

*Closing Speech – CDPPS 30th Conference, Kraków*

*Christopher SIEGERSMA*

*Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, and friends,*

*We are nearing the close of our CDPPS Conference here in Kraków, I want to begin with a few words of thanks.*

*First, to our Polish hosts, for their warm welcome and excellent organisation. To the Council for Penological Co-operation, its Chair and Secretariat, for guiding us through the agenda with care and efficiency. To our speakers, who brought knowledge and experience into the room. And most importantly, to all of you, the participants, for your active engagement, honest reflections, and willingness to share both challenges and successes.*

*Over the last few days, we have had the opportunity to focus on some of the most important questions facing prison and probation services today. We looked at ways to reduce heavy workloads on staff and services, we examined the role of data and risk assessment tools in supporting good decisions, and we spoke more broadly about how penal policy can adapt to meet the needs of our societies.*

*These are complex issues. They touch on resources, technology, fairness, public safety, and human dignity. They are not questions with simple or quick answers. But what has been clear here in Kraków is that across Europe we are asking the right questions, and we are committed to finding solutions together.*

*This cooperation is at the heart of the Council of Europe. No single country can meet these challenges alone. By sharing experience, by learning from one another, and by building on each other's progress, we make all our systems stronger. That is why meetings such as this one are so valuable.*

*As we leave, I hope each of you takes home not only the ideas raised in our discussions, but also the sense of common purpose that has been so present in this room. Whether it is through new practices, fresh perspectives, or new professional connections, what we take from here can make a difference in our daily work.*

*Let us also remember that these reforms and innovations are not just technical matters. They are about people. About the staff who need fair workloads, proper training, and safer working conditions. And about those in our care, who deserve responses that are proportionate, just, and that give real chances for change. Keeping this person-centered perspective at the centre of our work is what ensures that our systems remain both effective and fair.*

*Before we close, let me once again express our gratitude to Kraków, a city of history, resilience, and renewal. It has been a fitting place for our conversations and for building shared understanding.*

*Looking ahead, I am very pleased to invite you all to our next CDPPS Conference, which will take place in Malta next year. We are eager to welcome you there, to continue the discussions we have started here, to reflect on the progress made, and to take forward our work together.*

*And to give you a small taste of what awaits, I now invite you to watch a short welcome video for Malta.*

*Thank you once again for your commitment and your contributions here in Kraków. I wish you safe travels home, and I look forward to seeing you in Malta.*