



Annual Report 2015

THE EUROPEAN FORUM FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS A PARTNER IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLATFORM EUROPE

European Forum for Restorative Justice
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Foreword

It is my great pleasure to introduce the EFRJ's Annual Report of 2015. As you will see when reading through this brochure we can look back on a year full of challenges, changes and activities.

Most important, not only from an organizational point of view, is the recent change in the secretariat. After two busy years our former executive officer has left the position at the end of last year. In the name of the entire Board I'd like to express our gratitude to Kris Vanspauwen for all his contributions. With his leaving the structure of the secretariat and the profile of the positions was revised. Since January, 2016, Daria Nashat is heading the secretariat in the position as the new executive director. Edit Törzs who has been working for the EFRJ since many years in different positions was appointed as the new deputy director. With this re-structuring of the secretariat and its key positions we hope to further strengthen the Forum.

In 2015 some further persons left the Forum: Katrien Lauwaert who was a researcher in the ALTERNATIVE project, Emilie van Limbergen, the former communications officer, and Harry Knooren as financial and administrative officer. We'd like to thank them as well for all their excellent work.

At the 2015 Annual General Meeting in Warsaw the Board has launched the **Forum 15 project** which was since then the main focal point of activities. After 15 years of the EFRJ's existence, a fundamental review of its role and the future strategy became crucial. Based on intensive discussions in a series of facilitated working meetings two working groups developed a draft strategy paper. We will now step into the second phase of the Forum 15 process. With the presentation of the Board's concept in the forthcoming AGM in Leiden, the project will now be passed to our members. The concept is meant to be the basis for a broad discussion with the membership.

Over the past years Restorative Justice has substantively advanced in many countries throughout Europe. The EFRJ has significantly contributed to this development. Experiences from the practice clearly show that RJ is an extremely valuable resource; its impact and value is increasing in accordance with the seriousness of a crime. Nevertheless – and notwithstanding the progress in the arena of criminal policy which finds its proof, e.g., in the 2012 EU Victims' Directive – there is still a lot to do in order to make sure that restorative justice is available not only as a vague possibility but as a real option of choice for anyone who wants to take advantage of it. This approach is strongly promoted by the EFRJ and this is why the Board is proposing to amend the Constitution by a preamble which explicitly states that "**every person in Europe shall have the right of access to restorative**

justice". There is a lot to do to transfer this vision into reality. The EFRJ, that is, not only the Board, the executive director and the secretariat but all our members and supporters, have the responsibility and the task to be a key player on this path.

All our activities would not been possible without the extraordinary commitment of the EFRJ's staff. Besides the executive director and the deputy director, Emanuela Biffi, Mirko Miceli and Rik Defrère, the new financial and administrative officer, are further important pillars for the EFRJ. While their work might not always be fully and directly visible to the members, they are all working hard, and much more than can be expected, in order to help the Forum running and increasing its visibility and impact.

Michael Kilchling
Chair

Introduction to the European Forum for Restorative Justice

The European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) is a non-profit organisation established in 2000.

Aim

The EFRJ aims to establish and to develop victim-offender mediation and other restorative justice practices throughout Europe. The EFRJ focuses on the application of restorative justice to criminal matters but other areas, such as family, school and community mediation, are not excluded. The EFRJ does not defend any 'best practice' model of restorative justice but recognises that restorative justice is an evolving approach.

Objectives

The EFRJ:

- Promotes international information exchange and mutual assistance
- Promotes the development of effective restorative justice policies, services and legislation
- Explores and develops the theoretical basis of restorative justice
- Stimulates research
- Assists in the development of principles, ethics, training and good practice
- Pursues other objectives determined by the General Meeting

To realise its aim and objectives, the EFRJ:

- Promotes dialogue between practitioners, policymakers and researchers (including students)
- Supports public education that increases awareness about issues for victims, offenders and the community
- Makes representation to and/or liaises with European and international institutions or organisations, including the Council of Europe, the European Union and relevant non-governmental organisations
- Raises, holds and administers funds in furtherance of its work
- Works to ensure that practice and research inform and support each other, and that these both inform and support policy making, which then informs the work of practitioners

The EFRJ's principles include:

- Openness and respect
- A willingness to learn from all members
- Providing opportunities for expressing various points of view
- Providing channels for participation, exchange, mutual support and contact

Organisational Structure

Board

In 2015, the Board of the European Forum for Restorative Justice was composed of **nine volunteer Board member** from eight different countries (in accordance with the Art.28 of the EFRJ Constitution). Four Board members are part of the Executive Committee, responsible for following up the day-to-day running of the EFRJ.

