

SOCIAL NETWORK CONFERENCES: CONFERENCING WITH JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN THE AUSTRIAN PROBATION SERVICE²

ABSTRACT

From the year 2012, the Social Work Service in Austria introduced a new technique for working in the field of probation services. Subsequently, the Federal Ministry of Justice approved the funds necessary for the technique of »conferencing« to be applied in the probation services of Vienna, Upper Austria, Styria and Carinthia. Austrian social workers developed this new technique on the basis of the Family Group Conferencing technique used in Australia and adapted it to the needs of restorative justice. When applied to restorative justice, this technique, originally developed for families, is grounded in the idea that not only do social networks have the potential to resolve a problem, but also, and more importantly, to give the participants access and help they needed in the first place. The most important change that this type of conferencing introduces is the fact that the elements of social control are shared by all

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participants in the process, and are not exerted by only one participant, usually the strongest.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2012 with approval and funding from the Federal Ministry of Justice NEUSTART, an NGO which runs the Probation Service in Austria, tested the method of »Conferencing« as a methodological extension to casework in four locations - Vienna, Upper Austria, Styria and Carinthia. The target groups are juveniles (14-18 years) and young adults (18-21 years), who have been convicted of an offence by a juvenile court and where probation was ordered. The duration of the project was two years from 1.1.2012 until 31.12.2013. The project Social Network Conference was evaluated by the Institute of Criminal Law of the University of Vienna.

It was a conscious decision of NEUSTART to integrate two approaches in the project Social Network Conference: the classic restorative justice approach, which comes from the criminal context where victim and offender look for a settlement of their conflict (see Hagemann 2009; 2010a) and the conferencing approach that has been developed in the youth welfare system and is practised as a Family Council in Germany (see Früchtel 2011; Früchtel and Budde 2003). There are no comparable projects in the European probation services. Ideally three types of conferences will be tested: **release conferences** prior to release from prison, **»Care conferences«** to solve specific problems and crises and **reparations conferences** with a focus of conflict mediation, the assumption of responsibility and reparation, including the victim and his/her caring for others.

Project aims:

- Development and adaptation of the conferencing process for the Austrian probation service and testing in 60 conferences
- reduction of resource use in the individual help by takeover of responsibility and specific tasks by caring for others
- Extension of social control through the social network itself
- Development of a training concept
- In the case of a positive evaluation, the development of an implementation plan. A positive evaluation means: in terms of the revocation rate, the results of the conferences have better effects than or the same as the case management

MANDATE AND PREROGATIVES OF AUSTRIAN PROBATION SERVICE

The Austrian Probation Service views itself as an organisation of social work to support clients, not primarily as a supervisory body of the courts.

In Austria, the court or the public prosecution imposes probation orders on offenders. Probation services are either provided as a community based option when custody is suspended or on conditional release. Additionally, the Public prosecutor may offer probation service as a diversion measure during the pre-trial phase. In this case the offender's consent is needed.

In most cases probation service is offered as individual supervision; specific standards in support programmes are compulsory for certain delinquents (defrauders, stalkers, drug addicts, sexual offenders, etc.). However, group-work with offenders is possible, too: For example violent offenders - as appropriate - may participate in anti-violence training.

Every probation activity starts with a first assessment interview on the offender's risks and needs. On this basis the following interventions are planned in the form of working concepts with transparent and evaluable goals and stages of work, which are continuously reviewed

Depending on risks, needs and responsibility of the offender the frequency of personal contacts is agreed upon with the offender. If possible the concepts and interventions should be defined consensually between client and probation officer. Especially in cases of high risk offenders the officer seeks consent, if that is not possible the officer is the one to decide (control aspects).

The probation service is responsible for both juvenile and adult offenders. Nearly 30 percent of all probation clients are cared for by volunteer probation officers. This big proportion is seen to increase the acceptance of society towards offenders. The tasks of the Austrian Probation Service have been transferred via a general contract to the private NGO NEUSTART. The probation service is financed from the budget of the Ministry of Justice. It is argued that one of the reasons for the privatisation is the greater flexibility. The quick response to new social developments and testing of new methods and measures in pilot projects are seen by policy makers as key advantages of a private organisation compared with state institutions. In addition to the probation service, there are several differentiated services to the judiciary: victim-offender-mediation on behalf of the courts intended as a diversion measure, support for released prisoners (after care services) as a voluntary care service, community service, and more recently - the care in the electronic monitoring.

