

# Objective 4: Child-friendly justice for all children



## Session on advocating for the rights of children in contact with the law

### Mid-Term Review Conference for the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)



Building a Europe  
for and with children

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pour et avec les enfants



PRÉSIDENTIE DU / PRESIDENCY OF  
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11/2024 - 05/2025

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# Advocating for the rights of children in contact with the law

***What if all children in contact with the justice system felt safe to participate in legal proceedings that affect them? What if they received support and protection of their rights in legal proceedings with dignity, equality and without discrimination?***

Child-friendly justice for all children is the fourth objective of the [Strategy for the Rights of the Child](#) (2022- 2027), and a crucial component the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of various policies and national efforts across Europe and the globe.

Child-friendly justice systems guarantee the respect and the effective implementation of children's rights at the highest attainable level, by providing justice that is accessible, age appropriate, speedy, diligent, child-sensitive and respectful of children's rights including the rights to due process, to participate in and to understand the proceedings, to respect for private and family life and to integrity and dignity.

It is essential that children in contact with the justice system feel safe to participate in legal proceedings that concern them. This is particularly important given the significant impact that judicial decisions can have on their lives and the trauma it may cause. It is encouraging to see that alternatives to detention and restorative approaches have become a part of pedagogical and child-friendly procedures, and it would be highly beneficial to further prioritise these in child justice.

Since 2010, the [Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-friendly Justice](#) have been instrumental in guiding Member States in adapting their justice systems to the rights and needs of children. Considering the progress achieved and the evolution of international and Council of Europe standards and jurisprudence over the past fifteen years, the Council of Europe is undertaking a thematic review. The aim of this review is to ensure that these Guidelines continue to lay the foundation for a justice system that is effectively responding to the rights and needs of all children in contact with the law.

## Aim of the Session

This session will provide an opportunity to inform participants about the ongoing thematic review of the Council of Europe's Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice, with a focus on enhancing their practical application and adaptation to current and emerging needs.

The session will also aim to raise awareness of key challenges, explore systemic deficiencies, and highlight principles of child-friendly justice approaches and strategies that help children rebuild their lives, and make positive contributions to society.

## Practical information

<b>Session</b>	<b>Advocating for the rights of children in contact with the Law</b>
<b>Strategic objective</b>	Objective 4 - Child-friendly justice for all children
<b>Day &amp; time</b>	Thursday 3 April, 14:30 - 17:00
<b>Venue</b>	Agora Building, Council of Europe
<b>Room</b>	G02 and online
<b>Languages</b>	English and French

## Programme

<b>14h30</b>	<b>Moderation:</b> <i>Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Director of DCI Belgium, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, President   President   CFJ-EN – Child Friendly Justice European Network</i>
<b>14h35</b>	<b>I. Setting the Scene, welcoming remarks</b>  <i>H. E. Ambassador Gabriel Revel, Permanent Representative of Monaco, Chair of the Rapporteur group on legal cooperation of the Committee of Ministers (GR-J)</i>
<b>14h50</b>	<b>II. The Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice and its thematic review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice fifteen years on - <i>Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou &amp; Susanna Greijer, independent experts</i></li><li>• Emerging issues and existing gaps to be addressed in the thematic review</li></ul>

15h30	<p><b>III. Towards a child justice system which guarantees the respect and the effective implementation of children’s rights</b> (Panel discussion - based on questions prepared by the Young Justice Transformers)</p> <p><b>Moderation</b> <i>April Dominique van Pairen and Joana, Young Justice Transformers, Mariama Diallo, Child Friendly Justice European Network</i></p> <p><b>Panelists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Andrej Del Fabro - Head of the Child Friendly Criminal Justice Department at the Ministry of Justice - Republic of Slovenia</i></li> <li>- <i>Myriam de Hemptinne - Family and Juvenile Judge – Court of appeal Brussels Belgium, Member of the International Hague Network of Judges of the Hague</i></li> <li>- <i>Astrid Podsiadlowski- Head of Sector Social Rights – Focal Point Rights of the Child- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights</i></li> <li>- <i>Leo Ratledge - Co-Director Child Rights International Network (CRIN)</i></li> <li>- <i>Marie-Cécile Rouillon - : Commission Coordinator for the Rights of the Child - Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission</i></li> <li>- <i>Angelica Russu -Senior Project Officer at the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Subjects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective participation of children in the justice system</li> <li>• Addressing the systematic barriers and challenges faced by children involved in legal proceedings</li> <li>• Activities of the EU Commission on child-friendly justice and European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights</li> </ul>
16.00	Coffee break
16.15	<p><b>III. Towards a child justice system which guarantees the respect and the effective implementation of children’s rights - <i>continued</i></b></p>
16:45	<p><b>IV. Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Director of DCI Belgium Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child President   CFJ-EN – Child Friendly Justice European Network</i></li> </ul>
17h00	End of the session