



# Newsletter of the European Forum for Restorative Justice

## Editorial

I am pleased to present to you a summer issue of the Newsletter and recent updates within the European Forum. You can read a report about the Annual General Meeting of the European Forum as well as information about two projects run by the Forum. Indeed, you will find material about the first outcomes of the third AGIS project 'Restorative justice: an agenda for Europe' including the seminar held in Lisbon on 10-12 May 2007. More than 150 participants from 41 countries gathered for it, although initially fewer participants were expected. Next year Verona will host the Fifth Conference of the European Forum on 17-19 April. Don't forget to put the date in your diary! In addition, the newsletter also includes an overview of the EU Project on 'Developing standards for assistance to victims of terrorism', prepared by Ines Staiger.

Congratulations to the organisers of the second Summer School "On moving forward" held in Riga on 27 June - 1 July.

## On Moving Forward

### Summer School in Riga, Latvia 27 June - 1 July

People from different parts of Europe met for a five day Summer School. A genuine interest in restorative justice and mediation was the common interest of these people. They all wanted to move forward, to gain experience from each other, to gain and improve existing knowledge and practice. Niall Kearney (SACRO and CJSW Development Centre at Edinburgh University) set a frame for the Summer school by assuring us that by sharing our experiences we were all important to the group. And so we did. The summer school's purpose was threefold:

1. To provide a supportive environment for trainers and mediators to

Laila Oppedal shares her impressions about this event. The aim of the summer school was to get tools for moving restorative justice forward, in particular, to provide a supportive environment for trainers and mediators to share their experiences of training modules and methodological skills in mediation, to explore and adapt the European Forum recommendations on training programmes and to motivate trainers and mediators to have more international exchange.

In the Readers' Corner we are happy to introduce to you new publications in different languages.

I am happy to welcome and introduce to you new members of the Editorial Board of the Newsletter. They are our regular contributors Borbala Fellegi (Hungary), Panagiota Papadopoulou (Greece) and Robert Shaw (UK).

On behalf of the European Forum I would like to wish you a good rest and nice vacations!

**Vira Zemlyanska**

**Coordinator of the Editorial Board**

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realise how important this work is. I will mention just a few key points from his lectures on primary foci in supervision:

- Provide a regular space for the supervisors to reflect upon the content and the process of their work.
- Develop understanding and skills within the work.
- Receive information and points about one's work from another perspective, in particular with regards to content and process feedback.
- Be validated both as a person and as a worker.

Diana Ziedina (Head of Mediation Division State Probation Service of Latvia) took us to the State Probation Service. Mediation can be offered at all stages of criminal procedure. In Latvia cases are referred by police, prosecutors, judges and parties.

Ivo Aertsen (Professor K.U.Leuven, Belgium) facilitated our work on the role of evaluation and research. His experiences in Flanders served as illustrations for our discussions. We will need to ensure that there will be research about mediation and restorative practice, so that we can improve our work and create more understanding of our work among

politicians and the public.

Lutz Netzig and Frauke Petzold (Waage Hannover e.V, Germany) shared their experiences of mediation in domestic violence. Through practical exercises, role-play sequences, theoretical input and discussions we discovered new perspectives on mediation and training. The aim of the summer school was to get tools for moving restorative justice forward. At the end of the course, I think I gained new tools: a theoretical overview, knowledge about how important research is to improve practice and to increase the use of restorative justice practice, several new working methods and more colleagues to discuss and move forward with. There are now more people who share common thoughts about the "Utopia of Mediation".

Finally, I want to give special thanks to Diana Ziedina for being a wonderful hostess to us all in Riga. She arranged nice common meals, a guided tour in Riga and cultural experiences and she gave a good presentation of the State Probation Service. All this added to the many good memories of the Summer School in Riga 2007.