Executive Committee Board Members



Chair
Michael Kilchling
Germany



Secretary
Vicky De Souter
Belgium



Vice-Chair
Annemieke Wolthuis
The Netherlands



Treasurer
Karolien Mariën
Belgium

Board members



Aarne Kinnunen
Finland



Bruno Caldeira
Portugal



Beata Czarnecka-Dzialuk
Poland



Roberto Moreno Alvarez
Spain



Tim Chapman
Northern Ireland

The Secretariat

The Secretariat of the European Forum for Restorative Justice, based in Leuven (Belgium), consists of the Executive Officer (EO), the Financial and Administrative officer (FAO) and the Communications & Liaison officer (CLO) for a total of 2.0 FTE positions. On a project-basis, research-coordinators and research assistants are hired.

In 2015 the Secretariat consisted of the following team:



Executive Officer
Kris Vanspauwen
Belgium



Financial and Administrative officer (1st half 2015)
Jozefina Gjelij
Belgium



Communications and Liaison officer
Mirko Miceli
Belgium

Financial and Administrative officer (2nd half 2015)
Harry Knooren
Belgium

Project staff in 2015



ALTERNATIVE project (Coordinator)
Edit Törzs
Belgium



ALTERNATIVE project (Project officer)
Emanuela Biffi
Belgium



ALTERNATIVE project (Communications officer)
Emilie Van Limbergen
Belgium



ALTERNATIVE project (Project officer)
Katrien Lauwaert
Belgium

Editorial Board Newsletter

The Editorial Board of the European Forum is composed of a team of international experts actively supporting the EFRJ in collecting, selecting and disseminating relevant developments in the field of restorative justice. These developments can relate to practice, but also to research, policy or legislation. In 2015, the Editorial Board was composed of seven members from five different countries.

Editor: Kerry Clamp (Australia)

Members of the editorial board include: Magnus Lønneberg (Norway), Branka Peuraca (Croatia), Nicola Preston (United Kingdom), Robert Shaw (United Kingdom), Martin Wright (United Kingdom), Diana Ziedina (Latvia)

Membership

The European Forum for Restorative Justice is a network organisation offering a common space for a variety of actors engaged or interested in the further development of restorative justice practices and principles. The ultimate goals of collecting and sharing experiences and practices are:

- raising awareness on the potential of implementing restorative justice in different contexts;
- further promoting international cooperation; and
- informing and influencing policy makers.

In addition to promoting a better exchange of information, the EFRJ represents the voices and interests of many different actors trying to bring about a real change in the society through restorative justice approaches. The Forum has a heterogeneous membership including policy makers, practitioners, researchers, academics, governments, lawyers and representative of judicial authorities. The EFRJ membership is divided in two general categories:

- Individual members
- Organisational members

According to their legal status, organisations can decide to become member of the EFRJ as: local organisation, non-governmental organisation or governmental organisation. Each member is entitled to decide whether to join the EFRJ as Full Member (with voting rights) or Associate Member (without voting rights).

At the 2015 Annual General Meeting in Warsaw, 28 new membership applications have been approved. The list is divided as following:

- **8** new individual with full status;
- **2** new individual with associate status;

- **14** new organisations with full status;
- **4** new organisations with associate full status.

By the end of 2015, the EFRJ membership counts on a total of **260 members** from over 40 different countries

The membership can be divided as follows:

- 160 Paying members (last update Dec '15): Group A
- 100 members who are still considered members but they have not renewed their membership in 2015: Group B

Type	Group A		Group B		Total
Individual	116	72.5%	96	96%	212
Organisations	44	27.5%	4	4%	48
Total	160	-	100	-	260

At the end of year, the EFRJ shared the electronic Membership Directory with all paying members in 2015. The pdf document includes contacts details, position, website and other relevant information of the members.

External cooperation

Catholic University of Leuven – Leuven Institute for Criminology

The EFRJ cooperates closely with the Leuven Institute of Criminology (LINC). The EFRJ grew out of a LINC project in the 1990s and the EFRJ Secretariat is still based in the Institute. The EFRJ staff has daily contacts with the LINC researchers working on RJ and related topics and participates in the monthly RJ research line meeting and co-organises a series of monthly thematic lunches on RJ. The EFRJ and LINC also cooperate in research projects, such as the important four-year 'ALTERNATIVE' project on restorative justice approaches in intercultural conflict settings.

