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28 March 2017

PC-CP (2017) 5

COUNCIL OF EUROPE ANNUAL PENAL STATISTICS (SPACE)
MEETING OF THE SPACE I NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

(20-21 March 2017)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Document prepared by DG I – Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe

I. Introduction

1. Forty one participants from 33 Council of Europe member states, representing 35 prison administrations took part in the meeting.
2. The meeting was opened by Ivan Koedjikov, Head of the Action against Crime Department, DG Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe.
3. The participants were informed of the importance and use of the SPACE statistics from a Council of Europe perspective, as well as from the perspective of the national prison administrations, researchers and experts working in the field and the media.
4. The importance of having a longitudinal study of prison trends in Europe (2005-2015) was also explained. In relation to that each prison administration had received beforehand their data sent in the course of the last 11 years for final verification and rectification.

II. Aim of the meeting

5. The aim of this meeting was to examine the outcomes of this important annual collection of statistics by the Council of Europe prison administrations in the course of the last ten years, to enhance the exchange of information and expertise among the national SPACE correspondents and the team of scientific experts from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, responsible for collecting these data, as well as to discuss some fundamental points related to the methodology of collection and to the conformity and comparability of data across Europe.
6. The objective of the first session was to show national correspondents what was being done and what could be done with SPACE data. The goal was to make them realize the importance of their contribution in the project, and the repercussions of such contribution and investment in collecting and sharing their data.
7. The second session was aimed to be an interactive and dynamic group discussion. Four groups were created, each one mediated by one member of the SPACE team. The objective of this group discussion was to debate about longitudinal series in general, and about specific indicators country by country. This allowed the experts to get to know particularities specific to each country, which will allow to improve the questionnaire, the report and the longitudinal series.
8. On the third and fourth sessions, the SPACE team wanted to share some of the difficulties inherent to the data collection and analysis, particularly concerning methodological issues resulting of different interpretations of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to share their impressions and opinions about the concrete situation in their countries. The SPACE team also wanted to know what are the difficulties of the national correspondents when fulfilling the SPACE I questionnaire. Once more, this will allow to improve the questionnaire, and the data collection and analysis, and, consequently the report as well as the longitudinal series.

III. General and particular concerns of the correspondents

9. During sessions two, three and four, several points deserving further discussion emerged. Some of these points concern all the countries; others are specific to some of them. These topics are presented below:

III.1. General concerns:

- Total number of inmates: should inmates on EM be included on the total number of inmates?
 - The problem of EM as an alternative sanction and as the last part of the imprisonment sanction.
 - Capacity: the capacity must be estimated in a more accurate way. Not all countries estimate the capacity according to the same criteria, some of them refer to the total number of cells, other to the total number of inmates each cell can accommodate, others to the number of beds available, for example. It should also be noted that in many countries where there is no overall overcrowding issue, some prisons may still be overcrowded and this cannot be seen from the overall data regarding prison capacity in such countries.
 - Foreigners: national correspondents showed interested in a distinction between foreigners that are legally established in the country, and those that are not.
 - Definition concerning legal establishment in the country should then be included.
 - Legal status: it is not always possible for all countries to provide data on the legal status of inmates in such a detailed level. The question should perhaps be reformulated.
10. Main Offense:
- The categories sometimes don't correspond to the legal categories applicable in each country, consequently, many countries do not have such information to share.
 - A category regarding road traffic offenses should be included in the questionnaire.
11. When calculating the number of prisoners sentenced for main types of crime it is needed to bear in mind that the definition of homicide may differ and that rape in Scandinavian countries is defined very widely (including the notion of rape via internet) which may lead to results which are not readily comparable from one country to the other. The issue of prisoners being sentenced for multiple crimes was also discussed and it was decided to calculate them only under the main crime for which they have been accused or sentenced.
12. The issue of calculating those sentenced for organised crime and for terrorism was also raised.
13. It was also underlined that there is a difference in the main types of crime for which men and women stay in prison and this is not readily seen from the tables.

