



EPTA Annual Conference

2021 Report

21-23 September 2021

Hybrid event in Warsaw, Poland



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About

The European Penitentiary Training Network (EPTA) was founded in 2010 by heads of European Penitentiary Staff Training Academies to provide for a structure that supports sharing of training methodologies and contents across Europe. EPTA aims at developing a cooperation that enhances initial and continuous training of correctional staff and at contributing to boost awareness of the correctional staff's work in prison and probation settings.

Introduction

Members of the EPTA Network meet annually at the EPTA Annual Conference to exchange the latest developments in the sector. This year, the Annual Conference was held hybrid on 21-23 September 2021 during three day sessions, organised by the EPTA presidency, the Academy of Justice in Poland. Moreover, the Annual Conference was supported by the EU-funded project 'Innovating Together: Connecting European Penitentiary Training Academies', which is being coordinated by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and the EPTA Steering Committee.



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Day 1

The 14th EPTA Annual Conference was organized in hybrid mode due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference theme was: "Prison Service in time of Covid: Impact on training and teaching".

Opening

The first day of the conference began with the opening ceremony, which was conducted by Rector-Commandant gen. Marcin Strzelec, PhD from Academy of Justice together with a special guest of the ceremony Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Justice Marcin Romanowski, PhD, who also took the floor and welcomed the guests of the conference. After the opening ceremony, Rector Commandant handed the floor over to participants online to introduce themselves.

Project perspective: The EPTA II

The conference continued with its first presentation prepared by Emma Oosten from Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) who presented the prospect of future international cooperation within the framework of the EU-funded project 'Innovating Together'.

European Judicial Training

Successively, representatives of the European Commission Lena Geckle and Cédric Le-Bosse presented the strategy prospect of European Judicial Training for 2021-2024. Training of justice professionals on EU law covering all areas: from civil, criminal and administrative law to fundamental rights.

Postdoctoral Fellowships in Poland

The next presentation by Dominika Teklińska, PhD, concerned the offer of 2-year post-doctoral fellowships that can be implemented at the Academy of Justice in Poland.

The health crisis, a lever for transforming training at the ENAP

The first plenary session began with a presentation Jean-Philippe Mayol (deputy director of the ENAP) and Hugues Belliard (deputy director of training at the ENAP) on the health crisis in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and the transformation of the ENAP training institution in times of crisis. Methodically presented the analysis of the impact of the crisis on training, the reorganization of the work and methods of teaching and training staff, as well as the impact on the knowledge and competences obtained during the training of course participants.

Professional training and advanced training of the personnel of the State Criminal and Executive Service of Ukraine in conditions of the pandemic: challenges caused by COVID-19

Another presentation conducted by prof. Oleksii Togochnykyi i Stanislav Chebonenko, PhD was devoted to the challenges that arose as a result of the pandemic. Solutions were presented that enabled the continuation of training in Ukraine despite the conditions that had to be introduced in connection with the pandemic, i.e. distance, remote learning, etc.



Research plan related to the validation of the cognitive-behavioral method used in Problem Solving Model on Polish prisoners

During the workshop, representatives of the Academy of Justice, Jarostaw Rychlik PhD, Maja Zawadzka, Amanda Perry PhD had the opportunity to present aspects of psychological training in the Prison Service. This workshop was devoted to the implementation of a psychological approach in the training of the Staff of the Prison Service and everyday work with prisoners. During the workshop, participants had the opportunity to get acquainted with current and practical approaches in psychological training.

Day 2

The second day of the annual EPTA conference included visiting the Academy of Justice Campus headquarters in Kalisz. Participants could personally see in what conditions students learn at Academy of Justice and, above all, what kind of training is crucial during their studies in the Prison Service. Online participants were able to join the tour via a livestream connection.

Prevention of alcoholism in the penitentiary

Throughout the second workshop, prof. Krzysztof Wojcieszek, PhD, presented various models of training patterns connected to fighting with alcoholism and addictions that are one of the main reasons of coming back to crime. During the workshop, participants analyzed the case studies and had opportunity to learn about up to date training patterns for prison staff concerning preparation with fighting with inmates' addictions.

Formerly, the conference participants visited the Town Hall with the observation tower and presented the history of Kalisz. Another attraction closely related to the Prison Service was a visit to the Prison in Kalisz, which in the years 1846-2015 was a closed type unit intended for men serving a custodial sentence for the first time. In the external ward there were convicts qualified to serve a prison sentence, while in a semi-open prison for those serving their sentence for the first time. In 2020, the Academy of Justice became the owner of the Penitentiary Unit.

Day 3

Prison Service in Time of Covid: impact on training and teaching

During the third day Dr. Vincenzo Abbodante presented „Prison Service in Time of Covid: impact on training and teaching”. During the presentation, particular attention was paid to the complexity of the Italian prison administration, which is crucial in society and plays an important role in the criminal justice system and at the same time should not be underestimated. It also stated that the Italian prison administration must be responsible for the way in which it exercises the powers conferred on it. In turn, this can only happen through serious training and updating of the knowledge of prison staff. In particular, to protect the fundamental rights of the individual and to prevent serious human rights violations against detainees, whom the Italian prison administration has a duty to protect and reduce.



Innovative Approaches to Prison Staff Enhancement within International Cooperation

Mr. Frantisek Vlach presented „Innovative Approaches to Prison Staff Enhancement within International Cooperation“. The main solution to the training problem that was raised was to break the language barrier, specifically the emphasis of the service on learning English. Thanks to this solution, the staff of the prison service could train remotely from eminent scientists from around the world. The author mentioned the two main countries with which cooperation has developed during the pandemic, i.e. Romania and Germany.

Prison Service and virtual training: what will remain after the COVID pandemic? Lessons learnt in Catalonia

Another presentation conducted by Mr. Marc Ceron Riera was devoted to what the COVID pandemic teach the Prison Service and virtual training in Catalonia. The author described the situation in Catalonia during the beginning of the pandemic COVID-19. How the pandemic itself has changed the approach in the prison service and how the prison service has adapted to the changed reality. The main problems raised by the author were various forms of training requiring face-to-face meetings in reality. The remote forms used as forms of training, despite the difficulty caused by the lack of the possibility of meetings themselves, gave other benefits in the form of enabling training for a larger number of people and regardless of the distances separating students and trainers, which in turn increased the quality of training, thanks to the possibility of using the knowledge of outstanding specialists.

Guidance and training on prison management and human rights

The Annual EPTA conference hosted a guest from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights", Laura Jaffrey, Andrea Huber and Martin Gillå. In this workshop, the speakers presented the practical guidance for penitentiary staff and prison administrations to implement the revised Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), which they developed together with Penal Reform International and the training curriculum on the Nelson Mandela Rules that they were currently developing.

Election of the EPTA President

The annual conference ended with the election of the next president, who was elected Centre of Legal Studies and Specialized Training in Catalonia, congratulations!
Note that in addition and as support of this report, recordings of the online conference and PowerPoint presentations are available on the EPTA website.





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