

LEAP 2026

HUMANIZING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Conference Programme

Thursday, 5 February

Optional Pre-Conference Social Activities

17.00 Informal meet-up for early arrival - Participants meet at the hotel reception and walk together up to [Café Prasini Tenta](#) (Lycabettus Hill) to enjoy sunset views.

19.30 Dinner at [Estiatorio Filippou](#)

Friday, 6 February

14.00 Registration

14.45 Welcome Remarks

- Chryssa Mela, Senior Legal and Policy Officer at Fair Trials
- Dara Robinson, Chair of the Fair Trials Board
- Georgios Pyromallis, Defence Lawyer, LEAP Advisory Board Member
- Sveva Franco, Legal and Policy Officer, European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers

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15.15 The State of Criminal Justice in Greece

- Tasos Theofilou, journalist, researcher, and author specialising in criminal justice and prisons, Member of the European Impacted Person Advisory Council (EIPAC)
- Thanasis Kampagiannis, Greek Defence Lawyer

Moderator: Chryssa Mela, Senior Legal and Policy Officer at Fair Trials

16.00 Coffe Break

16.30 AI in Criminal Justice: Automating Enforcement or Humanizing Proceedings?

The rapid expansion of AI and data-driven technologies is transforming criminal investigations, evidence-gathering, and cross-border cooperation across Europe, amid a fragmented regulatory landscape and the growing mandate of the EU's law enforcement agency.

This panel will examine how AI-driven investigative tools affect core fair-trial guarantees, including procedural rights, equality of arms, and the defendant's ability to challenge increasingly complex and opaque forms of evidence, with particular attention to cross-border investigations and Europol's expanding use of AI-driven data analysis.

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Bringing together perspectives from the EU agency on judicial cooperation, civil society, academia, and journalism, the discussion will explore both the systemic risks for defence rights and the potential for AI to humanize criminal justice by reducing intrusive practices, addressing bias, and strengthening safeguards.

- Anna Pivaty, Assistant Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology at Radboud University
- Apostolis Fotiadis, Free Lance Journalist at Solomon
- Romain Lanneau, Legal Researcher at Statewatch
- Vincent Jamin, Administrative Director at Eurojust

Moderator: Gwen Jansen De Wolf, Defence lawyer, Vice-president at the European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA), LEAP Advisory Board Member

18.30 Close of Day 1

18.30 Evening Reception: Dinner & Music

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Saturday, 7 February

09.30 Keynote speaker: The future of Criminal Justice

- Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers

Opening reflections: The EU policy perspective on the future of criminal justice

- Sveva Franco, Legal and Policy Officer, European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers

11.00 Group Photo & Coffe Break

11.30 Vulnerability, Mental Health, and Poverty: Access to Defence in Europe

This panel examines how the protection of vulnerable suspects lies at the heart of efforts to humanize criminal justice. Drawing on recent European Court of Human Rights case law, it connects access-to-lawyer standards with progressive practice in the United Kingdom, showing how these rights can be protected in practice and what defence lawyers across Europe can learn. Focusing on the cases *V.D. v. Croatia* and *T.V. v. Croatia*, the panel discusses police conduct towards persons with mental disabilities and proposals *de lege ferenda* to ensure compliance with Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR.

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These safeguards are situated within wider, intersectional patterns of vulnerability, including the criminalisation of poverty and its disproportionate impact on women and other marginalised groups. The discussion will also look ahead to emerging questions and priorities for EU-level policymaking in this area.

- Dimitrios Giannouloupoulos, Professor at City St George's University of London, LEAP member
- Jerome Mangelinckx - Global Policy Manager, Penal Reform International
- Laura Stelzer, Legal and Policy Officer, European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers
- Lidija Horvat, Defence Lawyer, LEAP Advisory Board Member

Moderator: Federica Coppola, Assistant Professor of Criminal Law at IE University Law School, Fair Trials Board Member

13.00 Lunch

14.30 Breakout Rooms - 5 Sessions

(Advance registration required. Participants should attend the break-out room assigned to them following registration.)

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14.30 1. Videoconferencing and European Investigation Order

Against the backdrop of the European Commission's upcoming proposal to amend the European Investigation Order, with a focus on videoconferencing, this session will explore the use of videoconferencing in pre-trial and trial hearings in light of Case C-325/24 Bissilli and the overall EIO revision. It will engage LEAP members in a discussion on legal conditions, safeguards, and cross-border challenges rooted in their experiences, with a view to identifying core principles to inform potential future EU rules on remote participation.

Facilitators:

- Alex Tinsley, Senior Legal Consultant at Fair Trials, Barrister
- Michele Panzavolta, Professor of Criminal Law and Cybercrime at the Faculty of Law and Criminology of the KU Leuven

2. Access to a Lawyer

This session will examine the latest national-level trends on the right of access to a lawyer, with a focus on cross-border proceedings. It will also explore the conditions identified by LEAP members for ensuring effective legal assistance in cases

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of remote participation at trial and pre-trial via videoconferencing, in light of the European Commission's ongoing consultation on this issue.

