1468711](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1468711).
- [38] Kovach, D., Kullolli, B., Djaparova, S., Mikhnevych, L., & Myskovets, I. (2024). Legal aspects of environmental sustainability and climate change: The role of international and national legislation. *Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*, 4(2), 149-179. doi: [10.33002/jelp040206](https://doi.org/10.33002/jelp040206).
- [39] Krasivskyy, O. (2024). Development and evolution of European Union policy. *Democratic Governance*, 17(2), 46-57. doi: [10.56318/dg/2.2024.46](https://doi.org/10.56318/dg/2.2024.46).
- [40] Mahmood, K.S. (2024). Legal and policy response to climate change in Bangladesh. In M. Uddin (Ed.), *International law, climate change and Bangladesh* (pp. 23-41). Cham: Springer. doi: [10.1007/978-3-031-71297-5\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-71297-5_2).
- [41] McAdam, J. (2012). *Climate change, forced migration, and international law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi: [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199587087.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199587087.001.0001).
- [42] Negrón, R., et al. (2025). Critical approaches to climate-induced migration research and solutions. *Local Environment*. doi: [10.1080/13549839.2025.2462545](https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2025.2462545).
- [43] Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. (2023). *Annual report*. Retrieved from <https://www.occrp.org/en/about-us/annual-reports/annual-report-2023/>.
- [44] Oxfam America. (2022). *Annual report 2022*. Retrieved from <https://webassets.oxfamamerica.org/media/documents/2022-Oxfam-America-Annual-Report-2.pdf>.
- [45] Pact on Migration and Asylum. (2024, May). Retrieved from [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en).
- [46] Piguet, E. (2021). Linking climate change, environmental degradation, and migration: An update after 10 years. *WIREs Climate Change*, 13(1), article number e746. doi: [10.1002/wcc.746](https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.746).
- [47] Rajshree, Mehta, C., & Luhach, S. (2025). Displaced by climate change: Navigating legal framework for 'climate refugees' in international environmental law. *India Quarterly*, 81(1), 9-24. doi: [10.1177/09749284241307928](https://doi.org/10.1177/09749284241307928).
- [48] Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 604/2013 "On Establishing the Criteria and Mechanisms for Determining the Member State Responsible for Examining an Application for International Protection Lodged in One of the Member States by a Third-Country National or a Stateless Person". (2013, June). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/604/oj/eng>.
- [49] Šedová, B., Čizmaziová, L., & Cook, A. (2021). *A meta-analysis of climate migration literature*. Retrieved from <https://d-nb.info/122998836X/34>.
- [50] Thomas, A., Baptiste, A., Martyr-Koller, R., Pringle, P., & Rhiney, K. (2020). Climate change and small island developing states. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 45(1), 1-27. doi: [10.1146/annurev-environ-012320-083355](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-012320-083355).
- [51] Uddin, M.J. (2023). Climate change, vulnerabilities, and migration: Insights from ecological migrants in Bangladesh. *Journal of Environment & Development*, 33(1), 50-74. doi: [10.1177/10704965231211589](https://doi.org/10.1177/10704965231211589).
- [52] UN Women. (2023). *Women, peace, and security 2020-2021 annual report*. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/02/women-peace-and-security-2020-2021-annual-report>.
- [53] United Nations Environment Programme. (2022). *UNEP in 2022*. Retrieved from <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/41679/Annual-Report-2022.pdf>.
- [54] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (1992, May). Retrieved from [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf).
- [55] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/global-trends-report-2023.pdf>.
- [56] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2024). *Mid-year trends*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/mid-year-trends-report-2024.pdf>.
- [57] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2025). *Global appeal*. Retrieved from <https://reporting.unhcr.org/global-appeal-2025-executive-summary>.
- [58] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2017). *The Sendai framework terminology on disaster risk reduction*. Retrieved from <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster-risk-reduction>.
- [59] United Nations Refugee Agency. (2022). *Climate change, displacement and human rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/6242ea7c4.pdf>.
- [60] van der Vliet, J., & Biermann, F. (2022). Global governance of climate migrants: A critical evaluation of the global compacts. In S. Behrman & A. Kent (Eds.), *Climate refugees: Global, local and critical approaches* (pp. 60-82). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi: [10.1017/9781108902991.004](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108902991.004).
- [61] Vince, G. (2022). *Nomad century: How climate migration will reshape our world*. London: Penguin.
- [62] Waters, M.C. (2024). Preparing for climate migration and integration: a policy and research agenda. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 51(1), 4-23. doi: [10.1080/1369183x.2024.2438449](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2024.2438449).
- [63] World Bank. (2018). *Groundswell: Preparing for internal climate migration*. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29461/WBG-ClimateChange-Final.pdf>.
- [64] World Bank. (2021). *Climate change action plan 2021-2025*. Retrieved from <https://www.miga.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/CCAP-2021-25-2.pdf>.
- [65] World Food Programme. (2024). *Global report on food crises (GRFC) 2024*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfp.org/publications/global-report-food-crises-grfc>.

## Роль Європейського Союзу у вирішенні проблеми міграції, спричиненої зміною клімату, та захисті прав іммігрантів

**Йоана Кочі**

Магістр

Університет Тирани

1010, пл. Матері Терези, 4, м. Тирана, Албанія

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9156-6509>

**Анотація.** Метою цього дослідження була всебічна оцінка політики Європейського Союзу щодо кліматичної міграції з погляду її відповідності міжнародним стандартам у сфері прав людини. У роботі застосовано структуровану якісну методологію, що поєднує доктринальний правовий аналіз, порівняльне оцінювання політик і критичне інтерпретування офіційної та неурядової звітності. У дослідженні встановлено, що хоча інституції Європейського Союзу демонструють зростаюче визнання зміни клімату як чинника міграції, залишається суттєвий розрив через відсутність чіткого правового статусу для кліматичних мігрантів у правовій системі ЄС. Існуючі правові інструменти виявилися недостатньо адаптованими до специфічних потреб осіб, переміщених переважно внаслідок екологічних чинників, що створює вакуум у сфері захисту. Аналіз міжнародних звітів підтвердив зростання масштабів проблеми: станом на кінець 2024 року у світі налічувалося 83,4 млн внутрішньо переміщених осіб, з яких 9,8 млн – через природні катастрофи. Практичні заходи Європейського Союзу, хоч і включають гуманітарну допомогу та фінансування адаптаційних програм, часто характеризуються як короткострокові та недостатні для подолання першопричин або забезпечення довготривалого захисту. Встановлено, що домінуючий дискурс Європейського Союзу розглядає кліматичну міграцію переважно як гуманітарну або безпекову проблему, а не як комплексне питання прав людини, що викликає послідовну критику з боку неурядових організацій за пріоритетність контролю кордонів над гуманітарними принципами. Це дискурсивне обрамлення виявлено як ключову перепону для системних правових реформ. На основі порівняльного правового аналізу та огляду інституційної політики сформульовано конкретні рекомендації для переходу до гуманістичної парадигми у політиці Європейського Союзу щодо кліматичної міграції, чим обґрунтовано практичну значущість дослідження

**Ключові слова:** міжнародний захист; зміни навколишнього середовища; глобальне потепління; внутрішньо переміщені особи; правові норми