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16th Conference
of
Directors of Prison Administration
with the participation of
Directors of Probation Services

“Working together to promote the social reintegration of prisoners”

Council of Europe, 13-14 October 2011
www.coe.int/prison

CONCLUSIONS

The 16th Conference of the Directors of Prison Administration (CDAP) with the participation of Directors of Probation Services was organised by the Council of Europe on 13-14 October 2011 in Strasbourg, France. The theme of the Conference was “Working together to promote the social reintegration of prisoners”. During the plenary sessions and workshops, the participants discussed the latest Council of Europe standards in the area and their implementation by the member states, problems encountered in this respect and good practices. The forthcoming draft European Code of Ethics for Prison Staff was also presented.

The main focus of the discussions was how to improve co-operation between the prison and probation services both at national and European level in order to improve the treatment of prisoners and their preparation for release.

The Conference:

- **WELCOMED** the standard-setting, monitoring and capacity building work of the Council of Europe in the prison and probation field;
- **EXPRESSED** its adherence to the European Prison Rules, the European Rules for juvenile offenders subject to sanctions or measures and the Council of Europe Probation Rules as valuable sets of standards which help develop relevant national laws and practices;
- **SUPPORTED** the principle promoted by the Council of Europe that prison should be used as a last resort;
- **STRESSED** that offenders remain part of the community even if they are deprived of their liberty and hence have the right to fair access to services. Therefore their preparation for release, social reintegration and aftercare shall not only be the responsibility of prison and probation services but also of other suitable agencies and civil society;
- **UNDERLINED** that the legitimacy of prison and probation services stems from the professional response to the difficulties experienced by offenders to adjust to society.

Working with offenders should rely on mutual respect between staff and offenders and as far as possible on participative decision-taking. Decisions regarding the modalities of offenders' treatment shall be based on their personal strengths and not only on their weaknesses. Rule 50, EPR is a very good example of such an approach.

- **EMPHASIZED** that working together for social reintegration of offenders supposes normalisation of prison regimes as well as providing offenders with adequate opportunities for finding their place in society;
- **RECALLED** that in most countries the number of offenders dealt with in the community exceeds that of prisoners and therefore there should be equal attention to the challenges faced by them and the services dealing with them;
- **NOTED** the increasing use of electronic monitoring and **CALLED UPON** the Council of Europe to help countries set an ethical framework and introduce procedures in this respect;
- **UNDERLINED THE NEED** for the political, legislative and judicial authorities to initiate and maintain cooperation with prison and probation services with a view to reduce the number of detainees, improve the possibilities for conditional and other forms of early release, use community sanctions and measures more appropriately and treat juveniles differently from adults;
- **UNDERLINED** the importance of recruitment, selection and training of staff possessing the necessary professional and personal skills to work with offenders and recalled in relation to this Recommendation (97)12 on staff concerned with the implementation of sanctions and measures;
- **STONGLY ENDORSED** the initiative for an European Code of Ethics for Prison Staff which helps set the deontological frame of everyday work in European prisons and **WELCOMED** the Council of Europe work on the text;
- **CALLED UPON** the Council of Europe to consider drafting a European Code of Ethics for Probation Staff;
- **UNDERLINED** that prison and probation services in Europe wish to share among themselves contemporary good practices and **URGED** in this respect the Council of Europe to serve as a platform for offering regular access to and updates of such information;
- **UNDERLINED** the importance of the collection of the Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics (SPACE I and II) and underlined in this respect the need for caution in using simple statistics without scientific comments as this may lead to misinterpretations and **CALLED UPON** the national authorities of all member states to provide accurate and timely data;
- **CONCLUDED** that there was not sufficient support at this moment for a legally binding instrument on prisons;
- **EXPRESSED** gratitude to the Council of Europe for the excellent organisation of the present Conference which is an important forum for discussions and exchanges.