



7th international EFJCA Conference and network meeting

Heraklion, Greece - 6 and 7 October 2025

From Vision to Implementation: Advancing Gender-Responsive Multidisciplinary Policies Towards Sustainable Family Justice Centers

The European Family Justice Center Alliance (EFJCA), the Union of Women Associations of Heraklion and the Regional Authority of Crete are pleased to invite you to a two-day international conference dedicated to strengthening multidisciplinary responses to gender-based and domestic violence.

This conference brings together professionals and organizations from Greece and across Europe working in the fields of policing, justice, social work, health-care, youth services, NGOs, and government. With a focus on exchange, networking, and learning, the event will highlight models such as the Family Justice Centers (FJC) and explore how to implement and sustain multidisciplinary approaches.

Special attention will be given to the essential role of governments and policymakers in ensuring the long-term sustainability of FJCs and related models. A diverse lineup of Greek and international speakers with deep expertise will share good practices and practical insights.

Participants will engage in interactive sessions on key themes critical to building and managing effective multidisciplinary responses. The conference offers space for meaningful dialogue and international networking, providing inspiration and concrete tools to strengthen daily practice.

Join us for two days of knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and connection.

Practical information

Participation **in person** and **online** is possible.

Language: English

Registration fee:

in person € 175

online € 75

Register on
www.efjca.eu



Funded by
the European Union

7th international EFJCA Conference

Program Day 1

Monday 6.10.25 • 10.00–17.00u
Heraklion, Aquila Atlantis hotel

09.30 Registration

10.00 Opening
by Nicholas Spetsidis, UWAH – Pascale Franck and Bert Groen, EFJCA

10.15 Welcome
by Name TBC

10.30 The role of tackling gender-based violence and the role of local authorities
by a representative of the Local Authorities of Crete

11.00 A travel to Family Justice Centers and Multidisciplinary Models
In a fast-paced overview, we explore how cross-sector collaboration transforms responses to gender-based and domestic violence, and how it unites professionals around a shared mission of safety, empowerment, and lasting change.
by Dries Wyckmans, Department gender related violence, Flemish Government and Bert Groen, EFJCA

11.30 Coffee break

12.00 Panel Discussion: Advancing Gender-Based Approaches in Multidisciplinary Responses to GBV and DV

This panel will explore the critical role of a gender-based approach in addressing gender-based and domestic violence, with insights drawn from international frameworks and monitoring reports. Special attention will be given to key lessons from GREVIO evaluations, the EU Directive, and the recent OECD report. The session includes time for questions from the audience.

Panel Host: *Melina Daskalakis, Lawyer, Legal Advisor (TBC)*

Speakers: • *Maria Andriana Kostopoulou (GREVIO), The Istanbul Convention and the Multidisciplinary Approach: Why a Gender-Based Perspective Matters, Insights from GREVIO Reports*

• *Representative of the Committee of the Parties, The New EU Directive: Implications for GBV Policy and the Sustainability of Multidisciplinary Centers*

• *Doron Wijker, OECD, OECD Findings: The Role of States and Governments in Shaping Effective GBV and DV Policies*

13.00 Lunch

14.00 Experiences of FJCs in Europe: Building, Sustaining, and Centering a multidisciplinary approach

In this session, speakers from several European countries will share how Family Justice Centers and related multidisciplinary models have taken shape in their local and national contexts. Through storytelling and visual impressions, we explore how these centers were built, how they strive for sustainability, and how they embed a strong gender-based approach in their daily work. Speakers will reflect on both the opportunities and challenges they face in their regions, offering inspiration and practical insights for professionals across Europe.

Contributions from:

• *Netherlands – Tanya Hoogwerf, FJC Filomena Rotterdam*

• *Italy – Giusy Barbara/Laila Micci, FJC Milan*

• *Belgium – Lilith Roggeman, Veilig Huizen Flanders*

• *France – Violette Perrotte, Re#Start, Maison des Femmes*

• *Iceland – Jenny Valberg, FJC Bjarkarhlöð Reykjavík*

15.00 The Development of the FJC in Heraklion



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Program Day 1 (continued)

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Highlights of the process, structure, and key experiences in building a Family Justice Center in the Heraklion: the opportunities this journey has brought, as well as the challenges faced along the way.

by Nicholas Spetsidis, UWAH

15.15 Coffee break

15.45 From Surviving to Transforming: Understanding Perpetrators and Strengthening System Accountability

by James Henderson

Henderson brings a compelling and deeply personal perspective to the conversation on domestic violence. Drawing from his own experience as a survivor of family violence and his decades of work in offender accountability, probation, and system reform, he explores the complex profiles of perpetrators and the critical need for coordinated, informed responses. This keynote highlights the responsibility of institutions to not only hold perpetrators accountable but also to ensure safety and justice for victims. With clarity and passion, Henderson challenges professionals to move beyond victim-blaming and center their efforts on systemic change and perpetrator-focused strategies.

