



Introduction

The fourth conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice: 'Restorative justice and beyond – An agenda for Europe', that has taken place 15-17 June 2005 in Barcelona has attracted a lot of interest. As the title chosen indicates, we had intended to take a look beyond the boundaries of the established realm of restorative justice. We have attempted to address those exciting efforts of peacemaking and peace-building in societies torn by ethnic or religious conflicts, a peace that adheres to the principles of restorative justice. We have been looking at experiences with community mediation programmes that are operating independently of the criminal justice system and we have been looking at the restorative elements in school mediation. Where restorative justice programmes find their place in close connection to this system, we have paid special attention to its dealing with more serious crimes. But we have also tried to give time and space to the dynamics of restorative processes, to the training of mediators and legal professionals and to standards of good practice, core topics within the work of the European Forum.

As with the earlier conferences of the European Forum, we have again strived to implement a design that allows for maximum feasible participation of all those attending the conference. It seems that we have indeed come a decisive step closer to achieving this ambitious goal – thanks also to the facilitators entrusted with the task of inciting participation.

The plenary presentations of Brendan McAllister, of Ivo Aertsen together with Leo Van Garsse, and of Belinda Hopkins had set the stage for the workshops combined with café conferences that followed. Except for the Powerpoint-based presentation of Aertsen/Van Garsse where there is only an abstract available, you will find the presentations in full length included in this report. And the same holds – almost – for the final plenary speech given by Lode Walgrave (in fact, Lode's actual speech was considerably longer than what he could deliver in written format).

The summaries of the workshop presentations provided by the presenters are different in length and detail; most of them are complemented by a short comment (or report) provided by the observers that were present at the workshops.

This report is to bring back to the memory of the participants what they have heard and what they have talked about. Even more important, it will give you an opportunity to receive some basic information on those presentations that you have missed but would have liked to attend. (Indeed, the most common point of critique in relation to the conference was that workshops dealing with one theme were taking place simultaneously. We hope that in this way we can make up a bit for this defect). Finally, this report is to give those that have not been present, information on what was going on during the conference. For all of the potential readers we hope this report will succeed in conveying a bit of the flavour of those two and a half days of working in the pleasant building on Carrer d'Ausias Marc in Barcelona.

This is also to thank once more our great host, Jaume Martin, and his team at the 'Secretaria de Serveis Penitenciaris, Rehabilitació I Justícia Juvenil'.

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