

CALL FOR PAPERS

Othering and the Reconfiguration of Mobility Governance in Europe

Midterm conference of the Working group ‘Criminology of Mobility’
16-17 April 2026 – Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Across Europe, the governance of mobility is undergoing significant transformation. While borders remain central to the regulation of migration, they increasingly operate far beyond traditional territorial and geographical lines, within digital infrastructures, municipal administrations, welfare offices, police practices, labor markets, and other everyday (non-)institutional settings. Processes of *othering* – the discursive and practical marking of certain groups as fundamentally different or ‘outsiders’ (Weis, 1995; Dervin, 2016) – play a crucial role in these dynamics. In the context of mobility governance, othering shapes how migrants are problematized, categorized and ‘managed’, and how insider/outsider boundaries are reproduced in policy, media and sometimes even uncritical criminological discourses. These developments unfold against the backdrop of recent policy shifts at the European level, most notably the EU Migration and Asylum Pact, which are likely to further reshape practices of categorization, control and the (re)production of othering. Such discursive and policy shifts also (re)shape how migrants move, settle, access rights, encounter institutions, and experience safety and uncertainty in their daily lives.

The Working Group Criminology of Mobility invites scholars to its fourth mid-term conference to explore these shifting dynamics and discourses of migration, crime and citizenship under the theme “Othering and the Reconfiguration of Mobility Governance in Europe.” The conference aims to bring together criminologists, socio-legal scholars, anthropologists, political scientists, geographers and other social scientists interested in the governance of mobility in its many contemporary forms.

This year’s theme encourages contributions that examine how bordering takes place within societies, across institutional and legal frameworks, and through discourses and interactions between multiple state and non-state actors. We welcome empirical, theoretical and methodological work that addresses how mobility governance and discourses intersect with security, rights, social control, policing, welfare, detention, technology and everyday life across Europe and beyond.

Key topics

- › Borders and bordering practices: external, internal, digital, administrative
- › ‘Othering’ of migrants
- › Crimmigration, security and policing mobility
- › Asylum, reception and protection systems
- › Digital technologies and mobility control
- › The externalization/outsourcing of immigration control
- › Mobility, rights and citizenship (i.e., stratified citizenship, residence regimes, access to services etc.)
- › Gender, race, intersectionality and migration
- › Resistance, agency and solidarity movements
- › Detention, deportation and return practices

Organising committee

- Prof. dr. Lars Breuls – Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)
- Laure Deschuyteneer – Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)
- Dr. Mieke Kox – Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands)
- Dr. Cristina Fernandez Bessa - University of A Coruña (Spain)
- Dr. Giulia Fabini – Università di Bologna (Italy)
- Dr. Monika Szulecka – Polish Academy of Sciences (Poland)

Abstract guidelines

When submitting your abstract, please have in mind the following:

- Abstracts should be sent through this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/5PafQdNiv8> ; the deadline is 30 January 2026.
- Abstracts may not exceed 250 words. It should include a title, description of the presentation including the methodology, up to 4 keywords, the author's affiliation as well as contact details.
- Pre-arranged panels of three or four presentations will be accepted. Please add the name of the panel and the names and abstracts of its participants.
- A person can submit only one abstract (no one will be able to present two papers).
- We will notify you about acceptance of your abstracts on 15 February 2026.
- We expect contributors to attend the conference in person in Brussels. Registration will open later.
- Any questions? Please contact us: wg.immigrationcc@gmail.com

Conference fee

There is a conference fee of **40 EUR** to be paid by the participant(s). This will include lunch and coffee breaks on both conference days.

Key Dates

- Deadline for abstract submission: 30 January 2026
- Decision on the acceptance of the abstracts: 15 February 2026
- Preliminary program: 28 February 2026
- Conference date: 16-17 April 2026

The conference is partly funded by the Strategic Research Programme (SRP) “Criminology of the ‘Other’: Experiences and Processes of ‘Othering’ in and Beyond Crime Control.”