

**Converted Christians, Closeted Gays:**

**Conceptualising religion and sexual orientation in asylum claims in Europe**

VU Migration Law Seminar

Tuesday, 15 March 2015

Aurora (HG-0C29), VU University Amsterdam

10:00 *Opening and introductions*  
Professor Hemme Battjes (Vice Dean, Faculty of Law, VU Amsterdam)

10:15 Introduction to Workshop, explanation of the fish bowl setup  
Janna Wessels (Law, VU Amsterdam)

**10:30 – 12:30 Morning Session: Conceptualising the Convention Grounds**

5-10 min ***Introduction: Why converted Christians and closeted gays?***  
Professor Thomas Spijkerboer (Law, VU Amsterdam)

30 min ***Opening: What is the purpose of the Convention grounds?***  
Professor Alex Aleinikoff (Law, Columbia University)

30 min ***Respondents: Conceptualising the Convention Grounds***  
Professor Hemme Battjes (Law, VU Amsterdam)  
Professor Joke van Saane (Theology, VU Amsterdam)

30 min ***Discussion with “inner circle”***  
All of the above  
+ Dr Kees Wouters (UNHCR Geneva)  
+ Janna Wessels (Law, VU Amsterdam)  
+ Bahija Aarras (Law, VU Amsterdam)  
+ Dr Jesper Lindholm (Law, Aalborg Universitet)

20 min ***Discussion with “outer circle”***  
Other participants

**12:30 – 13:30 Lunch break**

13:30 – 15:30 Afternoon Session: Challenges for European practice

5-10 min     ***Introduction: European practice in international refugee law***  
Professor Hemme Battjes (Law, VU Amsterdam)

30 min     ***Opening: UNHCR’s position in European asylum law***  
Dr Kees Wouters (UNHCR Geneva)

30 min     ***Respondents: Challenges for European practice***  
Professor Alex Aleinikoff (Law, Columbia University)  
Dr Marcelle Reneman (Law, VU Amsterdam)

30 min     ***Discussion with “inner circle”***  
All of the above  
+ Dr Juan Amaya Castro (Law, Amsterdam University College)  
+ Sabiha Beg (Law, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg)  
+ Janna Wessels (Law, VU Amsterdam)

30 min     ***Discussion with “outer circle”***  
Other participants

15:30     Closure and Wrap-up