



**Cross border training
programme**

**Hostage taking situations
in penitentiary
environment**

**National Correctional
Officers Training School
Târgu Ocna (SNPAP)**

The first reactions in case of hostage taking situations in penitentiary environment



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

SECTION A

I. Definition of crisis

The Oxford dictionary gives the following definition for the term "crisis": a moment of intense difficulty or danger; a time when an important difficulty or decision must be made.

The word "crisis" is derived from the Greek κρίσις (krisis) which means "decision" or "turning point".

The Romanian language dictionary gives the following definitions for the term "crisis": "manifestation of different difficulties (economic, political, social etc.); period of pressure, disturbance, trials (often decisive) that society faces at a certain time; tension, moment of great mental depression, uproar; violent manifestation of contradictions; a dangerous and decisive moment.

There are many words that people use to describe negative life events such as stress, distress, emergency or crisis, and sometimes they are used incorrectly, leading to confusion or to an overlap of meanings.

As a rule, *crises* have their own process of initiation and evolution. At the same time, crises are not the result of chance but the visible manifestation of a long period of negative accumulations (tensions, superficiality, routine, lack of interest, lack of control etc.). Crises are, thus, *the result of a cumulative and continuous process of organizational disfunctions*, therefore the crisis situation does not appear as an unexpected and random event, but rather as the result of cumulative and potentially observable disfunctions which the management of the institution have to handle, but whose dynamics can become suddenly overwhelming once it is initiated.

Definition

In the penitentiary environment, we can say that ***the crisis situation*** represents the direct and violent confrontation of the parties involved in a conflict situation that generates a state of



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

danger for the life or for the physical integrity of the staff or which endangers the safety of the penitentiary and requires specialized intervention in order to be handled.

Experience has shown that, despite all the precautions taken to stop or control a crisis situation in penitentiaries, it usually gets out of control and escalates. In these circumstances, the crisis can bring serious damage to the institution (if it is not managed correctly), an important element being, in this situation, communication. In other words, good communication during the crisis can mitigate and even prevent damages or injuries.

It must be remembered that, in some cases, the crisis situation in penitentiaries can also occur without having an obvious, visible conflict, situations in which the crisis occurs due to the subjective reasons of those involved.

For example, *an escape* can be generated by the abusive behavior of the staff towards an inmate (as a result of an open conflict situation - the classic case) but also as a personal decision of an inmate who simply wants to get home to see his mother (practically the result of an inner/intrapersonal conflict).

The crisis situation can also arise from an open and impersonal conflict with the prison administration (which does not approve the permission of an inmate to attend the funeral of a relative) or it can arise from a personal or impersonal conflict with entities outside the penitentiary system (inmate who believes that the prosecutor investigated him incorrectly, or that the judge gave him a sentence that he perceives it as being too harsh, or because there is a rumour that there would be a general amnesty that is delayed etc. and thus, the inmate ends up instigating the other detainees into initiating a riot or in taking a prison officer hostage), but the consequences and the management of the resulting crisis rest with the penitentiary.



I.1. The phases of the crisis situation

The evolution of a situation from conflict to crisis has 5 phases:

- **Phase I. Conflict situation-** partial or total opposition of the parties.
- **Phase II. Engagement in conflict-** the period when there are confrontations between parties which do not lead to a resolution of the conflict, or when the conflict is mismanaged, or its potentially violent development is ignored.
- **Phase III. Crisis situation**—the violent confrontation between parties lead to a solution.
- **Phase IV. Crisis resolution-** type A or B solution.
- **Phase V. The post-conflict situation-** the relationship between the parties after the resolution of the conflict.

We can easily notice that any conflict situation has the potential of a crisis situation. Therefore, a conflict situation that is managed carefully and professionally by staff working directly with prisoners can reduce or even extinguish a crisis situation before it occurs.

The role of the prison officers thus becomes a crucial one in preventing crises in the prison environment, by paying attention to the communication with inmates, paying constant attention to details, complying with procedures and developing skills in managing conflicts tactfully and cautiously.

It is traumatic for a prison officer, both at a personal and professional level, to find out too late that, due to his unprofessional behavior (either abusive, indifferent, careless or too permissive) he has created a crisis situation in the penitentiary, whose management needed a forceful intervention and which resulted in human casualties or significant material damage.

For example, there were cases when a prison officer chose to ignore the "signals" sent by inmates who were unhappy



about the time spent outside the cell and to enhance the tension thus created by using statements like "why are you asking for a walk, you're not on vacation, you're in prison. I have other emergencies today. Leave these whims aside!". Subsequently, the inmates initiated a riot during which the detention cells were set on fire, requiring the prison administration's forceful intervention, and, as a result, a prison officer was seriously injured and became unfit for work. It was too late when the prison officer in question realized that this situation could have been avoided by properly managing the conflict in its early phase, through effective communication and professionalism.

II. Crises situations in penitentiary environment

II.1. General considerations regarding crises situations in prisons

In prisons, the crises situations can be divided into two major categories:

- ✓ *operational incidents;*
- ✓ *critical incidents.*

The course deals with approaching incidents/crises situations in penitentiaries through effective communication and through specific mechanisms which a prison officer can use, particularly the persons who are in direct contact with the actors of the conflict.