SOCIAL NETWORK CONFERENCE – A NEW METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH IN SOCIAL WORK WITH JUVENILE OFFENDERS

This new tool refers to Family Group Conferencing (FGC) which was originally developed in New Zealand and regulated by law in 1989 by the »Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act« as a statutory measure for child protection as well as in crime cases of the juvenile justice system. FGC is a gathering of family members in the broadest sense. Actually it is more about the »family« of friends, relatives and neighbours in a community, as to the »family« within the meaning of consanguinity. The social network to which the individual belongs is the focus of activation, conflict resolution or problem solving, respectively, and builds on the »social capital« of the individual. In the German-speaking countries Family Group Conference, is also called Familienrat, Verwandtschaftsrat, Familienkonferenz³, Familiengruppenkonferenz, Gemeinschaftskonferenz or (since 2012 in Austria) Social Network Conference (see Hagemann and Lummer, 2012).

The concept is based on two central assumptions. First, the addressees of aids are generally competent regarding problem-solving and making the appropriate decisions. They are the real »experts« of their problems (Thiersch, 2002) and should be the »owners« of their conflicts (Christie, 1977). Secondly, it is assumed, that part of the (potential) addressees of help is integrated in »social networks« (e.g. family members, relatives, friends, neighbours) to solve concrete problems. »Social networks« do not only have resources for problem solving, but also direct access to the needs of the assistance addressees. Thus, the Social Network Conference is consistently focused on the life-worlds of the clients. Against this background three main objectives in this process are:

- The people - involved in a social network - will be stimulated and supported to solve their own problems. In criminal conflicts perpetrators and victims, in a larger social frame of reference, are given the opportunity to directly work on their conflicts (see Krell, 2007; Hagemann, 2010b).
- Social networks and community relations are activated and involved in the problem-solving or at the (re-)storation of social peace.
- The social network itself becomes the decision-maker of the solution or help/support. The parties themselves take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring. Furthermore, they can take advantage of professional guidance and support.

³ However, this term can easily lead to misunderstandings as it is also used for a completely different way to improve inter-generational communication between children and their parents (see Gordon, 1970).

These objectives are pursued through central working principles (supportive attitudes) as well as clearly defined tasks and process rules. Participation is secured by providing (»family only«) space, by considering and discussing possible solutions firstly within the family and people from their network. Resources are mobilised by involving the family, relatives, friends or other significant persons in their life world in the discussion and decision. Negotiation is enabled by the management of the process taking place by neutral coordinators. The coordinators take responsibility for the process, but not for possible solutions. The competence to achieve a suitable outcome remains with the social network. For the competent case workers/managers a so-called »right of veto« is granted. They can reject proposed solutions when they appear uncertain, violate principles of law or expose a young person to an irresponsible risk (see Früchtel, Budde and Cyprian, 2007). The main focus is the involvement of the social network in a **decision-making-process**, whose goal is to ensure that juvenile offenders may desist from their criminal misconduct. Together with the help of their social network, they should work out their own PLAN to which they can fully commit. With the help of their reinforced and extended network, their opportunity to desist from criminal behaviour is consequently increased.

THE FIVE STAGES OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK CONFERENCE

The Five Stages of a Social Network Conference include:

- preparation phase
- information and consultation phase
- discussion phase (family only)
- decision phase
- verification phase (follow-up conference)

In the **preparatory phase** the young person and his/her family receive information about the procedure. Two coordinators organise the Social Network Conference, in consultation with the Probation Service. They perform individual interviews, select the circle of the participants to be invited and determine location and date in consultation with the young person and his/her family. Every young person shall designate a trusted person for the conference. A good preparation, a comprehensive network analysis of the social environment, providing information and motivation of the participants are key success criteria for the success of the conference. To prepare for a Social Network Conference and to gain clarity about the social network, different techniques such as so-called Eco maps (Hepworth,

Rooney and Larsen, 1997) that depict the support and network of contacts and call attention to kinship resources are useful.

