

From 2025 to 2027: A European Project on Restorative Justice restorative justice What has changed in Europe and which transformations are emerging

Introduction Between 2025 and 2027, restorative justice is undergoing a significant evolution across Europe. It is no longer viewed merely as an experimental practice or an academic niche, but increasingly as an integrated component of European policies related to justice, victims' rights, social cohesion and education.

This period represents a key transition: restorative justice is becoming a cross-cutting paradigm capable of connecting criminal justice, social policies, migration, educational leadership and institutional innovation.

1. The new European framework: from experimentation to systematisation

In recent years, European institutions have strengthened their focus on a more person-centred and victim-oriented approach to justice.

A key development has been the revision of the EU Victims' Rights Directive, which aims to:

- improve access to information and support services for victims;
- Give feedback strengthen assistance services and European helplines;
- increase data protection safeguards;
- promote specialised training for justice professionals.

These developments create favourable conditions for the expansion of restorative practices, increasingly recognised as tools that enhance participation, accountability and protection for those involved.

2. A paradigm shift: restorative justice as a social response

Between 2025 and 2027, an important conceptual transformation is emerging:

→ restorative justice is no longer seen only as a response to crime, but as a broader tool for social governance.

European discussions and initiatives increasingly highlight its role in:

- addressing social polarisation;
- fostering intercultural dialogue;
- supporting vulnerable groups;
- preventing community conflicts.

European seminars and professional networks show growing interest in applying restorative approaches in complex social contexts such as migration, youth vulnerability and community tensions.

3. From judicial focus to systemic approach

One of the most significant changes in the 2025–2027 period is the expansion of restorative justice beyond the judicial sphere. It is increasingly applied in:

- schools and universities;
- social services;
- integration programmes;
- youth policies;
- local community development.

Recent European debates demonstrate a clear transition:

- from isolated practices → to systemic processes;
- from individual interventions → to institutional transformation.

4. Emerging European priorities: evidence, innovation and impact

Three main trends are shaping the European restorative justice landscape:

a) From experience to evidence

There is growing demand to transform local experiences into research-based evidence capable of informing policy-making and structural reforms. Give feedback

b) Innovation and public influence

Restorative practices are increasingly connected to public communication, civic participation and social innovation.

c) From practice to systemic change

The objective is no longer limited to repairing harm, but extends to redesigning educational, institutional and community systems.

5. Education and relational leadership

Another key transformation concerns education.

Between 2025 and 2027, restorative justice is increasingly interpreted as:

- an educational methodology;
- a preventive approach;
- a tool for developing socio-emotional competences and inclusive leadership.

Schools and universities are becoming strategic environments for building cultures of dialogue, responsibility and participation.

This shift moves restorative justice from post-conflict intervention toward cultural prevention and long-term social development.

6. Towards 2027: what is really emerging

Looking ahead, several strategic trajectories can already be identified:

- stronger integration between justice, education and social innovation;
- increasing professionalisation of facilitators and practitioners;
- development of transnational European networks;
- greater attention to impact measurement and sustainability.

Restorative justice is therefore evolving from a specialised practice into a broader social infrastructure.

Conclusion

The period between 2025 and 2027 represents a phase of consolidation and transformation for restorative justice in Europe.

New European policies, stronger attention to victims' rights and the growing integration with education and social innovation clearly indicate a common direction: building more participatory, dialogic and resilient societies.

The next challenge will not simply be the application of restorative practices, but the transformation of European conflict culture itself — turning justice into a collective process of learning, responsibility and social rebuilding.