

General Description and Project Objectives

(JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1534)

Under the Specific Programme Criminal Justice of the European Commission (Directorate-General Justice - Directorate B: Criminal Justice), the Sector of Criminal Law and Criminology (with the participation of Prof. Dr. Angelika Pitsela as Scientific Responsible and of Prof. Dr. Elisavet Symeonidou-Kastanidou as Scientific Consultant) had successfully submitted a relevant research proposal and took over the coordination of a research project that aims at the promotion and the further diffusion of Restorative Justice in Europe. The title of the project is: "*The 3E Model for a Restorative Justice Strategy in Europe*" and the full subtitle: "*The geographic distribution of Restorative Justice in 11 European Countries and the configuration of an Effective - Economic - European Strategy Model for its further diffusion (the 3E-RJ MODEL)*".

Co-beneficiaries of the project, research managers and partners of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) in its implementation are the following institutions: 1) the Panteion University of Political and Social Sciences, Greece - Athens (Prof. Dr. Vasiliki Artinopoulou), 2) the Independent Academic Research Studies, United Kingdom - London (Dr. Theo Gavrilides), 3) the Institute of Conflict Resolution, Bulgaria - Sofia (Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Chankova), 4) the University of Lapland, Finland- Rovaniemi (Prof. Dr. Heli Mirva Lohiniva-Kerkelä), 5) the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, Poland - Cracow (Prof. Dr. Barbara Stańdo-Kawecka), 6) the University of Miskolc, Hungary - Miskolc (Prof. Dr. Ilona Görgényi), 7) the Ramon Llull University - Faculty of Law, the Business and Management School, Spain - Barcelona (Prof. Dr. Esther Gimenez-Salinas).

The members of the AUTH working group are Prof. Dr. Angelika Pitsela as the Scientific Responsible of the project, Prof. Dr. Elisavet Symeonidou-Kastanidou as Scientific Consultant, Dr. Athanasia Antonopoulou as the Coordinator of the project and Dr. Charalampos Karagiannidis as the Transnational Research Manager. In the working group of AUTH they participate as external individual partners and research managers Prof. Dr. Fusun Sokkulu-Akinci for Turkey, Prof. Dr. Anette Stoogrand for Denmark, Prof. Dr. Irene Sagel-Grande for the Netherlands and Ms Andrea Parosanu for Germany.

The project has started on 01-06-2011 and its duration is 24 months. The implementation of the project is based upon two main branches: a) a comparative study of 11 European countries from the North, Western Central, Eastern Central and South Europe, and b) a relevant project_aiming at the organization of a coherent strategy, the identification and the diffusion of effective measures and procedures and the exchange of good and low-budget practices through a flexible and easily applicable Model, for their wider adoption and their better appliance in Europe.

Project Objectives:

The overall objective of the project is to facilitate through transnational co-operation in a further way the implementation of good practices of crime and social disorder management on a Restorative Justice approach in European countries that have little experience on it, but also in some more experienced countries that could teach and at the same time learn from the comparison, the collaboration and the networking. It seeks to contribute to the general idea of Restorative Justice in Europe, to promote a range of practices and measures inspired by restorative justice values, to reduce the divergence between the countries (especially between the countries of North-Central and the countries of South), to create an overview of key considerations on this field - identifying the real situation as well as the problems of implementation - and also, to offer a practical reference format and strategy guide, inspired by the values of Restorative Justice and the spirit of the Justice-Freedom-Security European policy, that can be used by all the participant countries –especially by those who are more weak on this field - and by other European countries that would like to adopt it.

Notably, this project seeks to:

- (a) collect specific and updated legal, factual and statistical data on law and practice of Restorative Justice of all the participant countries and study of practices and measures of Restorative Justice in 11 European countries, emphasizing to the last five years.
- (b) analyze the information collected, categorize them and present the distribution of Restorative Justice on Europe on a “map”,
- (c) point out the obstacles of implementation and the possible risks on penal procedural rights, as well as to detect both the strengths and weakness of Restorative Justice in the various examined jurisdictions.
- (d) prepare a reference guide towards the promotion of Restorative Justice in different criminal justice systems taking into consideration the varying cultural, social and legal characteristics and elaborate of proposals for legislative measures on a European level for the improvement of the Restorative Justice strategy
- (e) organize transnational meetings between the representatives of the participant countries and help them exchange good practices and methods
- (f) contribute to a formation of a coherent model of a European strategy on this area

Basic terms of the project:

- The term “**Restorative Justice**” is used in its broadest meaning and it includes for example:
 - “...an evolving response to crime that respects the dignity and equality of each person, builds understanding, and promotes social harmony through the healing of victims, offenders and communities...”¹;
 - “...an approach to problem solving, that, in its various forms, involves the victim, the offender, their social networks, justice agencies and community”²;

¹ ECOSOC Resolution 2002/12 on Basic Principles on the use of restorative justice programmes in criminal matters”, adopted on 24 July 2002.

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2006). *Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes*, New York: United Nations, p. 6.

- “...a set of principles which may orientate the general practice of any agency or group in relation to crime”³;
- “... an ethos with practical goals, among which is to restore the harm done by including all affected parties in a process of understanding through voluntary and honest dialogue, and by adopting a fresh approach to conflicts and their control, retaining at the same time certain rehabilitative goals”⁴;
- The main types of restorative justice schemes include **victim offender mediation, conciliation, community and family group conferencing, peace circles, circle sentencing, reparative probation.**
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A restorative initiative can be used **at any stage of the criminal procedure** (from the very beginning of it), by either **completing or replacing** the traditional criminal justice procedure.

³ Marshall, T. F. (1999), *Restorative Justice: An Overview*. London: Home Office, p. 5.

⁴ Gavrielides, T. (2006), *Restorative Justice Theory and Practice: Addressing the Discrepancy*. Helsinki: HEUNI, p. 139.