14. It was also mentioned that it is extremely difficult to gather data related to cybercrime as in many countries cybercrime is not a separate offence but a qualifying factor in other offences. The same is true for terrorism, as this specific offense does not exist as a separate offence in many countries.
15. Entries in penal institution: a question about the total number of entries following a hospitalization should be included. When an inmate is hospitalized, some penal administrations count this hospitalization as a release from the penal institution, therefore, his/her entry (after the hospitalization) should also be considered.
16. The concepts of temporary / long term hospitalization should maybe be included and defined.
17. Releases from penal institutions: an item concerning the exit following a transfer to an EU country should be added.
18. Deaths: the exact causes of death are not always known, and sometimes, this information is only available latter after. The question should therefore be simplified to include only deaths by homicide and deaths by suicide.
19. Staff: the categories must be reformulated.

III.2. Particular concerns:

20. Belgium and France: the distinction between "écroué" and "écroué détenu" causes some problems, especially concerning the calculation of prison density. They propose to calculate an adjusted prison density.
21. Armenia, Germany: the national correspondents of these two countries mentioned that the questionnaire should enounce the types of homicide to be included under the general category homicide to make sure every country is counting according to the same criteria.

III.3. Special requests:

22. Some national correspondents highlighted the fact that they do not have a lot of time to answer the questionnaire; additionally some information is not available before the end of the year. They would like to have a longer period to fulfil the questionnaire in order to send more accurate and completed data.

IV. Summing up and follow-up

23. It was agreed that the draft longitudinal report will be sent to all participants for final verification before publication by the end of April 2017 and that any additional information, clarification of data, etc. need to be sent to the team of experts by the end of March 2017.

24. All participants were very satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, which is held for the second time since the start of the SPACE I project in 1983 (the previous one was held in 2013). Only one third of them had taken part in the previous meeting of the national correspondents. This showed that there is a need to meet regularly as people change and the newcomers need to be informed by their previous colleagues and by the team of SPACE experts regarding the requirements related to the collection of data.
25. The meeting allowed the participants to meet the team of SPACE experts, as well as their colleagues from other countries, to network and to agree on working methods, definitions, deadlines, outcomes.
26. All participants were of the opinion that next time they meet they would need more time to work in smaller groups and to switch from one group to another in order to be able to discuss the outstanding issues in details and learn how things are done in other countries.

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MEETING OF THE SPACE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS
Meeting Room G01 (Agora Building)

AGENDA

MONDAY 20 MARCH 2017

9.00-9.30: Opening speech

Ivan Koedjikov, Head of Action against Crime Department, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe

Professor Marcelo F. Aebi, School of Criminal Sciences, Faculty of Law, Criminal Sciences and Public Administration, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

9.30-10.30: Session 1: *The different uses of SPACE*

- 1.1. SPACE for the PC-CP and the Council of Europe (Ilina Taneva, Council of Europe)
- 1.2. SPACE for prison administrations (Annie Kensey, French Prison Administration)

10.30-11.00: Coffee break

11.00-12.30: Session 1 (continuation): *The different uses of SPACE*

- 1.3. SPACE for scientific research (UNIL)
- 1.4. Current state of the SPACE longitudinal series (UNIL)
- 1.5. General Discussion

12.30-14.00: Lunch break

14.00-14.30: Session 1: *The different uses of SPACE*

- 1.6. SPACE in the media (Jaime Rodriguez Murphy, Council of Europe)

14.30-16.00: Session 2: *Improving and explaining the SPACE longitudinal series*

- 2.1. Discussion in groups

16.00-16.30: Coffee break

16.30-17.30: Session 2 (continuation): *Improving and explaining the SPACE longitudinal series*

- 2.2. Discussion in groups (continuation)
- 2.3. Conclusions of the first day

TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2017

9.00-10.30: Session 3: Methodological problems in the SPACE data collection

- 3.1. Main problems faced by the correspondents when filling the questionnaire
- 3.2. General discussion

10.30-11.00: Coffee break

11.00-12.30: Session 4: The needs of the national correspondents

- 4.1. What are the needs of the national correspondents and other stakeholders contacting them? Round-table discussion with national correspondents

12.30-13.00: Closing session

Final discussion on the further steps of the SPACE project

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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