

Global Security and Human Rights in a Changing Climate: Exploring the Intersections of Migration, EU Policy, and Climate Justice

*Roundtable discussion organized by the Institute of International Relations Prague
Within the framework of the Horizon Europe HRJust project**

12 June 2025 (Day 1, Thursday)

16:00 – 17:30

Room (Karlín 4), Hilton Hotel Prague

Climate change is reshaping global security, driving migration, and challenging the foundations of human rights and international law. It is imperative to explore the nexus of climate change, human security, and justice through three interconnected lenses. This session will address the human rights impacts of climate-induced migration, EU's pivotal role in climate security, both in its internal and external actions, and the turning point for climate justice through landmark litigation. How can these dimensions converge to shape global stability and governance? What are the emerging challenges and innovative responses to climate security?

Speakers:

- Mats Braun, Director of the Institute of International Relations Prague
- Veronika Bílková, Professor and Head of the Department of Public International Law and Head of the University Centre for Conflict and Post-Conflict Studies at the Faculty of Law of Charles University, Senior researcher at the Institute of International Relations Prague
- Federica Cristani, Head of the Centre for International Law at the Institute of International Relations Prague

Moderator:

- Romana Jungwirth Březovská, Climate Diplomacy Lead, Association for International Affairs, Researcher at the Global Change Research Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS PRAGUE

* Horizon Europe HRJust project (States' Practice of Human Rights Justification), GA no. 101094346 and the SERI (Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation) GA no. 23.00131

REPORT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE

On 12 June 2025, the HRJust IIR team organized a high-level roundtable at the GLOBSEC 2025 Forum in Prague (CZ). Focused on the intersection of climate change, global security, human rights, and migration, with a particular focus on EU policy and international law, the event provided an opportunity to present and discuss key findings from HRJust’s Work Package 6 (WP6) on climate with a diverse array of international stakeholders. By facilitating direct engagement with international stakeholders and institutions, the roundtable exemplified HRJust’s commitment to multinational institutional outreach, effectively bridging the project’s research with global policy conversations.

This roundtable was moderated by the Head of Climate Diplomacy in Association for International Affairs Romana Jungwirth Březovská, and featured IIR Director Mats Braun, IIR senior researcher and Head of the Department of Public International Law at the Faculty of Law of Charles University Prof. Veronika Bílková, and the Head of the Centre for International Law at IIR Federica Cristani.

Dr. Braun opened the discussion by highlighting the EU’s role as a global leader in climate mitigation and adaptation. He outlined the EU’s early international engagement—from its participation in the IPCC in 1990 to its involvement in key agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Copenhagen Accord, and the Paris Agreement—emphasizing its “lead by example” strategy. Dr. Braun also warned of a global decline in democracy and cautioned against the appeal of authoritarian environmentalism, noting that while autocratic regimes may act faster, democratic systems tend to be more effective and legitimate in the long term. He further addressed political dynamics in science communication and growing public scepticism towards expert knowledge. The discussion also touched on China’s evolving climate policy, its industrial strength in areas like electric vehicles, and the potential for EU-China cooperation.

Prof. Veronika Bílková focused on environmental migration, a phenomenon that currently lacks a universally accepted legal definition. Drawing on IOM data, she described climate migrants as a diverse group, ranging from those forcibly displaced by rising sea levels and extreme weather to others who move voluntarily. Most are displaced within their own countries or regions, either temporarily or permanently. In 2022 alone, 32 million people were displaced by climate-related factors, with projections rising to 216 million by 2050. Prof. Bílková also examined the security implications of climate migration, warning against simplistic threat narratives and underlining the potential of migration to contribute positively to affected

** Horizon Europe HRJust project (States’ Practice of Human Rights Justification), GA no. 101094346 and the SERI (Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation) GA no. 23.00131*

societies. In terms of legal frameworks, she stressed the absence of binding international protections, as the 1951 Refugee Convention does not apply to climate-related displacement. Nonetheless, she pointed to evolving soft law approaches and human rights-based mechanisms, including a notable Human Rights Committee case concerning New Zealand and temporary protection agreements such as those between Australia and Tuvalu.

Dr. Federica Cristani addressed the concept of climate justice, understood as ensuring fairness and the protection of human rights in the context of climate change. She identified climate litigation as a growing tool for achieving redress, citing landmark cases such as *Urgenda v. Netherlands* and the recent *KlimaSeniorinnen v. Switzerland* judgment by the European Court of Human Rights. She also referred to ongoing proceedings at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice, which are expected to deliver advisory opinions on climate-related matters. Cristani emphasized the role of civil society—particularly vulnerable groups such as older adults, youth, and Indigenous peoples—in initiating these cases, often in response to state inaction. While climate litigation can be time-consuming and expensive, it has significantly advanced the recognition of the links between climate change and human rights.

Audience members engaged actively, particularly around the implications of political pushback against the European Court of Human Rights and the future of climate litigation. The roundtable offered a dynamic and timely contribution to ongoing debates on climate justice, security, and legal accountability.

For more information on the GLOBSEC Forum 2025: <https://forum2025.globsec.org/>

* Horizon Europe HRJust project (*States' Practice of Human Rights Justification*), GA no. 101094346 and the SERI (Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation) GA no. 23.00131