

A quarterly update on statelessness in Europe



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Interview with Christiana Bukalo, Statefree

In November 2025, we co-organised with Statefree our joint conference 'Statelessness and Innovation: Building Power Through Collective Action', bringing together over 100 participants with lived and learned expertise on statelessness for three days of learning and exchange. We caught up with Christiana Bukalo, founder of Statefree and ENS trustee, to hear her reflections on an energising and fulfilling few days.



"My personal highlight might sound abstract, but it really was so(!) tangible throughout the event: the warmth, the joy, and the respect for each other that carried us through the conference."

Firstly, what were your personal highlights from the conference?

My personal highlight might sound abstract, but it really was so(!) tangible

During the conference, many tools and resources were shared which could help stateless people across Europe access their rights, including our

throughout the event: the warmth, the joy, and the respect for each other that carried us through the conference. It sounds so exaggerated but to me it truly felt as if we had found the perfect formula for collaboration and learning at the same time. And also the range we were able to create - between technical content, inspirational keynotes, and performances.

But if I had to pick one “item” on the agenda, it was probably the poem with which we opened the conference, presented by the wonderful Lynn Al-Khatib.

It's been wonderful to watch Statefree's development over the past five years since you joined ENS, and we hugely appreciated you proposing that we work together to organise the conference. Our time together in Berlin felt like such a powerful example of community leadership and ensuring lived expertise is at the forefront of changemaking – building on this momentum, how do you see Statefree, ENS and other sector allies continuing to drive forward change both in Germany and across Europe, and where do you want us to be in five years?

When I started this work, I was hoping that we would be done in five years and that Statefree wouldn't be needed as an organisation anymore. I now understand how naive that was, but at the same time, I will not back down from aiming for a future in which our work might still serve the purpose of maintaining our achievements while also allowing us to look back at tangible change in people's lives.

When I think about continuing this work, I hope that we learn to enhance our capacity to collaborate and also focus on what is really important. It is easy to get

Identification Toolkits (recently [launched for Germany](#)) and Statefree's Digital Case Assistant. Are there any particular tools, including Statefree's, shared at the conference which you would want others working on statelessness to know about?

Of course, tools like the Case Assistant and others that aim to support stateless people in their process of identification and recognition are extremely important. At the same time, I think there is a tool that isn't usually viewed as one but is incredibly important - and actually the basis that makes the effective development of such tools even possible - and that is the ability to listen. To listen to what is actually needed and to keep listening in order to iterate on what you've built.

Tools matter because we need tangible and pragmatic solutions, but those solutions are only as valuable as our ability to make sure they truly align with what stateless people need.

The importance of listening to the understanding that comes with lived experience is incredibly important and was emphasised during the conference.

We are working in a particularly challenging time of diminishing resources, shrinking civic space, growing racism and anti-migrant sentiment, let alone the personal challenges that individuals we work with are facing on a daily basis. How do we build on the momentum from the conference to navigate the road ahead?

To be honest, I currently very much struggle to decide whether I'm hopeful or cynical.

Probably it's both, and maybe that's good.

distracted and get lost in the theoretical thinking around what needs to change and why. I find it important to hold ourselves accountable for how our “thinking” actually changes the “living” of stateless people.

That is way easier said than done, and that is exactly what makes it so valuable to do this work together with those affected by it. There’s no one who would ever be more impatient about the change - and this impatience should be our driving force.

There is no “one way” to deal with this situation, but moments such as this conference help to boost not just energy but also hope and a more specific understanding of where there is opportunity. It is important that all the conversations, ideas, and discussions don’t get lost in time, but that we hold ourselves accountable for following up and following through.

[\[Continue reading...\]](#)

[READ THE FULL INTERVIEW >>](#)

Spotlight

Building power through collective action: our joint conference in Berlin with Statefree



Max A. Klemm

In November, we joined forces with Statefree for a three-day conference in Berlin – [Statelessness and Innovation: Building Power Through Collective Action](#).