The RJ week events were hosted at the Katholieke Universiteit (KU) Leuven premises and in November the EFRJ and the KU Leuven team of the ALTERNATIVE project co-organised the final project conference in Leuven. The EFRJ team also takes part in seminars, events and meetings related to restorative justice organised by LINC. The close cooperation with the university enables the EFRJ to have contacts with students.

Between May and June the EFRJ Secretariat hosted Robin Cnops, Criminology BA student of the KU Leuven as an intern. On 13 October 2015, Emanuela Biffi (EFRJ project officer) and Monique Anderson (former EO) presented the EFRJ mission and two of its projects ('Accessibility and Initiation for RJ' and 'Building Social Support for RJ') to about 50 students of the RJ class of the Criminology Master programme of KU Leuven.

Criminal Justice Platform Europe

The EFRJ is part of the Criminal Justice Platform Europe (CJPE), which since 2012 brings together three organisations working in the fields of detention (EuroPris), probation (Confederation of European Probation, CEP) and restorative justice (EFRJ). The objective is 'to reduce re-offending and the impact of crime and to improve methods of working with victims, communities and offenders throughout Europe.' The CJPE's special focus during 2014 and 2015 was on the protection of victims of crime.

In 2015, the CJPE organised three internal coordination meetings with representatives of the EFRJ, CEP and EUROPRIS:

- 1) 11-13 March 2015 (Barcelona, Spain), 8 participants (EFRJ represented by Annemieke Wolthuis, Vice-Chair and Michael Kilchling, Chair)
- 2) 13 and 15 October 2015 (Barcelona, Spain), 8 participants (EFRJ represented by Kris Vanspauwen, EO and Mirko Miceli, CLO)
- 3) 3 December 2015 (Brussels, Belgium), 7 participants (EFRJ represented by Annemieke Wolthuis, Vice-Chair and Mirko Miceli, CLO)

Each CJPE partner organises one seminar or conference per year. During 2015, the EFRJ organised the international expert workshop 'Reviewing the Implementation of the European Directive on Victims' (11- 12 March 2015, Barcelona, Spain). In total, 19 participants attended the event. The EFRJ delegated Anneke Van Hoek (NL) as an expert to this workshop, which was also attended by Annemieke Wolthuis, Vice-Chair and Michael Kilchling, Chair.

Other cooperation

Thanks to the involvement of our Board Member Tim Chapman and our previous EO Monique Anderson in a new research project on juvenile restorative justice, the EFRJ enhanced its collaboration with the **International Juvenile Justice Observatory**. This collaboration will continue in 2016.

The EFRJ continued its preparation work for the International Seminar “The East meeting the West: Ideas on the development of Restorative Justice”, which is co-organised by the **Asian Pacific Forum for Restorative Justice** and will take place from 5-7 September 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The cooperation and preparatory work for this event, the first of its kind, has started in 2014.

Activity report

Annual General Meeting 2015

The Annual General Meeting took place on 21 May 2015 in Warsaw, Poland (connected to the Board meeting in Warsaw). An invitation letter with the proposed agenda was sent to the members by e-mail and the invitation was also shared on the EFRJ website. To encourage participation of members, an adjacent 1-day seminar was organised entitled ‘Access to mediation for victims of domestic violence’.

Despite the fact that the seminar was free of charge and that a campaign was launched in the beginning of 2015, very few EFRJ members participated. Some members preferred to join the AGM via a video-conference. The Annual Report 2014 and the financial report were approved.

Board meetings

The Board of the EFRJ usually meets twice a year.

Two Board meetings took place in 2015:

1. Board meeting I: 20-21 May 2015, Warsaw, Poland
2. Board meeting II: 18-20 November 2015, Leuven, Belgium

During both Board meetings, a special session was organised to include the staff’s participation. In Warsaw, this session was conducted by two external facilitators. In addition, during the Board meeting in Warsaw, the EFRJ launched the Forum15 strategic review process. In November, the EFRJ celebrated the 15th anniversary of the organisation in the margins of the ALTERNATIVE final conference and the Leuven Board meeting.

Executive committee meetings

The Executive Committee of the EFRJ consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary (all of them are Board members) and the EO. They meet regularly to discuss operational matters. While regular contacts take place via phone and email, the Executive Committee meets in person twice a year, usually, or more often if needed.

Two Executive Committee Meetings took place in 2015:

1. Executive Committee Meeting Spring – 24-25 April 2015, Leuven, Belgium
2. Executive Committee Meeting Autumn – 5-6 October 2015, Leuven Belgium

The Autumn meeting was dedicated to the Forum15 process and was attended by the members of the Secretariat too.

