

Online Workshops for Judges

Access to Justice for Children Accused and Suspect in Criminal Proceedings
ACCESS project

Judges I: May 14 (14:00–16:00 CET)

Judges II: May 21 (14:00–16:00 CET)

The **ACCESS Online Workshops for Judges** are designed to build on insights from the Transnational Roundtable discussions held in March 2025 in Brussels, focusing on the application of EU legal frameworks and practical solutions for juvenile justice. These workshops focus on applying EU legal frameworks and sharing practical solutions to ensure effective support for children in conflict with the law, particularly regarding their access to justice and procedural safeguards.

Bringing together judges from Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovakia, the workshops offer a space for judges to exchange experiences, identify common challenges, and strengthen their role in ensuring fair proceedings for children. The focus is on enhancing their understanding of Directive 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children and their practical application in day-to-day work. The workshops aim to foster a collaborative environment in which judges can gain a deeper understanding of existing mechanisms and explore potential approaches for handling cases involving children in conflict with the law across different jurisdictions. These sessions will enrich participants' understanding and perspectives, contributing to a stronger network of professionals promoting child-centred approaches in justice systems across Europe. The sessions will include a mix of expert-led presentations and interactive activities, allowing participants to engage in case studies and group discussions.

In line with the project's overarching goal of promoting equality in criminal proceedings, the workshops will also offer a platform for participants to share experiences on overcoming systemic challenges, such as discrimination or the disproportionate impact of criminal proceedings on certain groups of children. By collaborating with professionals from different jurisdictions, participants will identify practical solutions and strategies to improve children's access to justice.

The **Access to Justice for Children Accused and Suspect in Criminal Proceedings (ACCESS) project** aims to foster EU-wide effective and non-discriminatory access to justice for children in criminal proceedings, and respect for children's procedural rights amongst legal and other professionals. The project aims to foster the effective application of Directive 2016/800 by addressing the gaps identified in access to procedural rights through peer exchange among justice professionals from six EU countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovakia). These will become ambassadors of change in follow-up online workshops and national seminars, where further stakeholders will be involved.

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AGENDA

Judges I: May 14 (14:00–16:00 CET)

14:00–14:10	Introduction & Tour de Table Welcome, participant introductions, and session objectives
14:10–15:10	Comparative Case Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Comparison of justice system approaches in six EU countries: discussion among judges</i> • Additional discussion points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Age differences (7, 14 vs. 16), shoplifting vs. robbery</i> ○ <i>Impact of mild intellectual disability or similar circumstances</i> ○ <i>What happens outside the criminal justice system – how it works for children</i>
15:10–15:40	Small Group Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use of detention and alternatives, including conditional release</i> • <i>Assessing the best interests of the child</i> • <i>Identifying the biggest challenges and good practices across jurisdictions</i>
15:40–16:00	Reporting Back Key takeaways shared with the group

Judges II: May 21 (14:00–16:00 CET)

14:00–14:10	Introduction Overview and insights from the Brussels workshop
14:10–15:00	Post-verdict Responsibilities & Criminal Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Role of judges in executing their verdicts: probational sentencing, compulsory treatment, and follow-up mechanisms</i> • <i>Conditional release: when and how it is used</i> • <i>Criminal record deletion by age 18: judicial role and practice (e.g., Germany)</i>
15:00–15:50	Judicial training & Children with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education and training of judges: initial barriers and ongoing gaps</i> • <i>Good practice examples from different systems</i> • <i>Addressing disability in criminal justice: adaptations and safeguards</i>
15:50–16:00	Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways Summary, next steps, and closing remarks

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