

**Research Project**  
**Victims and Restorative Justice**

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Restorative Justice has become all over the world an important domain of theoretical research and a busy field of experimentation.

Looking at conflicts through the lens of Restorative Justice gives victims the chance to tell offenders the real impact of their crime, get answers to their questions and get an apology.

Moreover, it is an option for doing justice after the occurrence of an offence, that is primarily oriented towards repairing the individual, relational and social harm caused by that offence.

It meets the need to overcome the lack of effectiveness and credibility that the modern penal justice system is going through, which is due to the ever-growing expansion of penally relevant sectors, and to the systematic use of punishment.

Whereas the term "restorative justice" is common worldwide to describe alternative responses to crime, in Europe there is a preference to think and speak more in terms of *mediation* or *victim offender mediation*.

The aim of this project is to analyse the instruments of the Restorative Justice in criminal matters and to explore the Restorative processes and programmes adopted throughout Europe: above all in Germany and Austria.

We know that: «Restorative justice services, including for example victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing and sentencing circles, can be of great benefit to the victim, but require safeguards to prevent secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation» (DIRECTIVE 2012/29/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA).

Through a comparative method, the project aims to define the role and position of the victim in restorative justice practices, focusing on legislative, organisational and institutional frameworks of victim-offender mediation and conferencing programmes at a European and national level.