

Strategic Plan

# 2024- 2028



European  
Network on  
Statelessness

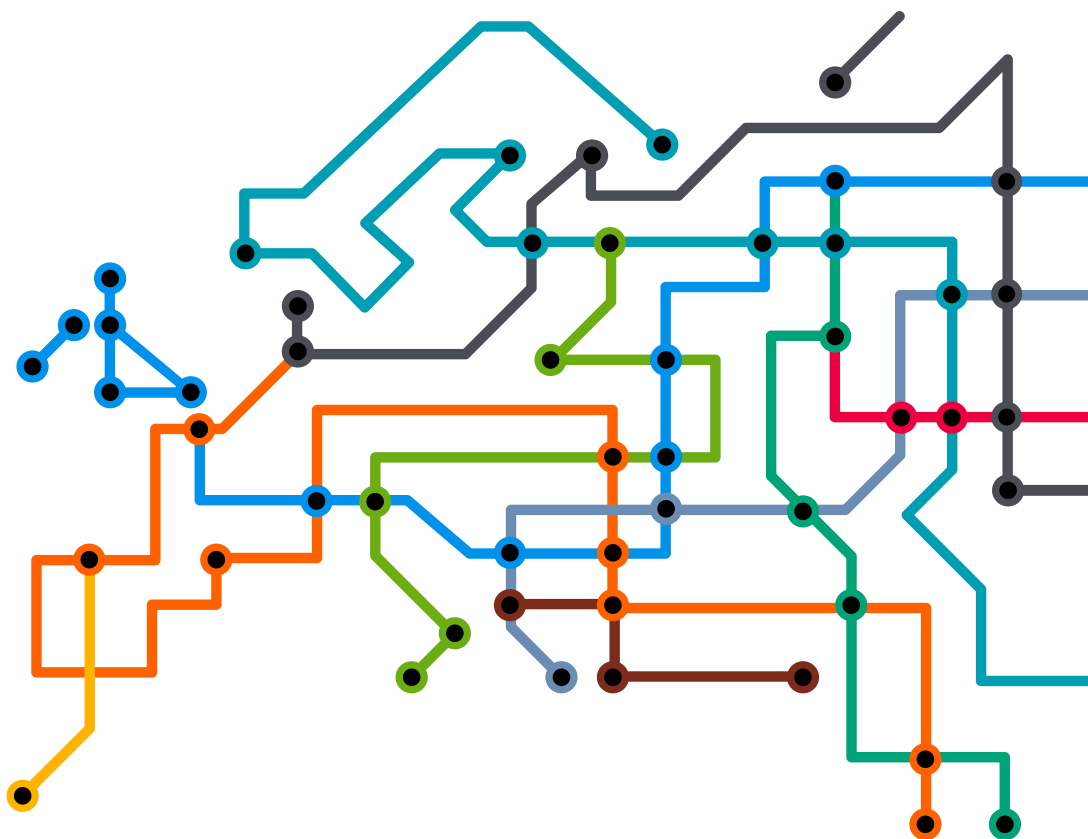
FOREWORD

WHO WE ARE

WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT

HOW WE WORK

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE CHANGE



## Discover key resources

Explore our website and online tools for more information about the rights of stateless people and how Europe can end statelessness and ensure that stateless people are protected.



[www.statelessness.eu](http://www.statelessness.eu)



[index.statelessness.eu](http://index.statelessness.eu)



[caselaw.statelessness.eu](http://caselaw.statelessness.eu)



[statelessjourneys.org](http://statelessjourneys.org)

## Foreword

In 2022, we celebrated our 10th anniversary. We have grown from an idea into a vibrant Network with ten staff and a diverse membership spanning 40 European countries.

We are now more representative of and more responsive to stateless communities. Over 30 stateless individuals and community representatives joined our Network in 2019-2023, and half our Advisory Committee has lived experience of statelessness. We have 50 stateless changemakers in our Community Group, which meets monthly to discuss and plan action.

But we know we need to do more so stateless people can claim power as leaders of change. This is one of three goals guiding our work in our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and is inextricably linked with our other two goals to be an accountable, inclusive, and sustainable Network, and to urgently bring about law and policy change so everyone in Europe can realise their right to a nationality.

