



Report

Family Relations Workshop

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Welcome

Kirsten Hawlitschek, Executive Director EuroPris

Today and tomorrow a very important subject will be discussed. When offenders change to the better this has very often to do with relations to people that are close to them, it has to do with understanding that they have a responsibility as a parent or as a partner.

But also, for the relatives outside it is crucial to stay connected, to being able to give support, to being able to understand what is happening inside prison or simply being able to deal with having a relative in prison.

EuroPris worked with the Family relations expert group for two years and will share its findings during this workshop.



Opening by host country

Erich Mayer, Director General Austrian Prison Service

In Austria the importance of personal development for prisoners has increased. Social re-integration has higher importance now and we try to support prisoners. It all starts with individual risk and needs assessment based on respect for the individual. Family relations are important to prisoners' personal development.

Session 1

Council of Europe Recommendation on Children with imprisoned parents

Moderator: *Gabriela Slovakova, Chair EuroPris expert group on Family relations*

*Vivian Geiran, Former chair Council for Penological cooperation Council of Europe
Director of Irish Probation Service*

The background of the Council of Europe (CoE) recommendations was explained. There are 47 member states setting standards for rule of law through the work of the Council for Penological Co-Operation (PC-CP). The work is based on human rights principles. Various partners were involved in this recommendation and it all started with the Bucharest meeting in 2015 when Family Relations was framed as something to approach for the CoE. Already at that stage there were examples of good practice, for example the Italian work with the Children Ombudsman. The question was put forward: Is there a need for national, or even international standards in this area? What form shall they take, and how can they be monitored? In 2016, the issue was again addressed at the CoE Prison and Probation Directors Conference. In November 2017 the draft recommendations were presented, last week the final version was approved by the Committee of Ministers. Now a new question arises: What are the future issues to address?

Vivian reflects upon how difficult it was to get the recommendations approved. Everyone thought recommendations was a good idea, but there were several countries resisting during the process. It is now passed by the 47 member states and now we enter the implementation phase.

Kate Philbrick, Children of Prisoners Europe

COPE estimate that 2,1 million children are separated from a parent due to incarceration. The mission of COPE is to make the relation as positive as possible. They do awareness raising to bring enhanced support to children, provide indirect support like advocacy, network activities, co-production of knowledge and directly support working on children areas in prisons and COPE member activities etc.

The CoE recommendation is a landmark in the support for children of prisoners. It is a cross-sectorial issue. The needs and rights of children are in focus. These children should have the same life chances as other children. The child's best interest is in the centre of the recommendation. There are relations between children and parents that doesn't work, we need to be aware of that. But we also need to acknowledge that contact with the imprisoned parent many times has beneficial effects on the relation, for the child and for the parent. Discrimination of prisoners affects the children. Working against prejudice about ex-prisoners will benefit the children as well.

Data collection and allocation of resources to this area are two very important parts of the recommendations. Kate presents the different segments of the recommendation. Next step is implementation, dissemination and translation, as well as inclusion in national regulations and guidelines. COPE will launch a campaign during 2018 with a children's version of the recommendations. COPE would like to create a user-friendly implementation guide for prison services and other agencies. Funding is searched for this purpose.

Children of imprisoned parents and family ties: What does scientific literature advocate during the last 10 years?

Ksenija Romstein, Assistant Professor, Croatia

Ksenija announces that she has personal experience of being the child of a prisoner. Children with incarcerated parents is a growing field of research. According to her two main streams can be identified, she calls them Biological determinism (BD) and Contextual influence perspective (CIP). Ksenija is displeased by studies describing drug abuse and other behaviours as being determined by DNA. Contextual perspective is more applicable in terms of finding solutions for these children. She stresses that scientifically the choice can be made to switch focus from risk factors to support.

Ksenija presents examples of research of both branches, for example effective parenting mediates positive outcomes on antisocial behaviour of the child. It remains unclear whether parental incarceration during childhood predicts psychopathology.

Post-modern perspectives advise us to use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the study of children of prisoners. The context is very important to include in research in this field.

