



Radicalisation Expert Group  
- Subgroup Chaplaincy -

# PRISON CHAPLAINCY AND DERADICALISATION

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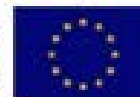
## About EuroPris

The European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) is a non-political, non-governmental organisation that was founded at the end of 2011 and officially registered in the Netherlands.

EuroPris speaks for the views of prison practitioners in Europe. Membership is open to public institutions or organisations in the Council of Europe region, which provide prison or correctional services on a legal or statutory basis.

EuroPris brings together practitioners in the prisoners' arena with the specific intention of promoting ethical and rights-based imprisonment, exchanging information and providing expert assistance to support this agenda. The organisation exists to improve co-operation among European Prison and Correctional Services, with the aim of improving the lives of prisoners and their families, enhancing public safety and security; reducing re-offending; and advancing professionalism in the corrections' field.

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## INTRODUCTION

EuroPris established the expert group on Radicalisation in 2015 with experts from 11 European jurisdictions, all being member of EuroPris. At the first meeting the group established the need for some guidance with regard to religious care in prison. Based on their own experiences and discussions with experts from other European jurisdiction, the expert group members from Germany, Dr. Hans Kieserling and Catalonia, Dr. Julio Zino drafted a document that was discussed and agreed at the following meeting of the group in 2016. The final result of this joint work are these general basic rules for prison chaplaincy and deradicalisation that should be seen as a non-binding, advisory reference document for prison practitioners in Europe.

The general basic rules are not contradictory to or inconsistent with other international recommendations and regulations, such as the “Mandela Rules” of the United Nations, the UNODC Handbook on Dynamic Security and prison intelligence, the guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism of the Council of Europe etc., but they should complement them.

The general basic rules cater for the pastoral care of prisoners and for combatting radicalisation, without regard to the religion of prisoners. They are based on respect for human dignity and the fundamental rights of prisoners, but also on the need for the public to be protected effectively from criminal acts. The whole of society needs more awareness of indicators of radicalisation and extremism, whether political or religious in nature. At the same time, we see that the need is growing to offer particular Muslim prisoners a comprehensive religious pastoral offer. This commands the same respect for all religions, but also the security needs of everyone due to the growing violence in Europe and the wider world by (supposedly) Islamic extremists.

The authors are aware that individual pastoral care as in the Islamic religion has no tradition such as in Christianity. However, in the Member State Germany, for example, many Muslim prisoners use the offer of individual pastoral care by Christian counsellors, with often positive outcomes. Therefore, the basic rules generally recommend for all religions, among other things, offers of individual pastoral care.

We are aware that the organisation of prisoners’ pastoral care in Member States has different attributes. For example, Imams in some EU Member States such as the Netherlands, are, as officials, part of the state system, while in other Member States Imams come from civil society and do their important work as volunteers. The design of the organisation should not have any impact for the actual pastoral work.

In order to find good chaplains (pastors, Imams etc.), it is advisable that religious groups participate in the pre-selection. The aim should be to find reliable, tolerant, moderate, chaplains/Imams who reject violence and appreciate all fundamental and human rights.

For this purpose there are the following general basic rules:

## GENERAL BASIC RULES

### A. Principles

All prisoners have to be treated with respect for human dignity and their fundamental rights, taking into account their specific situation and their individual - including religious - needs; and at the same time the general public has to be protected effectively from criminal acts.

- I. No man or woman loses his God-given dignity. A part of reasonable treatment in prison is the offer that all prisoners may have contact with the chaplaincy service of their religious community and receive assistance.
- II. Prisoners should also have the right to hold religious objects in their cells, pertaining to their specific faith - as long as these objects present no danger to other prisoners, prison staff or the public.
- III. The State is neutral and must not favour any religious group or denomination. Nevertheless the State and its prison service must guarantee a prisoner's right to religious assistance. No prisoner should be forced to practice religion against his will or to receive unwanted proposals of religious care during their stay in prison.
- IV. All prisoners are entitled to participate in religious services and celebrations of their own faith or another religion or confession. This right may be restricted only for overriding reasons of security.

### B. Religious care as an element of deradicalisation in prisons

- I. Religious care is an important element to help to prevent forms of radicalisation, (e.g. extreme left or right-wing or extreme radicalised religious groups). Therefore, it allows prisoners to exercise their rights, and gives them the chance to practice their faith in a non-extreme way.
- II. We accept that there are several forms of religious care within prisons, e.g. religious service, one to one or group meetings, celebrations of religious festivals, etc. or authorised events decided by religious communities or denominations.
- III. Moderate and tolerant religious care is particularly important to help to prevent all forms - especially religious forms - of radicalisation. A widespread religious provision helps to decrease radicalisation and increases the possibilities of recognising and combatting radicalisation, particularly religious radicalisation. Moderate and tolerant religious care allows voluntary relationships to be built between those within the prison system, even prisoners vulnerable to radicalisation. This reduces the influence of other - possibly radicalising - forces.
- IV. Prison chaplains contribute to the cohesion of the community by promoting encounters and dialogues between people with different religions and cultures and can strengthen dialogues between different faiths. Thus, religious care reduces divisive phenomena such as political or religious extremism.
- V. Prison chaplains also promote tolerance within their own religious group and within other social groups.
- VI. It is very important that moderate prison chaplains are carefully selected in order to promote moderate and tolerant religious care. Before starting pastoral work, a chaplain must undergo a security check. It is also important that prison authorities inform new chaplains about prison regulations that may affect them. Moreover, in each prison there should be a member of staff to act as the coordinator between prison management and the chaplains of the different religions and denominations.
- VII. Moreover, in each prison certain members of staff should be assigned to carry out functions of coordination and reference to chaplains of different religions and denominations.
- VIII. In order to select a chaplain, prison authorities need the support and endorsement of the appropriate external religious community for their representatives in prisons. The prison chaplains should use, as far as possible, the official language(s) of the country. It must be recognized that certain religious rituals may require the use of their preceptive language.

- IX. All prison chaplains commit themselves in particular to equality between men and women. Women's rights are human rights.
- X. Prison chaplains must be capable of and ready to detect any tendency towards radicalisation of prisoners. And they must be capable of and ready to deconstruct the ideologies underlying radicalisation. Thus, the conflation of religion and ideology can be demonstrated to the prisoner.
- XI. Prison chaplains can hold in confidence conversations between themselves and prisoners. However, if a prison chaplain recognises that the contents of a conversation could threaten security in prison or present a danger to the public, they are obliged to report this to prison management. The same applies to information provided about a particular prisoner by other prisoners.
- XII. The whole prison staff must be trained in cultural and religious awareness in order to handle the multicultural and religious background of the prisoners in a sensitive manner. This is important because their behaviour influences the prison's climate and therefore their own safety and that of the prisoners. It would also be desirable for prison authorities to designate a person responsible for informing staff about religious and cultural diversity and to answer their queries.
- XIII. Prison chaplains may support prisoners not only in religious matters. This might also apply after release from prison, as well for the family of the prisoner.

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