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## Restorative justice: an agenda for Europe

### Going South - The first outcomes of work in progress

As has already been mentioned in previous issues of the Newsletter, the AGIS project 'Restorative justice: an agenda for Europe' has the objectives of realising, on the one hand, effective support for the development of restorative justice (RJ) in Southern Europe and, on the other hand, of researching what could be the potential role of the European Union (EU) in the further development of RJ.

A steering group of experts is guiding the research work on 'EU policies' while a core group of experts representing Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey, together with experts from Belgium and France, is working on the 'Going South' part of the project. Two expert meetings, one seminar and two international conferences are the five milestones for both parts of the project.

This article will focus on the part of the project concerned with the South of Europe. Although in this region several RJ programmes are already in place, the actual implementation is characterised by instability and a limited reach in comparison with Western and Northern European countries.

On the basis of mutual help and cooperation, the work in the different stages will allow the experts to devise the strategies and tools that will help to improve the

practice and address the difficulties that are slowing down the implementation of RJ.

#### A first exploration

At the **first expert meeting** held in **Bordeaux** in January 2007, the participants analysed the state of RJ in their own countries. The specific challenges that Southern European countries are encountering were identified, as well as the factors that are supporting the implementation of RJ.

Although most of the elements identified were common to all countries, the discussions of the experts showed that their historical and cultural backgrounds have led to relevant differences in their current social and legal contexts. This explains why there are a few factors which are supportive for some and a challenge for other countries.

The **challenging factors** can be grouped in four areas. Related to the legal context and judicial system:

- The lack of an explicit legal basis in countries which strongly adhere to the principle of legality restrains the judiciary from making regular use of RJ programmes. Inequality in the application of the law can be a side effect of the ambiguity of the legal provisions that permit different interpretations depending on the court.

- The formalism and the positivist tradition of the civil or continental law culture of most of these judicial systems hinders the introduction of less formal elements like mediation or other restorative practices. This is especially relevant in the field of criminal law where fundamental rights are at stake.
- Lack of collaboration and common understanding between the criminal justice system and RJ practitioners.

#### Political context and policy implementation:

- Incomplete implementation policy: insufficient resources allocated, poor dissemination of information.
- Inappropriateness of the evaluation parameters typically used by the government which privilege the quantitative criteria of efficiency.
- No appropriate body responsible for RJ within the structure of the government.
- Lack of political will, partly due to the current repressive trend in crime policies, driven by principles of ‘security’ and ‘risk’. Another cause is the lack of information regarding RJ.

#### Social and cultural context:

- Lack of social awareness.
- Increase of a punitive mentality and confrontational approach to conflicts.
- The way in which media report on crime.
- Low civic participation; citizens generally adopt a ‘consumer’ attitude towards the government.

#### The RJ ‘collective’:

- Weak common ground, lack of communication and networking.
- Incomplete monitoring and unsystematic data collection. Lack of research and little involvement from the university sector.
- Lack of specialised training for mediators.

Nevertheless there are several **supportive factors** for RJ in Southern Europe:

- The pressure of international regulations and, in some countries, the current favourable political will to comply with them.
- Cooperation between the third sector and the government or between victim and offender support agencies. The university sector starts to be interested.
- Networking on a small scale with individual policy makers or legal professionals.
- General disappointment with the judicial system.
- Increasing use of mediation in other fields like family, school or neighbourhood disputes.
- Inherent constructive message of mediation and RJ.
- Available know-how ensuing from the existing

projects or pilot experiences as well as from international exchange, cooperation and partnerships.

On these grounds, an overview of the needs to be tackled was formulated. Although it was already possible to formulate some solutions, the experts agreed that these issues required further elaboration with other professionals and experts.

#### **Testing the first conclusions**

More than 150 participants from 41 countries took part in the Lisbon seminar on May 10-12, 2007.

