

Report of the General Meeting of the European Forum for Restorative Justice

Leuven (Belgium), 3 June 2009, 18.00-20.30

Participating members¹:

Albania: Rasim Gjoka, representative of the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes; **Austria:** Christa Pelikan; **Belgium:** Ivo Aertsen; Johan Deklerck; Katrien Lauwaert; Inge Vanfraechem; Pieter Verbeeck (representative of Suggnomè); Lisa Walters; Jolien Willemsens; **Finland:** Aarne Kinnunen; **Germany:** Regina Delattre (representative of DBH TOA-Servicebuero); Michael Kilchling; Meng-Chi Lien; **Hungary:** Borbala Fellegi; **the Netherlands:** Annemieke Wolthuis; **Norway:** Siri Kemény; **Portugal:** Rui Cortez (representative of APAV); **Spain:** Clara Casado Coronas (associate); Virginia Domingo; Marta Ferrer; Roberto Moreno (representative of Gobierno Vasco Departamento de Justicia); Alberto Olalde; **Sweden:** Eleonore Lind; **UK:** Martin Wright.

Non-members present:

Belgium: Carmen Borg; Jeanine Dams; Anniek Gielen; Karolien Mariën; Brunilda Pali; Estelle Zinsstag; **Ireland:** Ciaran O Searcaigh; **Spain:** Carlos Romera

Proxies:

Austria: Christoph Koss to Christa Pelikan; **Belgium:** Johan Deklerck to Ivo Aertsen; **Hungary:** Vidia Negra to Edit Velez; **Italy:** Marilena Colamussi to Inge Vanfraechem; Anna Mestitz to Inge Vanfraechem.

Rapporteurs: Carmen Borg; Anniek Gielen; Karolien Mariën; Brunilda Pali and Estelle Zinsstag

This report will also be made available on the Forum's website: <http://www.euforumrj.org>.

0. Opening of the General Meeting

Siri Kemény welcomed everybody to the meeting and gave an overview of the apologies:

- Chris Igoe (Restorative Justice Consortium)
- Sónia Sousa Pereira
- Christoph Koss (representative of Neustart)
- David Miers
- Anne Catherine Salberg (representative of Groupement Pro Médiation)
- Niall Kearney
- Vira Zemlyanska

The agenda for the General Meeting was approved.

¹ Applicant members who were accepted during this General Meeting are also included in the list of participating members.

1. Formal issues

1.1. Approval of the report of the previous General Meeting (17 April 2008, Verona (Italy))

The report was approved.

1.2. Approval of the annual accounts 2008 and the budget for 2010

Eleonore Lind (treasurer) presented the accounts of 2008 and the budget for 2010 in a power point presentation.

The annual accounts 2008 were not explained in detail, only those items were highlighted where there was a remarkable difference between the foreseen budget and the final result. Some examples: the final costs for travel and accommodation turned out to be much higher than foreseen. The main reason for this are the 2 strategic planning meetings which took place in January and June 2008. The final cost for accountancy also turned out to be higher than foreseen. Because the bookkeeping of the Forum is becoming more and more complicated, more money was spent on involving an external bookkeeper. On the income side there is a remarkable difference between the foreseen registration fees (0 €) and the actual income (23.164 €). This income is a result of the 2008 conference registration fees.

An important remark had to be made on the AGIS3 project and the Terrorism project. The results for these projects, as presented in the powerpoint, are only an estimate. This is due to the fact that we did not receive the final payment from the European Commission yet. The result presented for the operating grant is an estimate; corrections can be made after review of the financial report.

The budget for 2009 had to be revised because: 1) the conferencing project was not included and 2) the grant to bodies in a monopoly position allows to do some extra things, like, amongst others, organising a seminar for legal practitioners and going to several conferences to promote the work of the Forum. The revised budget for 2009 also includes income from the Flemish government and the Finnish government. This will be explained more in detail under 2.2.

Eleonore gave some more explanation on the budget for 2010. Jolien Willemsens made the remark that, although the situation looks positive, the Forum still is in a peculiar situation. It is important to be aware of the fact that we still owe the KULeuven around 300.000 € Jolien estimated that the Forum's own money is somewhere around 30.000 or 35.000 € This is not much at all.

