



IAFL ANNUAL MEETING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Intercontinental Dublin
2 – 6 September 2026

Education Program Committee: [Rhian McGrath](#) (Maryland, USA), [Frances Goldsmith](#) (Paris, France) and [Jemma Mackenzie](#) (Melbourne, Australia)

Thursday, 3 September 2026

08:30 – 9:00: Introduction and Welcome from IAFL President, [Heather Hostetter](#),
Washington D.C., USA

09:00 – 10:10: Definition of Maintenance, how do you define maintenance?
Maintenance v. equitable distribution; how do you isolate and define maintenance obligations across conflicting legal systems

Speakers:

[Paul McCarthy SC](#), Ireland

[Jocelyn Tsao](#), Hong Kong

[Robin B. Taub](#), Maryland, USA

[Maria Mercedes Lacasa Valls](#), Spain

10:10 – 10:40: Refreshment Break

10:40 – 11:00: Presentation by IAFL Substantive Committees

11:00 – 12:00: Recovering Maintenance

Speakers:

[Justin Spain](#), Ireland

[Jason Naimi](#), Nevada, USA

[Dervla Browne SC](#), Ireland

[Diane Sussman](#), France

Friday, 4 September 2026

08:30 – 9:00: Update on Kenyan Law Students

09:00 – 10:00: Collegial Session, Children's Right to Identity, Selfhood, and International Family Law.

Speakers: Marilyn Freeman, Nicki Taylor and Ursula Kilkelly, University of Cork

This presentation will address why change is needed in the way we think about identity and selfhood in the family justice and related fields. Article 8 of the UNCRC provides children

IAFL Annual Meeting, Dublin, Ireland
@ 30 March 2026

with the right to preserve their identity. However, this is currently a right hidden in plain sight, largely unrecognised by law, policy and practice. Yet, the preservation of a child's identity cannot be frozen in time. It should apply to the more static features of identity already identified within Article 8 (name, nationality, family relations) as well as those aspects that arise in response to significant life events and transformations experienced by children within and outside of their families (e.g., gender, out-of-home care, forced marriage, relocation, abduction, migration, detention).

This presentation will lift the veil on family law and consider how it can better address child identity issues. A more expansive approach to Article 8 will lead to identity becoming a more explicit consideration in relevant cases before the courts and other decision-makers. Children need to be actively involved in shaping their own identity and their views on this should be ascertained and taken into account in legal decision-making processes. We also reflect on the possibility of a General Comment to clarify Article 8's scope and interpretation, whether identity should feature in child-related statutory enactments, and how to teach family law to better equip lawyers, judges, related professionals, and society going forward.

10:05 – 11:10: Session 1A - Rethinking communication to get your point across

Speaker: Brodie Gregory

You already possess a wide range of communication approaches that you can use with clients and colleagues, and chances are, you overuse approaches in your comfort zone. In this session, get a refresher on the full range of communication approaches that you possess, ranging from directive (telling, instructing, directing) to non-directive (asking, listening, coaching) and everything in between. You'll leave the session with tangible, actionable strategies for identifying and using the best approach for the situation and what you want to accomplish with your clients and colleagues.

Reminder to All: Those who think they do not need this brush up on communication skills are probably those who need it most!

10:05 -11:10: Session 1 B – Topic presented by the Relocation Committee

Speakers to be confirmed

11:10 – 11:35: Refreshment break

11:35 – 12:40: Session 2A - Rethinking communication to get your point across

11:35 – 12:40: Session 2B – Through New Eyes: Junior Practitioners on the Future of Family Law

How do young lawyers perceive the profession and general trends they see, things they think are antiquated and should change.

Chair: [Andy Hayher KC](#), Canada

Speakers: [Dillon O'Toole](#), Partner, Schiller DuCanto & Fleck, Illinois, USA and others tbc

Saturday, 5 September 2026

08:30 – 09:30: Audrey Ducroux Memorial Lecture

09:30 – 09:45: Refreshment break

09:45 – 11:00: Forced Marriages

Forced marriage is one of the most complex and sensitive challenges in family law. Often sitting at the intersection of cultural practices, human rights, and cross-border legal frameworks, forced marriage is an issue which affects some of the most vulnerable members of society.

This session will explore the evolving response to forced marriage around the globe, examining how different jurisdictions define, prevent, and remedy such situations, as well as touching on the practical difficulties for family lawyers and their clients.

Speakers:

[Prudence Mutiso](#), Kenya

[Shabina Begum](#), England & Wales

[Stephen Page](#), Australia

[Mrunalini Deskmukh](#), India

11:00 – 12:00 : European Chapter AGM; Asia Pacific Chapter AGM; USA Chapter AGM; Canadian Chapter AGM

12:00 – 12:45: IAFL AGM

12:45 – 13:00: Board of Governors

20:00 till late: President's Dinner and Dancing at the Guinness Storehouse