The plenary and the workshop sessions focused on the needs that had been selected by the experts. The purpose of this second step of the project was twofold. First, the idea was to integrate the lessons learnt by other countries with longer experience in this field. Second, special efforts had been made to invite representatives of the judiciary, prosecutors, police, prison and probation staff and policy makers, in order to involve them in the discussions and build together a better understanding of the specificity of the challenges and needs. The seminar was opened by the State Secretary of Justice from Portugal, João Tiago Silveira. He was followed by the Head of the Juvenile Justice Department of Italy, Carmela Cavallo, who introduced the basic notions of restorative justice. With her professional experience as a juvenile judge she illustrated with real examples how restorative justice works and why it is needed. Prof. Ivo Aertsen outlined the AGIS3 project. *In what follows a synopsis of the needs and strategies concerning the implementation of RJ in the South of Europe is provided.* It is based on the first findings of the experts and integrates the reflections and recommendations resulting from the discussions held at the seminar.

An explicit legal basis is needed to support a regular and equal use of VOM programmes by the judiciary. David Miers, in his workshop, illustrated the different types of *legal instruments and legislative techniques* that can be used. The impact of a law depends not only on the scope, the ‘entry’ point or the effect given to an agreement but also on the principles that inform the legal system, as well as on the political and social context of the country.

João Lázaro and Frederico Marques provided a concrete example of how to legislate by describing the main features of the recently approved Portuguese Law 21/2007 introducing a mediation system for adults in criminal matters.

Leo Van Garssen proposed to formulate *RJ as a right* of every victim and offender, regardless of the type of the offence and the stage of the criminal procedure. This is the option taken by the new Belgian Law of 22 June



2005, which generalises the offer of mediation while preserving the voluntariness of the parties to decide whether to actually initiate the mediation process.

It is necessary to establish permanent instruments for *communication and collaboration* between the RJ world and legal professionals. Judge Kurt Creyf helped to understand the reasons behind the concerns of legal practitioners with regard to RJ practice. These are related to confidentiality, presumption of innocence or the public or private nature of organisations delivering the VOM service. Drawing on his professional experience, he provided useful tools for addressing these difficulties.

In the workshop presented by Frauke Petzold it was stressed that training has to be *customised* to the particular group of professionals and adjusted to the specific needs and interests of judges, prosecutors, prison and probation staff, victim support or police. Furthermore, besides informing and raising awareness, training should serve to engage these professionals in the application of restorative justice in the performance of their functions.

As was raised in the workshop conducted by Mark Montebello, in order to build working relationships with these actors, their needs and objections have to be listened to and addressed so they can also find benefits from using RJ practices in their daily work.

Pompeu Casanovas and Jaume Martín addressed the factors that favour the introduction of RJ on the *political agenda* and its implications.

The existence of more binding regulations at the *supranational level* is crucial in order to draw the attention of policy makers. This again clarified the link with the 'EU policies' part of the project. In this framework, Jolien Willemsens outlined the existing international instruments on RJ. In the workshop conducted by Frank Verbruggen the possibilities and the limitations of the EU in this field were explored.

The implementation of RJ requires thorough planning concerning *infrastructures and costs* on the one hand and the *establishment of guidelines* on referral procedures and service delivery on the other hand. The example of Finland described by Aarne Kinnunen illustrated the need to bring about a structural change within the government administration in order to ensure follow-up of the implementation process and monitoring of practice. Furthermore, the establishment of working relations between different government departments stimulates a more integrated policy and a better use of resources. The need to *raise social awareness* with regard to RJ entails also the education of people on the limits of the criminal justice system.

It is crucial to collaborate with the *media* so that they no

longer present a simplified picture of crime nor use the stereotypes of 'good' and 'bad' for victims and offenders. Nevertheless, the efficiency of mass media campaigns to spread knowledge of RJ was questioned due to the amount of information that is received by citizens on a daily basis. Small scale activities to sensitise a selected group of people have proven to be very effective. Furthermore, the need to *create a demand for mediation* services in other fields as well as to make available basic mediation skills training to the general public would serve to empower the average citizen to take responsibility for the solution of their own conflicts in a constructive way. Finally, there is a need to build more *cohesion* within the RJ 'collective' by establishing regular instruments to exchange experiences, share resources and build consensus regarding relevant issues. In the workshop led by Elisabetta Ciuffo, the creation of an umbrella organisation or a coordinating body was recommended. This would be responsible for fostering dialogue, stimulating networking as well as providing tools for monitoring and common guidelines.

