

**The 22nd Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services (CDPPS),
Lillestrøm, Norway, 20 June, 2017**

Staff selection, training and development in the 21st century

State Secretary Anette Carnarius Elseth

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to open this important conference.

Unfortunately, the Minister of Justice and Public Security, Per-Willy Amundsen, was prevented from being here today. He wants me to convey his greetings to you.

Since 1960, the Council of Europe has laid the foundations for cooperation in criminal matters between Council of Europe Member States, – and Norway has a longstanding cooperation with other Member States represented here today.

The theme of this year's Conference is Staff selection, training and development in the 21st century. I am especially proud to welcome you to our University College of Norwegian Correctional – here in Lillestrøm.

Norway takes great pride in the education of prison-staff and we have a long history of doing so: This year, we have educated prison-staff for 80 years - since April 1937.

Some of our Nordic fellow countries may have been a bit ahead of us at the time, but in a European perspective I believe this was quite unique.

Norway is also known to have the most comprehensive prison-staff-education in the world; Our two-year education is research- and experience-based and it is being carried out in close collaboration between the University College and training-prisons.

The Norwegian Government is working to ensure safe communities, to reduce everyday-crime, and the individual's need for legal protection and security.

Security is vital to people's fundamental freedom. Individuals should be able to feel safe in and outside of their homes. Security in day-to-day life and better emergency preparedness is of high priority.

Two of our main goals for the justice sector, is therefore to reduce serious crime and strengthen crime prevention.

The mandate of the Norwegian Correctional Service is to provide remand-custody for the police, to implement criminal sanctions in a way which prevents crime, and to facilitate reintegration of prisoners to the society; after having served their sentences. To this end, prison-staff is instrumental.

Not all prisoners are to be reintegrated into the Norwegian society: A globalised world has increased international mobility and migration. Judicial cooperation is becoming increasingly essential to manage issues linked to the pursuit and conviction of foreign criminals.

Sentenced and imprisoned foreign criminals frequently encounter difficulties such as language barriers, different culture and customs; as well as absence of contact with their relatives.

Morover, the objective of rehabilitation and reintegration is highly impaired by the circumstance that most sentenced foreign citizens have no contact with the sentencing state.

This is one area where cooperation under the auspices of the Council of Europe is vital: International cooperation within the framework of the European Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons; which has now been ratified by over 65 States, allows the parties to transfer sentenced persons back to their home-countries. This way they can be better reintegrated in their own societies. This is a priority for me and the Norwegian Government.

In order to be able to do so, it is crucial that the Member States have common minimum standards; as well as regimes for treatment of prisoners.

Today's standard levels and prison regimes for treatment of prisoners vary in the different Member States. This is evident and understandable; especially in these times of austerity.

Still – We must strive to achieve common minimum standards; as well as regimes for treatment of prisoners.

Not all measures to this end need to be excessively costly. One example I would like to point out in particular in this regard, is prison-staff training.

Prison administrations in Europe face many challenges today: overcrowding, violence and radicalisation. To be able to tackle them adequately, education of prison-staff is key.

It is a true pleasure for me to welcome General Directors of prison and probation administrations from the Council of Europe Member States who are here today.

It is my sincere hope that this conference will be fruitful and serve as a forum to share experiences and best practices and challenges – and how to overcome them.

We can only be successful by working closely together.

I wish you all the best of luck!

Thank you!