

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

Dear Guests!

It is my great honor to welcome you in Cracaw to the 30th Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services.

I would like to welcome particularly Minister of Justice – Prosecutor General Waldemar Żurek and Ms. Maria Ejchart – Undersecretary of State in Ministry of Justice.

I am delighted to welcome Ministers and Directors of Prison and Probation Services.

Welcome all distinguished guests.

It is a great distinction for Poland and our Prison Service to be the host of this exceptional event that for three decades has been gathering top-level representatives responsible for shaping prison and probation policy in Europe.

We meet in a group of persons who face the most difficult questions every day :

- how to ensure public safety,
- how to protect human rights in isolation conditions,
- how to effectively prepare convicts for their return to society.

For many years Council of Europe has been indicating direction based on European Prison Rules and recalls that the cornerstone of modern prison system is the respect for human rights, ensuring safety as well as effective social

resocialisation and reintegration. Today's conference is an occasion to discuss together how to apply these rules in the face of new challenges.

This year's theme „Can we move away from the overuse of penal sanctions?“ covers an extremely topical issue.

We know that nowadays penitentiary systems in Europe are facing overpopulation pressure, growing social expectations and limited resources.

At the same time we are increasingly emphasising the importance of alternatives to custodial sentence, development of probation, use of risk assessment tools and reintegration programs.

For many years Polish Prison Service has been developing both resocialisation system for inmates and modern forms of cooperation with Probation Service.

We focus on:

- education and professional programs,
- digitalisation and new technologies,
- innovative security solutions,
- modern infrastructure, creating better conditions of imprisonment according to international standards.

Thanks to the membership in EuroPris and an active presence in Council of Europe we can learn from the experiences from other countries as well as share our achievements.

Today an exchange of knowledge and cooperation are essential to develop penitentiary systems, effectively as well as humanely.

The topics of our workshops are also of particular importance – from the use of data and risk assessment tools, through healthcare, approach to trauma to the problem of children of imprisoned parents or crisis management in prison.

It is in these areas that international exchange of experience provides the most practical value.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Conference we are starting is cause for the celebration of 30 years of dialogue, but first of all for looking ahead to the future. I believe that these two days in Cracaw will result not only in inspiring discussions but also in specific conclusions and solutions that we will have the opportunity to implement in our countries.

Let me wish you fruitful successful debate, creative atmosphere and satisfaction because of the fact that we are shaping together European penitentiary and probation standards.

I kindly ask to take the floor Mr Waldemar Żurek – Minister of Justice – Prosecutor General, and as next Mr Hugh CHETWYND – Head of Department, Deprivation of liberty, monitoring and co-operation, DGI: Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law / Executive Secretary, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.