The implementation of the Victims' Directive

The EU's Victims' Directive (Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime) and especially its Art. 12. is the first Directive of the EU containing propositions related to restorative justice. This directive also replaced the previous EU-level legal basis for RJ, namely the 2001 Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings. The implementation deadline of the directive was November 2015.

The main activity of the EFRJ related to the implementation of the Victims' Directive in 2015 was the Summer School entitled 'The Victims' Directive – Challenges and Opportunities for RJ' (find more information below).

During 2015 a draft concept for a position paper on policy implications resulting from the Victims' Directive was developed. The paper aims to promote a broad concept of restorative justice services for citizens, arising from the 2 related articles: the right of information about available services according to Art. 4 and the right to access to such services according to Art. 12 para 1. While the EC guidance document on the directive represents a careful interpretation of Art. 12, the European Forum has argued that the Victims' Directive should be interpreted as providing an individual right to RJ services.

The EFRJ co-organised the expert workshop of the Criminal Justice Platform Europe on 'Reviewing the implementation of the European Directive on Victims' in Barcelona in March 2015.

One of the project officers of the EFRJ contributed as a part-time researcher in the project 'IVOR - Implementing victim-oriented reform of the criminal justice system in the European Union' (Feb. 2014- Feb. 2016), coordinated by the Portuguese victim support organisation APAV. She was hired on behalf of the KU Leuven Institute of

Criminology, partner in this project, and worked (among others) on the chapters related to RJ issues. The project looked at the legal and practical implementation of the Victims' Directive in the 28 Member States.

Although not directly linked to the implementation of the Victims' Directive, in 2015 the book 'Victims and Restorative Justice' was published (Vanfraechem, Bolívar Fernández, & Aertsen, 2015). The book is the result of the EU funded project coordinated by the EFRJ in 2011-2012, 'Victims and Restorative Justice: An empirical study of the needs, experiences and position of victims within restorative justice practices'. After the publication of the book, the research report of the project was made available on the EFRJ website under 'Resources'.

EFRJ Summer School in Lisbon



The EFRJ Summer School began in 2005 in Pilzen (Czech Republic) and the EFRJ have had Summer Schools every consecutive year since then (Riga 2007, Barcelona 2009, Canterbury 2011, Vienna 2013). The theme of each edition has been different every year and the selected topic for the 2015 edition was the Victims' Directive (2012/29/EU) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

The objectives of the 2015 EFRJ Summer School entitled "*The Victims' Directive – Challenges and Opportunities for RJ*" were:

- Locate RJ against the backdrop of the Victims' Directive
- Articulate a victim perspective for a range of RJ contexts
- Produce a good practice checklist for working with victims within an RJ context.

More than 20 participants from 12 countries attended this edition of the EFRJ Summer School. In addition to the numerous interactive sessions, group exercises and classroom lessons prepared by the two trainers Frauke Petzold (DE) and Niall Kearney (UK), the programme of the 2015 EFRJ Summer School included **two visits**:

- with a local victim support organisation (*Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima* – APAV): to better understand the relevance the Victims’ Directive can have on their work and to what extent RJ can be complementary to the EU Directive;
- to the Portuguese Ministry of Justice (*Direção-Geral da Política de Justiça*).



Participants of the Summer School have the opportunity to learn more about the penal mediation system set in place in Portugal directly from the national authority.



An additional activity of this edition of the EFRJ Summer School was the **public conference** organised (16 July 2015) and held at the Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Lisboa. After the opening speeches from *Helena Alves*, Director of the Department responsible for Mediation of Portugal and *Manuel Valin*, Justice Director of the Basque Government, the invited keynote speaker *Prof. Dr. Antony Pemberton*, from the International Victimology Institute Tilburg (the Netherlands), further analysed the main

important rights and safeguards for victims of crime set forth in the 2012/29/EU EU Directive in relation to existing research and practices in the field of restorative justice. In the afternoon, several parallel workshop sessions provided participants of the EFRJ Summer School the opportunity to present their own work and experiences to the public.

