

**Closing comments at CDPPS, Zaandam,
The Netherlands, 15th June 2016
*Vivian Geiran (Chairman, PC-CP)***

What a fantastic couple of days we have had. A really great opportunity to listen to and learn from each other, to share and – if I can borrow the phrase – to *co-produce* so much together.

While the concept and the sense of ‘community’ is so important for all of us, and we all feel instinctively that we know what it means for us – it is nevertheless a difficult concept to describe.

According to Dr. Beth Weaver: “Community” is a highly contested term because its meaning changes in different contexts, and people refer to different things when they talk about community.

It is the nature of the relationships between people and the social networks of which they are a part, that is often seen as one of the more significant aspects of ‘community’. Building on this understanding of community, we heard that community communicates ways of belonging – or lack thereof.

When we think about community, then, we are talking about a network of social relations and a particular manner of relating in and from which we are variously included or excluded. While we understand, then, community as a network of social relations, prisons and probation services nonetheless operate within bounded spaces or geographically determined jurisdictions in relation to which they have distinct functions, roles and responsibilities. In these bounded spaces are a range of resources which can be mobilised so as to work cooperatively - or coproductively. It is the resources, groups and individuals that make up civil society that people tend to think of when they talk about ‘community involvement’. (Above from Dr. Weaver’s plenary CDPPS speech).

We have heard from many wonderful plenary presentations and workshops: Beth Weaver, as I said already, spoke to us of the importance of community and the shared, co-production of responses to offending and victimisation, if we are to be successful in what we do.

We were welcomed at the opening of our conference by Peter Hennephof, General Director of the Custodial Institutions Agency, Ministry of Security and Justice. Michèle Blom, Director General for Sanctions and Protection, at the Ministry of Security and Justice, the Netherlands, reminded us of the need to work to include *all* of government, central and local, as well as wider civil society, in the rehabilitation and social inclusion of those who have offended. Philippe Boillat, Director General, Directorate General, Human Rights and Rule of Law at the Council of Europe, acknowledged the challenges we face, spoke about the complexities of our work, inside prisons and in communities, and issued a challenge to us – emphasising the need for prison and probation organisations to be flexible in our responses to the issues we face.

Claudiu Catalin Bejan, Director General of the National Prison Administration of Romania, provided us with a timely link to the past – particularly last year’s conference in Bucharest – and reminded us of the strategic challenges that continue to confront us, and how we need to persist in, and even intensify, our responses to challenges such as radicalisation to violent extremism.

And yet, we do not need to be reminded that the spectre of terrorism and violent extremism still hangs over Europe and the wider world. There have been further terrorist and hate-motivated murderous attacks yet again this week, in Orlando, Florida, and in France. These phenomena and effective responses, remain a priority for the Council of Europe and are something we all have a responsibility to continue to address and to overcome.

Mykola Gnatovskyy, President of the CPT, reminded us of the need to maintain, develop and implement standards in the communities that are our prisons, particularly, but not only, the standards that can help us to positively impact problems such as prison overcrowding. In addition, the need for and benefit of standardising how we *measure* standards in prisons

and places of detention was emphasised in Mykola's address. Can I mention here – a reminder – that the Council of Europe white paper on prison overcrowding has been drafted, is being finalised and will be available on our website. So you should all watch out for that and review it,maher it is finalised and available.

Santi Consolo, Director of Prison Administration in Italy showed us what *can* be done, and the positive outcomes that can be achieved, when we identify and confront head-on the problems that we face. He gave us some inspiring examples of positive developments in prison accommodation and administration, as well as prisoner work programmes and social enterprise, in Italy.

Our final keynote speech was by Lucy Gampell, President of Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE). Lucy set out clearly for us the negative impact that parental imprisonment has on the over two million children in Europe at any one time, who have a parent in prison. The COPE network's "Not my crime, still my sentence" media campaign captures very clearly in a simple 'slogan' what this impact is. Lucy emphasised that even very seemingly small and simple changes by prisons management – for example targeted training for staff, how visiting areas etc can be organised in a child-friendly way, and so on – can make such a significant and positive experience for the children and families of prisoners. .

As Philippe Boillat had said earlier, this issue is something we addressed last year and which we will return to in the coming months, with the Council of Europe, through its various bodies, including no doubt the PC-CP, working diligently to progress our understanding, our thinking, our standards and our responses to this important issue of the children of offenders.

Workshops yesterday and today covered:

- Community involvement in preventing radicalisation: Hadelin Feront of the Bravo Project (Belgium) spoke of the complexity of radicalisation and the need to involve many partners and the value of an individualised approach to interventions. The point was also made of the need to be aware of international interactions and conflicts. Mohammed Ajouaou, Head of Islamic Spiritual Care, Custodial Institutions

Agency (Netherlands) spoke of the need for close co-operation, clear practice guidelines and protocols, particularly regarding information sharing, and the crucial role of families and volunteers, especially post-release.