The members were asked if they could approve the accounts for 2008, the revised budget for 2009 and the budget for 2010. Martin Wright said he could not agree because he did not understand it. After some more explanation all members approved the presented accounts and budgets.

1.3. Approval of the annual report of 2008

Siri apologised for the fact that the annual report 2008 had not been put on the website yet. This was due to the fact that, because of Jolien leaving (although she has a contract which states that she will be working for the Forum until the 15th of June 2009 (one day a week)), the new staff was not able to have the annual report ready in time. Although the report was distributed at the day of the General Meeting, the members did of course not have the time to read it all. Inge mentioned that the content of the annual report was the same as the agenda of the General Meeting, so the annual report would be explained anyway during the meeting. The annual report 2008 was approved by all members. It will be put on the website very soon.

1.4. Approval of new membership applications and other membership matters

The names of the people initiating their membership were approved. The resignations from membership were acknowledged and the terminations of membership due to non-payment of the fee for 2 following years were approved (annex 1).

Jolien made the remark that for the last 4 to 5 years the Forum always had between 300 and 350 members. The years in which we organise a conference the number of members increases because a lot of people become a member during the conference.

1.5. Report of the activities of the Board

In 2008 2 Board Meetings took place: one in April (Verona) and another one in October (Leuven).

In addition to the board meeting, 2 strategic planning meetings took place, one in January and one in June. Both meetings took place in Leuven. These meetings were attended by the Chair (Siri), the Vice-chair (Inge), the Secretary (Michael), Niall and Jolien. The aim of these meetings is to figure out where the Forum is now and where we want to go. What is the ideal situation and how do we get there? It wants to make the structures and procedures, which already exist but are at the same time not always clear, more visible. In the framework of these meetings a “handbook” is being put together which should contain a clear overview on the different procedures and structures. This can be used by the board members and the secretariat and should make it easier for new staff members to take over. This way the Forum will become more “depersonalised”.

After the General Meeting Siri will step down as chair. She will stay on the Board for one more year, as board member. Niall Kearney (who unfortunately was not able to attend the General Meeting) will become the new chair. Inge took the opportunity to thank Siri for all the work she did for the Forum. Marko Bosnjak resigned on 11 August 2008 from the Board. His replacer will be elected during the 2010 General Meeting. The members approved both changes in the Board.

1.6 Report of the activities of the Secretariat

A lot of new people are working at the Secretariat in Leuven. Siri introduced them:

Karolien Mariën is the new executive officer since March 2009. She will be the line manager of the Secretariat and will be assisted in her tasks by Jeanine Dams, who works halftime as an administrative force. Anniek Gielen is the project officer for the Restorative justice and crime prevention project. Estelle Zinsstag, who started in May, is the project officer for the Conferencing project. She will be assisted halftime by Carmen Borg. Carmen will also work halftime on the Building social support project. Brunilda Pali, who works on the Building social support project, was already introduced during the 2008 General Meeting.

In the last years the core task of the Secretariat (service delivery to its members) has been neglected. This was mainly due to the fact that Jolien, in addition to her “regular” work, also did research. From now on more attention shall be paid to this core task and it has been made very clear that Karolien will not do research.

1.7. Report of the activities of the committees

Siri gave a short introduction on the state of affairs of the different committees:

- Practice and Training Committee: Niall Kearney would like to step back as coordinator of this committee. As he will be the new chair of the Forum, it would be too difficult to combine. So if there are people who are interested in taking over this function they can contact the Board or the

Secretariat. One of the activities of this Committee is the organisation of the Summer School. The 2008 Summer School had to be cancelled because of a lack of participants.

In 2009 the Summer School will take place in Barcelona from 20 till 24 July. The decision was made to organise a summer school every 2 years. So the next summer school, after the 2009 summer school, will be organised in 2011.

Another responsibility of this committee is the pool of trainers. In 2008 nothing really happened concerning this pool.

- Communications Committee: The coordinator is Christa Pelikan. The main focus of this committee is the content wise preparations, i.e. the themes, programme, structure and speakers of the Biennial Conference, and this in close cooperation with the Secretariat and the Board.

- Information Committee: Like last year, nothing really happened in this committee in 2008.

