



31st Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services

Persons with Specific Needs and Vulnerabilities

3-4 June 2026 - Valletta, Malta
Grand Hotel Excelsior



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
SECURITY AND EMPLOYMENT



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Programme overview

Tuesday 2 June

19.30 Maltese dinner - *Departure from Hotel reception*

Times	Wednesday 3 June	
08.30 - 17.30	Registration	
09.00 - 09.30	Opening Session Welcome addresses Keynote speech on Maltese penitentiary system	
09.30 - 10.15	Legal instruments and activities of the Council of Europe	
10.15 - 11.00	Group photo and Coffee Break	
11.00 - 12.30	Setting the scene	
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch Break	
14.00 - 15.00	Workshop A: Foreign nationals	Workshop B: Women
	Workshop C: Older persons	Workshop D: Cooperation between prison and probation services
15.00 - 15.30	Coffee Break	
15.30 - 16.30	Lived experiences	
20.00	Gala dinner	

Times	Thursday 4 June	
09.00 - 14.30	Registration	
09.30 - 10.30	Workshop A: Foreign nationals	Workshop B: Women
	Workshop C: Older persons	Workshop D: Cooperation between prison and probation services
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee Break	
11.00 - 11.30	Looking ahead	
11.30 - 12.00	Closing Session Conclusions Closing addresses	
12.00 - 14.00	Lunch Break	
13.30 - 15.30 14.00 - 16.00	Prison visit <i>Departure from Hotel reception</i>	
	Group A Group B	

 Ballroom

 Aragon Room

 Carapaccia Room (8th floor)

 Castille Room

Programme

Opening session

Moderated by Ms Louise Riondel, Secretary to the Conference

Welcome addresses

- Ms Joyce Dimech, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment, Malta
- Mr Hugh Chetwynd, Head of Department on Deprivation of Liberty, Executive Secretary to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), Council of Europe

Keynote speech on Maltese penitentiary system

Mr Christopher Siegersma, CEO, Correctional Services Agency, Malta

Legal instruments and activities of the Council of Europe

Moderated by Mr Keith Demicoli

During this session, former and current members of the Council for Penological Cooperation (PC-CP) will present the most recent instruments developed by the Committee in the field of artificial intelligence, education in prison, mental health, and foreign nationals, and how to integrate these standards at national level. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn about the support and technical assistance provided to Council of Europe member States through cooperation projects.

Speakers:

- Ms Louise Riondel, Secretary to the PC-CP
- Ms Laura Negredo López, Former President of the PC-CP, Spain
- Mr Michael Sorger, PC-CP Member, Austria
- Mr Jorge Sanches Monteiro, President of the PC-CP, Portugal
- Mr Donche Boshkovski, Division for Cooperation in Police and Deprivation of Liberty, Council of Europe

Setting the scene

Moderated by Mr Keith Demicoli

Setting the scene for the conference, speakers from diverse professional backgrounds will confront their perspectives on this year's theme and frame the main issues surrounding the key topics which will be developed throughout the conference. This session aims to establish a shared understanding among participants, setting a common foundation for informed dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the identification of practical solutions in the subsequent workshops.

Speakers:

- Mr Hans Wolff, Head of Division of Prison Health and President of the Clinical Ethics Committee at the Geneva University Hospitals, President of the Conference of Swiss Prison Doctors
- Ms Lúcia Rebelo, Prison Governor, Portugal
- Ms Olivia Rope, Executive Director, Penal Reform International
- Ms Liliana Lupșica, Probation Counsellor, Romania
- Mr Edoardo Cocco, Graduate Assistant, School of Criminal Sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Workshops

Workshop A: Foreign nationals

Moderated by Mr Michael Sorger and Mr Frédéric Hankus

Prison populations all over Europe are more and more diversifying. This diversity of backgrounds, cultures, religions, languages, educational levels, health conditions etc. bears challenges for the detained persons and the prison administrations. Foreign nationals in prisons are envisaging vulnerabilities, such as language barriers, geographical distance to their families, social isolation and have specific needs, e.g. access to translation, means of communication and freedom of religion. At the same time, prison administrations are challenged to cope inter alia with language barriers, increased medical needs of detained persons and an increased staff workload.

This workshop gives you fresh insights into the current development of numbers of foreign nationals all over Europe, into challenges and practices of the Austrian prison administration, dealing with more than 50% foreign nationals in prisons, and into up to date human rights standards in the field of foreign nationals in prison. Feel free to join a vivid discussion and share with your colleagues your experiences and good practices.

