

KEY DATES

- **May 1949**
Creation of the Council of Europe
- **November 1950**
Adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights
- **January 1959**
Establishment of the European Court of Human Rights
- **November 1987**
Adoption of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ECPT)
- **February 1989**
Entry into force of the ECPT
- **March 2002**
ECPT opened up to non-member states of the Council of Europe
- **May 2007**
47th State Party joins the ECPT
- **July 2020**
Revision of the European Prison Rules by the Committee of Ministers
- **May 2023**
500th CPT visit

FURTHER READING

CPT visit reports, government responses, public statements and general reports are available on the CPT website: cpt.coe.int

CPT standards relating to the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty can be found at : cpt.coe.int/standards

All resources and case law relating to the CPT : coe.int/web/cpt/database

WHAT IS OUR IMPACT?

By shining a light on practices which should not occur, the CPT assists governments in taking actions to improve life in places of detention.

The Committee's recommendations lead to changes in laws, healthcare and internal security, to profound developments in practices and to attitudes aimed at fighting impunity.

The CPT's success relies on governments' implementation of these recommendations, with the support of other stakeholders involved in improving the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, including civil society and intergovernmental organisations, through the development of standards and tools for guidance.

The CPT reinforces the work of the European Court of Human Rights, and other Council of Europe bodies mandated to promote the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Torture and ill-treatment still exist, and continuous monitoring and dialogue is essential to support countries in their efforts to eradicate such violence.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including, all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

THE CPT IN BRIEF



CPT

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR
THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE
AND INHUMAN OR DEGRADING
TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

Preventing torture in Europe





WHO ARE WE?

■ A preventive body

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) is a non-judicial monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe created **to prevent torture and ill-treatment and to strengthen the protection of persons deprived of their liberty in Europe.**

■ Our mandate

The CPT's mandate reinforces the human rights' protection system under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which states that:

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ”

The CPT works with persons deprived of their liberty in the signatory countries of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture (ECPT). It does not handle individual cases, but is aimed at preventing systemic abuse.

■ Our internal organisation

The CPT has as many members as there are countries in the ECPT, **all of whom are independent experts such as lawyers, doctors, and prison or police specialists**, elected by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. They do **not** represent their governments.

The CPT is supported by a Secretariat from the Council of Europe.

WHAT DO WE DO?

■ Monitoring compliance with European standards through visits to places of deprivation of liberty

Where?

The CPT monitors prisons, youth institutions, police stations, holding centres for foreigners, psychiatric hospitals, social care homes and any other place of deprivation of liberty.

What?

The CPT assesses living conditions, treatment, contact with the outside world, proportionality of security measures, and healthcare issues in detention.

Who?

Visits are conducted by delegations of CPT members, Secretariat staff, additional experts and interpreters.

When?

The CPT carries out 15 to 20 visits annually to State Parties to the Convention. Visits can last up to 15 days.

■ Reporting on visit findings in consultation with national authorities and publication

After each visit, **the CPT transmits a report** to the government with its findings, recommendations, comments and requests for information. The government must reply with a detailed response.

Once the CPT receives the response, both **the report and the reply are usually made public**. While not compulsory, most countries agree to publish these documents, in the interest of transparency.

■ Developing standards

As a result of its monitoring work, the CPT develops **standards and guidance** on the protection of the rights of persons deprived of their liberty in line with international and European norms.



HOW DO WE WORK?

■ Unlimited access

Members of visiting delegations have **unrestricted access to all places of deprivation of liberty** and the right to move freely within them. They have access to all the documents necessary to carry out their work.

■ Private interviews

CPT delegations meet persons deprived of their liberty, without witnesses, and are **free to contact anyone** who can provide them with information, such as medical, technical or security personnel. Members collect information **in strict confidence** to protect the individual from potential reprisals.

■ Cooperation and confidentiality

The Convention establishing the CPT enshrines the principles of **cooperation and confidentiality**.

The CPT works with states in a spirit of cooperation, to enhance the protection of individuals deprived of their liberty, **recommending improvements rather than condemnation**.

The Committee's findings, reports and government responses are **strictly confidential** until states authorise publication.

