

ENHANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HEALTH-CARE SUPPORT TO PENITENTIARY SYSTEM

List of Activities

The following activities contributed to the above-listed achievements:

Activity 1.1.1.1. *Review/analysis of the existing policy documents and legislative framework, including stock-taking from previous CoE Project (17 December 2020 – 26 March 2021, deskwork/online)*

A review of the existing legislative and policy framework was carried out by a working group, and recommendations were provided, resulting in the establishment of a common understanding on the expected deliverables which would contribute to the sustainability of the Project's work. As a result of the above, the Project in coordination with the MoJ proceeded with the planning of the elaboration of Penitentiary Mental Healthcare Standards and related Implementation Plan (see *Activity 1.1.1.3.* below).

Activity 1.1.1.2. *Editing and proofreading two Council of Europe Manuals (March-June 2021, deskwork/online)*

Two Council of Europe publications¹ were translated, edited and proofread in Georgian. Their accessibility in native language will further promote a deeper understanding of human rights standards and best European practice by the Georgian authorities and penitentiary system staff involved in the organisation and delivery of medical treatment and prevention.

Activity 1.1.1.3. *Support the development of the Concept document on standards and Action Plan to improve mental healthcare (including through a working group process) (May 2021 – March 2022, deskwork/online/in-person)*

The Penitentiary Mental Healthcare Standards and their draft Implementation Plan were developed with the active participation of representatives of the MoJ and SPS, who provided their feedback through online communication as well as at a 2-day working group meeting on 29-30 July 2021 and a 1-day working group meeting on 18 March 2022. During the former, the group reviewed and discussed the content and structure of the Standards presented by the national consultant to ensure that it corresponds to the needs of the Georgian penitentiary system. The latter working group meeting was dedicated to elaborating the format and method of developing the Implementation Plan of the Standards. The issues discussed included: mental healthcare team composition, workload, resources required, referral, safety and management issues, risks and available resources.

Activity 1.1.1.4. *Development of relevant evaluation/screening instruments to support the implementation of the Plan (WG meeting on 2 November 2021, deskwork/online)*

Two screening instruments, namely the Assessment of Self-Injury (SISRI) and the Assessment for General Adaptation Disorder (Adjustment Disorder) were developed and provided to the SPS. The proposed instruments were discussed and finalised within a working group meeting with participation of the consultants and the representatives of the SPS. The SPS intends to incorporate the instruments

¹ See [Prison Health Care and Medical Ethics: A manual for health-care workers and other prison staff with responsibility for prisoners' well-being](#) and [Organisation and Management of Health Care in Prison: Guidelines](#).

into legislation, as evaluation forms approved by ministerial order, and actively use them in practice in its day-to-day work.

Activity 1.1.1.5. *Support the development and introduction of the needs assessment instrument for persons with disabilities (physical, sensory, mental and intellectual)(August 2021 – March 2022, deskwork/online)*

As the first step of this activity, a report was produced on the existing instruments and practices in Georgia, including examples of best practice among Council of Europe member states. As the next step, the Project continued to support the development and introduction of the actual instrument in practice, through shared research findings and proposed recommendations. The instrument was developed in compliance with Council of Europe and international standards and recommendations, and supported by strong intentions of national authorities to improve the care of persons with disabilities in penitentiary settings. This is the first time that such instrument is available to the penitentiary institutions to assess the needs of persons with disabilities in penitentiary institutions. It will serve to promote the improvement of care of inmates with disabilities and, if needed, to further remedy the shortcomings of the services accordingly.

Activity 1.2.1.1. *Review/analysis of the existing suicide prevention programme and mechanisms and recommendations for improvement (December 2020 – March 2021, deskwork/online)*

The Project's national and international consultants carried out a review of the current policy framework on the SPP, mechanisms and relevant Action Plan in line with Council of Europe standards. The proposed recommendations were discussed in online bilateral meetings and possible future steps to update and revise, as necessary, the SPP Action Plan (2022-2023) were agreed.

Activity 1.2.1.2. *Training programme provided to medical and non-medical staff of the penitentiary system on dealing with the category of inmates in question (1-22 November 2021, deskwork/online; 19-21 March and 25-27 March 2022, in-person ToT)*

Council of Europe consultants reviewed the existing SPP related training modules available in the Georgian penitentiary system and recommended an updated interdisciplinary training module for medical and non-medical personnel on this issue.

