



BRUSSELS INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CENTRE FOR
MIGRATION & MINORITIES

BIRMM POLICY BRIEFS

On the occasion of World Refugee Day 2025, BIRMM launched its new Policy Brief Series. The Policy Brief Series provides concise, research-based insights into pressing migration and minorities-related issues, with clear policy recommendations for EU and national decision-makers.

Since its launch, two Policy Briefs have already been published:

1. **BIRMM Policy Brief N° 01/2025 – World Refugee Day 2025: don't let national emergency measures become the new standard of EU asylum policy by Florian Trauner:** This brief tracks how emergency asylum measures are increasingly used across the EU, warning against their normalization and urging that fundamental rights remain at the core of asylum policies. [Click here to read the full policy brief.](#)
2. **BIRMM Policy Brief N° 02/2025 – The EU's Return Regulation: Negotiating on the Basis of Evidence, not Narratives by Lina Vosyliūtė & Florian Trauner:** This brief critiques the European Commission's new Return Regulation proposal, highlighting the lack of impact assessments and calling for evidence-based policymaking to avoid unintended consequences. [Click here to read the full policy brief.](#)

Stay tuned for upcoming publications in the BIRMM Policy Brief Series, where we continue to bring timely, evidence-based analysis to current policy debates.

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Inside stories



Spotlight Interview with Prof. Dieter Vandebroeck on the 'Primary Prejudice' project

In our latest BIRMM Spotlight, we welcome Professor Dieter Vandebroeck, a sociologist at the Brussels Institute for Social and Population Studies (BRISPO) at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), to discuss Primary Prejudice, a groundbreaking SBO project on social well-being and identity-based bullying in Flemish preschools and primary schools.

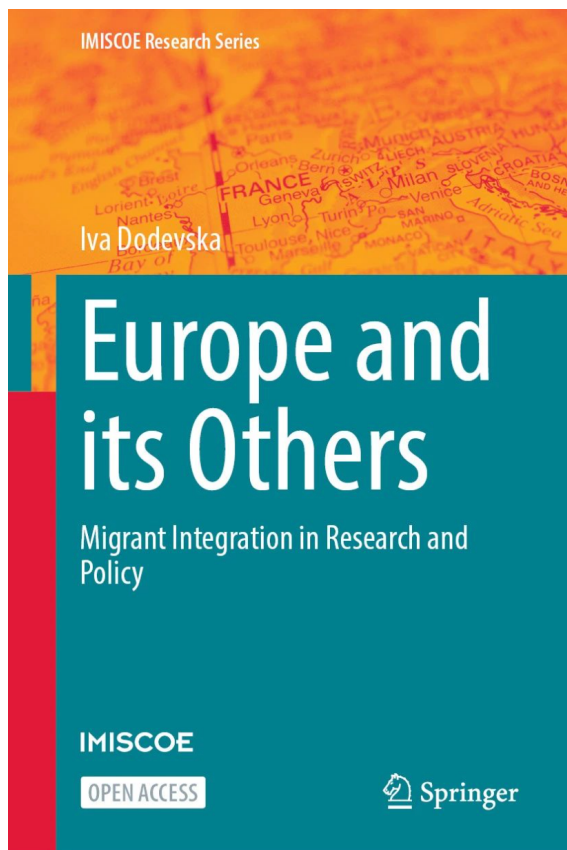
Watch or read the full interview via the link below:

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New Open-Access Book by Iva Dodevska on Migrant Integration

We're thrilled to celebrate the publication of BIRMM-member [Iva Dodevska's](#) first book, based on four years of doctoral research.

The book offers a critical examination of migrant integration as both an analytical and policy concept. It explores how social research shapes



the politics of migration and integration, while shedding light on the European Union's role in sustaining integrationism as the dominant paradigm in European governance.

Best of all, the book is open access, making this important contribution freely available to all. Read the full book by clicking the link below:

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MentalHealth4All platform now live!

The EU co-funded project MentalHealth4All, involving partners from 9 countries, has officially launched its multilingual and culturally sensitive digital platform on mental health and mental healthcare. The platform aims to improve access for migrants, refugees, and expats by addressing linguistic and cultural barriers, while also serving professionals in healthcare and social support.

