



CHILDfront

Child-friendly justice in the Greek and Cypriot courts

Newsletter
October 2022



Welcome to the first issue of the **CHILD Front newsletter**! Our newsletter aims to share information on child friendly justice with judges of the civil, criminal, and administrative branches of justice; prosecutors; trainers; and judicial

training providers, across the European Union. We invite you to subscribe below to receive the newsletter fresh from the press and get regular updates on project activities, including cross-border training activities for judicial trainers, judges, and prosecutors, resources on child friendly justice, transnational conferences, and more! A new issue of the newsletter will circulate on January 2023.

CHILDfront at a Glance

CHILD front aims to promote the effective and coherent application of EU law and policy in the area of child-friendly justice. The project focuses on the two EU member states with the lowest scores in this area in the EU, according to the 2020 Justice Scoreboard, namely Greece and Cyprus, and engages partners also from Bulgaria and Italy. To fulfil its objectives, the Child Front project will involve multilateral exchanges of good practice, and interdisciplinary, cross-border training for 235 judges and prosecutors and 8 trainers, through a state-of-the-art interdisciplinary training curriculum, developed based on good practices.

Meet the partners

To ensure the project's interdisciplinary approach and guarantee that all aspects of child-friendly justice are identified and addressed appropriately, the partnership brings together specialized actors from the fields of judicial training, child psychology and the rights of the child. The project is coordinated by the [Centre for European Constitutional Law](#) in cooperation with the [Society of Social PSychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos](#), the [Cyprus Family Planning Association](#), [Save the Children Italy](#) and the [Centre for the Study of Democracy](#) in Bulgaria, and is actively supported by the [Ministry of Justice Greece](#), the [National School of the Judiciary of Greece](#) and the Cyprus Supreme Court, which hosts the [School for Judicial Training](#).



Training needs assessment

Within the framework of the project, and to better identify the training needs of the target group in Greece and Cyprus, a research plan was designed including a mix of research methods (desk research, interviews, focus groups and online survey). The blended research design provided different insights on the type, frequency and focus of judicial training on child-friendly justice, the institutional, legislative and practical barriers to child-friendly outcomes, and the specific challenges and areas in need of further support, in accordance with the target groups' assessment.

The main conclusion resulting from the interviews is the undeniable need for interdisciplinary training in child friendly justice; verified by both the focus group discussions and the online survey. The topic of child friendly justice has only recently emerged as a priority in judicial training in both countries. Initial training in Cyprus is at initial stages, while the topic of child friendly justice is a hot issue for all professionals involved in legal procedures; same applies in Greece as initial training on child-friendly justice, and more specialised training has been absent from the initial training curricula of the National School of the Judiciary until very recently.

What the interviewees said:

"... I feel lucky that I didn't have to deal with 'difficult and challenging behaviors' (distress, intense emotional conditions) as I feel incompetent to handle this kind of situation, I have no training, no experience and no knowledge to deal with these issues.... What stresses me more, though, is that I know that sooner or later I will face such reactions..." (Criminal Justice, 105)

"... I am conducting personal interviews with children whose parents are getting a divorce.... I had a child crying about their parents' divorce, no support from a professional, no training, and no experience in dealing with this kind of reaction... Is up to me and my common sense how am I going to handle this situation and manage the emotional state of the child..." (Civil/Family Law, 103)

"... there is a great concern by most of my colleagues how do we approach a minor... We need training to properly ask questions that will give the opportunity to the minor to express itself in order to enable us to assess the information and conditions and decide on the status to be provided to him/her..." (Administrative/International Protection Law, 102)

Key findings of the CHILD front research:

- All interviewees mentioned interdisciplinary training on elements of child psychology and child-friendly communication as their number one need and expressed a strong desire to participate in such training.
- Most interviewees felt that they are adequately equipped in terms of the applicable legal standards and that, in any case, they have the capacity to read up on those on their own accord, in the context of specific cases they are called to adjudicate.
- Administrative judges, in Greece, who do not come into contact with children, mentioned that they would like to be trained on legal standards, in particular EU and international ones, which would help them specify and determine the principle of the best interests of the child, including through the case law of the CJEU and the ECtHR.
- All interviewees were favourable toward being trained together with their peers from different MS.
- All interviewees felt strongly about focusing on practical, interactive, experiential training, and opposed overly theoretical approaches.
- In terms of training materials, interviewees strongly expressed their desire for clear, practical, step-by-step guidance on how to approach children of different ages and levels of maturity involved in different types of proceedings.

More information on the data collected, the analysis and the conclusions you can find on the comprehensive [Training Needs Assessment Report](#).

Next project steps to look out for:

Good practices in child friendly justice will be mapped, in the EU and internationally. Based on the findings, tailored, practical, multidisciplinary, state-of-the-art training material will be developed, which will be accessible through a project specific e-learning platform, to be retained by the national School of Judges after the conclusion of the project. Training for judges, prosecutors and judicial trainers will be provided through study visits; synchronous, cross-border training workshops; and asynchronous e-learning.

The training and the material developed will focus on three separate and one cross-cutting training themes: criminal justice and the rights of children in criminal proceedings; civil proceedings involving or impacting the child; administrative proceedings for children in migration, including unaccompanied minors; and personal data protection for children in all types of judicial proceedings.

All training activities will incorporate modules on child psychology and child-friendly communication.

Details on specific activities, as well as information on how to access the project material and how to take part in the project events, will be included in our next newsletters! Stay tuned!



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Did you Know That...

The Council of Europe has created standards and guidelines aiming at supporting the justice system adapt in order to guarantee respect of all children's rights.

More information you can find on:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/child-friendly-justice>



**Co-funded by
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