Speakers:

- Ms Caroline Walser, Deputy Director General of Prison Administration, Austria
- Mr Petr Hnátík, Advisor, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), Council of Europe
- Mr Edoardo Cocco, Graduate Assistant, School of Criminal Sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Workshop B: Women

Moderated by Ms Carla Ciavarella and Ms Danijela Mrhar Prelić

Data collected by the Council of Europe through the Space I 2024 report shows that European prisons remain overwhelmingly male. On average, 94.6% of prisoners are men, while women make up 5.4% of the total population. Data shows how gender inequality also emerges in sentencing, with women receiving more lenient sentences than men for similar crimes. This may be due to the role women play within the family compared to men, which consequently often leads to the preference for community sanctions rather than prison sentences. In Europe, the number of women serving alternative measures is double that of those serving prison sentences.

International and regional supranational bodies have paid particular attention to the protection of the rights of women prisoners (The Bangkok Rules, UN Resolution 16/2010). At the regional level, the European Prison Rules of the Council of Europe (updated in 2020) serve as fundamental guidelines for all member states. While not specific to women, they require that prisoners be treated in accordance with human dignity and that individual needs, including gender diversity, be taken into account.

Despite growing attention, at least theoretically, to women prisoners, it seems there is still a struggle to take into account the gender-specific nature of prison sentences.

This workshop aims to raise awareness on the issue of female detention and to discuss it through the data collected to date and on the basis of some treatment experiences carried out on the ground (e.g. Rebibbia Female prison in Rome, Italy).

Speakers:

- Ms Eleonora Di Benedetto, Vice President, the Severino Foundation
- Ms Olivia Rope, Executive Director, Penal Reform International

Workshop C: Older persons

Moderated by Ms Kim Thornden-Edwards and Ms Aleksandra Deanoska-Trendafilova

The aging of global population due to many factors, including the increased longevity, has a significant impact on the respective rates in the prison population as well.

There is no strict dividing line between old and young cohorts of the population in the demographic studies. The more developed countries put this line at the age of 65; contrary to this, in some studies prisoners over 50 are already considered older persons, but mainly the division is put at the age of 60. Some researchers point out that the older prisoners “have individual age years in advance” compared to persons who are not deprived of liberty due to the circumstances they live in – prisons.

Older persons have special needs *per se*. These needs are even more expressed in prison and under probation in a different manner. These inmates face age-related health challenges, mobility assistance needs, general health decline (chronic illnesses and cognitive impairment, like dementia, are prevalent in older persons) etc. Older people are distinctively vulnerable due to facing difficulties in accessing appropriate healthcare and specialists, appropriate housing in the facilities, isolation issues, but also bullying by younger inmates.

Under probation, the vulnerabilities of older people are expected to be lower, but are still existent. They face challenges regarding difficulties in mobility in respect to attending meetings, probation programmes and even medical treatments. The online contact with probation services and the digital illiteracy are also an issue. The lack of family support and potential for becoming of victim of domestic violence is present as well. The issue of homelessness is also something that should be attended to.

The workshop is aimed to address the challenges and best practices in CoE member states and to incite discussions on significant, even radical ideas on addressing these issues within legal reforms and practices.

Speakers:

- Mr Aleksandar Koviloski, Counsellor in the Sector for Rehabilitation, North Macedonia
- Mr Rory McErlean, Policy lead for Prisoner Cohorts, Ministry of Justice, United Kingdom

Workshop D: Cooperation between prison and probation services

Moderated by Ms Iuliana-Elena Cărbunaru and Ms Caron McCaffrey

This workshop will explore how prison and probation services can work together more effectively to ensure continuity of care for individuals transitioning from custody back into the community. It will examine the importance of coordinated planning, information sharing, and joint interventions to support rehabilitation and reduce reoffending.

The structure of the workshop will include the explanation of a personal journey from prison to probation of a person with lived experience and example of best practices from two jurisdictions in terms of enhancing interagency cooperation and trust while offering practical support in the community on release.

Participants will discuss practical challenges and national practices in maintaining support for individuals during and after release, including access to housing, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. The session will also highlight the role of inter-agency collaboration in promoting social reintegration and improving long-term outcomes.

Speakers:

- Mr Anthony Breen, Team Lead, Tiglin Challenge Men's Rehabilitation Centre, Ireland
- Mr Rait Kuuse, Deputy Secretary General for Prisons, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Estonia
- Ms Donna Creaven, Director of Corporate Services, ICT & Governance, Irish Prison Service, Ireland

Lived experience

Moderated by Mr Keith Demicoli

Lived Experiences will offer a space for personal narratives from persons in prison at CSA, focusing on two meaningful experiences beyond the prison setting. Speakers will reflect on their visit to Rome and meeting with the Pope, as well as CSA's participation in the Malta Biennale through the *Floating Fragments* pavilion. The session will highlight voice, creativity, dignity, and the human stories behind these experiences.

Looking ahead

Moderated by Mr Keith Demicoli

As the Conference draws to a close, three participants engage in an open discussion to reflect on what has emerged, resonated, and challenged them over the course of the event. This session also invites them to turn towards the future: What conversation feels unfinished? Which ideas deserve deeper exploration? What voices or themes would they like to see brought into the next edition of the CDPPS and into the work of the PC-CP? By opening the floor to participants' voices, "Looking Ahead" offers a space for participants to become active contributors and to shape what comes next.