In the **information and consultation phase** - the beginning of the actual Social Network Conference - the assessments of the problem situation and the objectives of the Social Network Conference are summarised by the probation officer in a »formulation of concern«. Furthermore, information from experts on the legal situation and possible professional support options are given. In this phase, the definition of »contract« and the rules for the subsequent phases finally takes place. Rules of the game are, for example, that the focus should be on the future and not about coming to terms with the past, and that every participant must be respected and that proceedings are strictly confidential, except for the use of the protocol for the court's purpose or if threats and dangers are evolved. In the formulation of the contract it is essential that all issues are very clear and concrete such as: What are the first steps after release from prison? Who does what, with whom, when and where? What happens if something goes wrong? Before the social network retires for deliberation each participant has the opportunity to show the positive skills of the young people in a »Resources Round«.

In the **discussion phase (family only)** the »extended« family (social network) talks about possible solutions and creates a detailed plan for how to proceed without the participation of professionals and coordinators.

In the **decision phase**, there will be a moderated presentation and coordination of the plan and the arrangements and the definition of the review with the responsible probation officer.

In general it takes approximately three months to check agreements made by the family group involving the responsible probation officer and with the support of the coordinators the plan can be approved at the **verification phase**.

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TYPES OF CONFERENCES

A Social Network Conference to redress and conflict-mediation differs in some characteristics of a release from prison or care conference. The main difference is that in a restitution and conflict mediation conference two systems meet each other: the offender with his/her circle of support, and the victim with his/her community of care. From a methodological point of view such a conference requires primarily a mediation approach, and is therefore always run by two coordinators. First, the willingness of the offender to participate constructively is tested in individual discussions. Then, the coordinator contacts the victim. This sequence is to avoid frustration on the victim's side if an offender refuses to participate. This step

requires a high degree of sensitivity and can be initiated by a third party (lawyer). Only when all doubts have been removed in individual meetings is a safe setting guaranteed and there is a clear commitment of the victim and the offender, can the conference be prepared. A reparations/restitution conference is not a »home game« of the offender. The location of the conference must be primarily accepted by the victim and his caring for others. Perpetrators and victims designate a trusted person before the conference (see Hagemann, 2010b). One coordinator introduces the facts (incident, injury, judgment), the other formulates the job to the conference. In the information phase perpetrators, as well as victims, get the opportunity to describe the incident and the consequences from their perspective. Subsequently, in the »family-only« phase, a concrete reparation plan is developed by the offender and his or her social network. In a final round this plan will be discussed with all stakeholders, possibly concretised and modified. All participants sign this plan. A follow-up meeting may, but need not be agreed. The results of the plan are reported by a probation officer to the court and may be considered as significant mitigating circumstances.

APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Overall in the project at the four project sites mentioned above 84 conferences have been successfully conducted so far. (The project target of 60 conferences in two years had been achieved.) To conduct a conference was tested for 239 clients of the Probation Service. The potential of the target group of juveniles and young adults with probation arrangement is 2640 people.

Via the project the competence to actively control the decision-making process and to draw up a plan - without interference from the professional helpers - is transferred to the Social Network. In the »family only« time, the social network develops the plan without the presence of a professional, that is, the goal setting is done through the social network with primary involvement of the young person.

Care conferences (family council model)

This type of conference is a social network as a solution and decision-making process for certain social problems such as school problems, work integration, housing, addiction issues, etc. and has been applied in 20 cases. A Social Network Conference strengthens those affected, contributes to conflict resolution within families, activates resources, encourages responsibility and distributes workloads on many shoulders.

Referring to this form of empowerment, a young offender states: »The experience that there are so many people behind me, has caused me to make a lot more effort to achieve the goals. I did not want to disappoint anyone.«

Reparations conferences »Wiedergutmachungskonferenzen« (Restorative Justice Model)

These are conferences with victim participation to handle consequences of offences; to achieve taking responsibility as the offender, to seek redress and to restore social peace. Three conferences have been held with perpetrators and victims.

Release from prison conferences

We have successfully carried out 14 conferences before a (conditional) release from prison as a means of integration and support in residential and work problems.

A participating teacher used these words to advocate for a release: »As his classroom teacher I would advocate an early release of Nabil. Nabil is a pleasant, attentive student who has no difficulty in meeting the requirements during regular school attendance. If he sticks to the points that were discussed in the Social Network Conference, it should be a win-win for everyone, and one where Nabil would go back to school as soon as possible and attend regularly.«

Pre-trial custody conferences

The goal and purpose of the implementation of Social Net Conferences is to reduce the period of detention in pre-trial custody after a suitable PLAN has been worked out and accepted by the judge.

