



NEWSLETTER

International Association of Youth and Family
Judges and Magistrates

2025

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Children Under the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

This year AIMJF has decided to address the issue of "children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility: measures, rights, procedure, participation".

The questionnaire addresses topics such as the existence of one or more minimum ages in each country, especially if *doli incapax* rule is adopted; how age assessment is made and the rights of the child in this context; the intervention of the police, if any; the measures that may be applied to children; the procedure observed in this context and by which institution; if any other kind of assessment is made; the legal and procedural guarantees of children regarding the measures that may be imposed; the role of the justice system in this context, if any; the assistance received by children; how the child participates; legal implications of the involvement of children with criminal offences and reforms in progress.

37 countries have joined this initiative: Argentina, Austria, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada (Québec), Chile, Congo, Croatia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, England and Wales, Germany, Hungary, Isle of Man, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, North Macedonia, Norway, Puerto Rico, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA (California) and Zambia.

We thank the support of the CMJA - Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association for contacting some countries from where AIMJF still does not have members.
The national reports and the global analysis will be published until January, the latest.

World Congress on Justice with Children

The World Congress on Justice with Children, a joint initiative from AIMJF, Terre des Hommes and Penal Reform International, took place from June the 2nd to 4th in Madrid, Spain, bringing together over 4,000 registered participants, including 800 in person and more than 4,000 online. With satellite events held around the world, the Congress reached an estimated total of 6,000 people. Participants represented 132 countries in person in Madrid and an estimated 160 countries overall. Notably, 35 children actively participated in Madrid, including 15 members of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee. The event also had a strong digital presence, with an average of 10,341 connections through the dedicated app, reflecting high engagement across platforms.

AIMJF's deputy-president, Jorge Jimenez, has been one of the key-note speaker and several members have participated in workshops, such as :

- **Drug trafficking as the worst forms of child labor: public policies and the justice system** - Eduardo Rezende Melo
- **Reconstructing multilateralism: the role of Academia in advancing sustainable capacity-building for children's rights** - Ton Liefaard; Ann Skelton, Karabo Ozah
- **Child protection responses to violence in the family** - Marielle Bruning
- **Advancing child-centered justice for underrepresented children in complex judicial contexts** - Jaap Doek
- **Child participations as victims and witnesses in criminal cases. An AIMJF comparative research** - Eduardo Rezende Melo; Ursina Weidkuhn, Lana Petö Kujundzic
- **Advancing child-centered justice through OPIC: ensuring access to remedies, policy reform and state accountability** - Ann Skelton, Ton Liefaard
- **Access to justice for children: the perspective of the justice system. An AIMJF analysis** - Eduardo Rezende Melo, Jorge Jimenez, Mary Beloff, Ursina Weidkuhn
- **Child participation in Juvenile Justice in Latin America and the Mercosur panorama (in Spanish)** - Eduardo Rezende Melo, Elbio Ramos, Juan Carlos Bordon, Marta Pascual
- **Attending to language ability as a prerequisite to a child-centered justice** - Lana Petö Kujundzic

The next World congress will probably take place in Kuwait, date to be confirmed.

Creation of the AIMJF's Latin-American Section

During the World Congress, within the discussion on "Child participation in Juvenile Justice in Latin America and the Mercosur panorama", an AIMJF Latin-American section has been created to enhance cooperation between members, to develop study tours to exchange good practices and to develop studies to improve local practices.

Judge Leonel Peña, from Colombia, was elected its first president, with the commitment to organize its first meeting in 2026 (see below). We wish success to the new Section and to its president!

London in October - European section Meeting and Election

From 27th to 29th October, AIMJF has organized a study tour in London, UK, with the support of Judicial Office from the Royal Courts of Justice, with the participation of members from Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, France, Germany and the USA.

On the first day, members have met judges and magistrates for discussions and also participated in court hearings in Croydon Magistrates' Court and in Highbury Corner Magistrates' Court.

On the 28th, members have spent the morning visiting Feltham Youth Custody service. In the afternoon, the focus was on youth assessment on Youth Justice Service in Lambeth.

On the 29th, members have spent the whole day in the Prevention and Youth Justice Service in Wokingham, focusing on child first approach, understanding preventive strategies and following a joint decision-making panel. Professor Kevin Haines, retired Professor of Criminology and Youth Justice at Swansea University and the main theoretician of child first approach has also joined AIMJF members to debate this practice.

During the study tour, the European section has met and Lana Petö Kujundžić was elected the new president, promising to organize the next study tour and European Section meeting either in Moldova or in Italy, in 2026 (see below). During this period, AIMJF Editor in Chief, Eduardo Rezende Melo, has also met the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges Association Secretary, Karen Brewer, to personally thank their support to our initiatives and to improve our common partnership.

04. THE SWISS CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER

As announced in our last newsletter, from 3-5 Sept 2025, AIMJF president, Dave Stucki, deputy-president, Jorge Jiménez Martin, and deputy secretary general, Ursina Weidkuhn, have participated to the Annual Conference of the Swiss Association of Juvenile Justice Professionals, which took place in Geneva, dedicated to the topic of comparative law/practices ("Droit pénal des mineurs - Au-delà des frontières").