Therefore, we will not tackle here the way of solving operational or complex critical incidents, but only the frequent and usual crises situations which might appear between the staff and inmates and which must be managed by the prison officer immediately, in order to prevent the development of a crisis situation.

We will use the term "*crisis situation*" to name that particular phase of the evolution of a conflict, when the parties are involved in an open confrontation, often a violent one, with the intention of finding a solution to end the conflict.



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

One must avoid the confusion between *critical* and *operational incidents*, regulated by operational procedures manuals, and *the crises situations* approached in this course, which aims at emphasizing the role that communication has within a crisis.

So, situations such as: an inmate knocks on the door very loudly and continuously, shouts, screams or does not want to comply with the instructions given by the prison officer, he exchanges different objects with other inmates or does not want to go in/out of the room, or he requests to go to the doctor too frequently and unscheduled, or two inmates threaten each other and fight in the courtyard using a knife or other sharp objects, or all the inmates in a room demand that an inmate be removed from the room, *represent conflict situations* and not *crisis situations*.

Thus, we must keep in mind the essential aspects regarding *"the conflict"*; it represents a process that takes place between two parties, A and B, parties that have different interests, needs (for e.g. one of the parties wants something that is unacceptable to the other party).

Therefore, *the conflict situation represents the initial phase of a crisis*; a minor conflict which was ignored or mismanaged by the prison officer can turn into a crisis situation.

For example: *The inmates are agitated and complain to the prison officer, several times, that the food is not good and cannot be eaten; the prison officer replies "this is the food in the prison, it's just not a 5-star restaurant", without trying to explain the reasons, or without showing any empathy.*

Managing the inmate-administration conflict in this way has a very high chance of degenerating into a crisis situation (e.g. a riot of all the inmates in the penitentiary).



There is a crisis situation in the penitentiary only when a certain situation creates a state of danger for the life or physical integrity of the staff or endangers the safety of the penitentiary, respectively:

- Assault upon staff;
- Inmates` riot;
- Escape;
- Taking hostages.

II.2. General causes regarding the occurrence of crises situations

- a) Causes related to the abusive/harsh detention regime;
- b) Causes related to a weak authority of the staff/penitentiary administration.

Such incidents, varying in intensity and severity, can occur in a detention place when, in a certain period, the following conditions are *met*:

A. The unbearable detention regime is determined by:

- ✓ inadequate accommodation, food and medical assistance;
- ✓ violation of rights, frequent and significant abuses amongst inmates ("strong" prisoners attack the "weak" ones), as well as abuses generated by staff in relation with inmates;
- ✓ the staff's lack of flexibility, the exaggerated rigidity in the enforcement of the rules;
- ✓ causes related to the development of the legislative framework or to the anticipation of unwanted changes regarding the detention regime.

• *Remember*: when there seems to be a certain level of discontent, which apparently does not seem serious, the unbearable state of the situation can be exaggerated by the instigating inmates, who usually aim at solving their personal interests.

B. Weak authority of the staff/institution is created by:



- ✓ sloppy look of the staff, violation of specific safety procedures, overly tolerant attitude in relation to the inmates;
- ✓ the reaction of the prison officers regarding the orders received from superiors (negative comments, delayed actions, negative debates in the presence of inmates);
- ✓ tolerating the abuse committed by the inmates on the staff (verbal aggression, swearing, slapping, inappropriate way of speaking, inappropriate touching, name-calling etc.);
- ✓ situations of non-compliance with legal provisions, working procedures, duties, supervision and safety measures;
- ✓ the lack of appropriate sanctions or the lenient/indifference treatment regarding repeated violations conducted by the inmates (minor, medium or even major incidents, tackled superficially by the administration);
- ✓ sanctioning decisions ordered by the management of the penitentiary, which are cancelled in Court.

III. Basic rules in the management of crises situations by prison officers

III.1. Necessary skills in solving crisis situations

Unlike the conflict management situation, in which the role of the prison officer is active, with certain defined limits, in crisis situations the role of the prison officer who is involved in such an event is much diminished.

The specialized departments are the ones which can solve a crisis situation in a prison. In Romania, we have:

- *The crisis cell* - which analyzes and coordinates the intervention;
- *Specialized intervention groups* (teams trained on enforcing special security measures, coercion and control, as well as on the use of immobilization means and techniques);



- *Police/gendarmerie* - as supporting aids in some situations.

Therefore, the prison officer involved in a crisis situation has a collateral role in the resolution of the crisis, namely:

- a) *preventive role*;
- b) *reactive role*.

a) The preventive role

It means that the prison officer must do his/her job in such a way as to avoid the generation of conflict situations or, as the case may be, to effectively manage the conflict situations that arise, so that they do not turn into crises situations.

