



EFRJ Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Athens, Greece – 15 May 2025

Minutes

The AGM officially begins at 18:30.

Brunilda Pali, Chair of the EFRJ Board, opens the meeting and warmly welcomes all attendees. She presents the agenda for the evening, noting that the formal part will be followed by an interactive session, proposals from members, information about the next AGM, and a social dinner.

Approval of the Minutes – AGM Tallinn 2024

The minutes from the 2024 AGM in Tallinn are presented to the membership and approved unanimously.

Annual Report – 2024

Brunilda Pali delivers the annual report, reflecting on the key developments and achievements of the year. She highlights the active engagement of the working groups and committees and places special emphasis on the 2024 conference held in Tallinn, noting it as a major milestone. A particularly meaningful moment was the presentation of the **Award to the Encounter of Encounters**. In general, our discussions could have gone further. The desire is to develop the ability to have painful and difficult conversations and engage in dialogue.

She also recalls the joint **staff and board retreat** in Tuscany in October 2024, which played a vital role in fostering connection and co-creating the new **2026–2030 strategy**. The strategy, now shared with members for feedback, outlines four clear priority areas and describes how the EFRJ aims to achieve them.

Brunilda underscores the EFRJ's continuing influence at the **EU level**, particularly through its work with **victim support organisations** on the Victims' Rights Directive. She praises the evolution of the **policy network**, which has become a participatory and relational space for dialogue.

The **International RJ Week** remains a highlight of the year, and the most recent edition stood out for its strong **international collaborations**.





Capacity building remains central to the EFRJ's mission, including numerous **events and trainings**, many delivered in partnership with others in the field.

On a more personal note, Brunilda shares that a particularly meaningful part of her year was meeting individually with EFRJ staff. She expresses deep appreciation for their dedication, thoughtfulness, and the quality of their work. She also acknowledges the invaluable contributions of the board and the many members actively engaged in working groups and committees.

CEO's annual report: At 18:37, Edit Törzs takes over as CEO and announces that, as people have received the presentation in advance, she won't be presenting it this year. Instead, she will conduct a quiz to check whether people understood the report.

The quiz ends at 18:58 and the report is approved by the membership.

Financial report: Zsofia Anda begins her presentation by explaining that there was a profit last year, albeit less than in 2023. Although income increased, costs also rose, exceeding expectations. The conference in Tallinn, the new website and the migration of the website all contributed to the increase in costs. Staff costs remained more or less at the same level as in 2023. The slight difference is that Zsofia Anda is now responsible for the financial area alone, as Rik Defrere has retired.

Income was 3% lower than in 2023. However, the core account still showed an increase in income due to the successful conference in Tallinn. It is normal for us to have a higher income in conference years than in symposium years. However, the income was not profit due to the size of the event. There was also an increase in membership income, which is normal for conference years, as people sign up to take advantage of the lower membership price. Last year, the Winter Academy was less successful than expected.

The EC grant is the largest source of income, but the EFRJ still needs to raise another 20%. Consequently, the amount of the OG remained unchanged from 2023. In 2023, the Pamplona government provided funding in the form of a grant, whereas in Tallinn, the government did not provide funding in the form of a grant, but rather in the form of participation fees.

In 2024, the EFRJ had much lower project income. Only the CROSSING PROTECT project started in 2024. The amount received in the first year is always higher than in the final year. This means that although income is higher in the first year, expenses are lower. Then, the expenses follow in the next year. This is the normal life cycle of the projects.

The reserves increased due to the positive result of approx. 31,000 euros in 2024.

This year's budget is similar to that of 2024; however, we expect slightly higher costs due to inflation, as well as slightly lower staff costs. There will be no new income, as there is only one ongoing project. We expect less income because it is a seminar year. We also expect to receive some minor grants for the REstart festival in Leuven in December.

There are no questions. The membership approves the financial report.





Interactive moment

At 19:10 Bálint opens the interactive session by presenting three key dilemmas currently facing the EFRJ. These dilemmas emerged from reflections on recent survey results and ongoing strategic discussions. While the survey provided valuable insights, it also raised new questions that have proven to be complex and thought-provoking.

Members were invited to watch a short scene presenting the dilemma presented by staff members, then consider each dilemma, take a position, and explain their reasoning in open discussion.

