



EUROPEAN
FORUM FOR
RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE

WORKING GROUPS & COMMITTEES

EFRJ internal guidelines and procedures

Version to be presented on the AGM 2022

For many years the European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) relies on the expertise of its members to contribute to some activities (see Committees) or thematic work (see Working Groups) relevant for the development of restorative justice in Europe.

In 2022, the EFRJ counts on the work of **4 Committees** (dedicated to research, training, communications, values and standards of practice) and **6 Working Groups** (dedicated to violent extremism, restorative cities, gender-based violence, environmental justice, institutions and restorative schools). A total of 83 members (out of the almost 450 of the entire EFRJ membership) are active in these groups. Additionally, each Committee and Working Group includes a member of the Board and a member of the Secretariat to assist and direct the work in a way that is in line with the overall objectives and activities of the EFRJ.

Given the growing numbers of members' requests for participating in the Committees and Working Groups and requests for establishing new thematic groups, and given the amount of coordination work that this implies for the Secretariat, this document attempts to put together some key questions on the establishment and management of EFRJ Committees and Working Groups.

This document was drafted in 2021 by appointed members of the Board and Secretariat (Emanuela Biffi, Tim Chapman, Maia Chochua and Lars Otto Justad). It will be shared with the Chairs and members of existing Committees and Working Groups and, later on, with the full membership for receiving feedback. The aim is to present it at the Annual General Meeting 2022.

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What is the difference between EFRJ Committees and Working Groups?

Committees are groups of members appointed to work on specific areas, such as practice and training, research, information and communication. These areas are linked to the main operational activities and objectives of the EFRJ. There are standing committees (e.g. editorial committee) and ad-hoc committees (e.g. the selection committee, which is set up before board elections and the election committee, which exists only to manage and supervise the actual voting on the board members).

Working groups also consist of members, but they are convened by the Board (often advised by members themselves) to perform a specific task or produce a specific outcome in a limited timeframe. They either dissolve after their task has been done or they are transformed to a formal committee of the EFRJ (e.g. Values and Standards for restorative justice). Mostly, working groups gather together around specific areas of application for restorative justice relevant for the field (e.g. gender-based violence, violent extremism, environmental justice, schools, cities, institutions).

What do EFRJ Committees/ Working Groups look like?

Every Committee and Working Group is composed by **4-10 members**, who are appointed for a 2 years term (renewable).

One Board member and/or one Secretariat member is linked to the Committees/ Working Groups, depending on the topics and competences needed. Their task is to assist and direct the work in a way that is in line with the overall objectives and activities of the EFRJ; to make links with the work of other Committees/ Working Groups; to update members about relevant EFRJ activities; to propose concrete actions in case of difficulties; and to advise in how the Committee/ Working Group's initiatives can be used, disseminated or published.

Each Committee and Working group should appoint a **Chair and (optionally but advised) a vice-Chair** among its members (in the first three meetings convened, they are normally those two members who proposed the group). These roles can be fixed for the two years mandate, or rotating (e.g. every half year). Their task is to organise the online meetings (i.e. agenda, minute-taking and practical arrangements), follow up on decisions taken, encourage the delivery of some concrete activities available for the wider public (e.g. webinars, publications). They report to the Secretariat and they present the work of the Committee or Working Group at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

How is a EFRJ Committee or Working Group established?

Committees are established to work on specific broad activities relevant to the strategic plan and activities of the EFRJ (e.g. training, practice, communications, research), thus they are normally established by the Board based on the organisation's priorities. In this case, the Board writes a short informative sheet (300 words) to explain the aims of the Committee.

Working Groups respond to specific requests from the field, thus the theme is proposed by two or more members (from at least two different countries) and then they are approved by the Board for a two years term. In this case, the two or more members write a short informative

sheet (300 words, plus 50 words bios about the two proposers) to explain the aims of the Working Group to the Board. They will act as Chair/ Vice-chair until the 4th meeting, when the action plan is created.

For both groups, a call for members is then launched (in Spring and in Autumn) to encourage the EFRJ membership to apply for the Committee/ Working Group. The call is disseminated in a tailored mail for members only as well as via our regular Newsflash, posts on social media and news on the website.