- Research Committee: Borbala Fellegi is the coordinator of this committee. She gave a state of affairs. Her work consists of informing the Forum about restorative justice-research and of keeping everybody on the mailing list up-to-date on research-related issues in restorative justice. The news edited by Borbala is sent out every month or every 3 months to the members of the mailinglist. So far there are around 53 members. She encourages people to send her information on events, publications, job postings, scholarships, legal developments, et cetera which can be relevant for restorative justice-researchers. People who are interested in becoming part of the mailinglist can contact Borbala.

- Editorial Board of the Newsletter: Vira Zemlyanska coordinates this board. The newsletter was published 3 times in 2008.

- Working group on Restorative Approaches in Schools: The name of this group is changed. It is not longer called committee, but working group. The coordinator is Belinda Hopkins. Belinda was asked to work out the objectives of this committee. These objectives will soon appear on our website. So far nothing concrete has happened.

Katrien Lauwaert raised the question whether the committees (as well as the working group) in which nothing really happens, should still exist. Siri said that the Board had asked the same question and had discussed it. On the 2010 General Meeting the Board will propose a solution/change. Then it can be discussed whether or not to continue with the committees and the working group.

1.8. Appointment of three members to the Selection Committee

Three candidates have been proposed to be appointed to the selection committee: Keith Simpson (chair), Sonía Sousa Pereira and Borbala Fellegi. All candidates have been approved by the members (annex 2).

2. The functioning of the Forum, evaluation of activities

2.1. Project activities

a) “Building Social Support for Restorative Justice”: Bruna referred to the international seminar which took place on 3-5 June. She hopes the seminar will give her some input to continue with the rest of her research. From now on she will be assisted by Carmen Borg who will work halftime on the building social support project and halftime on the conferencing project.

b) “Restorative Justice vs Juvenile Delinquency: The Baltic States in the European Dimension”: The European Forum is a partner in this project, the promoter is Providus, an organisation in Latvia. The goal of this research is to promote the effective development of restorative justice as a response to youth crime in the Baltic States and to enhance mutual knowledge of best practices and initiatives

in the field of restorative justice and beyond. It focuses on Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, but nevertheless has a strong European dimension through its activities. The project took a slow start, but in February we finally received some news from Latvia. The role of the Forum consists of, amongst others, doing the comparative research and supervising the complete research work.

A meeting took place between the Latvian researcher Andrejs Judins, Ivo Aertsen and Karolien Mariën. During this meeting they agreed that Ivo would help the researchers with the methodology of the research. A conference organised in the framework of this research will take place on 25-26 November 2008.

c) “Restorative Justice and Crime Prevention”: Anniek gave a short introduction on this research: The European Forum is a partner in this project, the promoter is the Italian Juvenile Justice Department. The project runs until 27 April 2010. The general aim is to clarify the relationship between restorative justice and crime prevention. The project’s objectives are to: 1) research the possible connecting points between restorative justice theory and crime prevention models from a theoretical perspective (this part of the research will be carried out by Prof. Adam Crawford); 2) look at the extent to which restorative justice is inscribed in either crime prevention policies or other policies in the EU Member States and the reasons for this; 3) inventory what is already known from empirical research about the effect of restorative justice on crime prevention and further analyse these results.

d) “Conferencing: A way forward for restorative justice in Europe”: Estelle gave some more explanation about this project. This two-year project consists of an exploratory study of conferencing practices, for both adult and young offenders and for low and high level crimes, and their further applicability within Europe. The two researchers, supported by a steering group composed of both academics and practitioners, will focus their work on 3 main research questions:

- To what extent has conferencing been developed internationally?
- What are the processes used in and outcomes achieved by conferencing, and how do they compare to victim offender mediation?
- How could conferencing practices be developed further in Europe?

e) Publications linked to previously finished projects:
- “Developing standards for assistance to victims of terrorism”: An agreement has been signed about the publication of the results of this project. A book will be published in a couple of months.
- “Restorative justice: An agenda for Europe” (AGIS3): The report “The role of the European Union in the further development of restorative justice” (made by Jolien Willemsens) will be put on our website. It will not be published as a book. The report “Supporting the implementation of restorative justice in the South of Europe” (made by Clara Casado Coronas) is already on our website.

