

SWISS PRISON STAFF TRAINING CENTRE

A SHORT PRESENTATION

Needs-based and Sustainable Professional Training and Education



Schweizerisches Ausbildungszentrum für das Strafvollzugspersonal SAZ
Centre suisse de formation pour le personnel pénitentiaire CSFPP
Centro svizzero di formazione per il personale dei penitenziari CSFPP
Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre SPSTC

RECRUITMENT

Switzerland is a federation; the territory is divided into 26 cantons, each of which is a member state of the Swiss Confederation. The execution of sentences and measures in Switzerland falls largely under the remit of the cantons. The cantons have the duty and the competence to execute the decisions of their courts, construct and operate penal institutions, as well as conclude agreements with other cantons. Therefore, the recruitment and development of staff is done by the cantons or the institutions where staff are put under contract.

The Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre (SPSTC) is responsible for the basic training of prison officers, and leadership training for staff who occupy an executive position in a penal institution, or seek to apply for one. It is also responsible for the further training of the organizational staff.

PRISON OFFICER TRAINING

The basic course at the SPST is the standard training for all prison officers of all 114 institutions that execute penal sanctions in the three main linguistic regions of Switzerland.

Prison officers first pass a practical training in their institution, during their first year of contract. Subsequently, they complete a 15-week basic vocational training at the SPST in the town of Fribourg, within a two-year period.

The basic training at the SPST provides prison officers with the necessary professional, personal and social skills to qualify them to look after, accompany and supervise prisoners. The requirements to be fulfilled by prison officers demand a large degree of personal maturity. It is imperative to be able to build a professional relationship with the detainees. It is key to properly evaluate different situations and to communicate and act accordingly. In addition, team work requires the ability of multi-agency cooperation.

The officer will have completed the basic training after successfully passing a federal professional examination.

Last year, a total of 183 prison officers – 82 from the German-speaking, 96 from the French-speaking and five from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland – were awarded with the certificate holding the title: Federally Certified Specialist in the Execution of Penal Sanctions.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR PRISON MANAGERS

Since 2011, the Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre (SPST) has offered leadership training for staff who occupy an executive position in a penal institution or seek to apply for one. The leadership training consists of four modules, offered within a two-year period. The participants of the leadership training are taught a variety of professional, social, methodological, and leadership skills. Having passed the advanced federal professional examination, the prison leaders obtain the title: Federally Certified Expert in the Execution of Penal Sanctions.

The leadership training has been specially developed for the needs of the professional environment of the execution of penal sanctions. The training is highly interactive and practice-oriented.

In January 2016, a new leadership training started with two parallel courses: 25 prison managers are attending the German-speaking training course; 12 managers are following the French-speaking training course.

FURTHER EDUCATION

The SPST offers further education courses for prison and probation staff, as well as for staff of all correctional authorities. The courses offer staff the opportunity to refresh, as well as broaden and deepen, specific professional expertise, while also introducing them to new relevant issues in the field of the execution of penal sanctions.

The educational offerings are updated and improved on an annual basis. For this purpose, the SPST assesses the needs of staff and their institutions, taking into account daily challenges staff are confronted with. The new strategy, which was adopted recently, provides the following thematic foci:

- Crime Prevention and Risk Management
 - Supervision and Assistance of Prisoners
 - Security in the Execution of Penal Sanctions
 - Work and Occupational Integration of Offenders
 - Prison Health
 - Prisoners with Special Needs
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- Self and Team Management
 - Leadership in the Execution of Penal Sanctions
 - Recent Developments in the Execution of Penal Sanctions
 - Methodology and Didactics
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In 2016, 53 further education courses were organised: 33 in the German-speaking region of Switzerland (counting 95 course days and 601 participants) and 20 courses in the French- and Italian-speaking region (counting 47 course days and 298 participants.)

TEAM

Regine Schneeberger and **Stephanie Zahnd** are the co-directors of the educational offer of the SPSTC. They lead a team of five managers: **Kathrin Kohler** and **Maria-Teresa de Agazio Dozio** (basic training), **Nadja Kuenzle** (leadership training), **Eliane Zimmermann** and **Léa Juillerat** (further education).

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