

## 27<sup>th</sup> Conference “Prison and Probation: Sharing and Refocusing Knowledge and Practice”

### Summing up of the workshops by Ms Nadya Radkowska, PC-CP Chair

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues, we come to the end of one very interesting and insightful Conference held in the beautiful city of Seville. This conference brought together more than 130 participants of whom many experts and professionals from different generations and from different countries and cultures, but all connected by very important mission - to build a safer society, to supervise and assist the sentenced persons during their difficult path of change, to preserve and guarantee human rights and democratic values in a very challenging context during the very unpredictable times we live.

The title of the Conference is not there by coincidence, it addresses how crucial it is for both services and professionals to stay connected, to support each other, to share the knowledge, to build bridges, to be united because **Everything we do, we should do it together!**

Yesterday, Prof. Durnescu during his keynote speech told us a very interesting story about the British Cycling team to show us how small changes, small steps put together can bring big achievements and improvements. He stressed the importance of evidence-based interventions, good staff, constructive organizational culture, leadership and effective legislation in order to create a good correctional service. He stressed the need to redesign staff training, to invest more in cognitive interventions to make the staff more confident in using and implementing their knowledge, to equip people with the right skills, to integrate training in the daily routines, to change the way we see the training. **WHY** – because staff is the most important pillar in our organisations, without well-trained, prepared and motivated staff everything will be questionable, and all efforts are doomed to fail.

Very comprehensive discussion took place during the panel discussion following Ioan Durnescu’s keynote speech, chaired by Danijela Mrhar Prelič from Slovenia. Daniela, you did a great job, thank you!

Practices from Ireland, Belgium and France were shared. The discussions showed that there is an ongoing process of reform and revision of the concept of the aim of punishment and the ensuing practices. One of the challenges is that all personnel should be aware of their important role. There is a need to professionalize every role in order for all staff in the field to contribute to the rehabilitation efforts. Very crucial issues were mentioned – how to reform the profession of correctional officers in order to stress its societal value and to make the profession more valued and attractive. Important highlights during the discussions were the need to support, to take care of staff, to enhance confidence and trust (both between staff and between staff and prisoners/offenders), the role of criminal records during the reintegration phase of offenders and all related issues, the role of leaders, the recruitment model, the importance of connecting stakeholders in the society.

Then we had a coffee break!

### **Workshop I “Planning the future today: prison design and infrastructure”:**

During this workshop the importance of several factors when planning a prison were stressed by Pia- Location, size, function, reachability and digitalization. She explained the “smart prison” project in Finland. There, a digital learning environment was set up, restricted internet is available and virtual reality is used for rehabilitation. They plan to roll out this project to other prisons.

Ilse showed several aspects of a new prison design: Greening prisons maintained by gardening inmates. Wellbeing by art and participation by prisoners in this project. Specialized Settings for mentally ill offenders in Forensic psychiatric centres. Important is a human centred prison climate, which puts the “client” in the centre (“Prison Village in Haren”). A new approach is a layout that makes participation by society possible. New design of “transitional houses” and detention houses for inmates short before their release or for short sentences.

Jose showed the Spanish infrastructure and new approaches: The modern type of prison has kitchens, bakery, living rooms, places for workshops and a swimming pool. They plan to open psychiatric facilities, which implement good treatment, green landscaping, spaces for families to meet. A new type is the Social Insertion Centre. They will have zero emission buildings with human materials and a healthy environment. They are in research for solutions using cameras and artificial intelligence to enhance security.

The discussion was dealing with the question of the range of internet and safety, of a potential new approach to prisoners and wardens when there is an increasing digitalization. Are there risks and benefits?

### **Workshop II SPACE I and SPACE II Statistics – Prof. Marcelo Aebi**

**SPACE I was published in April 2022, SPACE II was published yesterday. The media attention was high as usual, which is very positive.**

#### **Prof Aebi did a presentation of some findings and trends**

- Comparing data improves the quality of statistics. Every jurisdiction is checking their results, as they know that other countries compare themselves to them. By contributing to SPACE you also provide a platform for improving statistics in countries with less developed statistical services.
- Comparisons of prison and probation trends were requested. This triggered a discussion about how the grey area between prison and probation will grow in the coming 10-15 years, with probation technology meeting more open prison regimes.

What is missing?