Through a series of workshops, panel discussions, keynote speakers and break-out sessions, we brought together over 100 participants including community members, activists, civil society organisations, institutions, government officials, and allies in Berlin to explore innovative and creative solutions to statelessness, share lived and learned expertise, strengthen our collective knowledge on statelessness in Europe, and try to chart a path forward together.

Highlights included mapping the future of statelessness advocacy with community members from across Europe, panel discussions on innovative new tools and approaches to tackling statelessness, reflections on the power of storytelling, and performances from a variety of artists, musicians and community leaders reminding us all of the power of creativity and finding joy.

As our Director Chris Nash reflected in his [recent editorial](#), the conference epitomised efforts to address power imbalances and facilitate safe spaces for reflection, innovation and direction-setting. In some sessions, community voices were in the majority, and the format of the event encouraged participation by diverse actors on equal terms. The event was a powerful reminder to us all of how lived experience and community leadership can and must shape and lead our changemaking efforts.



Following the conference, our aim now is to set out a shared, innovative direction for how we can improve the identification and protection of stateless people in Europe and enable everyone to realise their right to a nationality. In the coming months, we will be developing and sharing a post-conference outcomes report which will detail our key findings, recommendations and next steps for addressing statelessness in Europe, taking into account the challenging funding landscape and hostile environments we operate in, and building on the energy of such a fulfilling few days together.

Watch our joint conference video

Good practice, challenges and risks in statelessness determination and protection



Benjamin Loyseau, UNHCR

Stateless people in Europe face the risk of rights violations every day. The main reason for this is that most European States still don't have an established process to identify stateless people, determine their statelessness, and provide them with a route out of limbo.

As our updated briefing - [Statelessness Determination and Protection in Europe: Good practice, challenges and risks](#) - sets out: whilst most countries in the [Statelessness Index](#) have acceded to the 1954 Convention, only 18 countries have any procedure to determine statelessness, i.e. where determination of statelessness is the objective of the procedure. However, even where a procedure exists the outcome varies, and not all countries automatically grant protection to those determined to be stateless. Only 14 countries in Europe can be considered to have fully functioning statelessness determination procedures (SDPs).

Launched on the eve of our conference in Berlin, the briefing highlights good practice examples from across Europe and globally which other States could learn from when implementing their own SDPs, and provides a critical analysis of the remaining gaps and barriers in countries across Europe.

The briefing also presents recommendations for urgent action needed to strengthen access to protection and pathways to naturalisation for stateless people. We identify four key areas where urgent action is needed by Governments, legislators, and decision-makers to ensure that stateless migrants and refugees in Europe can access the rights and protection they are due under international law and resolve their statelessness:

1. Introduce fair and accessible SDPs in line with norms and good practice
2. Ensure that SDPs lead to a dedicated protection status for people recognised as stateless
3. Provide specialised training on statelessness and nationality rights and ensure cooperation between relevant public authorities
4. Ensure that stateless migrants and refugees have an accessible route to naturalisation to resolve their statelessness

This briefing is part of a series of thematic briefings and summarises how the 34 countries featured in the [Statelessness Index](#) perform against international norms and good practice in law, policy, and practice on statelessness determination and the protection of stateless people.

Latest updates

Global Refugee Forum Progress Review



This week, our Director Chris Nash and ENS Vice Chair Aleksandra Semeriak attended the UNHCR Global Refugee Forum Progress Review in Geneva. We were proud to join over 20 organisations – many led by or including people with lived experience of statelessness – in raising awareness and advocating on statelessness over the three days through interventions, high-level meetings, events and networking opportunities. Our Vice Chair Aleksandra moderated a side event ‘Legal Identity for All - Addressing Statelessness to achieve the SDGs’ organised by the UNHCR Statelessness Section.

