

Annex 1: Developing links between ECRE Secretariat and ECRE Membership

One of ECRE's priorities in 2017 is further developing links between the Secretariat and the ECRE membership. The purpose of this memo is to collate suggestions for activities and mechanisms that will be put in place and/or maintained. It includes ideas suggested by ECRE members, staff and Board. It also serves as a guide to members on how to get involved in ECRE's work. The memo is an annex to the ECRE Strategic Plan 2017 to 2019.

As well as general activities that link the Secretariat and membership, there should be mechanisms for involvement of members in all specific areas of ECRE's work. The overview is presented in the table below.

Areas of ECRE's work	Member involvement
Legal Support and Litigation	ELENA network EDAL
Legal and Policy Research	CEAS Working Group AIDA Experts meetings
Advocacy	CEAS Working Group External Affairs Working Group Rights of Refugee Children WG Inclusion Working Group
Communications	EMON (ECRE Media Officers Network)

1. Working Groups on thematic policy areas

The Working Groups bring together ECRE members with a strong interest in a particular thematic area. Members are welcome to contribute as actively as they wish however there are no specific obligations attached to membership of a Working Group – members are free to use them just to gather information if they prefer. The Working Groups will meet in person whenever possible; otherwise regular communication will take place virtually.

- Staff members provide input to members on ongoing activities to meet policy objectives
- Staff members gather suggestions from members for ECRE activities and initiatives
- Secretariat and members share information on developments and on their work
- Secretariat and members identify opportunities for and carry out collective advocacy whenever resources allow
- Secretariat and members circulate invitations to events, including ECRE internal and external events.

The Working Groups (as of 2017):

- CEAS Working Group (covering the EU legal framework, including Dublin)
- External Affairs Working Group (also including return and global issues)
- Inclusion Working Group
- Rights of Refugee Children Working Group

2. Member presentations in Brussels

ECRE Secretariat is pleased to host members visiting Brussels to present an update on their work. The presentations are useful for staff members to better understand the work of members and situations in countries where they work. Members should contact the Secretariat in advance of a visit to Brussels.

3. Secretariat visits to members/presentations

ECRE Secretariat staff are also pleased to visit ECRE members in order to hear more about members' work and to provide an update on ECRE's work and/or policy developments at European level. In particular, if there are regional meetings for ECRE members, it is useful for ECRE Secretariat staff to participate. Please feel to contact the ECRE Secretariat with information and invitations.

Longer visits of Secretariat staff to members and vice versa can also be organised

4. Secretariat presentations in Brussels

ECRE Secretariat will provide regular presentations to ECRE members in Brussels, followed by lunch reception.

5. Regular communication to members

Information on ECRE's work is provided in the Weekly Bulletin, the website and social media. On average once per month, ECRE Secretary General sends an email update to members. In order to avoid sending too many or too frequent emails, more detailed information goes through working groups and other mechanisms. ECRE will launch a 6-monthly newsletter with an update on its work for members and donors.

6. Use of the Annual General Conference

As Secretariat staff and members are present at the AGC, it is an opportunity to discuss the results of and plans for ECRE's work.

7. Regular meetings between ECRE Secretariat and ECRE Board

According to ECRE's governance structures, the ECRE Board represents the ECRE membership. It is therefore important that there be regular contact between ECRE Secretariat and ECRE Board. When the Board meetings take place in Brussels, there will be meetings with all staff members. All Board meetings have at least one slot where staff members present work for discussion.

8. Projects

Since its creation, ECRE Secretariat and members have worked together on projects, sometimes led by ECRE, in other cases led by members. In the most successful cases, these projects have become part of ECRE's core work, including work on strategic litigation and AIDA. In other cases, the costs of involvement in projects has been high and risk has been involved. However, ECRE is open to cooperation on projects.

ECRE is frequently invited to be part of projects by members and non-members alike; decision on involvement are taken case-by-case and involve assessing costs (including opportunity costs), benefits, risks, etc. Questions to be addressed include how many ECRE members benefit from the project and from ECRE's involvement in it, and whether the work is something that helps meets ECRE's objectives.