- Electronic Monitoring: Eric Staal, National Co-ordinator, EM, Netherlands and Pedro Ferreira Marum (Belgium) highlighted, through their presentations, that EM can be so different in practice, and its impact and effect depends on cultural and organisational contexts, systems and approaches. It is not a case of 'one size fits all' and we can learn so much from the different application methods.
- Prison Overcrowding: Carsten Herstel, Deputy Director General for Sanctions and Protection, Ministry of Security and Justice, The Netherlands, pointed out that while overcrowding is a persistent problem in many jurisdictions, The Netherlands has the opposite experience now, with significant 'under-crowding.' Also, The issue of overcrowding needs a multi-dimensional approach, incorporating legislative responses (e.g. shorter sentences), better security in the street and around premises and property, and economic approaches, for example. It is also necessary to keep numbers, and the factors driving them, under review. There are also 'side-effects' of both under and over-crowding, including staff-prisoner relations and the level of violence in prisons. Melanie Tiago of the University of Lausanne emphasised the importance and value of the SPACE statistics, while also highlighting the need for better standards and shared definitions and interpretations. Changes have been made to the way statistics are gathered, and what is counted, to make it easier for member state correspondents. Some issues such as measuring cell surface areas, are persistent challenges. Finally, it would be great to allow better inter-country comparisons, as well as tracking and graphing changes in individual countries over time. Apparently a number of such developments are currently being planned.
- Community Involvement: Mark Munger and Lars Thuesen, spoke persuasively about using adaptive leadership approaches to addressing the wicked problems faced by prison services for example. They spoke, among other things, about how it is difficult but necessary for leaders to *unlearn* their old ways of working (rather than learning new ways, as such), and at the same time, how simple improvements in how we relate to service users and others can have such a positive impact; how we need to be humble, and leave our egos outside the door, when we really want to

enter dialogue and co-create good things with others. Ian Hanlon and Ryan Kearney, volunteers with the Irish Red Cross, told us about their personal journeys and how their involvement as leaders and facilitators on the peer-led community based health programme has had such a positive effect in the lives of those in prison and on probation. Eric Nijman (Director/Governor) and Flora de Groot (Programme Manager) at Zaandam Judicial Centre described the 'Top 600' project, where it came from and how it works, prioritising the most prolific offenders, particularly by greatly increased interagency co-operation and more efficient collaborative processes, to get the best outcomes.

- Children and Families: Bente Granbo (FFPS organisation, Norway) and Viviane Shekter (REPR, Children Parents Centre, Switzerland) gave powerful, and very similar, testimony on the impact of imprisonment on children and families of prisoners – from quite different perspectives. Again, they showed how simple things can make such a huge positive difference.

We also had the opportunity to have discussion in small groups of the draft text of the document: Recommendation on Community Sanctions and Measures. This will be invaluable to the PC-CP in finalising the update of these standards, with our expert on this project, Prof. Rob Canton.

One of my PC-CP colleagues commented to me that we now have a more rounded perspective on the work we do, in that we have moved through at least three important perspectives: the first is that of our work with offenders. The second is incorporating victim issues, which are so important. The more recent, "third perspective," is that of relatives of offenders and others within the wider community and communities we operate in. I am proud of the Council of Europe for taking on this broadening of perspectives, and especially this year, for broadening our perspective to include – for the first time in the 21 years of the CDPPS – the inclusion of real service-users, ex-prisoners (Ian Hanlon and Ryan Kearney) in considering how we co-produce what we do. I know I am biased, but I am even more proud of Ian and Ryan for the fantastic work they did here in Zaandam, and for the superb work they and their colleagues in the Irish Red Cross project do back home in Ireland.

We have had such a richly diverse range of contributors to this year's conference. It has been great to have such real, such authentic practitioners, as well as service users, researchers, religious leaders and so on, to share their experience and their thinking. We were also reminded that while there are so many differences between us, as well as similarities – we have to be conscious and learn from both: every good idea from elsewhere does not necessarily transfer to a new situation, without the necessary groundwork being done.

We now look forward to next year's conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services, which will be held in Lillestrom, Norway, and will focus on training and education in prisons and probation settings, including but not exclusively, the education and training of prison and probation staff. I thought it was really interesting that the importance of staff training was so clear in so many of this year's presentations – in relation to children of prisoners, establishing peer-led initiatives, addressing radicalisation, and so on. In the meantime, we have as busy and important a schedule of work over the intervening twelve months, helping in our own unique ways to make our own countries and Europe a safer and fairer place for everybody.

I want to thank our hosts here in Zaandam - the Custodial Institutions Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice. Deepest appreciation to all the speakers, at plenary sessions and workshops, as well as all the moderators and everyone who made this conference a reality. Many thanks also to my colleagues in the Council of Europe, and especially the members and Secretariat of the Council for Penological Co-operation, the PC-CP. A very special thanks and farewell to Antanas Jatkevecius, who has served the PC-CP and the Council of Europe so long and so well, and for whom this will be his last CDPPS conference, as his mandate with the PC-CP expires at the end of 2016. Many thanks to the management and staff of the Inntel Hotel, all the background logistical technical support staff who made the conference possible and such a positive experience for all of us, and of course our team of excellent interpreters. Finally, thank you all for attending and for all your contributions, which were so open and so constructive.

Thank you again for your attention. It is Bloomsday tomorrow – the day when in Ireland we celebrate the great Irish writer and Nobel Laureate, James Joyce. Joyce said: “I am tomorrow, or some future day, what I establish today. I am today what I established yesterday or some previous day.” Let us go forward today, to co-produce positively our tomorrows together. Safe travelling back to wherever you will be travelling, today or in the coming days. And we look forward to seeing you all again for the 22nd CDPPS Conference – 2017 – to be held in Norway, and covering the theme of education, training, development and related issues.

Thank you.