At our pan-regional Madrid conference in June 2023, we witnessed the powerful impact of diverse voices of lived experience taking the floor alongside decision-makers to expertly speak truth to power.

We firmly commit to continue to work alongside stateless communities, and to mainstream statelessness across child rights, forced migration, access to justice, and anti-discrimination agendas to find solutions to the issues affecting stateless people's lives.

Working together we truly believe that we can break the cycle of statelessness in Europe - we invite you to join us!



**Chris Nash**  
Director and co-founder of  
the European Network on Statelessness

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# Who we are

The European Network on Statelessness (ENS) is a civil society alliance of organisations and individuals working to promote the right to a nationality in Europe. Our network brings together over 180 members in more than 40 countries and includes grassroots community organisations, national and international NGOs, legal advice agencies, think tanks, individuals with lived experience of statelessness, and other experts.

Since establishing in 2012, we have been working to ensure that statelessness is given the attention it is due as a critical human rights issue. We are dedicated to raising awareness about statelessness and the right to a nationality, supporting legal and policy development, and building civil society's capacity to act. We work collaboratively with others and our partners trust us to provide them with reliable and high-quality comparative research, information, and analysis. Together, we seek to be an effective catalyst for change that improves the lives of people affected by statelessness across Europe.

Our London-based Secretariat steers and coordinates our work, providing guidance and channelling the expertise of those we work with into impactful solutions. Our members play a critical role, leading on national-level activities and contributing to regional and international advocacy. Our Advisory Committee draws on the diverse perspectives and experience of its members to shape and inform our work, all of which is overseen by our experienced and dedicated Board of Trustees. At the heart of our work lies the understanding that stateless people and their communities should be the leaders of change.

**We want to be an organisation that works tirelessly alongside people affected by statelessness to improve their lives; a strategic partner to policymakers in law and policy reform; a network that is stronger with the voice of each new supporter who joins our campaigns; and a catalyst for change.**

## Our Vision

Our vision is for a Europe where everyone is able to realise their right to a nationality.

## Our Mission

ENS connects stateless people, their communities, and organisations and experts from across Europe with a shared dedication to breaking the cycle of statelessness and realising everyone's right to a nationality. We aim to reach our goals by enabling collective action in three areas: law and policy development, awareness-raising, and capacity-building.

## Our Values

Diversity  
Equality  
Inclusion  
Transparency  
Accountability  
Innovation  
Collaboration



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# Why our work is important

The struggle to break the cycle of statelessness in Europe continues to face challenges on multiple fronts. A long-standing rise in nationalism and racism has exacerbated negative attitudes towards refugees, migrants, and other minoritized groups. Across the region, respect for human rights and the rule of law are at risk of backsliding. At the same time, wars and the climate crisis are fuelling forced displacement around the world, which is both a cause and consequence of statelessness. Against this backdrop, it is ever more important that we continue to hold governments to account and ensure that statelessness gets the attention it is due as a pressing human rights issue that cuts across policy areas such as child rights, migration, and equalities.

At least half a million people in Europe are stateless. The true number of those affected is undoubtedly much higher, as a lack of data makes official estimates unreliable. Stateless people are diverse and have different identities. Lacking a nationality means they are denied basic rights that many of us take for granted: to go to school, to work, to marry, to register the birth of a child, to 'legally exist'. Stateless people describe how a life without a nationality can be marked by immeasurable hardship, frustration, social exclusion, stigma, and poor mental health.

The causes of statelessness include State succession, gaps, conflicts or discrimination in nationality laws and State practices, as well as deliberate policies to deny or strip people of nationality. Thousands of children are born stateless in Europe each year because States do not have safeguards in their laws to ensure that every child acquires a nationality.

But statelessness is preventable. Drawing on our awareness-raising gains over the last decade, growing engagement by regional policymakers, and, above all, increased connectivity with stateless communities, we are in a strong position to push for lasting law and policy reform.