Speakers:

- Mr Gurgen Afrikyan, Head of the Probation Service, Armenia
- Mr Denis Perše, Director General, Prison Administration, Slovenia
- Ms Beverley Wall, Director General for Northern Ireland Prison Service, United Kingdom

Closing session

Moderated by Ms Louise Riondel, Secretary to the Conference

Conclusions

Mr Jorge Sanches Monteiro, President of the Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP)

Closing addresses

- Dr Glenn Bedingfield, Minister for Home Affairs and Security, Malta
- Mr Christopher Siegersma, CEO, Correctional Services Agency, Malta
- Mr Alan Mitchell, President of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

Speakers and Moderators

Opening session

Ms Joyce Dimech



Ms Joyce Dimech is a prominent Maltese civil servant with a long and distinguished career in public administration. She has served in various high-profile roles within the Maltese government, demonstrating strong leadership and a commitment to public service. Her career is marked by her contributions to the development and implementation of policies aimed at improving governance and public sector efficiency in Malta.

Her expertise spans across various areas of public administration, and she is known for her strategic approach to management and her ability to navigate complex bureaucratic environments. Throughout her career, Joyce Dimech has played a key role in shaping Malta's administrative landscape, earning respect and recognition for her dedication to public service and her contributions to the betterment of Maltese society.

Ms Joyce Dimech was appointed Permanent Secretary in 2013 and has held this role in various portfolios. At present she is Permanent Secretary for the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment.

Mr Hugh Chetwynd



Mr Hugh Chetwynd is the Head of the Council of Europe's Department on Deprivation of Liberty and the Executive Secretary to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).

From 2005 to 2024, he was Head of Division at the CPT Secretariat assessing the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in 47 countries (particular responsibility for the countries of the Mediterranean, the western Balkans and UK/Ireland and Türkiye); he has worked on a number of thematic issues such as solitary confinement, life sentenced prisoners, women in prison, immigration detention, combatting police impunity and children in detention as well as persons held in psychiatric establishments. He also contributed to the revision of the European Prison Rules of 2020. From 2017-2020, he acted as an Expert on Consultative Council for the Trinity College led research project "Prisons: the Rule of Law, Accountability and Rights -PRILA"

From 2002-2005, he was Head of the Council of Europe's Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, working notably in fields of criminal justice, human rights and education, and constitutional reform.

From 1993-2002, he was a Council of Europe Programme Manager working on criminal justice reform and local democracy issues, abolition of the death penalty in Europe and training of legal professionals on the European Convention on Human Rights in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Mr Christopher Siegersma



Mr Christopher Siegersma is the Chief Executive Officer of the Correctional Services Agency. As the Head of the Agency, he is responsible for the running of the Maltese prison services. Part of his role includes the design and implementation of initiatives aimed at reforming and improving correctional practices and rehabilitation programs.

With over 20 years of experience in the mental health field, Mr Siegersma is dedicated to enhancing public safety and promoting successful reintegration of persons in prison into society. Mr Siegersma holds a Masters degree from the University of Malta and is currently reading for a PhD at the Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh.

Ms Louise Riondel



Ms Louise Riondel is the Secretary to the Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services (CDPPS), as well as the Secretary to the Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP) at the Council of Europe.

Since joining the Secretariat in 2014, she has served in the Criminal Law and Counter-terrorism Division as well as in the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). Most recently, she was the Co-Secretary to the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI). Louise also previously worked in the Drugs and Criminal Organisations Sub-Directorate at Interpol, and was Deputy Director of Corporate Investigations and Security at Wynn.

She holds master's degrees in International Relations from Sciences Po Bordeaux and in European & International Affairs from Sciences Po Rennes.

Mr Gurgen Afrikyan



Mr Gurgen Afrikyan has served as the Head of the Probation Service of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia since January 2025. Prior to this appointment, he served as Deputy Head of the Probation Service from 2023 to 2025.

He has extensive professional experience in the fields of justice, probation, public administration, and legal reform. Throughout his career, he has held senior positions within the Ministry of Defence of Armenia, as well as legal and managerial positions at the Legal Education and Rehabilitation Programs Implementation Center.

He has also worked as a legal expert for UNICEF Armenia and the Council of Europe on projects related to child-friendly justice, probation services, and the protection of human rights in prisons.

In addition to his public service, he has been engaged in academic and training activities, lecturing at universities and delivering professional training courses for justice sector personnel. He is the author and co-author of more than ten scientific articles and educational manuals, and holds a Doctorate in Law.