Watch Chris Nash’s intervention at the GRF



Watch our Director Chris Nash’s intervention at the UNHCR High-Level Global Refugee Forum Progress Review in Geneva this week. The GRF

High-level delegation meeting



In the margins of the GRF Progress Review, we organised a delegation meeting for 15 sister networks and stateless-led organisations with UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner Ruven Menikdivela and UNHCR Director of Division of International Protection Elizabeth Tan. Driven by the diverse perspectives in the room, the meeting offered a constructive space for an open exchange with UNHCR about how to identify priorities and maintain momentum with global efforts to address statelessness, notwithstanding recent funding cuts and operational challenges.

Solutions to Statelessness: Multistakeholder Action



Alongside our partners, as part of the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review, we co-sponsored the event “Solutions to Statelessness: Multistakeholder Action to Achieve Equal Nationality Rights for

Progress Review is focused on taking stock of developments between Global Refugee Forums and assessing the implementation of pledges. During his intervention, Chris called on States to take action to end statelessness and urged the outgoing UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi to prominently highlight the issue in his handover to the new High Commissioner Barham Salih, who will start in post next month. You can [watch his intervention here](#).

GRF Legal Community Pledge



We are proud to have joined the Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge, being taken forward under the strong leadership of our partners PILnet. Our pledge refers to our [Statelessness Case Law Database](#) - the first of its kind database dedicated to capturing national, regional, and international case law addressing statelessness. Through our Pledge, we have committed to expanding the database to 600 cases by 2027, with support from our members and pro bono partners. Find out more about the [Joint Legal Community Pledge](#).

Watch our webinar on the legal rights of stateless Palestinians



In October we held a webinar on protecting the legal rights of stateless Palestinians in the UK, following the publication of our [legal briefing](#) on this topic. We developed this briefing after

All” which focused on joint action to end statelessness and discriminatory nationality laws; recent momentum for solutions; further steps needed to realize the SDGs and GCR objectives; and the role of impacted activists, civil society, states, and UN agencies to achieve equal nationality rights for all. The event featured impacted activists and representatives of champion states and UN agencies, including our trustee and Statefree founder Christiana Bukalo.

PILnet Global Forum



In November, we attended the PILnet Global Forum in Rome, an annual event bringing together legal professionals, civil society actors and advocates to share ideas and build partnerships for impactful pro bono work, and this year it had over 400 participants and more than 40 sessions on various topics. We co-organised two sessions on statelessness – the first introduced participants to the fundamentals on what statelessness is, why it matters, and how the law can be a tool for change, and the second shifted the focus to strengthening collaboration. [Learn more](#).

Watch our joint conference video



Longstanding ENS and Statefree community member Lynn Al khatib powerfully started our joint conference in Berlin with a

listening to our members, partners, and affected communities who have all voiced urgent concerns about the protection gaps faced by Palestinians throughout Europe. Facilitated by Nina Murray, our Head of Policy and Advocacy, we heard from two speakers: Patrícia Cabral, our Legal Policy Coordinator, and Abdelrahman Touman, a member of our Community Advisory Board (CAB) who helped to develop our legal briefing. Watch our webinar and download the presentation slides [here](#).

Statelessness in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum



In October, Nina Murray, our Head of Policy and Advocacy, and Hossa Skandary-Macpherson, who is part of our community group, spoke at European Migration Network's Platform on Statelessness in Luxembourg - "Statelessness in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: with a focus on statelessness as a vulnerability." Hossa shared her lived experience of statelessness in Europe after fleeing Afghanistan, and shared good practice from Scotland in working with people seeking refugee protection. Nina presented on the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in implementing statelessness provisions in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Learn more by watching this [short video](#).

Council of Europe Committee on Legal Cooperation CDCJ-MIG

poem she'd written on her experience of being stateless. Our conference video starts and ends with her words, woven through the stories and experiences of our community members with us in Berlin, a reminder of the power of collaboration and using your voice to speak out and push for change. Our joint conference was full of creativity, new connections, insightful discussions, and opportunities to collaborate – [watch our video](#) to find out more.