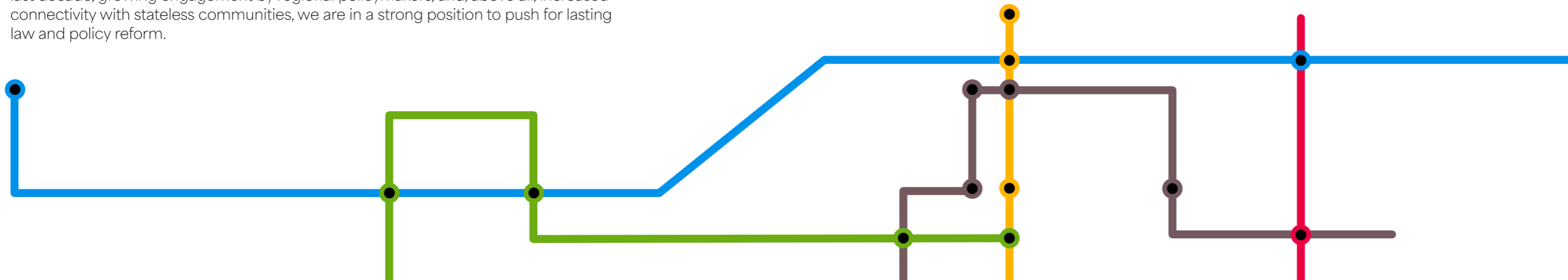
# How we work with others

Collaboration is one of our core values. We believe that collaborative and mutually reinforcing alliances between affected communities, their allies, and decision-makers are essential for sharing resources and expertise, identifying solutions to shared challenges, and achieving impact.

We strive to work in partnership with individuals and communities affected by statelessness, civil society organisations including other regional statelessness networks, governmental and intergovernmental bodies, regional institutions, law firms, the media, and academia. As well as statelessness and nationality rights experts, we work closely with experts focused on issues that intersect with statelessness, including child rights and women's rights experts, refugee support organisations and advocates, and minority rights specialists.

We have developed strong relationships for advocacy with regional and international institutions including the European Union, Council of Europe, UNHCR and UN human rights mechanisms, as well as with national governments, ombudspersons, and National Human Rights Institutions at country level.

Above all, we are committed to ensuring that people with lived experience of statelessness and their communities can claim power as leaders of change. We are determined to continue sharing advocacy spaces and helping connect stateless communities with decision-makers at national and regional level.



# How we work across themes

Statelessness is an intersectional issue. Stateless people are of different genders, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, abilities, religions, and ethnicities. Some stateless people have been displaced; others have lived in the same place for generations. This means that they can experience discrimination in multiple ways because of different aspects of their identities. We recognise that our work must consider these different experiences and strive to be representative of diverse stateless communities for it to be relevant and legitimate. Guided by this principle and the expertise of our Advisory Committee and wider membership, we identify priority issues to focus on within four broad themes:

## Children's Rights

This includes advocating for full access to birth registration and promoting nationality law reform to end childhood statelessness.

## Access to Justice

This includes promoting legal empowerment, rule of law, and ending the detention of stateless people.

## Forced Migration

This includes responding to stateless refugees and advocating for statelessness protection regimes and improved integration and inclusion policies.

## Anti-Discrimination

This includes addressing discrimination as a root cause of statelessness, promoting minority rights including Roma rights and health rights and addressing gender and intersectional discrimination.

# How we structure our work



## Law & Policy Development

We work alongside stateless people and their allies to carry out evidence-based advocacy. We commission and publish research to strengthen understanding and come up with solutions. Our website is a first port of call for information, research, and analysis. Our Statelessness Index is a critical benchmarking tool underpinning our change efforts. We work with our members to produce expert legal and policy analysis and hold governments to account. We are an interlocutor between our members, affected communities, and regional decision-makers. Our events attract international audiences. With our Statelessness Case Law Database and other initiatives, we support our members with litigation as we recognise that part of the fight to end statelessness must happen through the courts.



## Awareness-raising & Knowledge-sharing

Statelessness remains relatively poorly understood. It receives inadequate policy attention and media coverage compared to other human rights issues. We work with affected people and communities to amplify their voices and address this gap in awareness. Through our online communication channels, we publish information and commentary for diverse audiences. Our website includes a library of over 800 blogs, publications, interviews, and editorials providing analysis of developments to a readership of thousands. Our cutting-edge research and policy analysis inform debate. Our online campaigns engage and inspire supporters. We work with the media and use digital platforms to tell stories and engage new audiences.