Belinda Hopkins showed how an umbrella organisation like the RJ Consortium could foster a bottom-up participatory process to elaborate standards of training and accreditation of mediators. These would serve as the basis against which to evaluate the quality of the practice of mediators rather than their professional or educational background.

In several workshops participants stressed the importance of *university involvement* in order to provide legitimacy and credibility to the RJ practices in the eyes of the judiciary, policy makers and the general public. The academic world should be involved in the elaboration of more suitable evaluation schemes.

It was made clear that developing an *integrated communication strategy* is a matter of priority for which more resources and specialised professionals are needed. Prior qualitative research would identify the information needs of every different group (policy makers, practitioners, academics, legal professionals, general public...).

As Martin Wright mentioned in the closing remarks, discussions allowed people to see how important the forums where dialogue and exchange can take place at the international level are. Although there is a gap in the implementation of RJ between the Northern and Southern European countries, the types of challenges and concerns are shared, although to a different degree, by other Northern or Western countries.

### **Next steps**

The second expert meeting, which will take place in Trier at the end of November, will allow for concrete planning of the steps and actions to be taken to meet the needs.

Besides the findings of the meetings, the project builds on the activities of the experts in between the meetings in their role as a link with their countries. Reaching other experts, disseminating information and livening up networking in their countries is the constant element that sustains the development of the project.

At the Fifth Biennial Conference of the European Forum, which will take place in Verona 17-19 April 2008, the final outcomes of the project will be presented to a wider audience. Here, we will discuss how the

conclusions and the recommendations of the project can be used in a practical way to further the development of RJ in the whole of the European Union.

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1. Concerning adults, Italy, Greece, Malta, Spain and Portugal follow the principle of legality. In Turkey the principle of opportunity has been introduced only in 2004 through a reform of the Criminal Law, hence the legalistic tradition has still a very strong influence. France and Belgium adhere to the principle of opportunity.

## Readers' Corner

- *Herstelgericht groepsoverleg: een constructief antwoord voor ernstige jeugddelinquentie*, by Inge Vanfraechem (2007). This book describes the results of a policy-oriented study about family group conferencing (*herstelgericht groepsoverleg* or *hergo*) in Flanders. Moreover, specific attention is given to the implementation of hergo in practice. The book is written in Dutch and can be ordered here: <http://www.diekeure.be>.
- *Criminal Punishment and Restorative Justice*, by David Cornwell (2006). This book questions formal criminal justice in an analysis of punitive and restorative views. It argues that, if the voice of restorative justice is to resonate more widely, it must demonstrate that it will deliver better justice in a modern-day context. This book sets out to establish the credentials of RJ for this - as a force for change at criminological, penal and everyday, practical levels. The book provides a refreshing analysis of the inherent division between punitive and restorative approaches to questions of criminal justice. It provides an international perspective on the potential of RJ to deliver an altogether more enlightened approach towards dealing with offenders and victims. It argues that the use of custody can be reduced by challenging offenders to take responsibility for their offences and to make reparation for their wrong-doing. It seeks to consign to history the fallacies and false horizons of traditional thinking in favour of a principled, more purposeful use of sanctions. Available from Waterside Press: <http://watersidepress.co.uk/infoCPRJ.html>.
- *Restorative justice: the views of victims and offenders*, by Joanna Shapland et al. of the Centre for Criminological Research University of Sheffield (2007). This is the third report published by the Ministry of Justice of UK on the evaluation of the three restorative justice schemes funded by the Home Office under its Crime Reduction Programme. In accordance with the objectives set by the schemes (CONNECT, the Justice Research Consortium (JRC) and REMEDI), the experi-

ences and the views of victims and offenders were targeted as the principal element of the evaluation. Interviews were conducted with victims and offenders participating in restorative justice and in the JRC programme, interviews were also realised with the ones of a control group, right after the conference and also eight to nine months later. When dissatisfaction was expressed by the parties, the reasons for this were also analysed. More details on: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research190607.htm>.

