WORKING GROUP OF THE COUNCIL FOR PENOLOGICAL CO-OPERATION

(PC-CP)

25th (hybrid) meeting of the Working Group
Strasbourg, 8-10 September 2020

SUMMARY MEETING REPORT

Document prepared by the
Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DECISIONS TAKEN:

The PC-CP Working Group (WG):

- Took note of the opening words by Mr Jan Kleijssen, Director, Information Society - Action against Crime Directorate, Council of Europe who expressed regret that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact negatively the Council of Europe work and that at least the meetings in September and October will be held remotely. He informed that there are still very few meeting rooms equipped for holding good quality remote meetings and thanked the PC-CP Chair, Ms Annie Devos and the Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium) for offering to host the current PC-CP WG meeting via WebEx, which allowed for more participants to join remotely;

- Mr Kleijssen thanked once again the PC-CP for the revision of the European Prison Rules (EPR), informed that they were adopted by the Committee of Ministers (CM) on 1 July 2020 and that many national media had brought this fact to the attention of the national authorities;

- Mr Kleijssen also informed that the 25th Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services (CDPPS) (9-10 November 2020) will most probably have to be held also remotely;

- Consequently, the draft programme of the 25th CDPPS was revised and shortened in order to take into consideration the fact that it will be held remotely, and further decisions were taken regarding its overall organisation. It was decided that two presenters (instead of three) will speak during the workshops in order to leave time for questions and answers and that the workshops will be around 60 minutes each time and need to be very well organised and coordinated between the two moderators, who ideally should be physically attending, alongside the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Secretariat. It was also suggested and accepted to have a training session for all speakers and moderators before the Conference in order to avoid as far as possible technical problems of connectivity and to deal smoothly in an organised manner with the questions and answers, showing of documents on the screen, chat, etc. It was also suggested and accepted that an information document should be sent to all other participants explaining in a clear and concise manner the KUDO application which will be used;

- Took note of the information provided by Mr Carlo Chiaromonte, Head of the Criminal Law and Counter-Terrorism Divisions and Secretary to the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) and Counter-Terrorism Coordinator of the Council of Europe concerning the two last remote meetings of the CDPC Bureau in May and June, namely the work on illegal migrants, on artificial intelligence and on the protection of the environment through criminal law;

- Thanked the scientific experts for reflecting the oral and written comments sent between June and August on the draft CM Recommendation regarding the assessment, management and reintegration of persons accused or convicted of a sexual offence and its draft explanatory report (Document PC-CP(2019)3rev10), considered it and introduced additional changes to it;

- Considered what follow-up needs to be made to their statement on COVID-19 made in April 2020 and decided that a follow-up statement needs to be drafted in good time for the 25th CDPPS to send a strong message from the PC-CP to the participants. In relation to this agreed that attention should also be drawn to the need to address mental health, solitary confinement as well as domestic violence by prison and probation staff in their treatment interventions with offenders due to their increase in the past months. Instructed the Secretariat to prepare a preliminary draft to be sent out in a week’s time to all PC-CP WG members for finalisation by way of a written procedure;

- Took note of the information provided by the Secretariat related to the postponement of the activities to be carried out in the framework of the SPACE/NPM project funded jointly by the EU and the Council of Europe, due to the COVID-19 and that most probably the Conference on measuring cybercrime postponed from May will be held at the end of October remotely;

- Thanked the scientific experts on mental health in prisons and of offenders under probation for the very interesting and informative presentations made and took note of these;
Considered their terms of reference for 2020/2021 and decided that in view of the remote format of the next meetings of the PC-CP and the CDPC, work on mental health will have to start in 2021 and that a decision whether a CM recommendation on this subject needs to be drafted will be taken after a detailed stock-taking report is prepared and discussed by the PC-CP, as the subject matter is very complex and sensitive. In addition, a decision has to be taken regarding delimitation of the exact scope of the work;

Took note that the work related to terrorism will be done jointly and under the responsibility of the Steering Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT) and that therefore their representative will be invited to the next PC-CP WG meeting at the beginning of 2021 (dates of this meeting will be agreed at a later stage depending on COVID-19 situation) in order to discuss how this part of the PC-CP mandate will be carried out;

Agreed to the suggestion from EuroPris to revise the CM Recommendation on education in prisons [No. R(89)12] and to suggest this work to be included in the 2022/2023 PC-CP mandate;

Agreed to the suggestion from EuroPris for the PC-CP to contribute to the holding of a workshop in 2021 on children of prisoners. The Secretariat will also contact the Children’s Rights Division at the Council of Europe to coordinate the participation of the Council of Europe experts;

Took note of the request for observer status made by the European Public Service Union (EPSU) and of the fact that the decision will be taken at the next CDPC plenary meeting in November 2020;

Noted that out of the 36 participants (attending physically or remotely) 18 are women, out of whom 6 women are members of the PC-CP WG. Further noted that under each point of the agenda the participants were fully aware of the gender mainstreaming aspects and of safeguarding the principle of non-discrimination and that particular importance was attached to the issue of domestic violence which was discussed under the point on COVID-19. Issues related to these aspects were also discussed and reflected in the draft CM Recommendation regarding the assessment, management and reintegration of persons accused or convicted of a sexual offence. It was further noted once again that in the revised 25th CDPPS draft programme there is a balanced distribution of men and women speakers and moderators, as well as balanced geographical distribution.

Agreed on the draft agenda of their plenary remote meeting and decided that it will be held on 13 and 14 October 2020 and will last two full days.
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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

MEMBER STATES / ÉTATS MEMBRES

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(All participate remotely)

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(All participate remotely)

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María Noemí HERNÁNDEZ TÉLLEZ
Observateur Permanent Adjoint
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Head of Division, Secretariat of the CPT / Chef de Division, Secrétariat du CPT
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EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR) / COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME (CEDH)
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Evaluator / Evaluatrice

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