As for conflict resolution, *the competence of the prison officer is limited to the prevention of crisis situations*, which means:

- ✓ *Respond whenever requested by inmates;*
- ✓ *Intervenes in crisis situations, including the situations when the inmates did not ask to see him/her;*
- ✓ *Negotiate, if the inmate is claiming a right that cannot be granted immediately or if the inmate has a request which has not been included in the daily schedule, so that the detainee should find another solution to his problem.*
- ✓ *Forwards the inmate's request to the ward chief or to other superiors;*
- ✓ *Requests the intervention of superiors if the negotiation with the inmate regarding his request does not come to any result;*
- ✓ *Avoid aggressive or conflict-generating behaviors, such as:*
 - *the use of aggressive language in relation to the inmates: insults, irony, threats etc.*
 - *abusive behavior: revenge, physical aggression, causing physical or mental suffering, inciting acts of violence, provocation etc.*



b) The reactive role

It means that the prison officer must be able to *effectively manage the situation if he/she is involved in the development of a crisis, as a victim or potential victim*.

So, if the prison officer is directly involved in the development of the crisis, as a victim, he must have the ability to react correctly and appropriately to the situation so as:

- ✓ *Not to aggravate his own situation or that of other colleagues in the same situation;*
- ✓ *Not to hinder the efforts of the specialized team, which is trying to solve the crisis (negotiators, intervention groups etc.).*

III.2. Recommended behavior to prevent crises situations

The rules for preventing crises situations:

➤ Communicate effectively: don't raise your voice, don't offend the others, don't discriminate, don't make promises, don't use irony or slang, don't challenge, do not be abusive. One must not use a threatening, superior or ironic tone of voice.

➤ Do not be arrogant or defiant: use/enforce the law and authority in good faith and do not use it as a means of revenge or gain.

➤ Always be cautious and attentive to the gestures of the inmates with whom we interact:

- pay attention to their gestures, position yourselves so that you have all the inmates in your sight,
- do not allow inmates to stay next to you or behind you;
- when taking the detainee out of the room, ask him to stay in front of you, next to the wall, in the safety area (1.6 m), while you close and secure the door of the cell, then conduct the search.

➤ Always carry out body searches as regulated: this is a protective measure for staff, but also for our colleagues, it gives us the feeling that we have done our job well and at the same



time it represents a method of preventing crises situations in the penitentiary.

➤ Focus constantly on knowing many things about the inmates housed in the area you are responsible for: risk level, education, family situation, concerns, personal problems, conflicts with other inmates, with persons outside the prison with other prison officers, physical and mental health, emotional state etc.; all these will help you manage communication with the prisoner much more easily and, in crises situations, will increase the chances of success; you must not ignore any signal of discontent or tension amongst inmates

➤ Use the peephole correctly:

- Open the cover of the peephole slowly and do not slam it. It is very important that no movement betrays our tension: the prisoner will feel that we cannot control ourselves and will be more threatening because he will think he can impress us this way.
- Do not lean your head in the peephole area and rather let the detainee position himself in front of the peephole; the prison officer maintains his upright position, ready to listen to the inmate. This way you avoid an awkward and inferior communication position (bent over towards the peephole), as well as serious or unpleasant incidents: the possibility of being hit in the face/eye area with sharp objects or being splashed with substances.
- Do not introduce your arm into the peephole! If you have to hand over or receive objects from the inmates in the cell, ask them to hand them over/receive them at the peephole and be very careful when taking/giving goods. By doing so you avoid immobilization, injury or even being taken hostage by the inmate/inmates who might immobilize your arm.

➤ Face to face discussions with inmates must be held in a secure environment

- If the detainee needs to talk to another person (your superior, for example), after the search the prison officer will take him



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

directly to the office. It is best not to remove him from the cell until you are sure that the superior can talk to him. One must avoid that the inmate walks around in order to reach the peepholes of the other doors, but if he does and it turns out that he did not have a serious problem, this should be noted and mentioned the next time the inmate has a similar request.

- When the inmate is in the hallway, it is not advisable to have a conversation about solving the problem, to encourage him or to reassure him that the superior can talk to him, or to encourage him or to reassure him that everything will be fine.

IV. Essential aspects regarding assault on staff, riot and hostage-taking situations in penitentiary environment

IV.1.Types of prison officers who are likely to become victims of crises situations (assault/hostage taking)

The inmates have a tendency to react violently towards the representatives of the state authorities inside the penitentiary.

Every day, there is least one prison officer who is verbally or physically assaulted while doing his/her job.

The types of prison officers prone to being taken hostage are:

- a) The careless naive;
- b) The tough guy;
- c) The old man;
- d) Female staff.

a) The careless naive

It can be the "good" employee, the person who, in comparison with other prison officers, has a behaviour which is not compatible with the deontological code of the penitentiary staff.

The main characteristics of this type are as follows:



- He tends to be friendly with all the inmates and cannot say "no" when he has to. Such an employee wants to be liked by everyone and, thus, he/she finds it difficult to gain control over detainees.
- He can be that type of person who can be easily talked into allowing the inmates do something that is forbidden.
- He/she is tolerant in relation to inmates.
- He does not always apply and respect working procedures (for example: wishing not to disturb his colleagues or to find a solution to the situation, the prison officer enters the cell in a crisis situation, having with the keys to the cells with him, without waiting for any support from his/her colleagues).
- In his professional career, he repeatedly made wrong decisions.