- A definitions index for public use
- Statistics on crimes committed in prison
- CPT related information, aligned SPACE
- PT protocol

- Transfers under framework decisions
- A campaign to promote SPACE and how it can be used to improve policy and internal statistical quality
- Interactive data tools with filters to make your own comparisons
- Measuring digitalisation (use of specific digital technologies and tools (in cooperation with the EuroPris ICT expert group))

### **Summary of Workshop 3 - Working Better Together for Offender Reintegration**

Mary Corcoran discussed the complex relationship between the criminal justice system, specifically prisons and probation, and the third sector (NGOs) in provision of services to those in prisons or under probation supervision. Mary highlighted the positive role that the third sector can play in fostering desistance from crime, if these organisations are facilitated to maximise their unique potential. She stressed that the third sector could be the “antidote” to significant crises. Mary also encouraged workshop participants to explore the nature of the interagency relationship and to be civically courageous in addressing the threefold wicked problems of addressing reoffending, managing service cost and making services more efficient.

She mentioned the importance of trust among partners and that the third sector should be not treated as the junior partner and she raised the question whether the public sector, respectively prison and probation is adequately trained to cooperate and work with the third sector.

Robert Josten considered the changing role of prison staff in prisoner reintegration and reflected on some recent changes made in The Netherlands, including how staff roles are structured. In addition, the impact of the wider social context (legislation, the pandemic and wider labour force issues) on the correctional landscape, were discussed. More structured approaches have been taken to recruitment and training of prison staff, and in strategic human resource management. At the same time, challenges such as finding suitable applicants for prison service jobs in adequate numbers, remain.

Carlos Fernandez Gomez explored the meaning of terms such as working together and social integration and suggested that one size does not fit all, but rather that individualised programmes should be the norm in service provision. He also outlined how changes led to more people in prison in Spain to access the Open Regime more quickly, including spending more time serving their sentence in the community, as well as expansion of community-based supervision programmes and how this has facilitated better offender reintegration.

The three presentations offered different but complementary and overlapping findings and views from the respective sets of experiences and areas covered. There was a lively Q+A and discussion following the three presentations, where relevant issues were clarified, and the various themes considered in the presentations were explored in more detail.

## **Workshop IV: Ensuring equity and equality of access for women to services in prison and probation**

Olivia Rope from Prison Reform International (PRI) was the first speaker. She talked about the Bangkok Rules and how PRI is working all over the world to raise awareness and offer training on the Bangkok Rules. She showed some interesting global trends regarding the imprisonment of women: it seems that in the most part of the world there are more women in prison today than 10 years ago, but in Europe the figures show a decrease by 29% or by 85000 between 2010-2020, or shows that women represent 2%-9% of the national prison populations. The big challenge is the lack of programmes and services to meet their specific needs. The focus is more on male prison population and women in prisons may remain invisible.

She mentioned that whilst the UN Nelson Mandela Rules have their 'equivalent' at the European regional level with the European Prison Rules, the Bangkok Rules don't – yet! The revision of the EPR in 2020. introduced a 'catch all' gender-sensitive rule in Rule 34. -The Rules require the implementation of specific gender-sensitive policies, and for positive measures to be taken in all areas to meet the needs of women in prison. Olivia stressed that many women in prisons suffer from poor mental health.

She stressed that the Bangkok Rules in 2010 were a milestone for women and all those working with women in the criminal justice systems. But when the Rules were first adopted, there was relatively little knowledge of them – from UN institutions to monitoring bodies and prison administrations. Now, ten years later, that has changed. So many prison and probation administrations, have worked tirelessly over the past decade to raise awareness of the Rules, to explain why they are needed and what needs to be done to make them a reality.

Maximo Martines Bernal talked about women in the Spanish prison system and how they worked to offer them the same possibilities for employment, training and treatment. The figures show that about 3000 women are sentenced in Spain annually, mainly for property crimes and drugs related crimes. Since 2021 there is a new legislation on gender perspective and equality instruments for those working in prisons. According to the data, more than 7000 are male guards, compared to app.3700 women guards. A very interesting topic was raised by Maximo about the Spanish approach to mix W and M in prisons – pros and cons.

Lucy Baldwin did a presentation on the importance of motherhood in criminal justice and the perspective of being a mother in prison/probation. She stresses that being a mother is the most important role for many women and that our systems often oversee that. All of female prisoners feel very guilty about letting their children down and that is a trauma in itself She also talked about the importance if working on trauma with women since they very often also are victims of trauma.

There was fruitful discussion of the regime of prisons for women (women only or mixed). The Council of Europe international standards recommend that women and men should not be in a mixed accommodation with the exception of doing together some daily activities like work and training.

## **Workshop V: Dealing with mental health issues in prisons and probation**

Jorge Monteiro presented the current work on the White Paper regarding dealing with offenders with mental health disorders and informed that this is the first step leading to drafting a Committee of Ministers Recommendation on the same subject. According to him data collecting, research and targeted training of prison and probation staff are indispensable in this area in order to improve work with offenders with mental disorders.

