



**Fostering Child-Friendly Legal Environments
through collaborative networks**

FOSTER Project

*An EU-funded initiative to
strengthen lawyers' capacities in
child victim representation*

E- newsletter

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Welcome Message

Welcome to the first issue of the FOSTER Project e-newsletter. As we move forward with our mission to empower legal professionals across Europe, this newsletter will keep you informed about our progress, activities, and how you can engage with our work.

Together, we're working to ensure that every child victim of crime receives the protection and representation they deserve.

About the FOSTER Project

The project **FOSTER – Fostering Child-Friendly Legal Environments through collaborative networks** has the aim to create a child-friendly justice system and strengthen the legal representation of child victims by enhancing the knowledge, skills, and awareness of lawyers working in this sensitive and crucial area.

Key Objectives

The project's primary goal is to

- Build the capacity of lawyers by providing training on children's rights, the legal framework for the rights of crime victims (EU Directive 2012/29), trauma-informed approach, and victim-sensitive communication.
- Foster the development of strong cooperation networks among legal practitioners, judicial authorities, state actors, and civil society organisations involved in child protection.

Target groups

The target groups that will be addressed through the project activities include:

- Lawyers and judicial authorities
- State actors promoting children's rights, and
- Civil Society Organisations working on child protection and the rights of victims of crime



Project partners and involved countries

The project is implemented in four European countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovenia by a consortium of five partner organisations:

The [Centre for European Constitutional Law – CECL](#), project coordinator, is a leading public benefit foundation and research institute, based in Greece. Its areas of focus include Justice and Fundamental Rights, Democracy and Public Institutions, and Social Policy and the Welfare State. CECL is a training provider with extensive experience in the training of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other legal professionals, closely collaborating with the Greek School of the Judiciary, Bar Associations, and other professional associations at the national and European level. CECL also hosts the national focal point for FRANET, the multidisciplinary research network of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and is a member of the Greek National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI).

The [Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos – SSP. P. Sakellaropoulos](#) is a non-profit scientific organisation, which was founded in 1986 and provides high quality mental health services in Greece as part of the National Plan for Mental Health “Psychargos” of the Ministry of Health. It focuses on prevention, timely intervention, human rights promotion in mental health, advocacy and networking and it operates 35 mental health units in 5 Prefectures, including mobile mental health units and day centers for children and adults, rehabilitation units. It also provides training to professionals, including teachers, judges, prosecutors, legal experts, police officers, journalists in the framework of community awareness rising.

The [Center for the Study of Democracy – CSD](#) in Bulgaria, which has been long engaged in advancing child rights, with a focus on protecting the rights of child victims of crime. Over the years, CSD has conducted comprehensive research, developed policy recommendations, and implemented training programmes aimed at improving the treatment of children within the justice system. The Centre has been instrumental in promoting a child-sensitive and trauma-informed approach to legal proceedings, advocating for reforms to align national practices with international standards.

The [Centre for Social Sciences Institute of Legal Science \(CSS\)](#) in Hungary, CSS is a research centre for the legal sciences, conducting theoretical, empirical and comparative researches. The Centre also carries out basic, applied and comparative research in these fields and conducts its scientific work independently of political influence, and

The [Institute of Criminology \(IK\)](#) at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana is an organisation founded in 1954 as the first criminological institute in the former Yugoslavia. Since its establishment, its primary activities have included research, teaching, information dissemination, and the organization of a library and documentation service.



The project is co-funded by the European Union under the Justice Programme (JUST-2023-JACC-EJUSTICE/ 101160568).