RJ Week and 15th Anniversary

The International Restorative Justice Week took place between 15-22 November 2015. The EFRJ celebrated it with a series of events in Leuven. On Wednesday 18 November, at the end of the ALTERNATIVE conference on RJ in conflicts in intercultural settings (16-18 November), there was a theatre play “No theatre” performed by a Norwegian group, the book presentation ‘Hotel Pardon’ by Jan De Cock, a Belgian author and founder of the

NGO “Within Without Walls”. In addition, the RJ week included a film screening of “Beyond Punishment” and a discussion with the German film director Hubertus Siegert. On 1 November 2015, the EFRJ also celebrated its 15th anniversary. About 120 people attended one or more of the events organised, sponsored by local sponsors and the EC grant.

For those who could not join us in Leuven, the EFRJ acted as a platform to collect local events and advertise them across Europe via its website and social media. The calendar of events for the RJ week 2015 included 22 activities from 9 countries.

Representation at Conferences and other events

The Board members are representing the EFRJ regularly at national and international conferences. In addition, they deliver presentations about restorative justice and related topics in the framework of their professional duties. In August 2015, for example, Michael Kilchling delivered two lectures about the principles of restorative justice and about implementation and practices of RJ in Germany and Europe at Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran, Iran.



On 2 November 2015, Michael Kilchling also participated at a working meeting of the expert group on restorative justice, led by Prof. Dr. Grazia Mannozi, director of the Centro Studi sulla Giustizia Riparativa e la Mediazione at the University of Insubria in Como, Italy. The expert group was established as one of several themed tables of experts appointed by the Italian Ministry of Justice in the preparation of the reform of the penal code of Italy. A video documentation is available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IJ6yr7s2xU&feature=youtu.be.

One of the staff members of the EFRJ, Mirko Miceli, attended the international conference ‘Victims of Crime in Europe: the future is now!’ (Lisbon, Portugal, 13-14 May 2015). The conference was organised by the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) and Victim Support Europe (VSE).

On 28 May, the French Platform for Restorative Justice (Institut Français pour la Justice Restaurative) hosted a seminar (in French) exploring the concept of desistance and its possible link with restorative justice, in particular ‘Can restorative justice be a necessary step in the path of desistance?’. This was the topic also of one of the latest EU-funded projects coordinated by the EFRJ (2012-2014), ‘Desistance and Restorative Justice: mechanisms for desisting from crime within restorative justice practices’. The project coordinator, Katrien Lauwaert, presented during the IFJR seminar in Paris: ‘The potential of restorative justice confirmed in the desistance process. An opportunity or a threat?’.

The European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) organised a workshop on Secondary Victimisation, (3 June 2015, Brussels, Belgium), where the EFRJ was represented by Kristel Buntinx (EFRJ member, Belgium).

The annual European Society for Criminology conference, EUROCRIM 2015, was held in Porto from 2-5 September. More than 1400 delegates from all over Europe, the United States, Australia and Latin America came together to share and discuss their work. The RJ research community was well represented with 7 different panels. The EFRJ was represented by Katrien Lauwaert (EFRJ senior researcher, Belgium).

On 23-25 September 2015 the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) and the Czech Probation and Mediation Service hosted a conference on Restorative Justice and Probation in Prague. Around 75 delegates from 25 countries in Europe and beyond participated in the plenary sessions and workshops. The EFRJ participated in the programme committee preparing the conference and provided several plenary speakers. Katrien Lauwaert, EFRJ senior researcher, analysed European policy making at the crossroads of probation, restorative justice and victims of crime. Annemieke Wolthuis, EFRJ vice-chair, presented a European project on restorative justice practices in case of domestic violence offenders. Ivo Aertsen, former EFRJ chair, presented on the role of the community in probation and restorative justice. He referred to the project ALTERNATIVE on conflict resolution in intercultural settings, in which the EFRJ is a partner.

One of the EFRJ staff members, Emanuela Biffi, attended the course for professional development ‘Restorative Visitation and Professional Development’ organised by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)

in Kortrijk, Belgium (23-25 September 2015). This was an occasion to learn more about the several restorative activities going on in the area around Kortrijk with youngsters (in school and in rehabilitation projects for young offenders), with families and more broadly with the whole community. Additionally, the event was a way to strengthen cooperation with the IIRP team and get to know the new IIRP president, John Bailie. During the event, a small group of participants intended to cooperate in a restorative project called 'Restorative Action Without Borders' lead by Vidia Negrea from IIRP.

Kris Vanspauwen, EO represented the EFRJ at a roundtable on 29 September 2015 organised by Victim Support Europe in Brussels, Belgium.

The Irish ACJRD (Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development) organised a conference on 'Victims in Focus. European and domestic perspectives' in Dublin, Ireland on 2 October 2015. The morning session was devoted to the European perspective, with contributions from the European Commission, the EFRJ (Katrien Lauwaert, Belgium) and Victim Support Europe.