## Capacity-building & Community Engagement

Our diverse network of over 180 organisations and individuals in more than 40 countries multiplies our impact. We co-develop tools and channel resources to our members and coordinate their involvement in pan-European campaigns, research, and advocacy. We prioritise engaging with people with lived experience of statelessness and representatives of affected communities and facilitating spaces for open collaboration. Our Annual General Conference brings our members together to debate and strategise. We provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and good practice that aims to be shaped and informed by stateless people. We deliver online and in-person training designed to build the capacity of civil society, affected communities, policymakers, and frontline officials to address statelessness.

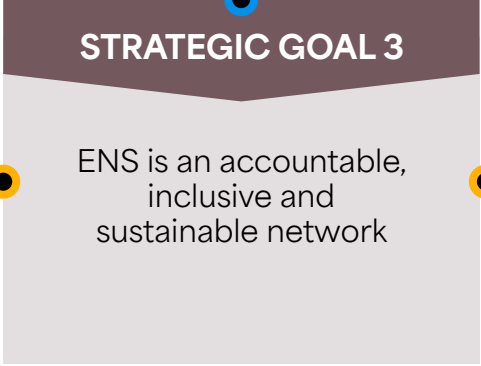
# How we will achieve change



**At least half a million people in Europe are denied their right to a nationality and other human rights.**

There is a lack of awareness and political will to address this issue, often rooted in discrimination. As a result, the risk of statelessness is perpetuated, and people who are stateless face significant barriers to fulfilling their rights and living their lives in full. This is a loss not only to individuals affected but also to communities and society as a whole.

**The cycle of statelessness in Europe is brought to an end and everyone is able to realise their right to a nationality. The human rights of individuals living without a nationality are fully respected.**



How we will achieve change

# Strategic goal 1:

Legal and policy frameworks ensure the effective realisation of the right to a nationality and other human rights of stateless people

1.1

Domestic and international laws and policies are adopted, improved, and effectively implemented

1.2

Advocacy and decision-making are informed by accurate and accessible information, including from stateless communities

1.3

Different audiences are engaged and mobilised to act on statelessness

1.4

Key actors mainstream statelessness as a cross-cutting issue in relevant policy areas

We will achieve these objectives through activities including:



Monitoring law, policy and practice, promoting effective policy solutions, advocating with governments and regional institutions, and undertaking strategic litigation



Developing, maintaining, and disseminating our Statelessness Index and Statelessness Case Law Database, delivering training, researching underexplored areas, translating and updating outputs, and ensuring they are informed by stateless people



Communicating the rights, experiences, and stories of stateless people, delivering campaigns, and engaging the media



Mainstreaming statelessness in nexus policy areas, researching intersectionality and statelessness, and exchanging knowledge with those working on cross-cutting issues

We will know we have made progress because decision-makers will have made positive changes to law and policy, countries will be assessed more positively in our Statelessness Index, court rulings will uphold the rights of stateless people, more of our outputs will be informed by stateless people, and more people will have engaged with our campaigns.

How we will achieve change

# Strategic goal 2:

People with lived experience of statelessness and their communities can claim power as leaders of change

2.1

Stateless individuals and communities are able to fully participate in ENS changemaking

2.2

Relationships and partnerships between stateless people and allies are strengthened

2.3

Stateless communities are supported to work effectively on statelessness

We will achieve these objectives through activities including:

Facilitating spaces for stateless people and other stakeholders to come together, collaborate, and jointly lead on advocacy initiatives, and connecting stateless changemakers with policymakers

Developing opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange and mentorship, delivering participatory events, promoting good practice in community engagement, and ensuring strong representation on our Advisory Committee

Addressing barriers to participation, fundraising and advocating to ensure stateless-led organisations and stateless individuals are resourced to work on statelessness, working with changemakers to build their capacity to take action, and addressing the mental health impacts of working on statelessness

We will know we have made progress because more of our activities, content and campaigns will have been informed and led by stateless communities, there will be more people with lived experience in our Network, more funding will be allocated to support initiatives led by stateless people, and those we work with will report increased agency, skills and capacity to lead change efforts.