Ronald Gramigna discussed the subtle differences between health, disease, illness and whether all persons with psychiatric diagnosis are considered ill. He also presented the Swiss risk assessment tools and Manual and stressed that it is important to define what needs to be treated (risk-oriented forensic treatment is the most relevant) before starting the process.

Puerto Solar Calvo presented the Spanish situation with mental health management, classification, diagnosis and treatment, the legal and practical aspects and the future steps which need to be taken. She shared with us some next steps to be taken, mainly the need to involve the community health services in the treatment of inmates as ordinary citizens and to find another approach to dealing with mental illness inside and outside prisons.

The topic of mental health was deemed important, yet complicated. During the discussion on mental health in prison and probation settings the contents of a future Council of Europe recommendation were discussed. It was pointed out that a recommendation needs to be sufficiently balanced – not too general because that is not so useful for practitioners, but also not too detailed because jurisdictions are so very different. It was interesting and important that it was pointed out that there might be conflicts of interest in what prisons in general deem to be the right kind of environment for prisoners while psychiatrists might deem that prisoners with mental health disorders would benefit from other settings (such as colourful interior or normal furniture). These sorts of disagreements must be considered. One interesting question in the discussion was what should be done with mentally ill prisoners if there are no suitable institutions for them outside prison. This is something the working group has not yet reflected on.

The discussion gave the PC-CP WG valuable input for our future work on this topic, and we hope that you will communicate your ideas and comments to us before the Recommendation is finalised. It became clear that we need to be very clear on the focus of a future recommendation. It seems now important to highlight that the main question is that offenders get the treatment and support they need, not whether they have a diagnosis or not or which specific disorder they may have.

## **Workshop VI: Staff recruitment and management**

The workshop on staff recruitment and management showed how important are the challenges for prison and probation. We need to find super men and super women! Our institutions depend on the economic situation of the country. So, if there is a lack of staff, we need to be creative to reach the right audience and find suitable candidates. It's important to make the diversity of jobs visible. The selection process impacts also the content of the basic training. It is key to work on values, good professional position, etc. A focus was made on the lack of medical staff. It is obviously a common problem in the European prison systems. Another very important challenge is how to

retain staff and make careers attractive. The continued training is important but also the work conditions, the attention to health, the reaction in case of incidents, etc. The leadership skills of the management are of key importance to the stability of staff.

Susanne Gerlach talked about the challenges they have to recruit staff and her conclusion was that prison staff is invisible in the society. You see police officers, firefighters etc in working but you never see prison staff. They made a big advertising campaign in social media on their website, in Google ads. They also had a TV-production based on following their staff on a daily basis "Berlin behind bars". Susanne's conclusion is that to be able to find staff you need to make the job visible, to offer modern working conditions and have a good leadership.

Then Sebastian Cauwel, Director of ENAP the French training prison academy followed and spoke about the long tradition of staff training in France that started after WW2. He showed a picture of a class of prison officers from that time and made a joke about that it seems like that moustache was mandatory at that time while currently it is the tattoos that prevail for prison staff. France has a big new training Academy in Agen where they use modern pedagogies to train staff. They are also working with the feeling that they are proud of their job. They have big challenges because they need to recruit massively the upcoming years due to the planned construction of new prisons.

## **Conclusions**

We live in difficult and challenging times, which are reflected in our correctional services as well.

More than ever the person should be in the centre of the process, both in the context of staff and also in the context of treatment of sentenced persons.

Training is essential. Those working in prison and probation services should receive adequate training and should be equipped with the relevant tools, in order to create a professional self-esteem, confidence and trust and by doing so to be able to help offenders desist from crime.

Leaders are key players, and their role is crucial.

Collecting data and developing evidence-based interventions is fundamental. How we measure and do we measure the success? There are instruments to that effect, but do we actually know **What Works and What doesn't Work having in mind the diversities in our correctional services, the new phenomena in our societies, the changing prisoners profiles and the new generation of staff?**

**The importance of prison infrastructure and AI is raising, that's the evolution in order to respond to the specific needs of the sentenced persons and also to the needs of staff, to create more friendly environment which can support the reintegration efforts.**

**There is an urgent call for a gender balanced approach to be integrated in all interventions and actions.**

Mental health is a raising issue and prison and probation services should not be left alone in dealing with this issue. More community involvement and support are also needed.

The societal perception is that prisons are places only for security and punishment. Maybe it is time to review, to reconsider this understanding and to transform our correctional services as a place for rehabilitation, a place where everybody deserves a second chance, **A PLACE OF HOPE.**