f) Any other projects in which the Forum is involved: “Mediation and restorative justice in prison settings”. The promoter of this project is the Hungarian FORESEE Research Group, the European Forum is one of the partners. The main objective of this project is to explore the opportunities for implementing mediation and restorative justice practices into the prison settings. A further aim is to test if such practices can help in supporting victims of crime, raising responsibility-taking in offenders, supporting the prison staff and inmates in peacefully resolving their internal conflicts and reintegrating offenders into the society after release. The project will start with a research phase, after which it will progress into a pilot project. The existing practices in Germany and the UK will be evaluated and further developed. In Hungary a pilot project will be started. The role of the Forum consists mainly of spreading information about the progress of the project by, amongst others, the

publication of an issue of the newsletter on this topic. An expert of the Forum (Karolien Mariën) will also participate in the 2 expert group meetings.

The general comment was made that the Forum is always looking as much as possible for people outside of Leuven to do the research in order to avoid to have the main part of the research situated in Leuven. It is also important for members to know that they are able to play an active role in the research or to be a partner. The Forum is also willing to help members by writing an application for a grant. On the other hand we have to be careful not to promote too much because the Forum can not say yes to everything.

2.2. Financial concerns and fundraising

The Forum has been acknowledged as an organisation in a de facto monopoly position by the European Commission. This does not mean that Forum is entitled to structural funding, but it will make it easier to receive an operating grant from the European Commission. But each time the Forum is awarded a grant by the European Commission it has to make an own contribution of 30%. As a consequence the Board members sent at the end of 2008 letters to several national governments in order to ask for funding. Although we received several negative replies, some governments are willing to make a financial contribution. The Swedish government will donate 8000 € whereas the Flemish government is willing to contribute 7000 € Norway also decided to make a contribution but they did not decide yet how much they will contribute. These efforts to contact governments will be continued.

2.3. Data management policy

The Forum was approached by Routledge Publishing. They asked whether it was possible to advertise using the contacts of the Forum's members. The Board wanted to know the opinion of the members because it would not only mean extra work, but it is also a matter of principle. The members were not really in favour of this proposal. Jolien said that the Forum already received that kind of requests in the past. A solution would be to add a promotion-page in our newsletter and to let them pay for it. We could also approach other publishers with this proposal. These (and maybe other) possibilities will be examined.

2.4. Policy work and the relation to international organisations such as the European Union and the Council of Europe

European Union: The Forum submitted a proposal (available on our website) regarding the update and amendment of the EU Framework decision 2001/220/JHA on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings. The European Union is currently waiting for the outcome of the Lisbon Treaty. Once a decision is taken, we can give more input.

Council of Europe: The Committee of Ministers decided to wait 3 or 4 years in order to see whether or not the guidelines work and then they will make a new recommendation.

2.5. The strategic planning exercise: structuring the Secretariat and the relationship between the Board, the Secretariat and the University in Leuven (KUL)

There is of course a strong link between the Forum and the University as the Secretariat is located in the buildings of the university and the staff working at the secretariat are employed as KULeuven-staff. Ivo Aertsen, professor at the University and former chair of the Forum, is the link between the Forum and the University. Although he is not a board member any more, he still plays

a very active role in the Forum by supporting the staff and the activities by supporting and supervising the research the Forum undertakes.

Another point that was mentioned here: there is a general cooperation agreement signed between the Forum and the University of Leuven in order to make the day-to-day cooperation easier.

3. Proposals

There were no proposals.

4. 2010 Conference and General Meeting: location and possible topics

The 2010 conference will take place in Bilbao, from 17 till 19 June. The General Meeting will take place during these days. The Basque government (represented at the General Meeting by Roberto Moreno) agreed to co-organise the conference. They will make a large financial contribution by paying the rent of the rooms and the catering. Jolien, who already visited the venue, said that it is a wonderful location, which is particularly fit for the Forum's 10th anniversary. The programme of the conference is not ready yet. Eleonore Lind, Christa Pelikan and Frauke Petzold will work on this. As soon as we have a preliminary programme it will be put on the website.

5. Communications

There were no communications.

Closure of the AGM.

