

The 7th biennial Conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice

Connecting people –

Linking Victims, Offenders and Communities in Restorative Justice

We invite you to participate in the 7th conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice in Helsinki, Finland from the 14th to the 16th of June 2012.

The title of the conference – *Connecting people* – describes the potential of restorative justice to build bridges and repair conflicts between people. Victims and offenders are not the only ones affected by crime. Frequently members of the community are greatly disturbed by violence, abuse and other crimes, but they rarely get to voice those concerns. Linking all those affected by crime and letting them express concerns, needs and wishes is what the 7th Conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice is about.

The 3 themes of the conference are victims, offenders and the larger community.

Victims and restorative justice

Although restorative justice puts victims and offenders at the heart of the response to crime, concerns are voiced about the position of victims in restorative justice practices. The European Forum is the promoter in a research project on the needs, experiences and position of victims in restorative justice. Preliminary results of this research will be presented and we invite people to hold workshops on this topic – victims and restorative justice – to enrich the debates and distinguish crucial themes. Furthermore, the European Commission has drafted a new Directive on Victims (18 May 2011) to replace the current Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings (2001); an update on the restorative justice elements of the draft will be available at the Conference.

Offenders and restorative justice

When it comes to offenders and restorative justice, a first focus often lies with recidivism but broader issues are at stake such as offender rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. We invite people working in probation and the criminal justice system to submit workshop proposals focusing on their experience of restorative justice and working with offenders.

The Community and restorative justice

As restorative justice develops, we see more ways of how it can progress to include more meaningful participation by the community, for example through different forms of conferencing and circles. Furthermore, more areas within the community can be distinguished where restorative justice practices can be used to great effect in schools and the workplace, for example. We invite workshop proposals on bringing in the community in restorative justice.

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