How can EFRJ members propose a working area for a Committee or thematic focus for a Working Group?

EFRJ members (Board members included) can send a **written proposal** to the Secretariat including the names and bios of the two members who volunteer to be Chair and vice-Chair from the start. In about 400-500 words, the proposal should explain the relevance of the topic for the field and the purpose, activities and possible outcomes of the Committee/ Working Group. The proposal is evaluated by the Secretariat and then formally approved by the Board before launching the call for applications.

The EFRJ Secretariat cannot coordinate more than 10 Committees or Working Groups, so in case of too many applications these may be kept on standby until one group ends its mandate and it is not renewed.

How can EFRJ members apply to take part in a Committee/ Working Group?

Individual members, or representatives of organisational members, can apply to join the Committees/ Working Groups every time a **call for members** is launched. This is normally done every two years (once the mandate is finished) or occasionally (in case several members resigned). Individual members can be involved in maximum 2 Committees/ Working Groups, while organisational members can delegate persons without limits.

Applicants can be senior or new members of the EFRJ: their membership is to be renewed or paid in the current year (in case of new members, their formal approval will only take place at the Annual General Meeting in June but they can apply before that already). Applicants must submit (before the given deadline) a **short biography** (100 words) and **motivational note** (200 words), including their expectations and potential contribution to the Committee/ Working Group.

They will be selected by a **temporary selection committee** (composed by Board and Secretariat representatives as well as the Chair and vice-Chair who proposed the Committee/ Working Group) based on the composition of their application, their experience, profession, expertise on the topic, motivation to participate, skills, time availability and (in case of more members applying from the same country) country representation. Priority will be given to ensuring diversity of experiences, country / regional representation, and commitment to make oneself regularly available for active participation.

What happens during the first (kick-off) meeting of a EFRJ Committee/ Working Group?

The first meeting is initiated and moderated by the **Chair and/or vice-Chair** in cooperation with the members from the Secretariat and/or the Board appointed to the Committee/ Working Group. This meeting is the occasion for members to get to know each other and get to know the aim and mission of the Committee/ Working Group. The **agenda** may include:

- a check-in where all the members can present themselves, both as persons and professionals;
- an invitation to everyone to share expectations and ideas for potential contribution;
- a short introduction to why the Committee/ Working Group was established and the EFRJ expectations of its work and outcome;
- a moment for discussion where members are invited to comment and brainstorm;
- a joint decision on the ground rules for working together (e.g. being on time, informing when not available).

If not done already (i.e. in case the Committee/ Working Group was initiated by the Board and Secretariat), a Chair and a vice-Chair are elected (rotating roles). They will host the next meetings; the second one may be organised about one month later. The second meeting will focus on making the 2-years plan, finding an agreement on the activities in the plan as well as the working method of the group, the organisation of tasks and the frequency and schedule of the meetings. This will be included in a mission statement and a 2-years work plan, to be drafted as a group.

What are the tasks and responsibilities of EFRJ Committees and Working Groups?

Committees and Working Groups are responsible:

- To select a Chair and (optionally but advised) a vice-Chair to coordinate meetings and to maintain a record of those present, activities and achievements. Minutes of the meetings include only decisions and actions (not full discussions).
- To prepare a **2-years work plan**, including topics, deliverables and activities; per each year this should include:
 - ❖ Objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound);
 - ❖ Activities (indicated clearly per each year) to achieve the objectives;
 - ❖ Responsibilities for each activity, assigned to an individual or sub-groups.
- To deliver the activities according to the plan and the timeline.
- To report to the Secretariat and AGM as required and to initiate communication on their work.

Additionally, Working Groups may present a proposal to extend their term of work if necessary, including a new 2-years work plan.

What are the tasks and responsibilities of individual members who participate in a EFRJ Committee/ Working Group?