- *Mediation - Six ways in Seven Days*, by Hans Bose-rup (2007) (to be published this summer by Nyt Juridisk Forlag). The main purpose of the book is to render accessible the practical tools of a mediation process to inexperienced mediators, drawing attention on both, the type of techniques that help the mediation process and those interventions that should be avoided. By presenting the microdynamics of what actually happens in the mediation room and comparing the six main mainstream mediation modes: generic, settlement-driven, cognitive-systemic, transformative, humanistic and narrative, the author wants to provide an analysis of what, according to him, is nowadays lacking in the mediation literature. The structure of the book has been devised as a seven-day training course in order to serve better to educative aims, including a number of relevant exercises and role-plays for each day. Furthermore, in order to enhance the interactive learning process, the written publication is supported by video cuts to illustrate the methods described in the textbook. Part of these will be seen on his website. A raw manuscript of this book is already available on: [http://uk.mediator.dk/240-new\\_book.htm](http://uk.mediator.dk/240-new_book.htm).
- The report *Restorative justice: the evidence*, by Lawrence W. Sherman and Heather Strang (2007), presents the findings of a research project commissioned and published by the Smith Institute, in association with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, with the purpose of assessing what constitutes good-quality RJ practice. Different research

and evaluation reports providing evidence on RJ, have been reviewed in order to draw conclusions on RJ effectiveness at helping victims and reduc-

ing reoffending. The full report as well as an executive summary can be downloaded here: <http://www.smith-institute.org.uk/publications.htm>.

## Calendar

- 9-13 July 2007, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (USA), *Summer Training Institute*, organised by IIRP. For more information on this journey from basic philosophy to in-depth preparation in implementing restorative approaches, go here: <http://iirp.org/institute/>.
- 17-21 September 2007, Finnmark (Norway) and 24-28 September, Oslo (Norway), *'Peacemaking circle training'* by Philip and Harold Gatensby. For more information, please e-mail: [knut.petterson@domstol.no](mailto:knut.petterson@domstol.no).
- 1-5 October 2007, Telemark (Norway), for more information, please e-mail: [b.geving@online.no](mailto:b.geving@online.no) or [hegeleidal@hotmail.com](mailto:hegeleidal@hotmail.com).
- 26-29 September 2007, Bologna (Italy), *7th Annual Conference 'Crime, crime prevention and communities in Europe'*, organised by the European Society of Criminology. For more information, see <http://www.eurocrim2007.org>.
- 9-11 October 2007, Hampshire (UK), *4th Winchester International RJ Conference: 'Restorative Justice: When, Where and How it Works'*, organised by the Winchester RJ Group in association with RJC. More information is available on: <http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/rj2007/>.
- 16-18 October 2007, Jerusalem (Israel), *VI International Conference of the World Mediation Forum*. Its central theme is the "Multicultural Spectrum of Mediation". For more information see: <http://www.worldmediationforum.org>.
- 7-9 November 2007, Budapest (Hungary), *IIRP 10th World Conference: 'Improving Citizenship and Restoring Community'*. More information can be found at: <http://www.iirp.org/hu07>.
- 10-12 April 2008, Belfast (Northern Ireland), *European Mediation Conference*. This date will be the 10th anniversary of the signing of the internationally mediated Good Friday Agreement in Belfast, which was a significant event in the Northern Ireland peace process. For more information email: [vom@eircom.net](mailto:vom@eircom.net).
- **17-19 April 2008, Verona (Italy), Fifth biennial conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. More information will be communicated as soon as available.**
- 20-25 July 2008, Barcelona (Spain), *15th World Congress of the International Society of Criminology*. One of the three main domains focuses on 'Victims and Restorative Justice'. You can find more information at: <http://perso.orange.fr/societe.internationale.de.criminologie/>