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel was one of the project partners, with the VUB team led by BIRMM-member Prof. [Koen Kerremans](#). Explore the platform below:

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Upcoming events



Critical Approaches to Race (CAR) Seminar Series 2025-2026

We are pleased to announce the start of the 2025-2026 edition of the **Critical Approaches to Race (CAR) seminar series**. This interdisciplinary series brings together scholars, activists, and artists to critically examine race, colonial legacies, decolonization, and social justice. Through film screenings, lectures, and discussions, CAR aims to foster dialogue and reflection on how these issues continue to shape society today.

Stay tuned for this year's line-up of events, starting with our first seminar on **24 September 2025**.



Movie Screening & Discussion of "Tout Contact Laisse Une Trace" by ZinTV

24.09.2025 // 6:30 PM - 9 PM

We are thrilled to invite you to the opening seminar of the [Critical Approaches to Race Seminar Series 2025-2026](#): a screening of *Tout Contact Laisse Une Trace* (ZinTV, 2024), followed by a discussion with members of the collective behind the film. This event will take place on the 24th of September at Pianofabrick from 6:30PM until 9PM. This



event will take place in French.

This composite film retraces the topographical and symbolic coloniality of Brussels, from Gaza to Goma, through the fragmented journeys and voices of Afro-descendant, African, and non-white communities. Produced collectively by ZIN TV and directed by Nizar Saleh Mohammed Ali, it confronts discourse with lived experience, replacing slogans with acting bodies and dismantling deceitful statuary.

Click on the link below for more information and registration:

> GO TO EVENT

MERLIT International conference at VUB

18.09.2025 - 20.09.2025

From 18-20 September 2025, the EU-funded project Meritocracy and Literature: Transcultural Approaches to Hegemonic Forms (MERLIT) will host its international conference Writing Meritocracy: Figurations of a Concept Across Literary History and Contexts of Literary Production at the Learning and Innovation Center, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Confirmed keynote speakers include Cathy L. Shrank (University of Sheffield) and Madhu Krishnan (University of Bristol). The conference will conclude with a literary reading by award-winning author Alecia McKenzie.

Click below for more information and registration

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Making Queer home(s) on the Move - Exhibition by Mohamed Youssef Chaouki

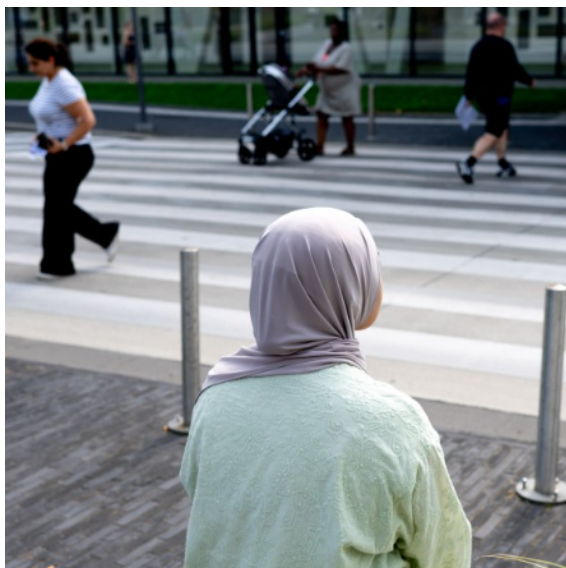


MOHAMED YOUJIL CHAOUKI

Throughout September, USQUARE hosts *Making Queer Home(s) on the Move*, an exhibition by Mohamed Youjil Chaouki. Through a photo-ethnographic lens, the exhibition traces the journeys of queer refugees in Brussels and beyond, capturing how home and belonging are negotiated across borders and identities.

The exhibition is open on weekdays from 10:00 to 18:00 at USQUARE, Avenue de la Couronne 227, 1050 Ixelles. Visitors are warmly invited to explore this powerful reflection on migration, queerness, and the search for home.