Inmates perceive such an employee as **an easy target**.

b)The toughguy

In comparison with the other employees, he is excessively strict and has difficulties in relating to inmates. The main characteristics of this type are as follows:

- He has low communication skills, is not a good listener, gives orders in a more than authoritarian manner, is sarcastic, ironic, even when the situation does not require such an attitude.
- He has a tendency to challenge inmates or to annoy them due to his/her limits in communication. He is inflexible, rigid, but not always correct in applying the rules.
- He can draw up an incident report for an inmate in a different way than for another inmate, even in similar misconduct situations. He can apply different disciplinary standards from one day to another, so that the inmates cannot anticipate his reactions in a certain situation; thus he maintains a state of pressure in relations to them.
- He can be the subject of many complaints regarding the regime enforced to the inmates.



The inmates feel anger towards the behavior of such a prison officer and may decide to insult him or take him hostage for *revenge*.

c) The old man

It is about the older prison officers, who are no longer able to maintain authority over the inmates. The main characteristics of this type are as follows:

- He is bored and fed up with the work he is doing, everything is routine for him, he is too confident in his instincts, and, as a rule he does not observe the safety procedures, but he relies only on his experience.
- He is not concerned with the relationship with the inmates and is completely out of shape.

The prisoners perceive him as an easy target, who does not raise problems if he is assaulted or taken hostage.

d) Female staff

As with the older staff, female staff are perceived as weaker and therefore an easier target; although it may be a false perception, this is *one of the stereotypes amongst inmates*.

They are prone to hostage-taking and sex crimes.

IV.2. Assault upon staff

The assault is the topic of a significant number of works, which denotes the importance of this type of offence.

Assault, as a crime against authority, is described as follows:

The threat committed directly or by means of direct communication, hitting or other violent acts, bodily harm, beatings or injuries causing death or murder committed against a prison officer, in the performance of his duties or in connection with these duties.



In the performance of their duties, prison officers who enforce the law and represent the state authority must comply with the legal provisions that regulate their activity and must also refrain from any act or deed which might harm the inmates.

It often happens that the assault is not reported, usually when there is verbal aggression. This encourages inmates to maintain such negative behaviour. However, there are situations in which even threats can be sanctioned. It's true, neither the criminal investigation bodies nor the courts understand exactly what the effects of prolonged exposure to these verbal aggressions are.

In general, *riots in prisons* take place as a result of non-compliance with the regulations regarding the safety of detention and of the intervention of a prison officer. In these cases, *the inmates develop two types of assaulting reactions:*

- a) **verbal:** *threats, insults, etc.,*
- b) **physical violence:** *hitting and other violent acts, tearing the uniform apart, stabbing, immobilization, strangulation, etc., violent actions that can cause the death of the prison officer.*

When the prison officer is assaulted by inmates **he can react effectively** as follows:

- ✓ *keeps calm,*
- ✓ *moves away from the violent inmate;*
- ✓ *does not react violently, either verbally or physically,*
- ✓ *if he has the opportunity at that moment, he must go away from the area where tension has been created and ask another colleague to take his place,*
- ✓ *informs the superior,*
- ✓ *draws up an incident report for the inmate in question, in order to be submitted to the disciplinary commission.*



IV.3 . Taking hostages

IV.3.1. Introductory notions

Taking hostages is not something new, the method being known and used for centuries, but the awareness of the complexity and human and social implications of such a situation is more evident in our times.

The longer the length of a hostage-taking situation is, the more it favors a peaceful/casualty-free resolution of the event. Although the negotiating staff must be the central piece of a hostage rescue operation, they represent only a small part of the collective effort directed towards the successful resolution of the crisis situation.

There is a *crisis management team* which plans the special intervention actions.

Remember!

There are no definite answers or recipes for successfully solving situations which involve hostages, and the recommendations that will follow in this course do not guarantee the peaceful resolution of the crisis situation and cannot always be applied in all situations; however, they are likely to ensure a higher degree of success in rescuing the hostage.

IV.3.2. Defining the notion of taking hostages in the penitentiary

Taking hostages is a *particularly serious incident* in the penitentiary environment, which involves obvious risks; therefore, hostage-taking is a **critical incident**¹ as it:

- a) affects/endangers the life or integrity of a person / more persons;
- b) endangers the security of the penitentiary;

¹*Incident Management Manual (Vol. 2 - Critical Incident Management)*



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

- c) affects morale among inmates and staff;
- d) endangers the act of justice.

Taking hostages in the penitentiary represents the action through which a person is restrained under threat, or through acts of violence, by a person or group of persons as a guarantee or form of pressure towards the prison management in order to solve some claims or requests that will bring benefits to the aggressive inmate or group of inmates.

Aggressors may be:

- ✓ the inmates;
- ✓ the visitors;
- ✓ other people (in courts, workplaces, hospitals, etc.)

Hostages can be:

- ✓ prison staff;
- ✓ visitors/collaborators;
- ✓ other detainees.