Towards collaborative advocacy on statelessness



In December we held a Global Alliance to End Statelessness Regional Network Lab (RNL), co-organised with Statefree, Apatride Network and Family Frontiers, to further develop our Advocacy Guidelines which we have been co-developing with Statefree and Apatride Network following a joint pledge made during the Global Refugee Forum in 2023. Facilitated by Chris Afuakwah, our Community Engagement & Communications Coordinator, we heard from campaigners with lived statelessness experience, before splitting into break-out sessions to discuss key sections of the draft Advocacy Guidelines. Now we will work together to incorporate feedback, with a view to publishing and disseminating the Guidelines in 2026.

Our toolkit to identify and address statelessness in Germany

meeting



Nina Murray, Head of Policy and Advocacy, attended the 4th meeting in Strasbourg of the Council of Europe Committee on Legal Cooperation's Working Group on Migration (CDCJ-MIG), focusing on advancing work to protect stateless children's rights. The group finalised a draft compendium of promising practices on access to nationality for stateless children and continued revising Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)13 on the nationality of children. We fed into key discussions on varied topics in the draft recommendation including birth registration, child-friendly procedures, and the role of judicial training. The revised texts were submitted to the CDCJ for consideration. *Image: © [Le Commissaire](#), licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#) license.*

Solutions to end childhood statelessness



Our member and community member Elvis Beriša, CEO & Founder of Phiren Amenca, spoke at the Global Alliance to End Statelessness Knowledge Webinar series on 'Solutions to End Childhood Statelessness,' in November. This inaugural global webinar showcased both high level and on the ground practices from across the world. The webinar reflected on how governments have a legal and moral



Together with our member, Statefree, we have developed a [national toolkit](#) to identify and address statelessness in Germany. Although Germany does not have a dedicated Statelessness Determination Procedure, statelessness can be identified if it arises during other administrative procedures. However, without a dedicated mechanism to formally determine statelessness and grant statelessness status, stateless people are not granted any protection status nor rights, unless also recognised as refugees. Our toolkit seeks to equip government officials, NGOs, lawyers, and community representatives in Germany with practical tools to identify statelessness and facilitate legal pathways to protection for stateless people.

Protecting children displaced from Ukraine



In December, Nina Murray, our Head of Policy and Advocacy, attended a Network of Networks meeting in Brussels hosted by Kids in Need of Defence (KIND) Europe and Missing Children Europe. The meeting brought together representatives of different networks to address the urgent issues and needs concerning the protection of children and young people displaced by the ongoing war in Ukraine, including children who may be affected by statelessness. The meeting was

duty to ensure children acquire a nationality at birth or as early as possible in life according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards. Elvis presented on his experience addressing statelessness among Roma children in Montenegro.

EUAA Consultative Forum in Malta



In October, Cameron Nye, our Legal Policy Officer, attended the 4th Plenary Session of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) Consultative Forum in Malta. As part of the Forum, we participated in discussions about the Agency's work, raised awareness of statelessness in the migration and asylum context, and received updates on EUAA's Pact Programme (supporting the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum) and new Monitoring Mechanism. ENS also attended thematic consultation group meetings on persons in a vulnerable situation and Country-of-Origin Information (COI) taking place alongside the plenary.

Young and Stateless



Over the course of the year, the BBC World Service has interviewed stateless activists and community members from Apatride Network, Statefree and ENS, alongside our co-founder and trustee Gábor Gyulai, for an audio

designed to foster closer, stronger, and more collaborative networks between stakeholders working in different but adjacent fields, to ensure children from Ukraine navigating their journeys through Europe receive the legal and psychosocial support they need.

Statelessness Index: Armenia launch event



Together with our member, Mission Armenia, we have published a new Statelessness Index country profile for [Armenia](#), bringing the total number of countries covered by our Index to 35. On 16 December, Mission Armenia and UNHCR Armenia held a multistakeholder advocacy event in Yerevan to launch Armenia's profile, attended by government officials, to reflect on good practice and gaps identified by the country data and to explore potential next steps. The event was opened by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Armenia, with presentations from Mission Armenia, UNHCR Armenia and Cameron Nye, ENS's Legal Policy Officer.

documentary and podcast exploring statelessness in Europe (and beyond) from the perspective of those affected by it. The podcast shows the bureaucracy and daily obstacles faced by people just trying to live their lives, and the resilience of those who have found a global community of people impacted by statelessness and who are fighting back. Listen or download: [Young and Stateless](#).

