

# **Minutes of the 5th Conference of the EPTA network on 13 and 14 September 2012 Marneffe, Belgium**

Apart from Belgium, 15 countries participated at the conference: Andorra, Catalonia, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, France, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and for the first time in Armenia, Georgia, the German Land of Bavaria, the Netherlands and Poland.

Italy and Spain were not able to join us for financial reasons but have confirmed their interest in the network.

Austria has shown interest in the network but could not send a representative this year.

The conference was preceded by a pre-conference during which the nomination of new members has been validated. Armenia, Georgia, Denmark and Poland are full members from 1 January 2013. President for the year 2013 was also elected. This is John MacGuckin from Ireland.

In the evening, the Governor of the Province of Liège has welcomed us. You will find his speech in attachment.

## **Conference Agenda and Presentations:**

You can find the conference program on Yammer and slides show on the DVD that you received on September 14.

### **Day 1: Focus on the hostage-taking:**

Presentation 1: Ireland - focus on general staff training and incident management training.

Presentation 2: Croatia – resolving incident situations with prisoners in a peaceful way

### Summary of group discussions:

After the presentations of Ireland and Croatia, 4 subgroups reflected on the following topics:

What do you do to prevent hostage-taking?

How do you train your staff to manage hostage-taking?

How do you ensure the follow-up after hostage-taking?

Except in Belgium, there is little or no hostage-taking in European prisons.

From the point of view of prevention, many emphasize the importance of

a good communication between staff members and inmates. We must work on this competence early in the initial training. In Sweden, the staff is also aware of what not to do in case of a critical incident and Norway on how to behave in case of aggression (5 days). The Netherlands has meanwhile opted for a position very clear: if there is a hostage-taking, the staff may not open the doors. Inmates know it.

For the management of hostage-taking: Most countries have a pool of negotiators. They are trained either in the prison or by the police in Bavaria for example.

Sweden, like Ireland, stresses the importance of choosing a negotiator in the penitentiary staff who, in fact, can not promise anything to the hostage taker.

France called for a task force formed by the GIGN. It can be on the scene quickly and supports incident management. In most other countries, when it happens, it is the police who takes over.

Catalonia, like other countries also stressed the importance of doing exercises every year.

Everyone agrees on the importance of debriefing and then also collate information gathered during the incident (or incidents simulations) to improve existing procedures. In Armenia, the teams which are not good enough in simulation exercises must come back in training.

The debriefing is provided mostly by someone specially trained for this kind of mission.

## Day 1: Focus on radicalization in prisons

**Presentation 1:** Koen Lambrecht - The radicalization in prison, a brief survey on the approach by the Belgian intelligence service

**Presentation 2:** Franck Orban - The radicalization in prison, European and Norwegian perspectives

Following the two presentations, the group mainly discussed the topic of staff training. It varies from country to country but the group seems to agree that good communication between staff and inmates and a climate of respect are obstacles to radicalization. Nevertheless, it would be interesting in that staff members can detect signs but still need to know what they should observe.

Several speakers stressed the importance of the presence of official imams in jail, which limits the emergence of extremist leaders among prisoners.

## Day 2: A good training program

**Presentation 1:** Focus on mentoring as part of the initial training of penitentiary staff - presented by Didier Simon and Serge Lukacs

**Presentation 2:** Mentoring in Romania as part of the training of new managers.

Each country then briefly explained for what audience, and in what context it applies mentoring.

A film about the initial training of penitentiary staff in Belgium was issued in conjunction with a tour of the "wing simulation".

The afternoon was focused on the bi or multi-lateral relationship existing between European countries with 5 presentations:

France: "The students internships Europe French directors";

Bavaria: "Relations of Bavarian prison school";

Poland: "International Seminar of self defense and intervention techniques (1992-2012)"

Switzerland: "international activities of Swiss training center for prison staff."

Georgia presented the various agreements signed with European countries.

We retain the speech that marked the last night, the word of our president, John MacGUCKIN, which emphasized the importance of continuing these collaborations, exchanges and continue to keep in touch between conferences.