Remember: the people taken hostages can be staff members or other people; there is no rule in this regard, the status of the victim depending directly on the goal of the aggressor or on what he wants to achieve.

IV.3.3. Aspects regarding the critical incident (hostage taking situations)

Hostage taking situations are rarely planned in advance, most of the time this type of incident represents spontaneous reactions of inmates to a specific situation, and the events can develop in the following manner:

a) *Initially, the safety of the hostages is an important issue for the aggressive inmates.* They are afraid of consequences in case an employee is injured or killed, the aggressors know the hostages and are aware that they will have to deal with them



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

even after the incident is over. The aggressors also know that their position during the negotiation depends on keeping the hostages in safe conditions.

b) Inmates will take all the keys and communication devices from the hostages. Even if it doesn't bring them freedom, it will give them a feeling of power and control.

c) Detainees may switch clothes with hostages in an attempt to make them more difficult to be identified immediately. In some cases, inmates may resort to this strategy if they believe that the forceful intervention of the staff is imminent, considering that in this way they will be less exposed.

d) Inmates can use hostages as communication channels. They can request or order the hostages to communicate their pieces of information or requests to the authorities or negotiators (verbally, in writing, by telephone).

e) Inmates can set barricades to prevent/slow down the actions of the intervention teams. Materials for such barricades can include whatever is available such as furniture, etc.

f) Hostages will usually be locked in a cell or in some other inaccessible place. The place where the hostages will be held depends on the circumstances of each incident. For example, when the crisis takes place in the detention ward, it is very possible for the aggressors to keep the hostages inside one or more cells. When the crisis takes place in a smaller area, it is likely that the inmates and the hostages will be in the same area during the crisis.

g) If they had not manufactured them before, the prisoners can make various weapons intended for retaliation, such as objects made with the purpose of cutting or stabbing. Remember that inmates are extremely resourceful in creating weapons out of items which might seem harmless at a first glance; in extreme situations inmates might have access to firearms. Their access to materials that can be turned into weapons depends, most of the time, on the length of time/space they control. Hostages can be used as human shields or as a protective measure in case of a confrontation with the intervention teams.



h) *If the situation lingers or the leader changes, the safety of the hostages may be at risk.* When the situation lingers for a long time and no progress is made, the group leader might expect to lose control over the other inmates and might want to regain it through harsh actions.

i) *Detainees can threaten to use force or even use it.* There is a possibility that the hostages will be physically or sexually assaulted by the inmates. This happens either when the aggressors feel the need to prove that they are very serious with their claims or when they are violent people with particular behavioral problems.

IV.3.4 Types of hostage-taking situations in prison

There are **three types of hostage taking situations**:

- a) *Planned hostage taking;*
- b) *Unplanned (spontaneous) hostage-taking;*
- c) *Taking hostages as a personal act (revenge).*

a) When the hostage taking situation is planned: the incident will occur during a certain shift, in a certain time interval, and the hostages are, as a rule, chosen according to certain typologies.

b) When the hostage taking situation is unplanned: it takes place during spontaneous riots or other incidents. When inmates do not plan to take hostages, they do so randomly. They simply "grab" whoever is within reach, the victim being in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

c) When taking hostages is a personal act (revenge): such situations are the most serious and fortunately the rarest; as a rule, the aggressor resorts to this method to take revenge on a certain person or institution, in general, either as an "*act of authority*", through which he marks his territory and expresses his dominance, or as an act of bravado. That is precisely why the chances of saving the hostage in such situations are very low.



It should be noted that, as a rule, the one who causes such a situation is the very person (prison officer) who ends up as a hostage; he was the one who, through his aggressive, authoritarian, violent and humiliating behavior towards the detainee, led to the inmate becoming frustrated to the limit of the unbearable, thus making the "victim" (the inmate) become a particularly violent aggressor.

IV.3.5. Recommended way of reaction for the person taken hostage

Although the hostagetaking is a critical incident, and special forces will manage this event, it is necessary that the staff of the penitentiary system, regardless of the department they work in, should know the minimum rules of behavior if they find themselves in such a situation.

It is important not to create a feeling of hopelessness or despair for the person who took hostages. He can behave like a cornered animal if he gets into such situations.

With all the pressure induced by the on-site presence of intervention forces, it is important for the offender to realize that he is isolated and that he can only survive if he behaves rationally. In this respect, the first 15 minutes from the start of the incident are the most important. The one who takes hostages is on top of his nerves.

The more prison officers know and assimilate more of the methods and techniques presented below, the more likely they are to identify the ones that work best in a given hostage-taking situation.

A. Important prerequisites for employees/hostages

- ✓ The most important element that contributes to hostage rescue is: THE HOSTAGE!
- ✓ In the case of hostage taking, all prison staff will have as their main concern and goal the rescue of the hostages!



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

B. Methods and techniques for the prison officer who has been taken hostage

a) Keep calm and regain control!