The Criminal Justice Platform Europe held an international experts' conference entitled 'Radicalisation and Violent Extremism – Disengagement, prevention, monitoring' in Barcelona (Spain) on 14 October 2015. Kris Vanspauwen, Mirko Miceli and Roberto Moreno represented the EFRJ.

Victim Support Europe organised a conference 'Putting victims' rights into practice: where are we?' on 9 November 2015 in the European Parliament. The EFRJ was represented by Mirko Miceli.

The CJPE organised a seminar entitled 'Implementation of Framework Decisions 2008/909/JHA, 2008/947/JHA and 2009/829/JHA – covering: "The mutual recognition of judicial decisions on custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty", "Probation decisions and alternative sanctions" and "Supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention" on 3 December 2015 in Brussels, Belgium. The EFRJ was represented by Mirko Miceli.

Information provision

The EFRJ Secretariat deals on a daily basis with requests for information, cooperation in activities and projects, dissemination of research findings and video materials in the field of RJ. This is usually done via emails and phone calls. From time to time, the EFRJ Secretariat receives visitors (national or international) who make use of the RJ archive at the LINC institute.

Dissemination

As the coordinator of two past EU funded projects, the EFRJ disseminated the published reports of the projects 'Victims and RJ' and 'Desistance and RJ' via its website and social media.

As a partner in the project 'ALTERNATIVE', the EFRJ was responsible for disseminating the results of the research (films, reports, e-books, manuals).

As a partner in the Daphne project 'Developing integrated responses to sexual violence: An interdisciplinary research project on the potential of restorative justice', the EFRJ disseminated the practice guide entitled 'Doing restorative justice for sexual violence'.

As a partner in the project 'Restorative Justice in Cases of Domestic Violence, Best practice examples between increasing mutual understanding and awareness of specific protection needs', the EFRJ helped to organise the final seminar in Brussels and to disseminate the project results.

The EFRJ also helped with the dissemination of the three volumes on 'Juvenile Restorative Justice' published by the International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO). EFRJ Board Member Tim Chapman and the former EFRJ Executive Officer Monique Anderson worked in this project.

Website and social media

At the beginning of 2015, the EFRJ website migrated from 'Statik' to a new website hosting company, 'Nilmedia', which uses Wordpress as a template for the website and offers more flexibility and access to changing services when needed. All website information from the old 'Statik' website was copied and pasted into the new 'Nilmedia' one. The migration was more difficult than expected and it took two months to ensure that all information was again visible online. The EFRJ website is a crucial tool for collecting news, events, publications

and since the migration, the website received more than 30.000 views from around 6.000 users. The website updates, as well as other news of the EFRJ have been often shared also on our social media, in particularly Facebook, which counts now more than 1300 viewers ('likes').

Newsflash

In 2015, the EFRJ Newsflash reached more than 1400 recipients. This number includes not only those who subscribe via the EFRJ website, but also participants in our events. The Newsflash includes information about publications, events, trainings, arts projects and more in the field of RJ and related topics. While the website is exclusively used for EFRJ related news and projects (involving our staff or board members), the Newsflash is an instrument for information sharing for everyone working in the field of RJ (members and not). Newsflashes are sent on a monthly basis, using the same layout to be easily recognisable by our audience. Additional Newsflash editions are sent to promote special events of the EFRJ (e.g. the summer school).

Newsletter

The Newsletter is one of the most important outputs of the European Forum for Restorative Justice to disseminate relevant information on RJ mainly in EU countries.

The Newsletter has three to four articles on some of the most interesting developments in the field of RJ. Each article is prepared by practitioners, policy makers, or researchers drawing from their own experience and competence. The members of the Editorial Board collect, select and revise each article in terms of contents, accuracy and language. In each issue there are also additional sections including info on upcoming events, new publications and other news.

The Newsletter is sent to all EFRJ members by email and then made available on the EFRJ website. The printed edition is mailed to our members at the end of the year.

The EFRJ Newsletter is published three times: *March 2015* (Vol.16 N.1); *June 2015* (Vol.16 N.2); *September 2015* (Vol.3 N.3). The printed edition was sent in December 2015.

The Forum 15 project: A Fundamental Review of the Role and Strategy of the European Forum for Restorative Justice

Background

In May 2015, the Board met with the Secretariat of the EFRJ to address serious operational issues of the Forum. It was clear that the staff were experiencing unacceptable levels of stress due to the volume of work over at least the past year. The workload included organising a very successful conference in Belfast, managing several large research and development projects, developing a three-years action plan for the operating grant and applying for the 2016 operational grant from the European Commission.