The problem defined and uniformly formulated:

»Where can the young offender stay safe until his/her trial and what conditions and rules does he/she have to meet to be released? Who can support him? What proposals for reparation is the young offender willing to put forward? And does he/she want to offer an apology?«

The cooperation among judges, prosecutors, juvenile court assistance, social services and youth welfare is an essential prerequisite for the success of a conference and takes place on a new, professional basis. Successful plans and a reduced risk of recidivism contribute to better acceptance of the target group in society.

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Pre-trial custody conferences are convened before a habeas corpus hearing and before the trial. At the same time the magistrate assigns the case to a preliminary probation officer.

- Since July 2013 a total of 47 Social Network conferences have been held in pre-trial detention after inquiry by a magistrate.
- Only in the cases of three young people did the contract to conduct a Social Network conference have to be rejected because there was no social safety network and because the language problems were too big. The action plan of the social network and the detained young person created during the conferences was presented to the magistrate.
- Based on the results the plans worked out and resulted in 33 young people being set at liberty (until trial).
- So far only three young persons have been remanded in custody because of committing another offence.
- All young people get intensive support from the Probation Service and comply with the requirements.
- All young people receive intensive care from the probation service and adhere to the conditions.

By carrying out the social network conference a total of about 100 young people (36% of the remand prisoners) could be released per year.

The plan at a pre-trial detention conference must include concrete suggestions about accommodation, daily structure, the frequency of the probation service contacts and ideas concerning restitution. The agreements have been strongly binding for all parties. The plan is presented to the first habeas corpus hearing in the form of a report.

Key factors for the success of such social network conferences are the quick reaction of social workers at the moment of detention of a young person. Within two days after notification by the judge, the first interview with the probation officer after the arrest is held. In addition, the home visit from the coordinator gives the family special affection and appreciation and they will be informed and motivated to participate. The preparation time for a pre-trial conference is 3 to 10 days, for a classic conference preparation it will take up to 6 weeks. In contrast to the (traditional) helper's Conference, in the Social Network Conference the social network and the young person are actively involved in finding a solution to the problem. The juvenile offender notes therefore that many people from his/her environment allocate time to discuss the plans for the future with him/her. By this participation of the support system he/she experiences a special form of empowerment and support. He/she is encouraged now to implement significant changes. The social

network also feels encouraged by a support system that is not seen as the »opponent« but as a support system to implement the plans of the family. Each plan shall include intensive frequency of supervision determined by the probation service. However, in some cases the tight family control is experienced as stressful by the young people. Since the establishment of the Roundtable to reduce pre-trial detention of young persons by the Justice Department has done some very positive over the summer. Since August 2013 the number of juveniles in pre-trial custody has been reduced to 33%.

RESULTS

There are no limitations concerning the types of offences. In previously conducted conferences the offences range from drug offences, attempted murder, aggravated assault, arson to property crimes. Most clients have a multiple criminal record or became noticeable at an early age. They can be subsumed in the category of risk offenders. The most frequent offence at the pre-trial conference was robbery (especially of mobile phones within a group context).

Most are facing multiple problems on high-risk factors such as unemployment, addiction tendency, stressed family situation, divorced parents, unstructured daily structure, homelessness, multiple and uncompleted previous care contacts, psychological abnormalities. For 6 clients (8 percent) a mental illness has been diagnosed. Those are under legal supervision. According to the evaluation of the Probation documentaries 43 clients (51 %) are in a mentally unstable state (tendency to a depressive mood, breakouts of violence). Addiction-relation challenges (from risky drug use to addiction) can be found in 48 percent of the clients. A Social Network Conference cannot solve all problems at once. The adequate focus on the essential, urgent but also editable problems by the social network is an important criterion for success. In this respect the good cooperation between probation officers and coordinators for the »care formulation« which is summarised in a central question is demanded. The problems that weigh on the client and his family prior to release from prison, strongly promote the willingness to engage in a Social Network Conference.