16.45 Closure

by Nicholas Spetsidis, UWAH

17.00 Welcome to network drink



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Program Day 2

Tuesday 7.10.25 • 10.00–17.00u
Heraklion, Aquila Atlantis hotel

09.30 Registration

10.00 Opening
by Nicholas Spetsidis, UWAH – Pascale Franck and Bert Groen, EFJCA

10.10 Speech
by Vicky Arali

10.40 **Walking the Extra Mile for Victims**
Valerie Swennen, police detective with extensive experience in cases of gender-based and domestic violence, serves as the liaison officer for the Flemish 'Veilig Huizen' and is a dedicated trainer with the EFJCA. Valerie highlights the critical need for a multidisciplinary approach and urges systems to adapt to the needs of victims – not the other way around. She speaks to the profound impact of coercive control and intimate terrorism on both adults and children, and underlines the importance of a truly victim-centered response. With conviction and compassion, she calls on all professionals to go that extra mile – because only then can we truly make a difference in the lives of those affected.

11.10 Coffee break

11.40 **Information Sharing in Family Justice Centers and Multidisciplinary Models**
Effective information sharing is a cornerstone of successful multidisciplinary collaboration in the response to gender-based and domestic violence. Berte Van Heemst (to be confirmed), Prosecutor in Rotterdam, and Davy Simons, strategic coordinator of the City of Antwerp at the FJC Veilig Huis in Antwerp, share their experiences and insights from the Netherlands and Belgium. The speakers will explore how information sharing is organized within their respective systems, including legal frameworks, protocols, and trust-building between partners.

12.30 Lunch

13.30 **Risk Assessment and Digital Tools in Practice**
This session explores how digital platforms support risk assessment and case management in domestic and gender-based violence. Nienke Scholten (Flanders) will present the WIDA system, designed to improve interagency collaboration. A speaker from Spain (tbc) will introduce VioGén, the national tool for risk monitoring and victim protection. The session offers practical insights into the use, benefits, and challenges of digital systems in multidisciplinary settings.

14.10 **Panel**
Q&A with the speakers of the speeches about Information sharing, Risk assessment and digital tools.

14.40 Coffee break



7th international EFJCA Conference

Program Day 2 (continued)

Tuesday 7.10.25 • 10.00–17.00u

Heraklion, Aquila Atlantis hotel

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- 15.10** **Voices in the FJCs and Related Models**
Survivors' voices are essential in shaping effective responses to gender-based and domestic violence. In this session, survivors from several Family Justice Centers across Europe will speak from their lived experience about what is truly needed to stop the violence and support healing. The session will also introduce the Voices Committee of the EFJCA, an initiative that centers survivor perspectives in policy, practice, and evaluation. Participants will be encouraged to integrate survivor-led structures into their local multidisciplinary work, as a powerful step toward more responsive and impactful services.
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- 15.40** **Trauma-Informed Care and the Pitfall of Victim-Blaming**
Sofia Thanasoula explores the principles of trauma-informed care in the context of gender-based and domestic violence. Her speech highlights how professionals can better understand and respond to victims' needs, while avoiding the common trap of victim-blaming. A powerful call to shift systems and practices toward empathy, safety, and true support.
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- 16.10** **The Hidden Force for Change: Why the Istanbul Convention Matters here and now**
Understanding the power of the Council of Europe's Convention to combat gender-based violence, and how it can guide local action
Discover how the Istanbul Convention shapes policies, protects victims, and holds governments accountable. Whether you're new to the Convention or already familiar, this session explores its real-life impact – from European frameworks to practical relevance in local communities.
Panel with GREVIO members
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- 16.40** **Closure session**
by Nicholas Spetsidis, UWAH – Pascale Franck and Bert Groen, EFJCA
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