Facilitators:

- Dimitris Giannouloupoulos, Head of the Department of Law at The City Law School, City St George's, University of London, LEAP member
- Mikołaj Pietrzak, Defence Lawyer, Former Dean of the Warsaw Bar Association, LEAP Advisory Board Member

3. EAW and ne bis in idem

This session will examine recent developments in European Arrest Warrant practice in light of the CJEU's judgment in case C-305/22, which held that a refusal to execute an EAW and the domestic enforcement of a sentence do not preclude the issuing Member State from seeking the person's surrender from another Member State at a later stage. Drawing on national and cross-border experience, the session will engage LEAP members in a discussion on the practical implications for ne bis in idem, the risk of multiple proceedings after a refusal of a statute execute the sentence and the safeguards needed to ensure legal certainty and protect fundamental rights.

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Facilitators:

- Asya Mandzhukova - Stoyanova, Defence Lawyer, LEAP Advisory Board Member
- Vania Costa Ramos, Defence Lawyer, President of the European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA), LEAP Advisory Board Member

4. The role of people with lived experience in criminal justice reform

This session will focus on how lived experience can be meaningfully integrated into criminal justice reform, moving beyond symbolic inclusion toward genuine co-creation and shared decision-making. Building on the work of the European Impacted Persons Advisory Council (EIPAC), the session will introduce newly developed internal guidelines aimed at strengthening Fair Trials' engagement with impacted people across its advocacy, research, and policy work. LEAP members will reflect on practical ways to collaborate with EIPAC, particularly on outreach, engagement, and agenda-setting. Participants will be encouraged to share experiences, challenges, and ideas on how lived experience can shape advocacy priorities, public narratives, and reform efforts at both the national and European levels.

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Session facilitated by Fair Trial's European Impacted Advisory Council (EIPAC) members:

- Angelica Vieira, Lawyer
- Elton Kalika, Researcher and Journalist
- Karim Ridwan, Legal Interpreter, Human Rights Activist
- Nuno Pontes, Researcher
- Wael Habbal, refugees right activist, community organizer
- Tasos Theofilou, Journalist, Researcher, and Author specialising in criminal justice and prisons

5. Fair Trials Index Project

This session will introduce the Fair Trials Index, a new global tool developed by Fair Trials and Freshfields to compare how criminal justice systems across countries comply with the right to a fair trial, from arrest to final judgment. Similar in ambition to the Rule of Law Index, it aims to provide clear and comparable data to identify good and poor practices, reveal systemic gaps, and support evidence-based advocacy and reform. The session will engage LEAP members in a hands-on discussion on methodology, indicators, data collection, and impact, and explore how the Index can be used and promoted at national and European levels.

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Facilitators:

- Chryssa Mela, Senior Legal Officer at Fair Trials
- Sophie Rolph, Pro Bono Lawyer at Freshfields

16.00 Coffee Break

16.30 Humanizing the European Arrest Warrant: Prison Conditions Through Case Law and Advocacy

This panel explores the growing tension between the expansive use of the EAW and the evolving legal and human-rights challenges surrounding its implementation in the post-Aranyosi/Căldăraru era. Despite being treated by most Member States as a highly efficient and unquestioned tool, the EAW has generated an overwhelming volume of case law and persistent concerns about detention conditions, proportionality, and the use of alternative cooperation instruments. Drawing on the use of NGO research and monitoring of detention conditions in surrender proceedings, speakers will discuss how such information has been relied upon by courts in several jurisdictions to challenge or suspend extradition where there is a real risk of inhuman or degrading treatment. By examining these issues, the panel focuses on how lawyers, judges, and civil society actors can work together to humanize the application of the EAW.

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Facilitators:

- Alessio Scandurra, Senior Legal Policy officer at Antigone
- Anna Karamoschoglou, Greek Prosecutor at the Court of Appeal
- Cristiana Bianco, Defence Lawyer, LEAP member
- Demetra Sorvatzioti, Professor of Law and Criminology at the University of Limassol, LEAP Advisory Board Member
- Lili Krámer, Senior Programme Officer & Research at Hungarian Helsinki Committee

Moderator: Nuno Pontes, Researcher, Member of the European Impacted Person Advisory Council

18.30 Closing Remarks

- Nicola Canestrini, Defence Lawyer, Advisory Board Member of the European Criminal Bar Association and LEAP Advisory Board Member
- Simona Di Dio, Networks Coordinator at Fair Trials

20.30 Dinner at [Taratsa Athens](#)

22.30 Dancing at [Discobala](#)

* These are optional activities that require registration and are self funded. Fair Trials Europe only covers the costs related to the official conference programme.