



## [ACCESS](#) Seminar Series on **The Externalization of Returns: EU Return Hubs**

University of Bologna

**University of Bologna, SPS Department, Aula Ardigò**  
**Piano Terra, Palazzo Hercolani, Strada Maggiore, 45 – Bologna and online**  
**Monday, 11 May 2026 | 15:00–17:30**

The proposal for a Regulation on return procedures marks a decisive step in the reconfiguration of the EU return acquis. While presented as the final building block of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the proposal introduces far-reaching innovations that go well beyond procedural harmonisation. Most notably, it envisages the possibility of establishing so-called “return hubs” through arrangements with third countries.

These developments raise fundamental questions concerning the scope of the EU’s external competence in the field of return and readmission, the applicable legal standards under EU and international law, and the allocation of responsibility and judicial accountability for return operations carried out outside the EU territory.

This seminar examines the proposal for EU return hubs within the broader evolution of EU return law. It explores the legal bases, limits, and safeguards governing the externalisation of returns, situating the proposal in light of CJEU and ECtHR jurisprudence, as well as recent state practice, including the recent returns implemented under the Italy–Albania protocol. Particular attention is devoted to the role of courts and national judges in reviewing externalised return arrangements, and the implications for effective remedies, non-refoulement, and the rule of law.

### **Programme**

#### **15:15 – 15:20 | Welcome and Introduction**

*Marco Borraccetti* | Associate Professor of EU Law, University of Bologna  
*Madalina Moraru* | Associate Professor of EU Law, University of Bologna

#### **15:20 – 15:50 | Externalisation of Returns and EU External Competences**

*Paula García Andrade* | Professor of Public International Law and European Union law at the Faculty of Law of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

#### **15:50 – 16:20 | Return hubs in the EU and the compliance with fundamental human rights**

*Adriano Silvestri* | Head of the Migration & Asylum Sector, European Agency for Fundamental Rights

#### **16:20 – 16:50 | Externalisation of Returns before the CJEU: the Italian example**

*Luca Perilli* | Judge, Tribunal of Brescia

**16:50 – 17:10 Discussants** *Luisa Marin* (Research Fellow in EU law, European University Institute) and *Madalina Moraru, Marco Borraccetti*

#### **17.10 – 17.30 Q&A**

Register [here](#)

Gatekeepers to International Refugee Law? – The Role of Courts in Shaping Access to Asylum (ACCESS)  
University of Bologna, 2023-2028, PI: Madalina Moraru,  
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