

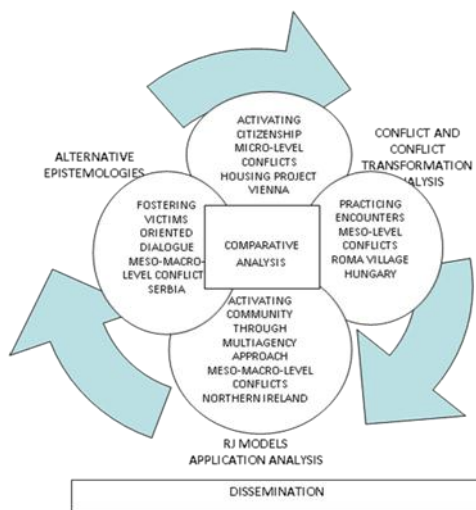
The ALTERNATIVE-project was set up in the framework of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) Security Call for Projects, launched by the European Commission in July 2010. The idea for the project arose in the light of the awareness of the limitations of research in the field of restorative justice (RJ) and at the same time its potential application in the field of security.

The four years long project, started in February 2012, aims to provide an alternative and deepened understanding based on empirical evidence of **how to handle conflicts within intercultural contexts** in democratic societies in order to set up security solutions for citizens and communities.

The project focuses on the *intercultural* context, because of the current relevance of the intercultural context to security matters and threats in Europe. Understanding the significance and impact of cultural difference is especially important for analysts or practitioners of conflict resolution who work in intercultural contexts, since culture affects many of the communicational or interlocutory processes that lie at the heart of most conflict resolution techniques.

The project studies both the phenomenon of conflict (its nature, characteristics, evolution, definitions, understandings) and conflict intervention in intercultural contexts, as seen from the framework of restorative justice, and provide alternative understandings of both.

In its methodology, it combines **theoretical research** [on three large topics namely (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:



- involving local and migrant residents in social housing neighbourhoods in Austria
- Roma and non-Roma inhabitants in a small town in Hungary
- conflicts between Serbs, Albanians, Muslims and Croats in Serbia
- three different kinds of conflicts with gangs, immigrants and different religious groups in Northern Ireland

A comparative and dissemination work package have been incorporated into the research to make the flow of information and action possible on all directions. These parts together produce a spectrum of theoretically grounded and empirically tested models of dealing with conflicts in intercultural settings by restorative justice processes.

In 2014 workshops will be organised in Oslo, Budapest, Ulster and Belgrade to share preliminary findings and complete them with experiences from other projects and practices in this field. A final conference in 2015 in Leuven will be held to share final results and a documentary made during the project and to identify possible networks and opportunities through which to continue and develop the actions and research in the project.

If you are interested to take part in these events or would like to learn more about the project, visit its website at [www.alternativeproject.eu](http://www.alternativeproject.eu) or contact the project manager, Dr. Inge Vanfraechem at [Inge.Vanfraechem@law.kuleuven.be](mailto:Inge.Vanfraechem@law.kuleuven.be).