

## **Multilateral Meeting**

### ***Management of prisoners' risks and needs to avoid re-offending***

***Strasbourg, 24-25 May 2018***

### **Concept Paper**

In several prison systems the management of prisons remains focused on security aspects, without full attention to prisoners' rehabilitation as preparation for their release.

Various judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the findings of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) have revealed that in a number of countries certain categories of prisoners, particularly those sentenced to life imprisonment, are automatically segregated from other prisoners and subjected to a very restrictive regime and security measures, without any individual risk assessment.

In addition, many prisoners are being held in high-security units and sometimes subjected to severe security measures (including solitary confinement) for prolonged periods without regular review of the placement and with no interventions for preventing re-offending.

The Council of Europe has developed standards for implementing effective ways of treatment and management of prisoners with respect for their human rights and support for their rehabilitation. In this regard, the enforcement of custodial sentences requires striking a balance between the objectives of ensuring security, good order and discipline in penal institutions and providing prisoners with decent living conditions, active regimes and constructive preparations for release.

Any regime which denies appropriate mental and physical stimulation to prisoners is likely to have a detrimental effect on their health and can create a range of psychological problems. There can be no justification for indiscriminately applying restrictions to all prisoners subject to a specific type of sentence, without giving due consideration to the individual risk they may (or may not) represent.

The provision of a regime of purposeful activities and positive staff/inmate relations are essential to reinforce dynamic security within the prison. It is important that prisoners are not subjected to a special security regime any longer than necessary and are provided with a structured

programme aimed at progressively integrating them into the main prison population. The management of their risks should include rehabilitative and restrictive measures to reduce the likelihood of re-offending in the longer term while ensuring necessary level of protection to others. In this regard, appropriate mechanisms to respond to indications of positive changes should be in place.

The relevant Council of Europe standards are set out in Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, in particular Rec (2006)2 on the European Prison Rules, Rec. (2003)23 on the management by prison administrations of life sentence and other long-term prisoners, CM/Rec. (2014)3 concerning dangerous offenders and R(97)12 on staff concerned with the implementation of sanctions and measures.

The Council of Europe and CPT standards are available on the website of the Criminal Law Cooperation Unit of the Council of Europe: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/criminal-law-coop> and on the CPT website: [www.cpt.coe.int](http://www.cpt.coe.int)

The meeting will bring together senior officials and professionals from all Council of Europe member states to share their different experiences and good practices regarding management of prisoners' risk and needs, and to identify ways of introducing new approaches in their systems in line with the Council of Europe and CPT standards.

As with other multilateral meetings on penitentiary issues, organised in recent years, this meeting is expected to facilitate a better understanding and implementation in practice of higher prison management standards for reducing prisoners' re-offending. The meeting will be an important forum for exchange of experiences and good practices on the implementation of Council of Europe standards through peer-to-peer discussion.

The meeting is also expected to facilitate a broader dissemination and subsequent use of the Council of Europe Publication "Combating Ill-treatment in Prison", a handbook for prison staff with focus on the prevention of ill-treatment in prison.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the exchange of good practices among practitioners will encourage a more positive, professional and efficient approach in their prison services.