Mr Donche Boshkovski



Mr Donche Boshkovski is the Head of Unit II in the Cooperation in Police and Deprivation of Liberty (CPDL) at the Council of Europe. His work primarily focuses on supporting member States in aligning their penitentiary, probation, and law enforcement regulatory frameworks and practices with the Council of Europe standards. He earned his bachelor's degree in law from the State University in Skopje in 2001, and his LLM in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex, United Kingdom, in 2009. Donche has been with the Council of Europe since 2013. Prior to this, he served as a torture prevention advisor in the National Preventive Mechanism of the Ombudsman Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, and as a National Rule of Law Officer with the OSCE Mission to Skopje.

Mr Anthony Breen



Mr Anthony Breen is the Team Lead at Tiglin Challenge, Men's Rehabilitation Centre in Ireland. Tiglin Men's Centre is a 16-month residential programme for men with life controlling problems in areas of drug, alcohol and social problems.

Anthony's life underwent a profound transformation during his time in prison through the Irish Red Cross CBHFA prison programme and engaging in education. He further developed himself in extensive therapeutic work through the program of Tiglin Challenge.

Anthony is the Lived Experience representative sitting on the Department of Justice Prison Education Task Force in Ireland. He uses this platform to advocate for person-centered rehabilitation. He is passionate about individuals transforming their lives and using their lived experience to support others.

Anthony is currently studying a BA in Applied Theology. Prior to this, he gained qualifications in Criminology and Applied Social Studies.

Ms Iuliana-Elena Cărbunaru



Ms Iuliana-Elena Cărbunaru is currently probation inspector in the National Probation Directorate within the Romanian Ministry of Justice ensuring the development and implementation of the international projects and promoting the probation system at the international level. Between 2017 and 2025 she was a Board member of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP), including Vice president of the CEP. As an employee of the Romanian probation service for the past 25 years, Ms Cărbunaru has served as probation counsellor, probation inspector and director of probation service. Her international experience includes working with probation services from Europe and North America and she is acting as an expert for the Council of Europe in her area of expertise and as a short term expert in various projects of the European Union in the Balkans. She holds a B.A in Social Work, a M.A in Community Justice Administration and she is currently doing her PhD on penal policy transfers in Europe. From 2023 she is associate lecturer at Bucharest University, Sociology and Social Work Faculty.

Iuliana-Elena Cărbunaru has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2026.

Ms Carla Ciavarella



Ms Carla Ciavarella is a former penitentiary executive and Director of the Coordination of Institutional Relations Office at the Prison Administration Department in Rome, Italy. During her professional career of over 30 years, she has held various professional positions such as manager for training courses of prison staff and Directors of prisons.

In coordination with universities and national and local institutions, she has coordinated several European projects, working on research and studies on restorative justice, prevention and management of sexual offenders, proselytism and violent radicalization in prison setting in a perspective on human rights protection.

For 9 years she was in service at the UNODC where she dealt with the penitentiary reform in Afghanistan, the coordination of police cooperation projects to combat illicit trafficking in the Balkan region and in South Africa where she worked on projects on domestic violence for the protection of abused women.

Carla Ciavarella has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2024 and serves as its Vice-President since January 2026.

Mr Edoardo Cocco



Mr Edoardo Cocco is a PhD candidate and research assistant in Criminology at the School of Criminal Justice of the University of Lausanne.

He is part of the Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics (SPACE) project, responsible of compiling data on prisons for the countries that are member of the Council Europe.

His research interests include the application of novel technologies in crime and security studies, as well as comparative criminology.

Ms Donna Creaven



Ms Donna Creaven is the Director of Corporate Services, ICT & Governance at the Irish Prison Service. In this role, she oversees key areas such as ICT, Legal, Governance, Policy and Organisational Strategy. Her professional expertise spans law, information technology, project and risk management, public administration, and corporate governance.

She holds a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a Masters in Management & Corporate Governance from the University of Ulster. Additionally, she is a Chartered Company Secretary, has completed a Professional Postgraduate Certificate in Data Protection Law from the University of Dublin, and a Professional Diploma in Strategy & Innovation from the Institute of Irish Management, University College Cork. She is currently completing a Professional Academy Diploma in Artificial Intelligence for Business in the University of Dublin.

Donna Creaven was a member of the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) ICT Expert Group during its term 2023-2025, where she played a leading role in contributing to digital strategies. She is also Co-Chair of the ICT Network for the International Corrections & Prisons Association, contributing to global collaboration on technology in corrections.

Donna previously served as a Board Director for Pobal, an organisation that supports the Irish Government in managing funding and services related to social inclusion, equality, inclusive employment, and enterprise. She also serves as a Council Member for the Association for Criminal Justice Research & Development. Furthermore, she has contributed to the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute's Expert Working Group, participating in research focused on technologies for prisoner rehabilitation.

Ms Aleksandra Deanoska-Trendafilova



Ms Aleksandra Deanoska-Trendafilova, PhD, is a Professor of Criminal Law at the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Justinianus Primus Faculty of Law in Skopje, North Macedonia. She holds MSc and PhD in Criminal Law and is a lecturer of Criminal Law, Penal Policy, Comparative Penal Law, Organized Crime etc. She works at the university for over two decades.

