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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS
(CDPC)

Council for Penological Co-operation
(PC-CP)

**Guidelines regarding selection, recruitment and training of prison
and probation staff**

Scoping document

Document prepared by the
Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law

1. Definition of prison and probation services and staff

Mission: Within the criminal justice process the prison and probation services are entrusted with the execution of penal sanctions and measures.

Status: The prison and probation services are the responsibility of the public authorities independent of whether they are managed by public or private bodies or whether they are managed jointly in one department/directorate or function separately. They should be separate from the military, the police, the criminal investigation services and other criminal justice services.

The prison and probation services should have a formally approved statement of the purpose of their work and of their main tasks and duties. They should have an annually allocated budget which allows them to fulfil their work in the best possible professional manner.

Staff: The prison and probation staff should be sufficient in numbers and should have a status comparable with the status of staff of the other criminal justice services which allows them to recruit, train and retain staff of the highest professional value, needed for the efficient fulfilment of their everyday tasks and of the overall purpose of the services they belong to. Staff should function within the context of high professional ethics based on treating suspects and offenders humanely and with respect for their human dignity.

2. Training facilities

Prison and probation services should have their own training curricula which correspond to the role and task of the different categories of their staff and to the aim and purpose of the work carried out by these services. Ideally they should have their own training facilities as well.

The facilities used for training should be well equipped and staffed in order to offer good quality education and training to freshly recruited staff and on-the job training on a regular basis thereon as necessary.

The start-of-the-career training curricula should include:

- a) For both prison and probation staff: basics of general law (constitution, administrative and civil law); basics of penal and correctional law and procedure; basics of social work and psychology; human rights; mentoring; dealing with special groups of offenders (like women, juveniles, foreigners, violent offenders, sex offenders, offenders sentenced for domestic violence or organised crime); dealing with mental illnesses and effects of addictions; intercultural education; professional ethics; conflict resolution techniques; risk assessment and risk management; safety, security and self-defence.
- b) Prison staff shall be trained in carrying out searches; using restraints, dynamic security; working in different types of penal institutions.
- c) Probation staff should receive training regarding preparing pre-sentence reports; managing probation files; ensuring accountability of intervention choices; using different interview techniques.

The collection of data and good practices should be encouraged, while respecting data protection rules. Research studies on priority issues relating to prison and probation reform should be carried out in order to inform and assist policy decisions.

3. Entry educational levels of staff

3.1. Staff working in prisons

- a) Basic grade front line staff in daily contact with detainees should have entry educational level 4, European Qualifications Framework (EQF);
- b) Staff responsible for risk assessment, offender management and treatment, regime activities and preparation for release should have entry educational level 5 or 6 (EQF)

3.2. Probation staff

Starting educational level 5 or 6, EQF, preferably from social sciences, psychology, criminology, pedagogy, law

4. Other criteria regarding selection and recruitment

- a) Professional experience (asset)
- b) Personal qualities (flexibility, assertiveness, integrity)
- c) Linguistic abilities
- d) Health state (fitness test, medical certificate)
- e) Other competences (driving licence; computer skills, communication skills)
- f) Professional integrity - clearance regarding family and closer environment, clean criminal record; etc.

5. Advertising of vacant posts and contents of the advertisement

- a) Media, printed, radio/TV, including social media
- b) Web site of the service or the ministry or civil servants employment websites, etc.
- c) Other means (publicising activities in interaction with the public, open-door visits of prisons and of probation services)

6. Entry exams and exit exams

- a) Entry exams during the selection process - what is included (filtering applications by tests: motivation test; oral, written, physical test)
- b) Exit exams after the training - what is included (oral, written, practical); how skills that have been learnt are applied; feedback from their work as trainees in a prison or a probation service
- c) Diplomas, certificates, licences

7. Contents of training (training always a combination between theory and practice)

- a) Basic grade front line staff - what content (admission of new prisoners; registration of information and maintaining of their files; risk management, observing and reporting)
- b) Management - what content (security in general; dynamic security, work with prisoners to enhance their social reintegration; desistance from crime; mentoring, reporting); overall management; management of staff and budget; policy decisions and reforms; handling staff conflicts, and transfers, etc.)
- c) Special grades (staff working with juveniles; women; foreigners; terrorists; organised crime; emergency situation, drug addicts, escort and external perimeter guards) - what content
- d) Probation staff - what content

8. In-service/on-the-job training

- a) How often, annual training plans, obligatory or by choice
- b) What contents
- c) Exit exams - ?

9. Regular assessment of the quality of training and revising training curricula or methods as necessary

10. Career development - between groups of posts/between institutions/between prison and probation services

- Steps within grades; passing from one grade to another - possible or not under what circumstances; switching to probation/prison

11. Professional ethics – ethical codes and some international reference standards

- a) Code of ethics of prison staff
- b) EPR
- c) CoE Probation Rules
- d) Rules for juvenile offenders