Session 2

Moderator: Gabriela Slovakova, Chair EuroPris expert group on Family relations

Invisible Walls Wales

Corin Morgan-Armstrong, Head of Family and Custody Interventions unit, HMP/G4S PARC, Wales

What is a dad? What is a mom? This question is asked in the first session of the Invisible Walls Wales (IWW) programme. In IWW they try to breach through different barriers for sustainable change. This includes both individual conditions and contextual conditions including rehabilitation measures, resettlement etc. Creating an empathic awakening is the key to splinter these barriers of change. A sense of family, belonging and nurturing is harnessing this empathic awakening. The IWW model aims to create hope through family interventions.

The IWW model consist of a mentor for the whole family, up to 12 months pre-release support, up to 10 months post-release support and coordination of clients contact with relevant agencies. One success factor seems to be the involvement of schools in the programme.

The programme has been evaluated by the University of South Wales. Evaluation consists of two phases, process and outcome evaluation. Results show that the intervention improves quality of life and personal relationships of prisoners as well as reducing risk factors associated to recidivism. The overall conclusion is that IWW is a successful project.

Family approach Netherlands

Monique Dijkstra and Fokko Drent, Leeuwarden & Veenhuizen prison, Custodial Institutions Agency, Netherlands

Petrick Glasbergen, Hanze University, Netherlands

Hanze University and the Dutch Ministry of Justice (DJI) have a trustful cooperation in bringing the Wales concept of family approach to the Netherlands. The effort has resulted in increased exchange between Dutch and English prison services. Several students are working in the project that aims to reduce re-offending and reduce intergenerational re-offending. In DJI a strategic plan

was formulated in 2016. Involving a large number of partners and organisations is essential for the success. In 2017 the pilot was started in two Dutch prisons. Informing staff and creating a good environment for the intervention. In June the first prisoners were entering the programme.

The safety of children is essential in the programme. Assessments are being done by child protection agencies and social services. The programme consists of several activities as bedtime story telling, Skype calls and baby care. Social services are involved before release to ensure a good transition to freedom. The programme is three layered, first layer is accessible for all prisoners, second are measures for those with specific needs, and third is the family intervention unit with a daily programme. The latter will open in two prisons in spring/summer 2018 with about 6-7 inmates ready for admission. There will be 24 places in total in these two units.

Actions to protect children of imprisoned parents

Metella Romana Pasquini Peruzzi, Department of Penitentiary Administration, Italy

In 2011 a law was passed in Italy on measures to protect the relationship between children and imprisoned mothers. As part of this increased focus on children of prisoners the first protected foster home was inaugurated in Rome last year. In Italy there are also low security prisons for women, ICAM. Children can stay until six years of age. ICAM are similar to a foster home. 34 prisoners with 41 children are currently in ICAM:s. Volunteer and support organisations are involved.

Other issues that they are trying to improve are visits in prisons and prisoners taking part in family decisions. A memorandum of understanding was signed by Ministry of Justice, the Children's ombudsman and NGO Bambinisenzasbarre to find new measures to soften the impact on children and reduce risks. Visiting procedures and outdoor facilities are improved in 111 prisons up until today. Indoor children areas are installed inside 192 prisons. Special training is also provided to Italian prison staff.

Session 3

Moderator: Kirsten Hawlitschek, Executive Director EuroPris

Croatian experience / challenges of cooperation between Prison Service and NGOs

Ivana Zanze, NGO Roda, Croatia

The NGO Roda advocates dignified pregnancy, parenthood and childhood. 300 volunteers are doing peer to peer support. Children whose parents are in prison is one of four vulnerable groups that are in priority in RODA's strategic plan. The Ma#me project is taking place in a women's prison. A reading programme is now running in all 23 Croatian prisons. Not just parents, also grandparents and cousins are affected by incarceration. Some of the effects that can be observed are positive signs in prison atmosphere and increased communication between inmates and between inmates and families. The collaboration has also led to special measures in Lepoglava penitentiary, the largest prison in Croatia.

Bars are not barriers is a project to provide financing of travel costs for children that want to visit their parents. It is about selling prison products related to children and prisons such as interactive games, time capsules and toys. The project consists of participative design workshops for inmates and several products are focused on children, pregnancy and relations. A formal partnership around this design and production is now taking shape.

Until 2017 NGOs had no access to Croatian prisons. Last year the Ministry of Justice started funding a number of projects, but they did not prepare prison staff on this change, which resulted in frustration among prison staff and problems with implementation.

EuroPris expert group Practice collection

All examples that are presented by the expert group members can be found in greater detail in the Collection of good practices that is published on the EuroPris website.