Dilemma 1: Climate responsibility and event organisation

Question:

Should we make substantial changes to how we organise events in the future to protect the climate?

Context:

Edit introduced the notion that reducing the EFRJ's environmental impact may require raising event prices by up to 50%. Laura countered that this would undermine the inclusive nature of EFRJ events and run contrary to the core mission of bringing people together.

Participants were divided on the issue, with the group split roughly equally between those favouring stronger climate-related measures and those concerned about the impact on accessibility and inclusion.

Supporters of substantial change stressed the moral responsibility to address climate change and argued that organisations should take meaningful action to reduce their environmental footprint. Suggestions included promoting train travel, reducing paper use, offering more sustainable food options, offsetting emissions, and developing a broader climate policy. Several participants emphasised that environmental responsibility does not necessarily require ending in-person events, but rather making them more intentional and sustainable.

Those expressing concerns argued that drastic changes could undermine the EFRJ's mission of inclusivity and meaningful human connection. They highlighted that small organisations contribute relatively little to global emissions compared to large industries and questioned whether measures such as moving events online would have a meaningful environmental impact. Others stressed the importance of preserving face-to-face interaction for training, collaboration, and community-building, while supporting more moderate and practical sustainability measures instead.





Dilemma 2: Pricing and inclusivity of trainings

Question:

Should we aim for more inclusivity when setting event prices, even at the risk of the EFRJ's financial sustainability?

Context:

Emanuela raised concerns over the €800 price for a training course, deeming it too high for many participants. Edit explained the pricing structure and financial limitations, noting the organisation does not profit from these events and that waiver systems are already in place. Emanuela countered that a 30% waiver application rate highlights accessibility issues.

Discussion:

A majority of participants supported greater inclusivity, particularly in response to concerns that current training fees may exclude many potential participants despite existing waiver systems.

Participants in favour of more inclusive pricing proposed solutions such as tiered pricing models, institutional funding, partnerships with universities, shorter or more targeted trainings, and differentiated fees for students and professionals. Several contributors stressed that high-quality training deserves financial support, but that accessibility should remain a central consideration, especially given economic inequalities across regions and participant groups.

Others argued that pricing must also reflect the real costs of organising high-quality events and ensure the organisation's long-term sustainability. Some noted that event prices are comparable to other professional or cultural activities when considering the services provided, while others emphasised that not all events should necessarily be accessible to everyone at the same cost. Most participants did not support reducing prices across all events, instead favouring targeted financial support, fundraising efforts, and flexible pricing approaches to balance inclusion with financial viability.

Dilemma 3: Expanding beyond the criminal justice field

Question:

Should we dedicate equal resources to projects beyond the criminal justice system (CJS), such as those focused on broader social justice issues?

Context:

Emanuela presented a potential project on Restorative Cities involving many partners. Laura raised concerns that it would divert focus from EFRJ's core mission – RJ in the CJS – and stretch limited staff resources. The debate explored whether expanding scope enhances or dilutes the organisation's impact.

Outcome: Strong consensus (approx. 95%) *in favour of* equally prioritising non-CJS projects.





A very strong majority supported giving equal priority to non-CJS work, though views differed on how directly the organisation should be involved.

Supporters of broader engagement argued that restorative justice naturally connects to wider social issues, such as education, inequality, and pathways into the justice system. They emphasised that working beyond the CJS can strengthen long-term policy change and deepen the relevance of restorative justice in society. Some also stressed that the organisation should collaborate with external actors in these fields rather than necessarily leading all initiatives itself.

Those more cautious about shifting focus warned that expanding too broadly could stretch limited resources and dilute the organisation's core expertise in criminal justice contexts. They highlighted the urgency and complexity of issues within the CJS, particularly juvenile justice, and questioned whether a wider mandate might weaken clarity of purpose. A recurring view was that engagement beyond the CJS should be strategic and collaborative, ensuring focus is not lost while still recognising the value of broader social impact.

The interactive part closes at 20:06.

Varia & Closing

Brunilda says there is a space for members to share communications or proposals. However, we have not received any. Issues can be raised now, though. No hands are raised.

Edit takes over to provide information about the next AGM. She officially invites members to the 2026 AGM and reveals where it will be held next year. The conference in Poznań, Poland, will take place from 11–13 June 2026.

The AGM closes at 20:10