The unstable financial situation of the EFRJ contributed to the increase of the overall stress. The Forum's income is derived from membership fees, project grants and the EC operating grant. The current situation was assessed as unsustainable in the long run. The EFRJ applies for the EC operating grant every year and the European Commission has made it clear that there is no guarantee that it will be granted each year. However, project grants are competitive, increasingly difficult to win and put an excessive strain on the administrative capacity of the EFRJ Secretariat.

Consequently, the Board with the support of the Secretariat decided to engage in a fundamental review of the role and strategy of the EFRJ. This process involved an examination of the internal structures, roles and operations of the EFRJ including the role and function of the Board and the EFRJ's external strategy for promoting restorative justice in Europe. In addition, the so-called Forum 15 process (based on 15 years EFRJ) had the objective to explore how the EFRJ could better support and involve its membership.

The need to build the capacity of the EFRJ to promote restorative justice throughout Europe

Within existing resources, the EFRJ does not have the capacity to take proactive steps to promote restorative justice and to provide practical support to those wishing to develop local provision. In 2015, the EFRJ's membership included policy makers, leading researchers, experts, restorative and legal practitioners from 34 different countries. In the context of the Forum 15 process, it became clear that the EFRJ needs to do more to support its members but also to make use of the many experiences and the expertise that the network offers.

By mobilising membership more actively, the Forum can enable different countries to assess their needs and to access the consultancy, research and training services in the field of restorative justice that will help them meet their needs.

To achieve these objectives, the Board decided that EFRJ should:

1. consider how it could change its relationship with its membership network,
2. review and improve its internal structure, systems, procedures and staffing,
3. develop a robust strategic plan and business model which will reduce dependency upon European Commission grants and research projects so that it can generate its own sustainable income.

In order to review and transform the EFRJ, the Board together with the Secretariat set up two working groups as part of the Forum 15 process: one to review internal operations and one to develop an external strategy. These working groups were composed of members of the Board and the Secretariat. In addition, all EFRJ members were consulted through an online survey on how the EFRJ can more actively support members. While members were overall satisfied with current benefits provided, they stated that they would welcome more active support in developing restorative justice in their own countries. The Forum 15 process will continue and the new EFRJ strategy will be presented at the 2016 AGM.

Projects

The EFRJ was partner in two EU funded projects ongoing in 2015:

- ALTERNATIVE project (FP7 – 285368, coordinated by KU Leuven, LINC)
- Domestic Violence project (JUST_2013_JPEN_AG_4587 coordinated by the Verwey-Jonker Institut)

[FP7 – Alternative - "Developing alternative understandings of security and justice through restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings within democratic societies"](#)

The 4-year European research project coordinated by KU Leuven LINC aimed to provide an alternative of how to address conflicts within intercultural contexts in democratic societies in order to set up security solutions for citizens and communities. In its methodology, this project combined theoretical research (on three large topics as (1) alternative epistemologies of justice and security, (2) conflict intervention in intercultural contexts and (3) existing methods of restorative justice and their relevance in intercultural conflicts) with action research carried out in four different countries with different types, levels and settings of conflicts (with local and migrant residents in social housing neighbourhood in Austria, with Roma and Non-Roma inhabitants in a small town in Hungary, three different kinds of conflicts involving gangs, immigrants and different religious groups in the United Kingdom, and in conflicts between Serbs, Albanians, Muslims and Croats in Serbia).

Research

The main responsibility of the EFRJ in the Alternative project was one of the work packages on theoretical research and dissemination. The research done by the EFRJ consisted of two main areas:

1 - Studying existing RJ models and their potential application to conflicts in an intercultural context. This work aimed at identifying and analysing existing RJ models, such as mediation, conferencing, peace circles and social mediation based on existing literature and a survey. In addition, the EFRJ was tasked to analyse the potential application of these RJ models to conflicts in an intercultural context.

2 - The other part of the research focused on the relevance of RJ in intercultural settings and possible implications for EU policies. This included the study of EU policies with respect to security and justice, with respect to diversity and intercultural tensions, and with respect to RJ (and to bring them together in one perspective).

Dissemination

The Alternative project included ongoing dissemination activities. One tool for dissemination was film making at action research venues and involved citizens affected in intercultural conflicts. The films were presented on an online platform (<http://alternativefilms.euforumrj.org>) to be used for trainings, national and European awareness raising, project communication, documentaries etc.