She has also been involved in the legislative drafting process for more than fifteen years. She is a Chair of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) working group on drafting the new Criminal Code. At the moment, within its tasks, the group revises the provisions on criminal sanctions, especially the alternative measures and the role of the probation service in the determination and execution of the sentences.

Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Deanoska-Trendafilova was also a Chair of the MoJ working group for the Law on Public Prosecution, Law on Council of Public Prosecutors and member of the working groups on Law on Courts, Confiscation Law etc. As a lecturer at the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors of North Macedonia, she is providing legal training for judges and prosecutors as well as for the justice system and other institutions' staff.

She is a Coordinator at the National Convention on the EU, member of the European Society of Criminology, International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates and other associations, member of editorial boards of publishing journals and expert in many research projects. She is author of over 70 articles, scientific papers, monographs, books of commentaries etc. in the area of criminal law, justice system, gender equality, protection of human rights, bioethics, security etc.

Aleksandra Deanoska-Trendafilova has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2026.

Mr Keith Demicoli



Mr Keith Demicoli is an independent Maltese broadcaster and moderator with more than two decades of experience in television, public communication and live events. From 2008 to 2021, he was one of the main TV news anchors on Malta's national broadcaster, TVM, while also contributing as a local correspondent for international media networks including BBC, France 24 and Euronews. He holds a Master's degree in European Law, Economics and Politics from the University of Malta and has received professional training at the BBC Academy in London and at the University of North Carolina in the United States. Throughout his career, he has moderated high-level conferences, public policy discussions and national events involving political leaders, European institutions, civil society organisations and industry stakeholders. His work today focuses particularly on helping organisations and institutions communicate complex issues in ways that are clear, human and accessible.

Ms Eleonora Di Benedetto



Ms Eleonora Di Benedetto is a criminal lawyer and holds a PhD in Comparative Public Law. She is a partner at the law firm Severino – Penalisti Associati and Vice President of Fondazione Severino ETS, where she is actively involved in rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, with a particular focus on women in detention and on art and culture as tools for reintegration.

Since 2023, she has also co-taught the Legal Clinic Prison and Prisoners' Rights at Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome.

Mr Frédéric Hankus



Mr Frédéric Hankus is the Director of the Haut Rhin Prison Integration and Probation Service (SPIP) within the Interregional Directorate of Prison Services of the Grand Est region (DISP). The DISP is a decentralised service of the French prison administration. The interregional directorate leads, controls and coordinates the activities of the 23 prisons and the 9 headquarters of the prison integration and probation services under its authority, in both open and closed environments. The SPIP of Haut Rhin is made up of 3 branches taking care of more than 3000 people on probation and more than a thousand inmates spread over 3 penitentiary structures including a prison for long sentences.

Frédéric Hankus has a long experience in prisons (more than 37 years) and has held several positions as a surveillance staff, educator for long sentence, short term or probation groups, then as Director of the integration and probation services (SPIP) for 10 years before joining the Strasbourg interregional directorate between 2021 and 2025. He was appointed Director of the SPIP of Haut Rhin on 1 July 2025.

Frédéric Hankus has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2024.

Mr Petr Hnátík



Mr Petr Hnátík is a lawyer with 25 years of professional experience, specialising in the field of human rights. He joined the Council of Europe in 2007 to work in the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights and later in the Secretariat of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH). Since 2011, he has been working as a member of the Secretariat of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).

Prior to his professional engagement with the Council of Europe, he worked for several international organisations, including the OSCE (Mission to Georgia) and IOM Headquarters in Geneva, and the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr Aleksandar Koviloski



Mr Aleksandar Koviloski has been employed as a counsellor in the rehabilitation sector of the central Macedonian prison "Idrizovo" since 2011. He is a front-line practitioner trained in working with cognitive-behavioral therapy with prisoners, and runs specific prison programs especially with life-sentenced prisoners, long term inmates and radicalized prisoners.

He is a member of the working groups that created the General Cognitive Prison Program, the Deradicalization Program for foreign terrorist fighters and other programs concerning the Macedonian prison system. He is the author of two books in the field of penology: *Recycling Behind the Prison Walls* (2017) and *A Guide to Prison Sentence Planning* (2020), and several academic papers and prison documentaries. He is a speaker at numerous events that address both prison policy and prison reality across Europe.

Aleksandar was a member of the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), and is currently a member of the EU Knowledge Hub at the Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission. He holds a Master's degree in Sociology.

Mr Rait Kuuse



Mr Rait Kuuse is currently the Deputy Secretary General for Prisons at the Estonian Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, responsible for the management of the Estonian Prison and Probation Service. The Estonian Prison Service includes three prisons and five regional probation departments (approx. 1,200 staff). His remit also covers coordination with the Correctional College within the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences.