Recent publications, reports & briefings

- [\(ENS\) Toolkit to identify and address statelessness in Germany](#) – With expertise provided by Statefree, we have launched our toolkit to help frontline asylum practitioners in Germany identify and address statelessness.
- [\(ENS\) Statelessness Determination and Protection in Europe](#) – Our updated briefing summarises how the 34 countries featured in our [Statelessness Index](#) perform against international norms and good practice in law, policy and practice on statelessness determination and the protection of stateless people.

Blogs & news articles

- [\(ENS\) Foundlings at risk of statelessness in Kenya](#) – Julie I. Lugulu, LL.D candidate at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, writes about efforts to address childhood statelessness in Kenya with a particular focus on foundlings, and proposes a way forward by looking at international good practice.
- [\(ENS\) Breaking the cycle of statelessness among Roma in Albania](#) – Co-authored by Tirana Legal Aid Society and ENS, this blog explores progress made and remaining challenges for Roma communities in Albania, and makes recommendations for what needs to happen next. This blog was developed following the launch of our [policy series](#) on Roma statelessness in the Western Balkans.
- [\(ENS\) Community-led action to end Roma statelessness in Montenegro](#) – Co-authored by NGO Phiren Amenca and ENS, this blog is also related to our [policy series](#) on Roma statelessness in the Western Balkans, this time exploring efforts by Roma communities to address statelessness in Montenegro.
- [\(ENS\) Reflecting on our Statelessness and Innovation conference](#) – ENS Director Chris Nash reflects on our joint conference with Statefree in Berlin, noting that it felt like a real step change in the development and transformation of ENS.
- [\(ENS\) Harnessing pro bono collaboration](#) – ENS Legal Policy Coordinator Patrícia Cabral reflects on the PILnet Global Forum in Rome, which brought together legal

professionals, civil society actors and advocates committed to advancing justice through pro bono collaboration.

- [\(ENS\) Clouds moving in over Spain's progress on statelessness](#) - Jesús Tolmo García PhD, an individual member of the Spanish Coalition on Statelessness, shared ongoing challenges in Spain which threaten Spain's status as a leading example of good practice on statelessness. He explores these challenges and sets out recommendations for improvement. This blog is also available in Spanish: [Las nubes que amenazan el soleado panorama de la apatridia en España](#).
- [\(ENS and Statefree\) Building Power Through Collective Action](#) - Read our joint newsletter sharing highlights from our joint conference in Berlin in November – and watch our [video](#).
- [\(Munasara\) Imagining a world beyond statelessness](#) – in partnership with the Global Movement Against Statelessness, Munasara magazine devoted the second edition of their magazine to statelessness in the MENA region and beyond, through personal stories, art, and interviews.
- [\(Context Newsroom\) How recognising Palestine affects stateless Palestinians](#) – Lin Taylor interviews ENS Legal Policy Coordinator Patricia Cabral on the impact of countries recognising Palestine as a state on stateless Palestinians.
- [\(BBC World Service\) Young and Stateless](#) – this audio documentary follows stateless activists and community members from Apatride Network, Statefree and ENS as they navigate statelessness in Europe. Search 'Young and Stateless' wherever you get your podcasts.

Case law updates

For case law updates you can subscribe to our dedicated [Litigation Bulletin](#) which provides information relevant to legal practitioners working on nationality and statelessness. This includes recent relevant European case law on statelessness and nationality from international, regional and domestic courts. For more updates and to browse over 350 other cases you can also visit our [Statelessness Case Law Database](#).

Events & opportunities

- [\(ENS\) Could you be our new Digital Trustee?](#) – We are looking for an expert in AI and digital technologies to join our [Board of Trustees](#).



"Everyone has the right to a nationality"

European Network on Statelessness

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