In all successful conferences clients still have ties to at least parts of the family or individual family members like mother, brothers, sisters, grandparents. Even if these are conflict-burdened or disrupted, bonds and mutual concern are apparent in the families who have agreed to a Social Network Conference. Most of the clients come from patchwork families which are often at odds over the education of children and blame each other mutually. In many cases the adolescent and young adults torn back and forth between the »parties«. Many of them have significant

others such as friends and professional caregivers beyond the family. In cases where it is possible to integrate these, the prospects expand and »better« solutions materialise. In 35 percent of cases the familiar climate changed for the better. Family relationships are a key criterion for the successful setting up of a conference. To detect these early saves a possible subsequent failure when the network turns out to be too small.

Critical success factors include:

1. Shame

For many teenagers, the debate in a larger family circle about their problems and failures is too great a hurdle. This is especially true if they fear that the delinquency may be an issue and they are threatened by shaming. Braithwaite (1989) points to different cultures in this regard. For some young people the close-knit network of social control becomes an excessive demand.

Although it is the conference of the young person, he or she should not organise it. The main discussions with potential participants are to be carried out by the coordinators. Home visits should be made to the primary family and individual interviews should be conducted. Invitations of the important people are to be arranged by the coordinators and not be left to the young person.

Some family members can deal poorly with disappointments if the young person refuses or rejects well-intentioned support.

2. Time frames and coordination of schedules

After the case referral and the subsequent check of suitability for a conference - which is a common task between the probation officer and the coordinator - the contact with the coordinator should be quickly made in the interest of the client. This client's first contact with at least one coordinator should be done together with the probation officer. The probation officer should even participate at the beginning of the conversation between the young person and the coordinator. After initial consultation and agreement to the conference an invitation list is to be created as soon as possible and the family has to be contacted. A conference will last between 4 and 5 hours on average. The longest meeting lasted 7 hours (from 17:00 to 24:00). Most conferences (with the exception of restitution and remand conferences) were held in the home environment and comprised of 6-20 participants of the social network. In one case we had 50 (!) participants.

3. Fulfilment of the plan

In 71 percent of cases the plans are met completely or are largely implemented. Only 10 percent of cases can the conference be classified as a failure. Successful

conferences can bring about a reconciliation and conflict mediation of the family members involved. They relieve the family system, take pressure off and strengthen the youth by the positive regard/attention and making feelings visible. They activate the social network and are characterised by creative and concrete support and aids. Detailed plans are developed jointly by all and distribute the burdens on many shoulders. They practise social control in a positive sense. With four initiated conferences the problem was already solved prior to the Conference. Therefore, the conference was not necessary any more. Just the proposal itself of a social network-conference activated the family system. The probation officer is indeed relieved of their work, but a social network conference cannot replace accompanying support. However, this takes on a new quality.

In summary it can be stated:

- The social networks are larger and more stable than they are commonly perceived to be by supervising probation officers.
- The family and social resources are manifold and more varied than was thought before. They open up many possibilities for action.
- The emotional force and experienced care for young people by their community of care is considerable and enables reconciliation processes in the family.
- Parents take back responsibility and do not delegate this to professional caregivers.
- The social control is much tighter. Ambulant care could never ensure this density.
- The plans are concrete, binding, verifiable and also go far beyond the usual target agreements concluded between the client and probation officer.
- The solutions are often surprising and creative, as they are based on the personal worlds of the people.
- The probation officer is actually relieved of his /her duty/ies.

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KONFERENCIJA SOCIJALNE MREŽE: TEHNIKA KONFERENCIJA S MLADIM PRIJESTUPNICIMA U AUSTRIJSKOJ PROBACIJI

SAŽETAK

Od 2012. godine služba socijalnog rada u Austriji uvela je novu tehniku rada na području probacijskih usluga. Savezno ministarstvo pravosuđa odobrilo je sredstva da se tehnika konferencija (eng. conferencing) počne primjenjivati u probacijskim uredima Beča, Gornje Austrije, Štajerske i Koruške. Austrijski socijalni radnici razvili su ovu novu tehniku na temeljima tehnike Family Group Conferencing razvijenu u Australiji, ali su tehniku prilagodili potrebama restorativne pravde. Osnovna ideja ove tehnike, koja je izvorno razvijena za obitelji, primijenjena u restorativnoj pravdi je u tome da socijalne mreže nisu samo nešto što ima potencijala za razrješavanje problema, nego, što je još mnogo važnije, omogućavaju sudionicima pristup pomoći koja im je potrebna. Najvažnija novina ovog tipa konferencija jest činjenica da se elementi socijalne kontrole dijele među svim sudionicima procesa, a ne ostaju samo u području jednoga, obično najjačeg sudionika.

