

## **From Law to Policy: Language, Categorisations and Migrant Rights**

The law often provides high-level definitions of terms including: 'refugee', 'trafficking' 'smuggling' 'migrant'. Policy makers, the media and the public frequently use these terms interchangeably, often wrongly, and sometimes with the intention of justifying a specific policy response. The conflation of 'smuggling' and 'trafficking' for instance is one where the language of 'trafficking' is often used in addressing asylum seekers being smuggled across borders to justify restrictive border policies. International organisations play with the language to justify their own, and to limit others', remits. With reference to current trends and policy responses (and with a focus on the EU) this paper explores these meanings and the implications of the way language is used to justify policy.

The paper then turns to the question of vulnerability and engages with the term as being both ill-defined and yet immensely meaningful (e.g. in selection for resettlement, exemptions from detention, and determinations re: reception conditions). Vulnerability becomes a metric of selection and exclusion – a language used to exclude some on the pretext of protecting others. In turn, it raises concerns as to the 'needs' of these groups, their likely 'demands' on the system and their (in)ability to contribute to society and the economy.

### **Brief Biography**

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