



## Statement of the European Forum for Restorative Justice on 6 December 2022 on the Thematic Discussions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration

On behalf of the European Forum for Restorative Justice I would like to thank for the opportunity to speak today. In this address I would like to underline the importance of restorative justice in reducing reoffending and supporting the reintegration of offenders.

Restorative justice is an approach of addressing harm and wrongdoing, through engaging all affected persons in a voluntary dialogue, for coming to a common understanding and agreement on how the harm can be repaired and justice achieved. A values-based and deeply relational approach, restorative justice prioritises dignity, empathy, accountability, and healing. It takes the form of victim-offender mediation, restorative conferences and circles, led by a trained facilitator in a non-judgmental manner taking into account the needs of all stakeholders.

Science shows that restorative practices, besides being beneficial for victims, can reduce recidivism and encourage long-term desistance.

In many countries around the world restorative justice is used as diversion, especially in minor crimes. But it has much more potential to contribute to successful reintegration, even in more serious cases.

Restorative practices within the prison - addressing conflicts between inmates or conflicts with the staff - may counter the harmful effects of custody and create a better prison climate. Restorative victim awareness programmes help inmates to take the path of desistance. Restorative processes before release or re-entry circles activate offenders to take responsibility in their reintegration process and enable the receiving family or community to clarify expectations and offer support.

To enable these benefits, more restorative programmes and services, more training and more awareness on restorative justice within prison and other criminal justice institutions are needed. Thank you for supporting these developments in line with point 42 of the Kyoto Declaration, for considering restorative justice not only as diversion, but also as a tool for reintegration and for contributing to a long term, profound cultural change in our criminal justice systems.