Community involvement

Stina Sjödin, Swedish Prison and Probation Service

Kristin Tandberg, Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service

Núria Pujol, General Directorate of Prison Regime and Resources

Families need different kinds of support, therefore efforts need to be made at different places in the community. The prison service cannot take the full responsibility in this field. Cooperation and exchange of knowledge is important because different actors have different responsibilities and knowledge, also in the individual case.

Two examples of cooperation with NGO's were presented:

- *For our children's sake* – parental education, Sweden.
- *Visiting mum programme*, Wales.

Two examples of cooperation with social services:

- *Family houses*, Denmark.
- *Family units*, Finland.

Cooperation with schools:

- *Visit programme for teachers*, Scotland.
- *Book and classroom module for classroom discussions*, Germany.

A challenge in this kind of work is the stigma it means having a parent in prison. These children are sometimes invisible and therefore we need to involve other partners than NGOs, as schools and social services.

Intervention programs

Bernardica Franjić-Nađ, Directorate for Prison and Probation, Croatia

Different kinds of intervention were presented:

- Parenting programmes
- Improving partner/family relationships
- Family counselling
- Other support interventions

Children and other family members, as well as prisoners, need additional support in maintaining and enhancing the quality of family relationship, as well as providing assistance in restoring damaged family relationships. It is also important to link with community-based agencies to facilitate in-reach and to ensure appropriate follow-up to the intervention post-release

Community follow-up should be a key element of the programme and it needs to be sustained beyond custody.

Visiting facilities and physical structures

Pat Dawson, Irish Prison Service

Tuija Muurinen, Criminal Sanctions Agency, Finland

The most positive experience possible should be created conducting a prison visit. This includes specific zones for children and making the entrance welcoming to children. Outdoor visiting facilities normally create a better atmosphere. Family days and events make the visit less dramatic. In Finland there is a sauna in the outdoor visiting area.

Visiting centres is a measure that is widespread in different prison systems. In such centres, round tables are good for visits, the open up for interaction. Sports equipment is something that also facilitates interaction.

Visiting times should be also on evenings and weekend ensuring the child's right to education. Printed and digital information need to be adapted to children.

Communication

Cristina Teoroc, National Administration of Penitentiaries, Romania

Lucija Bozikov, Prison Administration, Slovenia

Prison services need to provide public information about prison visits, towards inmates as well as visitors. They need to know what to expect, rules, what to bring etc. A few examples were presented:

- *Information in visiting areas.*
- *Communication with and between family members.*
- *Information for persons with impaired vision or hearing.*
- *Opportunities to submit complaints and suggestions.*

Staff training

Lillian Dougan, Scottish Prison Service

Prison staff needs to be involved in supporting good relations between prisoners and their children. How can staff be encouraged to promote and support inmates to maintain contact with their families? A few examples were presented:

- *Child coordinators, Norway.* Similar functions exist in Sweden and Scotland.
- *Handbooks for staff.*
- *Five standards for family relations, Scotland.*
- *Child protection training for staff.*
- *PaP programme (prisoner as parent), Croatia.*

Session 4 - World Café

The five pillars of the Practice collection were discussed in three different table sessions.

Feedback session

Community involvement

Some countries have problems with too few NGO's and some have problems with too many NGO's. In the Netherlands there is a coordination centre for persons who are going to serve a prison sentence as well as for released prisoners.

Visiting facilities

While striving to normalise the visiting facilities and procedures for family members as much as possible it is important to keep such measures balanced with security requirements. But also, to have a critical evaluation of the required security measures versus the advantages of being less strict.

Treatment programs

Different treatment models were discussed, from example Slovakia and the Netherlands.

Communication

Ideas and concepts of communication were exchanged. One discussion was about children with autism and how to approach them at visits. Another discussion was money, that it is possible to do many things *without* any particular funding. Awareness, information and behaviour are not matters of resources.

Staff training

Staff training needs to be broadened and modernised to include communication skills, attitudes and relations, not just security matters. Family liaison officers need specific training. Further, ethics and personal and professional limits need to be addressed to avoid situations where staff cross the line for what is acceptable in helping prisoners and their families.