Try to regain control over your own body and overcome the panic reaction that will initially set in at the beginning of the incident. Without exposing yourself to danger, try to calm down the other hostages (if there are any) who cannot calm down. Hostages who have noisy reactions (screaming, shouting, crying) draw attention to themselves and are perceived by the aggressors as "problematic" and "difficult to control", easily becoming victims.

If there are loud noises (broken windows, destroyed objects, even gunshots) put your head down and lie on the ground.

The panic reaction involves: tremors, accelerated pulse, palpitations, sweating, decrease in salivary secretion (dry mouth), short and shallow breathing (suffocation sensation).

Be determined to survive, unharmed, until a certain hour, moment, day, and be prepared to change your time limit if the duration of your captivity is prolonged. Always remember that extending the period of captivity leads to increased personal safety.

b) Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for prolonged discomfort!

Accept the situation and prepare to wait, the negotiation process may be slow but time is running out in favor of the hostages. If you are asked to sit with your head down or hold a certain position, try to relax so that you can hold that position for a longer period of time.

c) Maintain a peaceful attitude!



When you are held hostage, the attempt to resist is usually counterproductive. It is safer to control your impulsive behaviors, stay calm and follow the instructions you receive.

In the first moments of captivity, be aware that even direct visual contact (eye-to-eye) with the aggressors can be perceived by them as a challenge.

Studies have shown that uniformed personnel, as well as those perceived as a threat by aggressors, are the most likely to be killed or injured. When the hostages were injured, most of the time they entered into open and direct conflict with the aggressors after being taken hostage.

Never insult or show your contempt towards the people who are holding you hostage. Don't remind him that you are an employee and that you have authority. Do not threaten with retaliation after the crisis is over, even if you feel the need to do so.

If the aggressors talk to you, answer using an appropriate tone. Do not try to hide documents or personal items.

d) Try to make the aggressors perceive you as a human being!

Most of the time, the hostages are perceived by the aggressors as simple "exchange objects". You must try (if this is possible, depending on the situation) not to be threatening when communicating with them - talk about family, children, free time, but avoid topics that can lead to conflicts or those that might be considered sensitive (politics, religion).

Speak to them calmly and with dignity. Always remind them tactfully that as long as no one was hurt the situation is not hopeless for him/them and that it is "good" that he did this to the hostages (that he did not harm them).

e) Respect the rules set by the aggressors/ don't play the hero!

It is advisable and wise to consent to the requests of the aggressors, except for the situations when this is not possible



(orders received representing violations of personal dignity or safety). Be aware that some aggressors will "play" with the hostages: they will change the rules (sometimes along the way), ask you to do certain things (which were also previously forbidden by them) just to punish or bully you.

Be careful and try to assess the possible consequences of your behavior. For example, you may be asked to move to a certain place, not talk to the other hostages, keep quiet, blindfold yourself, change clothes or enter a certain room. These are examples of relatively reasonable requests although you may not like them.

If you are asked to read a statement in front of the media or communicate the requests of the aggressors to the authorities, say only what you are asked to say, avoiding apologies, appeals, or pleas in your defense.

Do not play the hero, do not try to escape from captivity if you are not absolutely sure of success, do not attack the aggressor, unless he is the only aggressor and only if you have a very good command of self-defense techniques. Do not fight back or try to fight back if the aggressor hits you; try to protect your head and the abdominal area, try to keep your abdominal muscles tense when you are hit.

f) Give as few details as possible when asked!

It is usually recommended that you give as short answers as possible to the questions asked by the aggressors and do not volunteer to offer information. Avoid making suggestions and recommendations to the aggressors, because if they do not have the expected effect, they may think that the questioning was planned and may consequently take revenge actions, including against other hostages.

If you or someone close to you needs assistance due to a medical condition, inform and ask for help from one of the aggressors first.



Look the aggressor in the eyes if he asks you a question, because it is difficult for him to hurt a person who looks into his eyes (without hostility).

In no case do not lie to the aggressors, it is possible that they will test you with questions to which they know the truth or which are obvious (example: how many supervisors are in the nextward? etc.); if they notice that you are lying, you risk being assaulted and they will not value your person.

g) Win the respect of the aggressors!

Try to let the aggressors see that you have accepted the situation as it is, but with dignity, and do not talk about the values you believe in, but let your behaviour talk about them. Also, avoid showing fear or cowardice; observe which behaviors are valued by the aggressors, and use the ones that you consider "acceptable" in your relationship with them.

Be very careful when the aggressors are excessively friendly with you.

h) Stay as mentally active as possible!

Observe, look, listen and remember as many details as possible about the habits, feelings, physical features and behaviors of the aggressors. If you don't know their names, give them nicknames, to make them easier to remember and associate them with the events that happened. This will diminish the fear of the unknown and you will begin to recognize and even anticipate their "patterns" of behavior.

Stimulate your thinking, try to recall a movie that you enjoyed, try to recall passages from a book you recently read, or practice any mental exercise that keeps your mind active.

Constantly relate to something that has a strong meaning to you and that you believe in, whether it is God, family, country, or an ideal. In most cases, faith returns much more prominently in the hostages' thoughts.



i) Try to understand your aggressors!