## EU Project on 'Developing standards for assistance to victims of terrorism'

The European Forum has been awarded a project by the European Commission on 'Developing standards for assistance to victims of terrorism'. The partners involved are the International Victimology Institute Tilburg (INTERVICT), the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence of the University of St. Andrews, the Catholic University of Leuven (K.U. Leuven) and Victim Support Netherlands.

The aim of the project is to develop, in a set of seminars, standards for the aid and assistance to victims of terrorism. A literature review, in which existing international legal instruments will be assessed, will provide a basis for discussion and the areas of continuing assistance, access to justice, administration of justice and compensation to victims of terrorism will be explored. The researcher at the European Forum is focusing on the possible role of restorative justice in dealing with victims of terrorism. In this respect, there is some scepticism about the application of restorative justice principles and practices in the field of terrorism. However, this scepticism can be lessened by looking at research on

restorative justice practices in cases of serious violence. Research shows that victims of terrorism and victims of serious violence are comparable as regards the impact of violence and their needs following the victimising event. Common needs for victims of serious violence and victims of terrorism are to get answers to open questions and to gain a greater sense of closure to move on with their lives. Such needs can be met, for instance, by meeting the offender. Restorative justice also offers other opportunities for victims who do not want to meet the terrorist or where the terrorist is unable or unwilling to meet the victim. When looking at the concept of encounter in restorative justice, a prerequisite for the application of victim-offender mediation should be that the offender has taken responsibility for the harm he has done to the victim. In this respect, one could question whether terrorists would ever accept such a responsibility. There have been recent cases, for instance, in Northern Ireland and Germany, where encounter sessions have taken place between victims and terrorists at post-sentence stage. These cases show that at least some terrorists



are able to take responsibility for their acts. However, if accountability is not the starting point for the encounter, the victim will face the danger of re-victimisation. With regard to victim-offender mediation in cases of terrorism, it is therefore important to concentrate on the preparation of victims and on advanced training of mediators before a mediation session is envisaged. Although there are many sceptics who are opposed to the application of restorative justice in cases of terrorism, research reveals that the application of restorative justice principles and practices should not be precluded from the outset. It is clear that restorative justice cannot solve the problem of terrorism, but still there is the possibility of helping the victims

and achieving some positive change in the terrorist's perspective. In the end, the decisive element in the application of restorative justice in cases of terrorism should be the victims' needs and their decision whether to go this way or another.

It is interesting to note that, in most of the cases in which an encounter has taken place, the victims took the initiative of meeting the terrorists. Therefore, the victim's perspective is not to be ignored when thinking about the possible role restorative justice principles and practices can play in dealing with victims of terrorism.

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## Newsflash

- On the 12th of June 2007, the first Portuguese law on mediation in criminal matters was published in the official journal. It can be found here: <http://www.dre.pt/pdfsdip/2007/06/11200/37983801.pdf>.
- On the 1st of October, Groupement Pro Mediation (Switzerland) starts with a specialised programme on mediation in penal matters. This programme will take place during 15 days over a one-year period. The general aim is to give mediators the opportunity to specialise in criminal justice for minors and adults. For more information, please see: <http://www.mediations.ch>.
- The Swiss Federal Assembly (national bicameral parliament) is legislating on a unification of the

civil and penal procedures, to replace the 26 cantonal systems currently prevailing in Switzerland. Though civil mediation has been supported by the legislature for the moment, this is not the case for penal mediation. Each Council (National Council and Council of States) has refused to introduce penal mediation into the Code of unified penal procedure, primarily for financial reasons. The whole project is not finished yet, but little hope remains that the Parliament will introduce penal mediation, although penal mediation for juveniles has been fully implemented across Switzerland since January 1, 2007.