Session 5

Moderator: Kirsten Hawlitschek, Executive Director EuroPris

Family links initiative Ireland

Gráinne Smith, Family Links Coordinator

Family Links is an NGO-driven initiative (Childhood development initiative, CDI), talking to children about imprisonment. They promote data collection and the establishment of more child friendly prisons including family liaison officers. They also facilitate Family and Imprisonment groups (FIG) as well as Parents plus programmes which are evidence-based interventions for different target groups, not just children of prisoners.

FIG Courses and programmes are based on five pillars,

1. Staff support and training
2. Community partnership
3. Communications
4. Visiting facilities
5. Standard operating procedures (SOP) for family relations measures.

Family links is implemented in three facilities so far, one more on stream.

Angelena Murphy, Assistant Chief Officer, Irish Prison Service

Family Links is now part of the basic training for new recruits in the Irish Prison Service. They also work on staff training for already employed officers, effective communication and support to Family Liaison Officer (FLO). Interagency support has been improved and visitor centres have been set up to support visiting children and parents.

To work on the cultural shift in prison services is very important to succeed in this field. The Irish experience is that parent training programmes increase the general knowledge in how to approach dads and moms in prison.

Family strategy Scotland

Lillian Dougan, Learning, Skills & Family Policy Manager, Prison Service Scotland

There are around 10 000 children in Scotland with a parent in prison. For the years 2017-2022 there is a strategy to improve the conditions for these children. Implementation is planned for all 15 prisons.

The Scottish Prison Service works in partnership with Barnardo's and Families Outside using five underpinning principles: Fairness, Dignity and respect, Inclusion of families in rehab plans, Every family is unique and The best interest of the child. Effective partnership is key to improve family contact. Families need to feel included, engaged and safe.

How can this be delivered? Each establishment must define the steps needed in its local environment, taking into account national regulations, operating procedures and laws. Training of staff, visiting centres and learning centres are some of the measures to fulfil the objectives of the strategy. Several other examples of local initiatives were presented.

Siblings of young offenders

Madelein Kattel, Bufff, Sweden

The Swedish NGO Buff did a research overview on siblings of prisoners, nine articles were found. Very little research is published so far. Sibling contact is not regulated in prison rules and other regulations. Siblings to young offenders seem to run an increased risk of being involved in crime, debt etc.

There is a need for more knowledge about young offenders and their siblings. A research project has started with 25 respondents, all young offenders. Preliminary results were presented at the workshop. 68 percent of the respondents had grown up in a family with criminality. Several respondents were concerned about their criminal behaviour's effect on their siblings, especially younger ones.

Family support

Diane Curry, CEO, Partners of Prisoners, England

Diane represent Partners of Prisoners (POPS) an English NGO with 115 staff and 28 volunteers. POPS do continuum of care services throughout the criminal justice system. She underlined the value of lived experience and using an inclusive approach based on decency, valid and trustworthy interventions. Empowerment is the driver for change and families matter in the rehabilitation of offenders. *Offender supporters* are persons who follow the offender through all stages of the Criminal Justice System. Supporting the family breaks isolation and reduces stress and anxiety.

POPS also run visitor centres, women's centres and community-based services. They also offer training.

How to move forward?

*Vivian Geiran, Former chair Council for Penological cooperation Council of Europe
Data, Lausanne University (SPACE).*

Vivian described the need for personality based local change to implementing an overall change in prison services. In addition, there is a need to involve the wider community, especially contact with schools. The point of departure is positive, people accept the fact and agree to the view that children should not suffer from the incarceration of a parent.

Vivian also called for more research in this field. Building alliances for research is important.

The recommendations are in place, an implementation guide will be produced to support implementation. There is a will to implement and EuroPris, COPE and Council of Europe will be important partners in this process.

The participants were asked to discuss the following questions:

1. What one thing will I do when I get back home?

Good practices, apply in home country if possible.
CoE Recommendation, create national guidelines

2. The role of EuroPris in the upcoming work?

Coordinate future activities in the field
Push countries towards delivering on the CoE Recommendations
Support implementation of CoE Recommendations
Support students/researchers
Collect staff trainings
Continue the expert group
Topic for AGM
Collecting good practices and communicate them in different languages
Best practice assessment/accreditation
Platform for staff training
Arrange another workshop in 2020, follow up on the CoE Recommendation
COPE, continue collaboration
Independent monitoring of prison practice
Linking with other organisations
Create “statement of intent” to use for national agencies

3. How should we seek to influence other organisations?

Open up for research/create research projects with several partners