Ključne riječi: konferencija socijalne mreže, mladi prijestupnici, probacija

Appendix 1. Two exemplary cases

1. Release from prison Social Network Conference

Initial situation: Alexander F. is 21 years old and was sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment because of aggravated assault. The young man has five prior convictions (assault, partly aggravated assault and serious vandalism). Since his first conviction in May 2010 he has dropped out of school and discontinued vocational training, too.

The problem: To be supported in finding an adequate place for vocational training.

The client requested the Social Network Conference to take place in the house of his parents. Following were some preparatory telephone talks with members of his social network and a visit to his parents in their home. The list of participants involves eight persons, among them his father, his mother, his sister, his brother, two friends and his probation worker. The probation worker formulated the concern in an appreciative manner: »how can Alexander succeed in gaining a foothold professionally after his release from prison?«

After the family-only phase the worked out plan was presented and concretised with the help of the coordinator. To assure the necessary liability the final plan was signed by all participants. In order to review the implementation of the plan a follow up conference was agreed.

The plan: The client will get support from

- *His father to contact the service of the employment agency and make an appointment for an initial consultation*
- *His brother to write job applications*
- *His father will try to use his personal contacts to help with the vocational training*
- *His friend will ask a company well-known to him concerning the vocational training*
- *His mother will get information from the District Commission on how to get a class B driver's licence*

After three months the follow-up conference took place.

Conclusion:

- *35 job applications sent out*
- *Clarity about conditions to fulfil concerning the driver's licence*
- *Start the driver's licence training*
- *Several job interviews and admissions processes at potential businesses for vocational training*
- *Completion of trial internships*
- *Since July 2013 the client has taken part in a vocational training and he has got his driver's license class B successfully*

2. Reparation Social Network Conference
Michael K. (20, offender) – Walter L. (21, victim)

Initial situation of Michael K.: one prior conviction because of drug abuse; unemployed; current conviction for aggravated assault (4 months of conditional imprisonment, under surveillance of probation officer, partial compensation for damages of 2500 €); damages: broken nose and five knocked out teeth, follow-up-damages and permanent damage is likely.

The attorney of the victim demands at least an urgent/immediate payment of another 16000 € in addition. Mr. K. was a member of the army until some weeks prior to the conference. Now he gets 880 € of unemployment benefits.

At the conference he wanted to make a plan with all participants, which would make it possible for him to apologise to Mr. L. and to make amends/compensate the damage. The victim agrees with the conference taking place.

At the conference 13 people participated: the client, his mother, his father, his brother as his specific person of confidence, his cousin, his probation officer and the victim with his mother and his attorney. There were two coordinators and two researchers of the University of Vienna present for evaluative purposes.

It was of utmost importance that there was a direct contact between offender and victim for the first time (except a very short encounter at the trial) and that they were able to talk directly with each other. In this safe setting the victim was able to describe vividly the consequences of the push/kick (anxiety, suicidal thoughts, ongoing dental treatment, problems with eating, contact with females ...). By directly experiencing this and the triggered emotions the client was able to understand what he had caused. He was able to offer an apology which was accepted as genuine. Then the attorney presented the demands which were set according to possible and entitled benefits.

The plan

In the subsequent family-only phase the family of K. developed a plan as to how the client could pay the material compensation. A part of it would be given by the parents, the rest paid in instalments by the client himself. In total 25000 € would be paid to the victim.

The family of K. made the agreement then checked with a lawyer, who gave his consent.

A follow up conference was set for a date five months later:

The parents have paid 9000 € plus the costs for the lawyer as was agreed. Mr. K. paid 150 € monthly. He got employment beginning in October and would then pay 250 € monthly. Mr. L. stated that he was happy that the conference had allowed a direct dialogue. After the trial such a talk would have led to more conflicts. Mr. K. was convinced that he would succeed in making the full payment despite the long duration. The agreement suited him even after five months still.

All participants agreed that restitution had been achieved successfully.