

29 May 2018

**Bullet points for Jan Klejissen's opening speech
at the 23rd Council of Europe Conference of
23rd Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison
and Probation Services**

**"WORKING TOGETHER EFFECTIVELY:
MANAGEMENT AND CO-OPERATION MODELS BETWEEN PRISON AND PROBATION
SERVICES"**

19 June 2018, Jõhvi, Estonia

- I would like to thank the Estonian Minister of Justice, Urmas Reinsalu as well as to the Head of the Estonian Prison Administration, Priit Kama for hosting this important event and for its excellent organisation.
- The relocation of the Estonian Prison Administration to Jõhvi is most certainly a source of new jobs, income and activities for the local population and contributes to their opening up to learning more about a grey area of knowledge: the public tasks and responsibilities in dealing with offenders and their social rehabilitation, and this is also very positive.
- What is also very positive is to find again very familiar faces: the majority of the Directors of the prison and probation services, our two major partners EuroPris and CEP, the current and former PC-CP members as well as participants from our observer states (Japan, The Holy See and USA).
- As you know, on 4 April 2018 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation (2018)5 concerning children with imprisoned parents. This initiative started, as you may remember, at our previous Conferences – in Bucharest and in Zaandam.

The Recommendation was met with much support and appreciation by the authorities of our member States and also by civil society organisations working in this field. "Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)" is already holding meetings and running projects for disseminating and implementing this important text.

Several countries have already indicated that they will translate the text into their national languages, promote it and make use of it in their work with such children and their families. I really plead that all administrations do the same.

This is the best way of ensuring that such standards reach and are being used by all key actors and especially by frontline prison staff.

- I would also wish to inform you that the Council of Europe intends to hold in 2019 a high level Conference on prison overcrowding.

As you know and as the Council of Europe annual penal statistics (SPACE I) show, prison overcrowding is still persistent in many member States and requires manifold action in order to address it effectively.

The numerous pilot judgements delivered by the Court due to serious and systemic problems with prison overcrowding and bad prison conditions as well as the CPT reports led to the drafting in 2016 of the White Paper on prison overcrowding which analyses the situation in Europe, including the different reasons for prison overcrowding, contains pertinent advices and proposes steps to be taken at all stages of the criminal justice process and at all levels – legislative, judicial and executive, based on good practices which have led to combatting successfully overcrowding in prisons.

- There is an urgent need to promote the White Paper and to discuss prison overcrowding with the different stakeholders at national level: judges, prosecutors, ministries of justice, prison and probation services.

This Conference intends to serve as a starting point for such a discussion and for maintaining the dialogue and cooperation between the different authorities and agencies in our member States in order to agree on and implement national strategies for finding long-term solutions to this problem.

You will be receiving in due course more information regarding this event.

- The issue of radicalisation and violent extremism continues to be high on our agenda.

Terrorism is still a big concern in Europe and in the rest of the world and efficient measures need to be taken to prevent such horrific acts, to prevent propagating radicalisation and violent extremism in our societies and also to deal effectively with the perpetrators.

The Council of Europe Guidelines and the Handbook addressed to prison and probation staff need to be translated into your national languages, further promoted and put in practice by the prison and probation services. In addition, as the issue of returning foreign fighters and their families becomes more and more acute in Europe, there is a need to look more in details into this problem and seek adequate responses by the national authorities.

- The today's Conference will deal with questions relating to management and structure of the prison and probation services as well as with staff workload and staff development.

These topics follow upon and continue the discussions started at the last year's Conference in Lillestrøm.

I would like to inform you in this respect that, following the conclusions adopted at it, work has already started on a Guide for prison and probation services regarding recruitment, training and development of staff in order to set some uniform standards in this area in Europe.

Such standards will benefit not only the management of prisoners and probationers and increase their chances to desist from crime but will benefit also staff members who in our increasingly technologically complex and culturally diverse societies need to be well trained and prepared to fulfil a rising number and variety of tasks assigned to them on an everyday basis.

- Like all other institutions, prison and probations services are, and will be, strongly affected by digital developments, notably Artificial Intelligence (AI). Robotics are already employed in Asia and their use, and ethnical dimensions, would, I suggest, be a very timely theme for your next Conference in Cyprus.
- I do hope this Conference will lead, as usual, to interesting and useful discussions and exchanges among the participants, will allow you to bring back new ideas and good practices and to continue to work for further improving the status and management of your services for the benefit both of staff and of those offenders who are under their responsibility.