The EFRJ was also the leading partner responsible for publishing a Practitioners' Manual. In addition, the EFRJ contributed to the organisation of four regional workshops for sharing the experiences gained during local project activities and action research and co-organised the final conference of the ALTERNATIVE project, which took place from 16 -18 November 2015 in Leuven (Belgium). The EFRJ run a blog, produced executive summaries and published policy briefs for researchers, practitioners and policy makers. The EFRJ also designed and manages the Alternative project website (www.alternativeproject.eu).

Domestic Violence project

The international project entitled 'Restorative justice in cases of domestic violence. Best practice examples between increasing mutual understanding and awareness of specific protection needs' coordinated by the Vervey-Jonker Institute (NL) aimed at collecting information from experienced practitioners on the use of RJ approaches in the context of domestic violence cases and to create an evidence based manual for practitioners. In addition to the European Forum for Restorative Justice (BE), the other partners are the Institut für Konfliktforschung (A), the Landsorganisationen for Kvinderkriscentre (Denmark), European Public Law Organisation (GR), Independent Academic Research Institute (UK) and the Ministry of Justice of Finland (FI).

In order to facilitate the exchange of good practices, insights of the victims and conditions under which RJ can be used in domestic violence cases, three meetings took place in 2015:

Hannover (Feb 2015): partners started sharing the experiences in the different countries involved in this project and decided on the foreseen contents of the final product of the project;

London (June 2015): invited experts commented on the draft guide, gave feedback on the contents and the possible benefits of an international practical guide on RJ in domestic violence cases;

Athens (Nov 2015): discussed the pilot phase and outcomes of the first focus groups carried out in the national contexts.



In 2015, the EFRJ contribution in the research project has been twofold:

- Research: the appointed Senior Researcher, Frauke Petzold contributed to the drafting of the guide.
- Preparation of the final event in Brussels (January 2016).

Project applications

During 2015 the EFRJ was involved in the following new project applications:

- Call EuropeAid/150147/DH/ACT/PRAREG – proposal entitled ‘Building bridges: empowering multi-ethnic communities through dialogue and non-discrimination policies and practices’ coordinated by the Victimology Society of Serbia (VDS) – rejected;
- Call JUST/2014/JTRA/AG/EJTR – proposal entitled ‘Learning for Legal users: open lab for training Courses and Exchange to support criminal proceeding (LUCE)’ coordinated by CRISI (reworked and reintroduced in 2015 by the University of Sassari for Horizon2020) – rejected;
- Call JUST/2015 Action grant – proposal entitled ‘Enhancing Cross-border Mutual Legal Assistance and Recognition of Decisions in Countering Terrorism and Preventing Radicalisation in Detention’, coordinated by the Academy of European Law (EFRJ as associate partner) – granted;
- Call JUST/2015 Action grant – proposal entitled ‘Enhancing of abilities of Judges and Prosecutors in restorative justice = improvement of victims rights’, coordinated by University Carlos III of Madrid – rejected.

Financial Report 2015

European Forum 2014-2015 Result		
	2014	2015
Profit and loss accounts		
Operational Costs	-174.723,65	-96.031,96
Staff Costs	-307.931,35	-193.463,80
Other Costs	-27.059,53	-31.786,78
TOTAL COSTS	-509.714,53	-321.282,54
Core Income	74.301,00	60.136,16
EC - Grant Desistance	118.047,04	0,00
EC - Grant Accessibility	65.385,81	-2.776,22
EC - Grant Judicial Training	24.663,79	0,00
EC - Grant Sex. Violence	5.857,92	541,82
EC - Grant Dom. Violence	9.413,01	2.823,90
EC - Operating Grant	114.000,00	140.000,00
Victims & RJ	0,00	-2.865,55
EC - FP7 - Alternative	105.530,45	130.789,57
TOTAL INCOME	517.199,02	328.649,68
RESULT OF THE YEAR	7.484,49	7.367,14

Balance sheet		
Fixed assets	1.898,27	664,46
Amounts receivable -1y	42.982,18	675,00
Liquid assets	245.340,98	224.819,00
Transitory accounts	3.148,16	971,33
TOTAL ASSETS	293.369,59	227.129,79
Capital and reserves	154.689,25	154.689,25
Result 2015		7.367,14
Amounts payable -1y	68.092,10	45.468,58
Transitory accounts	70.588,24	19.605,00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	293.369,59	227.129,97