Be careful and try to learn things about the cultural norms and values of the aggressors. Usually, those who will supervise you have an intelligence below average and low communication skills. In case the captivity extends over several days, you can usually be offered various games (for example: cards). It would be wise to let them win in most cases: humiliating your aggressors is not the best way to win their goodwill.

j) Accept your failures!

Be gentle with yourself, avoid feeding your feelings of guilt or weakness during your captivity, and realize that you are in an extreme situation for which you have little or no preparation.

Also, don't forget that you are under extreme stress and you may regret what you said at some point due to the stress or coercion you were under, and remember that these statements that can be used later by the aggressors.

Be aware that no one will judge you for what you said or did under pressure or coercion.

k) Try to use humor!

In the initial stages of captivity, when the aggressors are tense and focused on making the hostages fearful and submissive, it would be unwise to make fun of the situation, the aggressors, or yourself. Later, after the situation is calmer and a predictable routine is set, humor is a very powerful antidote to hopelessness.

Laughing within yourself can provide relief from anxiety and frustration. Try to find something funny in your situation, but be careful and keep your sense of reality, remember that you don't want to challenge your aggressors and invite them to retaliate.

k) Eat and exercise!

If you are offered food and water, do not refuse. At the same time, exercise your muscles to the extent that the position



in which you are forced to sit allows you to do that. These aspects have a double impact: they will keep your body working and fight against the psychological effects of stress and "detention".

l) Be lenient with the other hostages!

Each person reacts differently to stress, so each person has different ways of dealing with the hostage position. Certain methods may be ineffective or even endanger the entire hostage group. A certain method may be effective for one person, but ineffective for another - it is possible for a hostage to annoy the others (for example: continuously talking in order to release their tension).

Be tolerant, do not argue with other hostages or on the aggressors! Try not to perceive the other person's moments of mental breakdown as a sign of weakness, be aware that we all have moments when we feel weak.

m) Control your environment!

It is a strategy that reduces stress and increases self-esteem, diminishing feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. For example, a hostage can offer some food to the aggressor when he enters the room where the hostage is: it is a situation in which the apparent situation of lack of power and control is turned into a situation where the hostage becomes a "host" and the aggressor becomes a "guest", a situation in which, obviously, the "host" has initiative and control.

Sharing food with the other hostages can also be an important benefit, in this way creating bonds of friendship and mutual help.

n) Reaction to sexual assault!

Sexual assault on hostages can happen regardless of whether the hostages are male or female. In this situation, the attack aims at humiliating the hostages, at dominating them, in



reality it is about the manifestation of the aggressor's power and not about sex.

If during captivity you are in the situation of a sexual attack by the aggressors, you can take the following steps:

- *first, try using verbal opposition (yelling, screaming);*
- *if you cannot defend yourself or you are under the threat of a weapon or physical or mental coercion, try using passive physical opposition (fainting, heart attack, coughing attack, asthma, etc.);*
- *in extreme cases, eliminate bodily fluids (urine, feces, vomit, etc.).*

o) Use stress control techniques!

Most of us should know, at least in theory, how to use some stress management methods and techniques. Even if we know them, it is very rarely that we had the opportunity to put them into practice. Physical relaxation techniques can significantly reduce stress levels and help you manage pain (if applicable). Also, relaxation can be useful in the situation of panic that accompanies claustrophobia or physical constraint.

Thus, it is recommended for you to:

- ✓ *lie down or sit, try not to think about anything, concentrating on breathing;*
- ✓ *relax your muscles starting from feet to forehead, mentally going through each segment of the body and thinking "the muscle of the left calf is relaxed" etc.;*
- ✓ *after reaching a state of general relaxation (mentally and physically) you will try to maintain it for a few minutes without moving.*

In the hostage position, identify and practice the stress control techniques that are most appropriate for you: talk to yourself (inner dialogues), develop a daily ritual (routine), become aware of and accept your negative emotions.



p) Stockholm syndrome

It is an interpersonal emotional relationship of a particular type, of sympathy, which can develop between the hostage and the aggressors in case of prolonged captivity.

It was found that when the hostages and the aggressors share the same space for a longer period, the risk of harming the hostages is significantly reduced, due to the bond that is created between the parties.

This interaction can be the result of simple eye contact, both parties are under stress and are involved personally and emotionally and as the time passes, the bond will become stronger.

It is important for the hostages to be aware of the syndrome and even let it set in, increasing their chances of survival.

C. Rules for employees taken hostages in case of specialized teams intervention

It is necessary to identify, from the very beginning, the places that offer you protection and where you can take shelter if force will be used to end the crisis and save the hostages.