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## Report of the Annual General Meeting in Lisbon - 10 May 2007

The beautiful city of Lisbon (Portugal) was the setting of this year's Annual General Meeting of the European Forum. Michael Kilchling, Secretary of the Board, chaired the meeting.

In the first part, the standing items were dealt with: the approval of the report of the 2006 meeting, the approval of the annual accounts for 2006 and the budget for 2008, the approval of the annual report and membership matters. The Board and the Secretariat provided a brief report of their activities since the last General Meeting. In these the search for funding had a prominent place. In order to balance the 2008 budget, an extra 27.000 Euro still needs to be found. This would allow the Forum to employ only one full-time staff member for the year 2008. As has been mentioned in the past, this is barely enough to support the most basic activities of the organisation; a larger staff would be required in order to further develop the organisation. Because of the difficulty in obtaining funding from national governments, an application

for structural funding has been made to the European Union. The results of this application are still very uncertain. Hence, the membership was asked for ideas to raise funds.

Specific activities in the past year included the organisation of a seminar dealing with the training of legal practitioners on restorative justice, the preparation for the summer school, the launching of the pool of trainers, the follow-up of the Vienna and Helsinki seminars (see previous issues of the Newsletter) and the possibilities of setting up a network of policy makers on restorative justice. More information concerning all these activities can be found on the website: [www.euforumrj.org](http://www.euforumrj.org).

The attention of the Secretariat of the Forum has been focused almost exclusively on the two projects in place. Both of these (AGIS 3 and terrorism) are reported on in this issue of the Newsletter. Besides this, the Secretariat has provided support to a project run by the Istanbul Bilgi University of Turkey on the

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development of victim-offender mediation in Turkey. Also reports on the activities of the committees of the Forum were presented. The Practice and Training Committee reported on their work on the pool of trainers and the summer school. The Communication Committee has been working primarily on the follow-up to the Barcelona conference and on the programming for the Verona conference. The latter will be organised in the context of the AGIS 3 project and will hence deal with the implementation of restorative justice in the South of Europe and with the need for further EU action in this field. However, alongside these topics, the conference will have a third focus: the relation between research, policy, practice and communications with the public. The Research Committee is exchanging information on a regular basis. The Information Committee currently is not functioning as it has no chair. Candidates for this position were asked to contact the Board. The Newsletter Editorial Board then is continuing to publish the newsletter three times a year. Finally, the newly established Working Group on Restorative Approaches in Schools has had some difficulties in starting up. Its chair, Belinda Hopkins, made a warm appeal to members to join

the group ([Belinda@transformingconflict.org](mailto:Belinda@transformingconflict.org)). Another core issue discussed at the General Meeting was the need to make the election procedures for the Board more transparent. The Board had developed a proposal for a new internal regulation and formulated an annex to the internal regulations on the 'Selection, nomination and election of candidates to the Board'. The Board's proposals were approved.

The Board had also suggested a new organisational structure for committees and working groups. However, this matter was postponed until next year's General Meeting.

Last, but not least, a selection committee was composed. At next year's General Meeting (in Verona on 17 April 2008), the following Board members will step down: Jaume Martin (Spain), João Lázaro (Portugal) and Frauke Petzold (Germany). The following people have been appointed to act on the selection committee: Christa Pelikan (Austria), Gerd Delattre (Germany) and Sonia Sousa Pereira (Portugal). They will approach the membership of the Forum soon for nominations.

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## **Not a member of the European Forum yet?**

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**As a member you will receive:**

- **three newsletters a year**
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  - **reduced conference fees and special book prices**
  - **access to a virtual discussion forum that provides the possibility for direct communication with more than 200 restorative justice professionals from Europe and beyond**
- and much more ...**

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