

MEDIATION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN PRISON SETTINGS



AN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT BETWEEN
HUNGARY, GERMANY
AND THE UK

Criminal Justice 2008
With Financial Support from Criminal
Justice Programme, European Commis-
sion—Directorate—General Justice,
Freedom and Security

INTRODUCTION

The Mediation and Restorative Justice in Prison Settings (MEREPS) Project is a three year international exchange project funded by the European Commission, between the countries of Germany, Hungary and the UK.

The project will identify, exchange and develop best practice for the use of restorative justice (RJ) with the most serious crimes, particularly those against persons and property attracting a custodial sentence. Research suggests that RJ can have the biggest impact on the lives of victims and offenders where such serious crimes have been committed.

The consortium of international project partners will be involved in a number of activities, including: carrying out original research to gain a deeper insight into the attitudes of victims, juveniles, adult inmates, correctional staff, policy makers, legislators and other key stakeholders towards RJ; and exchanging knowledge of various post-sentencing RJ practices in each of the three countries to encourage learning between the regions.

More information about the project activities will be available on the project's website: www.mereps.foresee.hu

THE PROJECT PARTNERS



FORESEE RESEARCH GROUP - PROJECT LEADER (HUNGARY) — Foresee Research Group is a recently formed interdisciplinary think tank. Its research and project activities focus on promoting the principles and practices of alternative dispute resolution and helping the integration of marginalised groups in society.

INDEPENDENT ACADEMIC RESEARCH STUDIES (UK) — a youth-led social policy think-tank that empowers young people to have a voice and influence policy and practice that affects them.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY (HUNGARY) — as Central Europe's major criminological research institute, aims to conduct research on crime, to improve the theory and practice of criminology, police science and criminal law, to contribute to the utilisation of the research results, and to train the junior prosecutors.

INNOKUT RESEARCHING LTD.— strives to promote balanced yet efficient cooperation and symbiotic operation between various role-players of today's society and economy.

VICTIM OFFENDER MEDIATION SERVICE BREMEN (GERMANY) — is an NGO that offers a variety of services in the field of restorative justice. Among those are several mediation offices in urban trouble hotspots throughout the city of Bremen, a European funded project dealing with stalking and domestic violence and most recently the European funded MEREPS project.

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BREMEN (GERMANY) — is a university specialised in law and security courses and research. The university hosts the Institute of Police and Security Research (IPOS), which is engaged in a variety of research projects dealing with restorative justice, prevention, and other related topics.

EUROPEAN FORUM FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE — helps establishing and developing victim-offender mediation and other RJ practices throughout Europe by stimulating open dialogue between RJ practitioners, policy makers, researchers and legal practitioners.

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As the MEREPS project's consortium leader, **Foresee Research Group** (Hungary) is responsible for the technical and administrative implementation of the project. Concerning the Hungarian activities, Foresee is coordinating the Hungarian pilot project, including organising the training of prison staff as well as carrying out mediation and restorative justice activities in prison settings. Throughout the project Foresee's priority is to stimulate the effective partnership and exchange between the various national and international parties as well as to coordinate the dissemination of the results.

The **Innokut Researching Ltd.** (Hungary) is supporting Foresee Research Group in the financial administration of the project.

The Hungarian **National Institute of Criminology**, as the professional leader of the project, is responsible for carrying out a quantitative and qualitative empirical research concerning the attitudes of inmates and prison staff towards restorative justice.

IARS (UK) carries out a UK based research project on the post-sentence use of RJ with young offenders. IARS will conduct interviews with policy makers, correctional staff, and young people to identify emerging themes and examples of best practice. IARS is organising and hosting the study tour and first expert meeting in London in November 2009.

The German partners, the **HfoeV University** and the **Victim-Offender Mediation Service** in Bremen will carry out and evaluate victim-offender mediations in prison settings as well as will deliver an attitudinal research about the judiciary's view towards RJ.

With the help of the **European Forum for Restorative Justice** the MEREPS project's main objective is to internationally exchange the results of the above mentioned pilot and research projects. Via the national reports and the MEREPS web portal the project intends to help the European-level best practices and policy, including the future methodological, institutional and legislative developments.

MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES, 2009-2012

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	DATE
Study tour to UK to visit RJ projects in prison settings	London, UK	2009
Research in Hungary, Germany and in the UK	Hungary, Germany, UK	2009-2011
International Seminar hosted by the European Forum	Bilbao, Spain	June 2010
Pilot project to test RJ in prison settings	Hungary and Germany	2010-2011
Expert group meeting	Budapest, Hungary	Jan 2012
Final project conference	Budapest, Hungary	Jan 2012
MEREPS website (national reports, research findings)	www.mereps.foresee.hu	Continuous

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