Key Activities and Outputs

To achieve its objectives, the FOSTER project implements a comprehensive set of activities, including:

- **Training Needs Assessment:** Conducted in Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovenia, the TNA analyses the current legal practices related to child victims and their rights. It identifies key areas where lawyers need further training to effectively represent child victims of crime.
- **Development of Training Curricula:** The consortium partners will work on the creation of two tailored training curricula. One targets lawyer-trainers, focusing on adult learning methodologies and advanced aspects of child-friendly justice. The second is designed for practicing lawyers, emphasising the rights of child victims. Both curricula will include modules on data protection, child psychology, child-friendly communication, and inter-agency collaboration.
- **Train-the-Trainers Seminar:** A two-day seminar will be held in Slovenia to train 20 lawyer-trainers. Topics will include adult education methods, EU legal frameworks on child and victims' rights, child psychology, and communication techniques. Participants will gain the skills necessary to conduct effective national training sessions.
- **National Training Workshops for Lawyers:** Interactive, case-based workshops will be conducted in Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovenia. Delivered both in-person and online, these two-day sessions aim to enhance legal professionals' understanding and application of EU law regarding child victims, with a strong focus on psychological and communication approaches tailored to children.
- **Professional Guides for Trainers and Lawyers:** Developed based on trainees' feedback, these guides will address practical challenges and include case studies, examples, and actionable tips. They will be available in English, Greek, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Slovenian.
- **E-Learning Course:** An online training course will be launched to reach at least 300 lawyers. Hosted on the CECL learning platform, it will cover child-friendly justice principles and the rights of child victims. The course will be freely accessible in English, Greek, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Slovenian.
- **National and Transnational Networking Activities:** Conducted mainly online, these activities will bring together legal professionals, competent authorities, Bar Associations, and CSOs. They aim to foster cross-border experience sharing



and promote collaborative efforts in child protection within the criminal justice system.

- **Policy Paper on Child Protection in Criminal Proceedings:** Drawing on insights and recommendations from national and transnational roundtables, this paper will highlight best practices and policy suggestions. It will be published in English and translated into Greek, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Slovenian.
- **Intersectoral Networking Guide for Lawyers:** This guide will promote effective collaboration between legal professionals and other key actors—such as psychologists, educators, healthcare workers, and child protection agencies—involved in child protection. It will be available in English, Greek, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Slovenian.
- **Final Conference:** Scheduled for May 2026 in Greece, the conference will convene legal professionals, CSO representatives, judicial staff, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in child-friendly justice. The event will showcase project results, encourage dialogue, and promote ongoing cross-sector and cross-country collaboration.

Project Updates

Between September and December 2024, project partners in Bulgaria, Slovenia, Hungary, and Greece conducted desk and field research to assess the training needs of lawyers in the area of child-friendly justice and the representation of child victims of crime. The research included a comprehensive review of national and international legal frameworks, tools, and practices, as well as interviews and focus groups with 102 stakeholders — including lawyers, judges, law enforcement, and child protection professionals.

In March 2025, CECL compiled the findings into a consolidated Training Needs Assessment report, which includes the national reports as annexes. This report lays the groundwork for the development of tailored training materials for both lawyer-trainers and practicing lawyers.

The full TNA report is available in English: [here](#)

Currently, the consortium is developing two customised training curricula:

- **For lawyer-trainers:** focusing on adult learning methods and advanced topics in child-friendly justice.
- **For practicing lawyers:** covering the rights of child victims, child psychology, and child friendly communication.

Both curricula are expected to be finalised in summer 2025.



Upcoming Events

 **June 19–20, 2025 – Train-the-Trainers Seminar | Ljubljana, Slovenia**

The Institute of Criminology (IK) will host a two-day seminar for 20 legal professionals from Greece, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The event will focus on adult training methodologies, child-friendly justice, and the rights of child victims of crime.

 **September–October 2025 – National Roundtables | Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia (Online / In-Person)**

A series of national roundtables will be held in each participating country. Further details, including dates and formats, will be announced in the coming months.

 **October–November 2025 – National Trainings for Lawyers | Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia (Online / In-Person)**

Targeted trainings will be offered to lawyers, focusing on child-friendly justice, relevant EU legislation, child psychology, and effective communication with child victims. More information will follow soon.

Stay Connected

Whether you're a legal practitioner, lawyer, public authority representative, or child protection professional, your engagement is warmly welcomed.

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