

Minutes from the Fourth Meeting of the European Penitentiary Training Academies 23 and 24 June 2011 in Oslo, Norway

For various reasons the network members from Andorra, Catalonia, Croatia and Italy did not attend the Conference. England (not a member) had also announced that they would attend the Conference and also that they would like to become a member of the network, but for undisclosed reasons they did not show up.

Other Prison Academies representing various countries were Belgium, Ireland, France, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Denmark participated as an observer and a contributor.

The Conference agenda and lectures

The agenda and links to the lectures can be found on the internet pages of KRUS (The Correctional Service of Norway Staff Academy): <http://www.krus.no/no/Nyheter/2011/EPTA/>

A summary of the group discussions – some main points

The presentations from Denmark and Spain on the topic "Development of leadership" were followed by group discussions. Each group consisted of three or four nations. The following points of interests were discussed and presented in a plenary session afterwards:

- The quality of leadership is of great importance for the quality of the work of the Prison officers.
- It has been demonstrated in many countries that it is not a simple task to recruit the leaders one needs.
- There is a common understanding that the recruitment of leaders should be done on a national level in each and every country.

- It is important that there is a good coherence between theory and practice in leadership training so that theoretical knowledge can be transformed into practical skills applied on a day-to-day basis.
- A national leadership training scheme must be supplemented with international experiences concerning leadership in the care and confinement of criminals.
- Leadership competence must include reflection, the ability to see more solutions to a problem and also to understand the consequences of a decision.

- How can one establish a minimum standard of leadership in the EU/EEA-area?
- There is a common understanding that a leader should have a Bachelor's or a Master's degree and that the leadership training should be completed before entering a position as a leader.

- The contents of leadership training must be firmly based on what the expected qualities of a Prison leader are. It is not always sufficient having completed a general leadership training program before entering the Prison Service.
- How can Europe use the competence developed by ENAP on leadership training?
- Is it possible to develop multi- or bilateral Prison Academies for leadership training?
- All leaders should have access to coaching sessions focusing on their functions as leaders.

Following the presentation of a Nordic research project on recidivism there were group discussions on the possibilities of cooperation on research in other fields among the member countries. The following points of interest were discussed and presented in a plenary session afterwards:

- It is very important in all aspects of the care and confinement of criminals to translate the results and conclusions of research projects and to transform them into practical measures via the training programs in the member countries.
- The training programs must contribute to strengthen research in areas not covered by other research bodies e.g. colleges and universities.
- If transnational projects could be established, this could attract research bodies outside the community of Prisons to engage themselves on topics we would like to focus on.
- It is important to find the key constituents of success in the training programs to reach the goals of the Correctional Services in each and every country.

After the lecture on the quality of Prison staff training there were group discussions on the possibilities of cooperation to find common standards of training and ways of multi-/bilateral measures to become familiar with the training programs in the various countries and to improve the quality of such programs.

The following points of interests were discussed and presented in a plenary session afterwards:

- What is the professional role of a Prison officer? What do we need to know more about to improve the quality of the training programs to fulfill the needs of the Prison Service? The cooperation between the Prison Academies must be strengthened to illuminate these questions in more countries.
- There are somewhat differentiated opinions among the countries as to what should be the main focus in the training of Prison officers. It is therefore important to develop a set of minimum standards for the core areas of competence of the officers.
- A topic of discussion was also in what ways the training should include strategies to prevent burn-out and frustration. Do we have something to learn from other services e.g. the military forces?
- The quality and contents of the training programs should be developed in each and every country to include a common understanding of "good practice" and of "what works".
- A proposal was made that we should have a common website. There was a general agreement on this point to enable all of us to keep each others updated on the contents and development in

the training programs, but one did not reach an understanding regarding how and by whom this website should be operated. This really should be a challenge for the coming Presidency and the next Conference.

Conclusion and recommendations from the final plenary session

In an e-mail to Norway Georgia had expressed their wish to become a member of the network. This was discussed at the Conference. There was a general agreement that only countries inside the EU/EEA-area can be members. Consequently Norway was asked to inform Georgia that they would be given observer status at the next Conference. This would also apply to other countries within the EU/EEA-area.

Denmark was represented by Mr. Jørgen Balder, Director of Staff Training Center, Denmark, who gave a lecture on the challenges of management development. Mr. Balder participated throughout the Conference. The notion that also Denmark should become a member was expressed by the member countries. Director Balder said that he supported that suggestion, but he would have to discuss the matter with his General Director.

Distribution of binding follow-up tasks

The Conference asked for more tangible projects in the network. It was emphasized that one had to initiate collaborative projects which could give positive results in training in each and every country and which also could be inspiring for the development of multi-/bilateral minimum solutions and key constituents of success.

An agreement was reached on the following binding elements:

- Switzerland will try to recruit three German constituent states into the network.
- Norway, together with Belgium, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden will try to arrange a teachers' exchange program in the course of the autumn 2011 or the spring 2012. This could involve visiting each other to get more information on teaching programs and to be inspired to keep up the good work.
- Romania will complete a report on mentoring and pass the information on to the other member Academies.
- Belgium will consider the role and importance of ICT (Information and Communications Technology).
- The Presidency must prepare a declaration of willingness to accept and welcome partners from each and every member country.
- All Academies must firmly base their role in the network with their superiors in their line of command. This can be done by having each Academy sending Conference minutes to their General Director. It was generally agreed that attention be paid to tangible results.
- All countries should exchange more information on teaching programs and research projects.

Election of President for 2012

Director Harald Føsger (Norway/KRUS) was elected President for 2011 in Toledo. He has now resigned as Director of KRUS. It was therefore a natural choice that the new Director of KRUS, Mr. Hans-Jørgen Brucker, was nominated to replace Director Føsger for the remaining part of 2011. This motion was unanimously carried by the assembly. The fact that it now strictly speaking was Croatia's turn to take over the directorship could not be carried out since they did not show up for the conference, thus making it necessary to find a replacement.

For 2012 the members agreed that Belgium could assume the leadership of the Presidency since they had offered to do so. No specific person was mentioned but Belgium will announce the name of the new President after having discussed this matter in their country. The next Conference will therefore be arranged in Belgium in May/June 2012.

The Presidency is therefore held by Spain (the former President), Norway (the incumbent President) and Belgium (the prospective President).

A meeting for these countries will be arranged to review the minutes and conclusions from the Oslo Conference and to plan next year's Conference.