How we will achieve change

# Strategic goal 3:

## The European Network on Statelessness is an accountable, inclusive and sustainable network

3.1

Organisational effectiveness is continually strengthened

3.2

Member capacity, engagement and representation are enhanced

3.3

ENS embodies best practice as a learning network

3.4

The network is representative of affected communities

We will achieve these objectives through activities including:

Implementing our fundraising strategy, ensuring strong governance as well as effective operational planning and systems, investing in learning and development, promoting staff wellbeing, and promoting our values of diversity, equality, and inclusion

Providing new opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, delivering training, strengthening the resourcing of our members to work on statelessness, facilitating interpreting and translation, and reviewing member engagement

Monitoring strategy implementation in a participatory way, sharing learning, striving for an anti-oppression and anti-racist approach and scheduling a review of what more we need to do to achieve this

Continually engaging with communities affected by statelessness to strengthen representation, and ensuring that our membership actively engages through our Advisory Committee and other forums to support planning, implementation, and evaluation

We will know we have made progress because we will have raised more funds from diverse sources, staff will remain with the organisation, our members will report increased capacity on statelessness, stateless people will be represented in our internal structures, more members will lead initiatives on statelessness and report positive feedback about ENS.

# Putting our plan into action

This Strategic Plan has been co-created in consultation with staff, trustees, members, our Advisory Committee, and Community Group, and informed by an external evaluation of our work in 2023, which sought the views of a range of stakeholders. It sets out our longer-term strategic goals and our objectives for the next five years and will form the basis for our operational plan.

Our most recent evaluation confirmed that we have realised many of the objectives we embarked on in our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. It also helped us to capture important organisational learning and to identify areas where we can strengthen our impact.

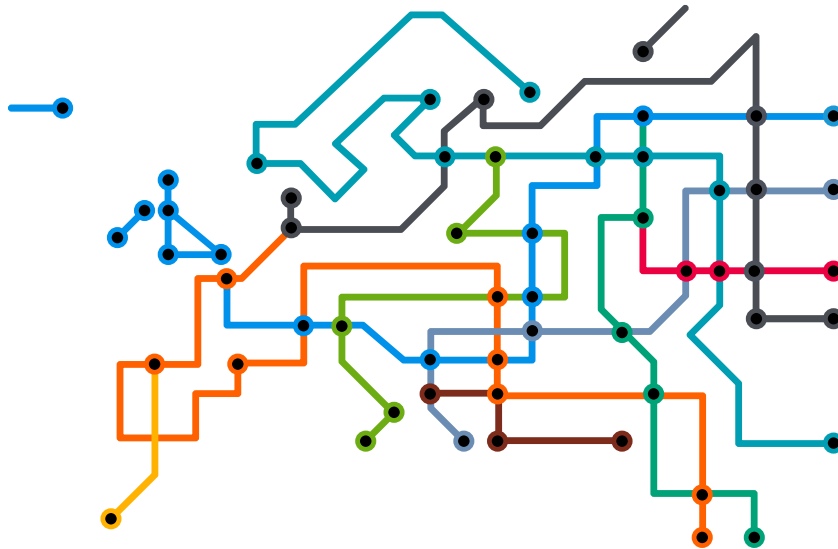
We are strongly committed to embodying best practice as a learning network and recognise that organisational learning is critical to successfully delivering our new Strategic Plan. We will monitor its implementation in line with the indicators and targets set in our results framework. Our results framework is developed in consultation with members, and with input from the Advisory Committee and our Board of Trustees.

To ensure the shared ownership of results, all three will hold responsibility for annual monitoring of the Plan's implementation. Halfway through the Strategic Plan, we will carry out a mid-term review of its implementation. This review will assess the results and challenges to date and provide recommendations for its successful delivery to the end of the strategic period, including any changes necessary to ensure its continued relevance.



To find out more about our work and discover different ways to get involved go to: [www.statelessness.eu](http://www.statelessness.eu)

Everyone has the right to a nationality



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