Individuals who take part in a Committee/ Working Group are not remunerated for their voluntary work and they are responsible:

- To attend at least 70% of meetings to which they are invited within the 2-year mandate and/or to complete at least 70% of the tasks assigned (beyond the meetings), unless they communicate the (good) reason for their absence;
- To volunteer as Chairs and vice-Chairs (rotating roles), when required and to report to the Secretariat and at the AGM on their activities and achievements;
- To share information and knowledge and complete tasks (individually or within a sub-group) that contribute to the design and implementation of the 2-year plan;
- To keep confidential the drafts or other internal EFRJ materials circulated;
- To refer to their membership to the Committee/ Working Group in their signature and communications, although they cannot represent the EFRJ (unless agreed otherwise with the Secretariat);
- To self-evaluate their commitment to the Committee/ Working Group every 6 months;
- To notify the Chair, vice-Chair and members of the Committee/ Working Group, if any matter arises on potential risks and issues that could impact the work, including potential resignation prior to the end of the 2-year mandate period;
- To participate in the AGM, webinars, workshops, conferences etc. as required and upon their availability;
- To always act restoratively, according to the values of the EFRJ (e.g. inclusion, participation, solidarity, responsibility, honesty, respect, openness).

Why does a EFRJ Committee/ Working Group need to appoint a Chair and optionally a vice-Chair?

The Committees/ Working Groups are made up by the members and for the members. To ensure sustainability of the group and its activities and to lower the burden on the Secretariat, each Committee/ Working Group should appoint a Chair and optionally also a vice-Chair. These positions will raise the group's feeling of responsibility for its work, and will make the dialogue between the Committee/ Working Group smoother. It will also ensure that there is someone that is responsible for the progress of the work. If necessary, members can decide to go for rotating Chairs, or to appoint one Chair for the two-year mandate. The first Chair and vice-Chair are the members who initiated the Working Group and who will convene the first three meetings: after that, the group can decide to appoint different Chairs and/or vice-Chairs. In case a Committee/Working Group decides to appoint a vice-Chair, the Chair and the vice-Chair should agree on the division of tasks between them.

What is the budget for each Committee/ Working Group?

Members of the Committees/ Working Groups act on a voluntary basis. The EFRJ, through the yearly structural funding received by the Justice Programme of the European Commission,

has a budget to cover some minor costs (e.g. printing a new publication, launching a communication campaign, paying for the online meeting platform).

Most meetings happen online and, occasionally, live (e.g. during the EFRJ conferences, organised in even years, time and space can be reserved for the Committee/ Working Group meeting, as most members attend it anyway, but travel and accommodation is not covered by the EFRJ).

Every two years, a live meeting of all Committees/ Working Groups is organised next to the EFRJ Annual General Meeting and seminar (half June in odd years, like 2023-2025). The EFRJ will cover travel and accommodation of two members per each Committee/ Working Group (these could be the Chair, vice-Chair or other appointed members as agreed by the group), up to the unit cost defined in the EFRJ operating grant. Depending on the main topic of the seminar, some members may be involved as speakers (e.g. a round table).

What are the terms of reference that members of the EFRJ Committees/ Working Groups sign in the beginning of their mandate?

Each Committee/ Working Group's Terms of Reference (ToR) may include the following details and commitments to be agreed by all members (note: no individual signatures required, but the ToR will be included as an annex to the minutes of the 1st meeting):

Committee / Working Group Name: _____				
Purpose and objectives: _____				
Specific area(s) of work: _____				
Start/end of the mandate: _____				
Chair and vice-Chair's (name and contact details): _____				
Composition (total number): _____				
Name	Job title	Country	Email	Responsibilities
...
Each individual (listed above) commits:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to be remunerated for their voluntary work to the Committee/ Working Group; 				

- To attend at least 70% of meetings to which they are invited within the 2-year mandate, and/or to complete at least 70% of the tasks assigned (beyond the meetings), unless they communicate the (good) reason for their absence;
- To volunteer as Chairs and vice-Chairs (rotating roles), when required and to report to the Secretariat and at the AGM on their activities and achievements;
- To share information and knowledge and complete tasks (individually or within a sub-group) that contribute to the design and implementation of the 2-year plan;
- To keep confidential the drafts or other internal EFRJ materials circulated;
- To refer to their membership to the Committee/ Working Group in their signature and communications, although they cannot represent the EFRJ (unless agreed otherwise with the Secretariat);
- To self-evaluate his/her commitment to the Committee/ Working Group every 6 months;
- To notify the Chair, vice-Chair and members of the Committee/ Working Group, if any matter arises on potential risks and issues that could impact the work, including potential resignation prior to the end of the 2-year mandate period;
- To participate in the AGM, webinars, workshops, conferences etc. as required and upon their availability;
- To always act restoratively, according to the values of the EFRJ (e.g. inclusion, participation, solidarity, responsibility, honesty, respect, openness).