Two 3-day ToT on Suicide Prevention were delivered for medical and non-medical staff of the penitentiary system. 30 staff members, mainly psychologists, were trained to train other staff on Suicide Prevention, in particular on penitentiary stress and its impact on inmates, signs and symptoms of suicide, discrimination in the penitentiary system, self-harm and suicide management in the penitentiary system, crisis management trajectory, suicide management in psychiatry, etc.

Activity 1.2.1.3. *A working meeting on the revision of the suicide prevention programme and Action Plan (21-22 January 2022, in-person)*

A working group meeting was held to elaborate the Development Action Plan (2022-2023) for the Suicide Prevention Programme. The meeting focused on the identification of the actors responsible for implementing the respective tasks of the Action Plan and how the progress will be monitored and reported. Enhancement of the role of suicide prevention coordinators as mentors, access of inmates to mental health specialists, and elaboration of SOPs for each task of the Action Plan were also discussed.

Activity 1.2.1.4. *Development of a standard form of the first interview for psychologists and psychiatrists working in the penitentiary system to support the implementation of the Suicide Prevention Programme and Action Plan (February 2022, deskwork/online)*

Desk research was carried out on existing standard forms/templates for conducting the first interview with inmates, with consideration to gender and age specific specificities, to be used by psychologists and psychiatrists working in the penitentiary system to support the suicide prevention efforts. The report

on the findings of the desk research was shared and discussed with the Medical Department of the SPS in a working group meeting format.

Activity 1.2.2.1. *Training for relevant personnel of the penitentiary system in order to introduce long-term replacement therapies in PEs (September-November 2021, deskwork/online/in-person)*

A training module and related training materials were developed and the first cascade training sessions on long-term OAT in penitentiary institutions in Georgia were delivered on 11-17 November 2021 by two national consultants for over 120 members of the penitentiary system personnel, including doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, regime and security staff. The training programme included modules on opioid dependence as a bio-psycho-social disease, treatment with opioid agonists, worldwide experience on long-term maintenance therapy and harm reduction services in prison settings in Georgia.

Activity 1.2.2.2. *Support of out-of-cell activities for convicted persons (June-December 2021, deskwork/online)*

In order to support the national authorities in providing out-of-cell activities for convicted persons, a study on out-of-cell activities and programs in Council of Europe member states was carried out, along with a review of the existing out-of-cell activities and services in Georgia, with gender equality and youth considerations included. The comprehensive compilation of best practices which resulted from the desk research was shared with authorities along with tailored recommendations on the introduction of out-of-cell activities in Georgia. Other important elements identified, besides the ones presented above in the documents under Output level, was the need to ensure motivation of prisoners to participate in different activities, to train the staff involved in organising treatment activities with prisoners on a more balanced approach between security/regime and rehabilitative viewpoints, and to place the prison infrastructure in a more natural or forested environment, to the extent possible.

Activity 1.2.2.3. *Update of the NPM monitoring tool to study and address drug addiction in PEs (5 October – 9 November 2021, deskwork/online; 24-25 February 2022, in-person)*

The first part of the activity consisted in a review of the existing NPM monitoring tool (methodology) with a focus on studying and addressing drug addiction in penitentiary institutions, and to develop recommendations for its improvement. The Project's international consultant elaborated recommendations addressing the identified issues based on the results of a desk analysis of available materials and comparative analysis of the Georgian NPM monitoring methodology and international standards as well as the best practices related to preventive monitoring visits. As the second part of the activity, the Project held a 2-day working group meeting to update the NPM monitoring tool in line with the proposed recommendations. During the meeting the tool was accordingly updated, allowing the NPM to carefully assess, among others, the practice of screening for substance use and dependency upon admission, timely treatment of withdrawal crisis, access to OAT, psychosocial services offered to inmates with substance use disorders, as well as continuity of care after release.

Activity 1.2.3.1. *Development of the map of training needs for the penitentiary system (10 August – 19 November 2021)*

The existing training programmes/curricula were reviewed and analysed by an international consultant and the training needs assessment methodology was discussed and agreed. A combination of the following qualitative and quantitative research techniques was used to develop the TNA toolkit: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Paper-based survey with qualitative and quantitative analysis. As a result of the assessment, the map of training needs of the penitentiary system staff was developed.

Activity 1.2.3.2. *Training for relevant personnel of the penitentiary and probation systems on healthcare management and other identified issues (4-13 October 2021, in-person; 5-6 March 2022, in-person; 16-23 March 2022, in-person)*

Training sessions were carried out on a number of issues identified as training needs.