05. RECOVERY AND DIGITALIZATION OF AIMJF ARCHIVES

Many historical documents of our association were stored in an office in Lausanne, Switzerland, at Terre des Hommes. Deputy secretary-general, Ursina Weidkuhn, has checked all the material, selected those of historical importance and is providing its digitalization to register our shared history.

March '26 - Children's Rights, Brasilia, Brazil

From March 24 to 25th 2026, the VII Iberian American conference on Children's Rights will take place in Brasilia, Brazil, focusing on Childhood, violence and digital environments. With AIMJF support, the Conference will be held at the Brazilian Superior Court of Justice, in person, but with online transmission.

Call for submissions of papers and oral presentations is open for submissions in Portuguese, Spanish and English from December the 10th to February the 15th to four working groups:

1. Comprehensive Protection, Public Policies, Psychology and Education;
2. Data, Consumption and Civil Liability in the Digital Society;
3. Violence, Protection Systems and Justice and
4. Childhoods, Contemporaneity, Diversity and Intersections

Detailed information is accessible in the following link:

https://ugc.production.linktr.ee/a1464857-8d53-4d9b-b2ef-319db6ee112f_ENG-EDITAL-VII-Conferencia-Ibero-Americana-dos-Direitos-da-Crianca.pdf

June '26 - Protection of children rights in a changing world, Sherbrooke, Canada + Study tour in Montreal and AIMJF elections

The current mandate of AIMJF board will end in July 2026 and to celebrate its conclusion a full week program will be organized in Québec, Canada.

On June the 8th and 9th, with the support of AIMJF members Anne-Marie Otis and Mélanie Roy, a bilingual (English and French) study tour will take place in Montreal. Detailed program will be announced next year.

From June the 10th to 11th, AIMJF will support an international conference organized by the University of Sherbrooke on the protection of children's rights in a changing world, in which many of AIMJF members will participate as keynote speakers: Benoit Van Keirsbitck, Jean Zermatten, Mona Paré, Eduardo Rezende Melo.

The conference will be only in French.

On June the 12th, AIMJF will organize its elections (8am-9:30am), in person and online. From 9:30am until 1pm, AIMJF will host a bilingual (with simultaneous translation) comparative case discussion, both on child protection and youth justice.

Take note that FIFA World Cup football games will take place in Canada, USA and Mexico during the same period. Therefore, it is highly recommended to book flights and hotel in advance.

September '26 - First Latin - American Section Meeting

Following the creation and election of the Latin-American section, Judge Leonel Peña proposed to organize a study tour in Bogotá, Colombia, in the first week of September.

The program, to be detailed next year, will include court hearing visits, restorative justice program, and also a conference in Colombia northern region to understand the approach to the rights of indigenous children. Activities will be held only in Spanish. Members from other parts of the world are welcome.

October '26 - Section Meeting in either in Moldova or Italy

Following the election of the new European section president, **Judge Lana Petö Kujundžić**, a study tour and the European section meeting will be held either in Moldova or in Italy, with the support of AIMJF treasurer, Michele Termine. The activities will take place in October, 2026. In 2027, the study tour will be in Zagreb, Croatia.

Program will be detailed next year, but will include visit to the court, including to attend court hearings, and to know local good practices. Members from other parts of the world are welcome.

07. BALANCE & PLANS FOR THE CHRONICLE + SEASONS' GREETINGS

For 2026, as Editor in Chief of the Chronicle, we intend to continue providing information of our activities in two annual newsletters, in the first and second semester, and providing support in the organization of our study tours.

We will keep focusing on developing research as an opportunity for members and collaborators to share what is the current situation of their countries and to allow us to have an insight on trends and new possibilities around the world. Even recognizing the limits of data collection with this procedure, with an impact in the systematization of the outcomes, we understand that this initiative provides possibilities of sharing experience and knowledge between all our members, curiosity about good practices and an invitation for participation in study tours and to enlarge networks. This is the main purpose of our association, to create bridges between our members in many parts of the world and to improve our understanding and practices on how to grant rights to children.

We are closing a period of focus on child participation and a new cycle, probably on effective remedies, will begin in the new mandate. We hope that the many opportunities we are creating to personal meetings, from different cultural and legal backgrounds, will create new synergies for a more powerful work of our association.

With this spirit and ideal in mind, we share our Board seasons' greetings to all our members and partners.

Season's
Greetings and
wishes for a
happy and joyful
new year!



David Stucki - Jorge Jiménez Martín
Michele Termine Andréa Santos Souza
Ursina Weidkuhn - Eduardo Melo

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Our sincere thanks also go to the executive management of our associated partners, whose strategic guidance and support have been pivotal in realizing our shared vision. This newsletter stands as a testament to the power of teamwork and shared commitment, and we are deeply appreciative of everyone's contributions.

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