Each Committee/ Working Group, coordinated by the Chair and vice-Chair, commits:

- to organise their operation, mainly to define their work plan (objectives, activities and responsibilities) and communicate internally;
- to moderate and take notes (or other records) of their meetings;
- to communicate to the EFRJ Communication Officer any information (e.g. events, publications) that can be disseminated to the wider public.

Responsible to (Board/ Secretariat's representative): _____

Note that the Board/ Secretariat representatives are responsible for:

- making the link with the general work of the EFRJ and with other Committees/ Working Groups, also by updating members about relevant EFRJ activities;
- ensuring that the proposed work plan is in line with the EFRJ overall strategy;
- proposing concrete actions in case of difficulties;
- advising on how the Committee/ Working Group's initiatives can be used, disseminated or published.

The date of approval of ToR: _____

Signature of all members: _____

The section below is to be completed once the Committee/ Working Group has met at least 4 times and drafted a 2-year action plan:

Objectives: _____
Activities: _____
Responsibilities: _____
Decision making processes (e.g. based on consensus): _____
Timeline and deadlines: _____
Reporting procedure: _____

How can a member resign from the EFRJ Committee/ Working Group?

A member of a Committee/ Working Group may resign at any time. Notice of resignation is to be provided **in writing** to the Chair and vice-Chair. The resigned member commits to provide access to the related documents / materials produced as part of the work within the Committee/ Working Group. The resigned member is asked to explain his/her reasons, especially when these have to do with the coordination of the Committee/ Working Group, in order to create better experiences for the future.

Membership to the Committee/ Working Group will be deemed to have resigned if they fail to attend less than 70% of the meetings (calculated on a yearly basis) without prior notice. Any member who resigns or whose membership is terminated, may be replaced from a reserve list of applicants (i.e. those not selected during the first selection process and those who contacted spontaneously the EFRJ Secretariat during the year), selected by a temporary committee (i.e. Chair, vice-Chair and Secretariat/ Board representatives). Alternatively, their position will not be filled, waiting for a new call for members to be launched.

When is the mandate of the EFRJ Committee or Working Group ending?

Committees are self-standing and they may be dissolved by the Board, in case of lack of interest and participation of members.

Working Groups dissolve after their tasks defined in the Terms of Reference have been accomplished (2 years' plan). If needed, they may transform it to a formal Committee of the EFRJ. In case they wish to prolong the mandate, after the Board's approval, a selection of the new members will be carried out and a new action plan will be prepared as described above.

When and how can a EFRJ Working Group's mandate be extended?

When a Working Group has fulfilled its mandate, but has a clear idea that their work should continue, or possibly be made into a committee, they should draft a proposition where they argue for that. The proposition should be sent to the Secretariat **at least 3 months before** the end of their mandate. The Secretariat shall then share their proposition to the Board. The Board should then decide, together with the Secretariat, whether the Working Group should end its work, extend its work, or become a Committee.

Why is it important that every two years a call for members is launched?

Members should re-apply for selection every two years. This will require them to **self-evaluate** their attendance, participation, activities and achievements. This will ensure that each member will make themselves accountable and that new members will bring new energy, ideas and perspectives to the Committee/ Working Group.

What concrete actions can be taken to give more visibility to the work of the Committees/ Working groups?

Some concrete ideas for the future are:

- to organise once/twice a year an internal online exchange between members of the Committees/ Working Groups concerning their plans and actions - the EFRJ Secretariat may take the lead, Comm/WG Chairs can propose it;
- to better inform the full membership, not only during the Annual General Meeting, about the work of the Committees/ Working Groups, e.g. by publishing blog pieces or opening some meetings to others beyond the actual members - Comm/WG Chairs get in touch with the Communication Officer;
- to link the work of the Committees/ Working Groups to local experiences, overcoming the (English) language barrier and connecting with other fields of expertise - Comm/WG Chairs may take initiative.