In the media



Dr. Saloua Berdai Chaouni on the lack of anti-racism policy in elderly care

In the June issue of *Samenleving & Politiek*, BIRMM member Saloua Berdai Chaouni sheds light on the underexplored issue of racism in elderly care. Drawing on research in Belgian care and dementia settings, the article highlights how both older people and care staff with a migration background experience racism, with serious consequences for health, wellbeing, and quality of care. Berdai

Chaouni calls for structural and sustained anti-racism policies in the sector. Read the full article below (in Dutch):

[> READ MORE](#)



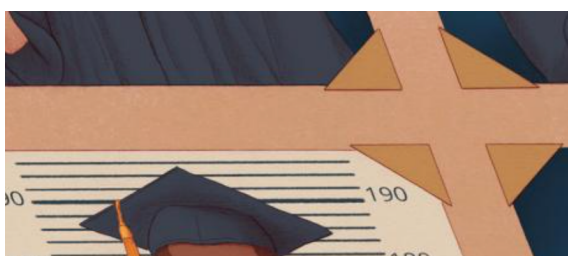
Gaia Romeo on the EU's shift toward an '(un)safe fourth country' asylum policy in *The Loop*

In a recent blogpost for *The Loop* (ECPR Blog), BIRMM member [Gaia Romeo](#) and co-author **Frowin Rausis** analyse the European Commission's proposal to remove the 'connection requirement' from the safe third country concept. They argue this technical change marks a profound political shift: opening the door to an '(un)safe fourth country' approach that risks undermining refugee protection and repeating the failures of past externalisation attempts. Read the full article below:

[> READ MORE](#)

VUB journalism students on wrongful detention of international students in Belgium for Knack

A new investigation by journalism students at VUB documents how at least six non-EU students were wrongly held in Belgian closed detention centres over the past two years despite valid visas. Through first-person accounts, the piece details harsh conditions, due-process gaps at the border, and lasting mental-health impacts. Experts and universities highlight systemic issues such as unclear procedures, language barriers, and limited safeguards while calls emerge for clearer legislation and better expertise at





clearer registration and better expertise at border controls. Read the full article below (in Dutch):

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Prof. Rik Vosters on the value of language education in De Tijd

In a recent opinion piece for De Tijd, BIRMM member [Rik Vosters](#) responds to the Flemish government's decision to raise tuition fees for language courses in adult education, framing them as mere 'hobbies'. He argues that this measure undervalues the crucial economic, cultural, and social capital of multilingual skills. Vosters calls for affordable access to language education as part of a broader vision of lifelong learning. Read the full op-ed below (in Dutch):

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Recent publications



[Cross-border archiving: Archival participatory filmmaking in borderlands](#)

Irene Gutiérrez Torres, Kevin Smets, Sally Hllouby | **Transnational Screens**

[Did you say “migrant”? Media representations of people on the move](#)Valérieane Mistiaen | **Journalisme et Communication**[Evaluating an Intervention to Promote Access to Mental Healthcare for Low Language Proficient Migrants and Refugees across Europe \(MentalHealth4All\): A Study Protocol](#)Liza van Lent, Soňa Hodáková, Saskia Hanft-Robert, Mike Mösko, Chiara Rao, Koen Kerremans, Antoon Cox, Raquel Lázaro Gutiérrez, Özlem Temizöz, Dalia Mankauskienė, Lucja Biel, Emilio Di Maria, Barabara Schouten | **BMJ Open**[Excess mortality among native Belgians and migrant groups in Belgium during the first three COVID-19 waves: the evolving dynamics of social inequalities](#)Katrien Vanthomme, Sylvie Gadeyne, Brecht Devleesschauwer, Laura Van den Borre | **Journal of Public Health**[Exploring culturally sensitive care from the perspective of informal caregivers with a migration background](#)A Claeys, S Berdai-Chaouni, S Tricas-Sauras, L De Donder | **International Journal of Integrated Care**[Fear of the Other as Electoral Strategies in Italy and Hungary](#)Kamber Güler | **DergiPark Academic**[From peace and freedom to the topos of management: the evolution of migration discourse and the construction of European identity](#)Valérieane Mistiaen | **Critical Discourse Studies**[Rethinking audiovisual methods: using film as a tool to overcome borders](#)Irene Gutiérrez Torres, Silvia Almenara Niebla, Kevin Smets | **Sensate: A Journal for Experiments in Critical Media Practice**

The Brussels Interdisciplinary Research centre on Migration and Minorities (BIRMM) unites over 100 VUB researchers from 11 disciplines (including political science, law, sociology, criminology, geography, medical sciences, communication sciences, linguistics, psychology and educational sciences, philosophy, and history) working on migration and diversity related topics.

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