



**Dr. Petra Masopust Šachová**

Lawyer, academic, researcher, RJ advocate and chairperson of the Czech Institute for Restorative Justice

Based on my nomination of **Ian Marder - proposer (Maynooth University)** and **Dora Szegő - seconder (Foresee Research Group)** for the position of Board Member of the European Forum for Restorative Justice, the following explains and declares my motivation to run for this position.

I am a lawyer, academic, researcher and RJ advocate. I am currently working as a chairperson of the *Czech Institute for Restorative Justice*, that was funded last year. The main focus of the Institute is to introduce new forms of restorative programs into practice, namely the prison mediation for serious crimes and to contribute to the awareness of RJ among the professional and wider public. We recently submitted together with our foreign partners (Belgian Moderator, Finish Criminal Sanctions Agency and Hungarian Foresee) an EC call application mapping the prison mediation in Europe and piloting the service in the Czech Republic.

Besides that I coordinate the Czech Core Member team, which is part of the *Restorative Justice: Strategies for Change* project. Our activities, supported for this year by sufficient funding, focus mainly on the advocacy and awareness perspective of RJ promotion. We are developing Strategy



of RJ for the Czech Republic, conducting workshops for professionals across the criminal justice field, networking with the Prison Service and last but not least preparing a publication for wider public with stories of victims, offenders and their families. We also managed to obtain co-funding for the whole RJS4C project meeting in Estonia, Tallin. The main intention with the project activities is to raise the awareness about RJ and its proper understanding among professionals, but also wider public, focus on the principals and main ideas of the restorative concept and try to open the space for discussions about what shall be the modern vision of the Czech criminal justice. We have a good team of representatives from Probation and Mediation Service, Ministry of Justice, Institute for Criminology and Social Prevention and Prison Service and academic field. This combination of different fields, perspectives and capacities gives us good resources to work with the general opinion and approaches of the Czech society how to deal with crime and its aftermath.

My professional career is bind with the *legal field*. I served for years as attorney-at-law for the NGO sector. After finishing my Ph.D. studies, I focused on restorative approaches into Czech criminal law and decided to stay in the academic field. My intention was to bring the attention of law students to the RJ concept, which is currently in the legal curriculum missing. The close cooperation was built with the Law Faculty, Palacky University in Olomouc where a new subject "*Restorative approaches when dealing with crime*" was introduced. Besides that I teach RJ on other law faculties, on Justice Academy (for judges, state prosecutors) and on other institutions. Last autumn my book focusing on the restorative perspective of the Czech criminal law was published (<https://www.beck.cz/restorativni-pristupy-pri-reseni-trestne-cinnosti>).

My high concern and focus, as a lawyer, is to contribute integrating RJ into the criminal law on all of its levels. In that way, I can offer the combination of legal background, academic perspective, research experience and commitment in criminal justice practice. I am convinced that RJ represents an integrated concept that transforms our traditional approaches when dealing with crime. On the highest level RJ is represented by its main principals. The Czech Republic, as other Middle and Eastern European countries, who share the communist history and experience,



has strong inclination to authorities. Even having introduced RJ into the Czech criminal justice system more than 25 years ago and even having established the Probation and Mediation Service similar time ago, we still face the old patterns. Those patterns are visible in the construction of criminal law, as well as in other areas of the society. I am convinced that restorative approaches can in broader sense help us on our way of true democratization of the society itself and to face crime with different perspectives and approaches based on different principals. In this commitment, it is also important to be active part of broader European community. Running for the position of a EFRJ Board Member represents for me chance to contribute in my commitment to the European development with experience and history background that is currently in the Board missing. On the same time this opportunity can be for the countries of this region a support that would further contribute to their development of RJ integration into criminal law as well to deeper development of the democratization of their societies in general.

**Dr. Ian Marder - proposer (Maynooth University Department of Law)**

Having sought and obtained her agreement to do so, I wish to nominate Dr. Petra Masopust Šachová for the position of Board Member of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. I asked Petra if she would be willing to run for the Forum's Board this year because I know that she is proactive, intelligent and highly experienced, as well as an active member and strong supporter of the Forum who would contribute greatly to its work. I understand that the Forum is a crucial network and infrastructure, and I would trust Petra to oversee, develop and strengthen its work in areas of law, policy, pedagogy and research, *inter alia*.

Petra has a strong background in law and policy, having recently published a book on the development of restorative justice in Czech law. She is a Core Member of *Restorative Justice: Strategies for Change* and has largely played the coordinating role for the Czech Republic, including by obtaining a large grant which she will also use to support the next RJS4C conference in Estonia. Her RJ development also involves instigating a partnership with the



Czech Prison Service on the development of restorative justice in that context. The Board does not have (and has not recently had) representation from the Czech Republic or from the surrounding countries, and Petra's close links to the Czech Probation Service, and to Slovakia and Poland, will help us further to bring those countries and agencies into the Forum's sphere of influence.

Perhaps most impressively, Petra recently established the Czech Institute for Restorative Justice, which she chairs. Petra is also a researcher and educator, teaching restorative justice to judges, prosecutors and police officers, and to legal students at Palacký University Olomouc. Previously, she has worked as an attorney in the non-profit sector and has received considerable training in restorative justice practice. This broad combination of experience and activities makes Petra perfect for the role, and we are delighted to nominate her as such.

**Dora Szegő - seconder, Foresee Research Group, Budapest, Hungary**

As a second proposer, accompanying the nomination of Ian Marder (Maynooth University) I wish to nominate Dr. Petra Masopust Šachová for the position of Board Member of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. Petra has been doing a persistent and remarkable work for the integration of Restorative Justice in the justice system and law enforcement of the Czech Republic. Her Ph.D. dissertation focused on restorative justice in the Czech criminal law system, recently published in a form of a book. Her diverse professional background combines legal practice, policy and academic perspective. She funded the Czech Institute for Restorative Justice in 2019, which aims at introducing restorative practices in the Czech system, with an emphasis on prison mediation in serious crimes. Foresee Research Group assists Petra's initiative with experiences gained in the former, international project: Mediation and Restorative Practices in Prison Settings, hopefully within the framework of a future EC grant project, with the aim of introducing prison mediation for serious crimes in the Czech prison service. I got to know Petra as a knowledgeable, committed ambassador of restorative justice, covering research, practice, advocacy and awareness raising about RJ in the Czech Republic. I am convinced that she would strengthen the Board of EFRJ and her contribution to the work of the Forum could add a



particular perspective to the integration of the restorative approach and related practices in East-European countries' criminal law systems.