In the Estonian public sector since 1999, he began as a probation officer and later led the Probation and Crime Prevention Department at the Ministry of Justice (from 2001). He played a leading role in criminal policy reforms, including modernization of parole, expansion of community service, introduction of electronic monitoring, and closer integration of prison and probation services. He served as Governor of Tallinn Prison (2012–2014).

From 2014 to December 2021 he was Deputy Secretary General for Social Policy at the Ministry of Social Welfare, coordinating national social policy and agenda-setting, and served in board roles related to care services and prison industry.

Experienced in international cooperation and criminal justice reform. He was Regional Director of Penal Reform International in the South Caucasus (2008–2009) and a key expert on probation in an EU-funded project

supporting probation development in Georgia (2009–2011). He has held leadership roles in European networks, including CEP (board member, 2004–2006), and served as Vice-Chair (2018–2019) and Chair (2019–2021) of the EU Social Protection Committee. He is currently a board member of EUROPRIS.

Education & publications - Master's level qualifications in Social Work (Tallinn University) and European Studies (University of Tartu). He contributed to the book "Probation in Europe" and has published scientific articles.

Ms Liliana Lupșica



Liliana is a probation counsellor at the Satu Mare Probation Service, Romania, with 16 years of experience in probation practice. Her work includes pre- and post-sentence assessment reports, supervision of juveniles and adults serving community measures and sanctions, and coordinating group counselling programmes for both inmates and individuals under probation supervision. In her practice she also works extensively with foreign nationals and ethnic minority service users.

Over the past three years she has served as a trainer for probation and prison staff on topics such as leadership in correctional services and the seamless principle of reentry. She is currently a PhD student at the Social Work Doctoral School of the University of Bucharest, researching probation staff burnout and resilience. Her interests include innovative reintegration methods for high-risk offenders, gender-sensitive approaches to social reintegration, and trauma-informed approaches for both probation staff and service users.

Ms Caron McCaffrey



Ms Caron McCaffrey was appointed Director General of the Irish Prison Service in December 2018, becoming the first woman to hold this position. She is responsible for the leadership, management, and strategic direction of the Irish Prison Service, which operates 13 prisons and employs over 4,000 staff and manages a significant budget of €579 million. Under her direction, the Service is committed to providing safe and secure custody, upholding the dignity of care, and promoting the rehabilitation of prisoners to contribute to safer communities across Ireland.

Caron has over two decades of experience in the justice sector. She began her career in the Department of Justice and Equality in 2000, before joining the Irish Prison Service in 2006 as Press and Programme Manager. She was promoted to Director of Corporate Services in 2008 and held responsibility for a range of portfolios including Human Resources, Finance and Estates prior to her appointment as Director General. Caron McCaffrey's leadership exemplifies innovation, dedication, and a commitment to excellence in one of the most challenging areas of public service.

In 2019, Caron joined the board of the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris), and served as President between October 2021 and September 2025. The aim of the organisation is to improve cooperation among Prisons and Correctional Services across Europe, to improve the lives of prisoners and their families, enhancing public safety and security; reducing re-offending; and advancing professionalism in the field of prisons.

Caron holds a BA from NUI Maynooth, an MA in International Relations from Dublin City University, an Advanced Diploma in Applied Employment Law from the King's Inns, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Corporate Governance from UCD Smurfit Business School.

Caron McCaffrey has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2026.

Mr Rory McErlean



Mr Rory McErlean has been policy lead for Prisoner Cohorts at the Ministry of Justice since 2020, advising ministers on how best to manage and support different groups of prisoners in the English and Welsh prison system, covering older prisoners, prisoners taken into care as children, transgender prisoners, and armed forces veterans, alongside the provision of purposeful activity in prisons.

In this work, he has led the development of an Aging Population Strategy, led cross-government work to reduce the number of people with care experience in the criminal justice system, reformed allocation policy for transgender prisoners, and led implementation of the government's manifesto commitment to improve access to purposeful activity in prisons. He joined the Ministry of Justice in 2018 following 6 years at the Department for Education, and having completed a Law degree at Queen's University Belfast.

Ms Danijela Mrhar Prelić



Dr. Danijela Mrhar Prelić is Director General of Slovenian Probation Administration, Body of the Ministry of Justice. She holds a Master Degree in Social Pedagogy, a Master of Science in Criminology and Doctorate in Law (the field of Criminology). From the beginning of her career, she has been working within the field of enforcement of criminal sanctions. She has served as Senior Advisor – Counselor for juvenile offenders, as Director of Women's Prison and as Project Manager – Secretary at Ministry of Justice. As Project Manager she was responsible for preparation of an Action plan for Establishment of Probation Service in Slovenia with all necessary normative and legal changes. In October 2016, she became the Head of Probation Service at the Ministry of Justice, responsible for establishing the new state body. In December 2017 she became an Acting Director of Slovenian Probation Administration, followed by position of Director General in 2018, reappointed in 2023. Since 2010 she is involved in education trainings carried out by the Slovenian Prison Administration while holding a position of a University Assistant Professor (Criminology, Penology). In October 2022 she was elected as CEP Board Member, and became a Vice-President in October 2025.

