



The 6th Biennial Conference and 10th Anniversary of

The European Forum for Restorative Justice

## **Doing Restorative Justice in Europe**

### **Established Practices and Innovative Programmes**

Looking back and looking forward

17 – 19 June 2010, Bilbao (Spain)

The 6th Conference marks the 10th anniversary of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. This milestone is an opportunity to look back at restorative justice practices developed in Europe so far and to look forward to new practices, possibilities and opportunities.

The Conference will cover three main themes:

#### **1 The work of the practitioners (mediators and facilitators) Restorative justice in different countries**

At the heart of restorative justice is a dialogue between the victim and the offender, the main stakeholders, with support from a mediator or facilitator. The stakeholders are frequently anxious about what lies ahead, often not knowing what to expect or how they may feel when they meet each other. The mediator/facilitator is the one building trust, facilitating communication and helping to move the process forward towards an acceptable outcome: an agreement, reparation and sometimes - reconciliation.

In a series of workshops, emphasis will be on the work of the practitioners, presenting and 'visualising' how the process looks in the different countries. This will be done mainly through re-enacting actual examples of restorative justice processes, discussing and comparing practices from different countries. The comparison will enable more detailed analysis and discussions of potentials and limitations of organisational and methodological approaches.

## **2 Cooperation with legal practitioners**

### **A way to increase the involvement of judges, prosecutors and police**

From the beginning, the closest cooperating partners for restorative justice practitioners have been professionals within criminal justice and legal agencies. This cooperation is necessary in implementing and developing restorative justice. Restorative justice practitioners and legal practitioners need to support themselves and each other to increase the use of restorative justice in Europe. The aim is to provide an opportunity for professionals from the different criminal justice and legal agencies to discuss from their own perspective the benefits of restorative justice.

## **3 Conferencing – A way forward for restorative justice in Europe**

A model of restorative justice called 'conferencing' is emerging in Europe. This has already been developed quite extensively in other parts of the world such as New Zealand, Australia or the USA. Conferencing may include, besides the offender, the victim and the facilitator, also members of their families and/or friends, and other members of the local community such as the social services, lawyers and the police. The stakeholders attending speak about how crime has affected their lives and contribute to an acceptable solution for the victim, the offender and the community.

The preliminary results of a project on conferencing run by the European Forum for Restorative Justice and funded by the European Commission will be presented at the Conference. The project focuses on how conferencing practices could be developed further in Europe. The Conference presentation will include an overview of conferencing practices in the world and the possible challenges of its implementation within a continental European legal and socio-cultural context. This will provide a basis for discussion on innovative restorative justice practices.