In October 2021, a cascade training session for penitentiary staff on preventing and addressing professional burnout was launched in Georgia. Feedback received from the participants, both verbal and through evaluation questionnaires, were positive and showed high interest in the content of the training and its practical aspects which can be used in their daily work.

In March 2022, seven employees of the penitentiary system participated in a 2-day training of trainers on intervision techniques. Social workers, psychologists and mid-level managers of the penitentiary system were trained in the methodology of intervision among colleagues, allowing them to use their skills in practice, which will ultimately have a positive impact on the mental health of the inmates. Participants showed a high level of involvement in the training and interest in practical use of the provided material.

Two 4-day training sessions were delivered to two groups of penitentiary staff on case management and multidisciplinary teamwork. The training course included all the stages of case management in the penitentiary system, such as the involvement of prisoners, assessment of criminogenic factors, development and implementation of an individual sentence plan for resocialisation and rehabilitation, according to the needs of the prisoner, monitoring of the individual sentence plan and review/closing of the managed case.

Activity 2.1.1.1. *Expert review of the existing framework and recommendations for improvement*

The activity entailed a review of the existing regulatory framework of the Monitoring Department of the SPS and the preparation of a report and recommendations based on the findings. Given the internal institutional changes, consultancy support on this matter was no longer needed.

Activity 2.1.1.2. *Training of the staff of the newly created Control Unit of the Monitoring Department (18-19 February 2022, in-person)*

A 2-day training session was held for the staff of the Monitoring Department and its Control Unit on tailored approaches, communication strategies and interviewing techniques in relation to prisoners who are under stress or have emotional or mental health problems. The training programme included modules on identifying the profile of prisoners with emotional and mental health problems as well as related barriers to communication and interviewing techniques.

Activity 2.2.1.1. *Training session for the General Inspection staff of the MoJ on monitoring methodology (14 October – 22 November 2021)*

The training programme included modules on the portrait of inmates with emotional and mental health problems, personal perceptions of inmates with emotional or mental health problems and subjective barriers to communication, as well as techniques of investigative interviewing (i.e. PEACE model, tools to overcome the difficulties of interviewing, integrating inmates in the investigation process). The activity benefited from having training participants from the Tbilisi office, as well as from the eastern and western departments of Georgia, meaning that newly acquired knowledge would be shared across the regional offices as well.

Activity 2.2.1.2. *Roundtable Meeting with the MoJ/SPS and PDO/NPM representatives (4 March 2022, in-person)*

A Roundtable Meeting was held with the participation of the PDO and the MoJ to discuss the recommendations of the PDO and the NPM on mental healthcare provision in the penitentiary system of Georgia. The main topics of the roundtable included: early detection of mental health problems; introduction of a bio-psycho-social approach in the provision of mental healthcare in penitentiary

institutions; timely placement in a psychiatric hospital and provision of adequate psychiatric care; the practice of prolonged placement of prisoners with mental health problems in de-escalation rooms and cases of forced injections of medication.

Activity 2.2.2.1. Training needs assessment for the PDO and NPM

A review of the existing training programmes of the PDO and NPM was conducted and analysed, and a training needs assessment methodology was discussed and agreed with the beneficiaries. The proposed methodology was based on a mixed-method approach and used various sources of evidence, such as training programmes/curricula, supporting documents, relevant questionnaires, focus group interviews with PDO/NPM management, PDO staff/NPM members and relevant CSOs. The findings of the TNA were included in the report along with relevant recommendations and the list of training needs of the PDO and NPM.

Activity 2.2.2.2. Training sessions on mental health care provision

As a result of their participation at a workshop on mental healthcare provision and protecting the human rights of people with mental healthcare, 19 participants (human rights specialists, lawyers, doctors, social workers and psychologists, as representatives of the NPM) have expressed their willingness to share information and knowledge with other colleagues, which will further expand the impact of the workshop.

Activity 2.3.1.1. Development of informational materials on the rights of convicted individuals on health care issues and access to services (March 2022)

The text of the brochure on access to medical and rehabilitation services in penitentiary institutions, originally prepared in Georgian language by the SPS of Georgia, was reviewed by the Council of Europe consultants in line with Council of Europe standards and recommendations. The review also ensured that the vocabulary/language used in the brochure is understandable for the target audience, i.e. inmates, and that the brochure is applicable and well-adjusted to the Georgian prison context. The text of the brochure was also translated into the languages widely spoken among the offenders placed in penitentiary institutions of Georgia, in particular, Armenian, Azerbaijani, English, and Russian.