Danijela Mrhar Prelić has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2024.

Ms Laura Negredo López



Since 2018 Laura Negredo López is the Deputy Assistant Director-General for Open Regime and Alternative Measures in the Ministry of Interior, Spain. She has been working in the field of alternative measures for more than 10 years, holding several positions like Technical Advisor and Head of Service. She is currently the director of Circles of Support and Accountability in Spain.

In 2016 and 2017 she was the Resident Twinning Adviser of the Twinning Project "Support for further development and strengthening of the Probation Service in Croatia".

She holds a B.A in Psychology (UCM, Madrid), a M.A in Forensic and Criminal Psychopathology (UCJC, Madrid) and a M.A in Forensic Legal and Clinical Psychology (UCM, Madrid) and a M.A in International Crime and Justice (CUNY, New York). For the latter, she received a La Caixa national competitive fellowship for master degree work in the United States.

Laura Negredo López is the former President of the PC-CP and an international consultant for the Council of Europe in several projects.

Mr Denis Perše



Mr Denis Perše is the Director-General of the Slovenian Prison Administration (URSIKS), a body within the Ministry of Justice, having assumed the leadership of the national prison system in February 2025. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security and a Master's Degree from the Faculty of Government and European Studies. He began his professional career within the Slovenian criminal justice framework in 2000 at Dob Prison, the country's largest correctional facility, where he progressively advanced through various operational and leadership ranks. Prior to his appointment as Director-General, he served as the Director of Ljubljana Prison and as the Deputy Director-General.

Before entering the field of penology, Mr Perše was a professional soccer player who represented the Slovenian national team across all youth categories until an injury shifted his professional path in 2000. Alongside his executive duties, he remains highly engaged in civic governance within his local community, currently serving as an elected member of the Municipal Council and as the President of the local Volunteer Fire Department.

Ms Lígia Rebelo



Ms Lígia Rebelo is the Director of Tires Prison, the largest women's correctional facility in Portugal and internal trainer at the Portuguese Directorate General for Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRSP).

With a Law degree and a postgraduate specialization in Labour Law, she began her professional journey as a lawyer. Since joining the prison services in 2009, she has held different leadership positions, directing other correctional facilities in the Lisbon region. Lígia has also represented the Portuguese Prison Services in international forums, notably at multilateral meetings of the Council of Europe focused on gender sensitive prison policies and the management of prison regimes. She has also spoken at international conferences, including the Annual Conference of the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA), and events addressing parental incarceration and the rights of children with imprisoned parents.

She has been an active member of several specialized working groups within the DGRSP, contributing to legislative proposals, ethical guidelines, and reforms related to prison labour, supporting the ongoing modernization of correctional policies in Portugal.

Ms Olivia Rope



Ms Olivia Rope is a recognised leader in the field of criminal justice reform and a human rights expert. She has more than a decade of experience advancing international standards and accountability in criminal justice systems, working extensively with governments, oversight bodies, civil society and multilateral institutions.

Appointed Executive Director of Penal Reform International (PRI) in 2020, Olivia has played a central role in shaping global policy discussions on imprisonment, community sanctions, decriminalisation of poverty and gender responsive justice. She has led high level advocacy at the international and regional levels, shaping policy debates and reform initiatives including on detention, torture prevention, women, criminalisation and detention, and community sanctions. She has authored and overseen influential research and policy publications, as well as developed practical training curricula for a wide range of stakeholders. Olivia is regularly called upon to speak and provide expert advice on rule of law, justice, and human rights issues. A qualified lawyer, she holds an LL.M. in International and

European Human Rights Law from the University of Amsterdam and was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.

Mr Michael Sorger



Mr Michael Sorger is a Legal Adviser in the Directorate General for the Administration of Custodial Sentences and Measures involving Deprivation of Liberty in the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice.

Since January 2025 he has been additionally working as a Scientific Expert to the PC-CP. Michael Sorger joined the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice in 2017 and served inter alia as Delegate to the Working Party on Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (COPEN) to the Council of the European Union and as Legal Adviser in the Constitutional Service.

He studied Law and Political Sciences at the University of Vienna and Sciences Po Paris.

Michael Sorger has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2026.

Ms Kim Thornden-Edwards



Ms Kim Thornden-Edwards is the Chief Probation Officer for England and Wales and a senior leader at Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The Probation Service employs around 21,000 staff working, in 11 regions and Wales, and includes the National Security Division which manages the highest risk offenders including those with terrorist offences.

Kim joined the Civil Service in June 2021 to work within the Probation Workforce Programme, taking on the role of Programme Director in November of the same year.

The programme was part of a major change initiative, aimed at improving the capacity and capability of the probation workforce.