ANNEX 1

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

New membership applications – to be approved

Full membership status:

1. Virginia Domingo de la Fuente, Spain	2. Matthias Geck, Switzerland
3. Beata Czarnecka-Dzialuk, Poland	4. Teresa Sousa, China
5. Groupement Pro Mediation, Switzerland	6. Martin Haverty, Ireland
7. Andrea Parosanu, Germany	8. Abbas Ghanizadeh, Iran
9. Jerzy Ksiazek	10. Aideen Murphy, USA
11. Katherine Doolin, UK	12. Frans Schlyter, Sweden
13. Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice, Austria	14. Julie Hay, UK

Associate membership status:

1. Meng-Chi Lien, Germany	2. Rebeka Mansourian, Sweden
3. Jacinta Cunneen, Ireland	4. Effie Papaioannou, Greece

Resignations from membership – to be acknowledged

1. Lotte Christy, Denmark (deceased)	2. Anne Killett, UK
3. Annette Robertson, UK	4. Jeanet Jansen, the Netherlands
5. Anne Catherine Salzberg, Switzerland	

Memberships to be terminated due to failure to pay the membership fee

1. Mediation UK, UK	2. Birgitta Engberg, Sweden
3. Jean Wynne, UK	4. Paul English, UK
5. Josephine Contu, Switzerland	6. Marianne Hilf, Austria
7. Bengt Lindell, Sweden	8. Nicola Preston, UK
9. Alison Hogg, UK	10. Sarah Smith, USA
11. Maria João Taborda, Portugal	12. Diogo Costa, Portugal
13. Johanna Seppälä, Finland	14. Koichi Maehara, Japan
15. Nina Raaschou, Denmark	16. Thérèse de Villette, Canada
17. Alessandro Bruni, Italy	18. Jean-Jacques Goulet, Canada
19. Alf Winnaess, Sweden	20. Alan Crisford, UK
21. Peter Cratcoski, USA	22. Dusica Vujacic-Richer, Serbia
23. Gorana Ilic, Serbia	24. Michelle Royle, Canada
25. Tamara Dzamonja, Serbia	26. Wilfried Graf, Austria
27. Isabel Fortio, Portugal	28. Gunhild Fridle, Sweden
29. Frans Schlyter, Sweden ²	30. Evelyn Zellerer, Canada
31. Joan Sendra, Spain	32. Vera Despotovic, Serbia
33. Dennis Cichon, USA	34. Mostafa Fazaeli, Iran
35. Bente Krogstad, Norway	36. Firouzeh Badiee, Sweden
37. Jaana Ylahollo, Finland	38. Michael Ledwidge, UK
39. Theo Gavrielides, UK	40. Harold Becker, USA
41. Karina Hartly, Ireland	42. Flavia Oliveira, Portugal
43. Asociación bienestar y desarrollo, Spain	44. Fernando Tonim, Portugal
45. Gilles Aubert, France	46. Patrick Wolff, USA
47. Hyunji Cho, Korea	48. Claudia Santos, Portugal
49. Ilona Gorgenyi, Hungary	50. Cathy Warren, UK
51. Marta Valiñas, Belgium	52. Cristina Figueiredo, Portugal
53. Pavel Abraham, Romania	54. Galma Jahic, Turkey
55. Jakob Beni, Israel	56. Luis de Miguel Ortega, Spain
57. Antony Pemberton, Netherlands	

² Re-applied in the meanwhile, but his original membership application needs to be terminated, and his recent application accepted.

ANNEX 2

Selection Committee: Candidates

Annex 1 to the Code of Internal Regulations states that: “A selection committee shall be composed at the General Meeting a year prior to the General Meeting in which elections to the Board shall be held. The selection committee shall consist of three full members of the European Forum, coming from different countries, and preferably from different regions of Europe. As far as possible, the members of the selection committee should represent different target groups of the European Forum. The selection committee shall be appointed by the General Meeting”.

At the 2009 General Meeting the following candidates for a position on the selection committee will be presented by the Board:

- **Keith Simpson:** Head of Development and Research at Sacro (Scotland)
(Chair of the selection committee)
- **Sonía Sousa Pereira:** Legal advisor for the National Data Protection Commission
(Portugal)
- **Borbala Fellegi:** Executive of the Foresee Research Group (Hungary)