Before this, Kim was the Managing Director of Interserve Justice, a private sector provider delivering a range of government contracts for Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) and Prison Industries. Kim was the Senior Responsible Officer for Interserve on Probation Unification – a complex and large-scale transfer of 1,600 staff from the private sector to the civil service.

Kim qualified as a Probation Officer in Kent in 1996 and has spent her career in and around probation and criminal justice. She has held senior operational positions, including Head of Operations at Greater Manchester CRC and Chief Executive of Hampshire CRC.

Kim Thornden-Edwards has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since January 2024.

Ms Beverley Wall



Ms Beverley Wall took up the post of Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service & Deputy Permanent Secretary for Reducing Offending Policy, Department of Justice in July 2023.

Beverley joined the Northern Ireland Civil Service in 1990 and has worked in a number of government departments, in both policy and operational roles in areas including the Prison Service, Community Safety, Urban Regeneration, the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry and Housing policy.

She has worked as Private Secretary to Ministers under both Direct Rule and Devolved Government Administrations. She was previously Director of Governance in the Department of Education, a role that involved the establishment of a single Education Authority for Northern Ireland.

Beverley also served as Deputy Secretary of Strategic Policy and Professional Services Group in the Department for Communities. In this role she was responsible for the development of a NI Executive anti-poverty strategy and suite of social inclusion strategies and the management of central policy functions, including the development of policy, operational and leadership skills across the department.

She holds a BSc (Hons) in Business Management and an MSc in Innovation Management in the Public Service. In September 2025 Beverley was appointed to the Board of EuroPris, the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services. The aim of this organisation is to improve collaboration and cooperation between European and Correctional Services to enhance prison practice.

Ms Caroline Walser



Ms Caroline Walser has been working at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice, General Directorate for the Administration of Custodial Sentences and Measures involving Deprivation of Liberty, since 2017. Since 2021, she has been Deputy Director-General as well as Head of the Group Security, Care and Resources and Head of the Department Executive, Supervision, Budget, Economy, Construction and Safety in the General Directorate for the Administration of Custodial Sentences and Measures involving Deprivation of Liberty.

After completing her degrees in Political Science and Sociology as well as in Law (PhD), she gained a wide range of experience at the European Parliament and at the Austrian Embassy in Washington D.C., completed her legal training at the Vienna High Regional Court, and served as a university assistant at the Institute for Criminal Law and Criminology at the University of Vienna, specialising in the field of the prison system.

Mr Hans Wolff



Mr Hans Wolff is the Head of the Division of Prison Health and chairs the Department of Community Medicine and Primary Care at the Geneva University Hospitals. Further, he is professor of medicine at the University of Geneva and President of the Conference of Swiss Prison Doctors (CSPD). On the European level he was member of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) in respect of Switzerland 2013-2025 and from 2021-2025 its First Vice-President.

Hans Wolff studied medicine at the University of Marburg, Germany and the University of Geneva, Switzerland and specialized in General Internal Medicine (MD) and Public Health (MPH). His main professional interests concern human rights of vulnerable populations in relation to social inequalities in health, access to healthcare and more generally medical ethics. In particular, his research interests are related to drug use, prevention and harm reduction policies, infectious diseases, mental health and human rights in place of deprivation of liberty.

Closing session

Mr Jorge Sanches Monteiro



Mr Jorge Sanches Monteiro is a Clinical Psychologist with a master's degree in criminology. Since 2008, Jorge Sanches Monteiro acts as Head of Unit in the Portuguese and Probation Services, and he was more recently appointed as Head of Research and Planning.

He began his professional career in 1997 working in a Psychiatric Hospital in Lisbon and since 1998 he has played different roles in the Ministry of Justice, such as clinical psychologist, case manager and Deputy Governor in different prisons in Portugal. He's also the manager of several international projects as well as trainer in different training courses related to the rehabilitation of offenders. Since 2022, he is a Consultant of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Jorge Sanches Monteiro has been a member of the PC-CP Working Group since December 2021 and serves as its President since January 2026.

Mr Alan Mitchell



Mr Alan Mitchell is the President of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).

His association with the CPT began in 2002 when as Head of Prison Healthcare in Scotland, he was engaged as an ad hoc expert on a periodic visit of the Committee to Latvia. He continued his involvement as an expert until 2017 when he was elected as the member of the CPT in respect of the United Kingdom. In March 2021 Alan was elected President of the Committee.

As medical doctor, Alan Mitchell's main clinical work is within the immigration removal centre in Scotland but he also continues to be called upon on occasion to work within Scotland's prisons.

A Commissioner with the Scottish Human Rights Commission from 2015 until 2021, Alan Mitchell also during that time was Chair of the Independent Prison Monitoring Advisory Group in Scotland. He is frequently instructed as an expert witness in extradition requests heard before the courts in the United Kingdom in respect of prison conditions in requesting states. In addition to having visited many prisons across the Council of Europe area with the CPT, has also undertaken visits to prisons in India, Kuwait and South Africa for the extradition court.