In case chemical substances (irritant spray or gas) will be used:

- ✓ *do not rub your eyes;*
- ✓ *let your tears flow;*
- ✓ *inhale/exhale shortly.*

The force used during the intrusion with the purpose of rescuing the hostages will be similar to the moment you were taken hostage (noises, screams, destruction) so it is advisable for you to:

- ✓ *take a safe position (in a safe place);*
- ✓ *throw yourself on the ground and try to protect yourself in case of forceful intervention;*
- ✓ *if you receive instructions from the rescue team, move quickly;*



- ✓ *keep your hands where they can be seen, above your head;*
- ✓ *do not make sudden movements;*
- ✓ *if you notice fire or smoke, try to go to the emergency exits or identify an exit;*
- ✓ *you might be considered one of the aggressors or an accomplice (especially if the aggressors changed clothes with you), as the specialized teams do not know who the aggressors are.*

You may initially be treated harshly, until it becomes clear whether or not you are one of the aggressors.

After the crisis ended, avoid discussions and interviews with media!

D. Recommendations for post-traumatic stress prevention and recovery

❖ After the event (the first 24 to 48 hours), alternate periods of activity with periods of relaxation. This helps to alleviate, diminish some physical manifestations generated by post-traumatic stress (tension, tachycardia, agitation);

❖ Try to stay busy, even if you are exhausted. It is not necessary to do a lot of activities, it is important to set goals, even minor ones, such as arranging your personal things, tidying up the house, the office etc.;

❖ Avoid suppressing your emotions or tension by drinking alcohol, smoking or taking medication. Accept your emotions regarding the incident, don't deny them, but don't exaggerate them either;

❖ Persisting memories of the event, nightmares, are normal for a period of time, so don't try to suppress them or worry when they happen. In time, they will decrease in intensity and frequency, until they disappear;

❖ If you like or have the habit of expressing yourself in writing, it may be a good idea to fill in a diary in which you write down your feelings related to the experience you went through.



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Writing helps you calm down, organize your thoughts and emotions, especially if you manage to be honest with yourself;

- ❖ Don't forget that those around you (family, friends, colleagues) are also under stress. Pay attention to your family; in such situations, they are also very stressed. Do not avoid discussions with family members: the absence of any information will scare them even more, exaggerating the danger you went through. At the same time, by avoiding dialogue with them, you lack emotional support, which is needed in such moments;

- ❖ Try to be patient with yourself, sometimes you need time to recover. If more than 30 days pass and the symptoms are not gone, it would be advisable to contact a specialist to be guided regarding the steps that have to be taken in order to overcome the negative emotions created by that the event;

- ❖ Avoid making major decisions in the midst of post-traumatic stress, such as resigning, changing positions or jobs. Stress is not the best advisor;

- ❖ Do not change your habits and do not avoid the persons you used to talk to. Isolation places you in an artificial environment, which prolongs your torment and amplifies the post-traumatic experiences;

- ❖ Have a balanced and regular diet and avoid excesses of any kind. Your body and mind need nutrients to recover.

IV.4. Riot

IV.4.1. Defining the term riot in the penitentiary environment

Riots defined in the Romanian language dictionary(2009) as follows: *to be gripped by revolt, indignation; to revolt, to rebel against something or somebody.*

Thus, "*revolt*" represents that "*feeling of anger mixed with bitterness, caused by a deed or an event considered unfair or*



unjust; indignation". At the same time, the characteristics of the revolt can be described as follows: spontaneous, unorganized revolt against the arbitrariness of the state authority or against the management; rebellion.

In prisons, the term revolt has much more complex connotations.

In the penitentiary, **the inmates' revolt** represents a major negative event, which resulted from the inmates' unresolved grievances or accumulated tensions, or which aims at exerting pressure on the management or on the public opinion; the inmates, organized in groups, become disobedient and perform acts of violence on staff or acts of destruction, they leave their detention cells/area and violently protest against the authority.

To prevent/control the inmates' disobedience and rebellion and to narrow their expansion area in order to restore order, the prison staff has to take the following steps:

- *Act according to the legal and regulatory framework,*
- *React firmly and tactfully,*

This way, they can put an end to the disobedient behaviour and, subsequently to the riot of the inmates, with minimum negative consequences.

In order to achieve this objective, **the order should be restored through a dialogue with the detainees;** the forceful intervention should take place only when all the possible non-violent solutions have been exhausted.

One of the negative effect of riots in penitentiaries is the deterioration of the relationship between prison officers and inmates; the riots have as a result a change in the behaviour of the staff, which is now characterized by:

- ✓ *mistrust,*
- ✓ *fear,*
- ✓ *hostility,*
- ✓ *harsh attitude.*

In this context, the prison schedule and the daily routine are seriously disrupted.



IV.4.2. The stages of evolution of the prisoners' revolt

Several stages of crisis evolution have been emphasized in the specialized literature and it seems that the inmates' revolting actions develop in a progressive manner.

➤ **Stage I – instigation:** in the first stage, the inmates are instigated by negative leaders (taking advantage of an incident or of a fact that can be blamed on prison staff, on the police, on the justice system, etc.); the most dangerous detainees or the ones that have been instigated start the acts of rebellion through violent manifestations: they shout, knock on the door of the detention room, kick the door, etc.; they are also accompanied by the other detainees, who will do the same;

➤ **Stage II – the exit of detainees outside the security premises;** the inmates create chaos and intense noise and, through the use of force, go out into the inner courtyards, break down cell doors, break windows, destroy everything in their path, climb buildings, get on the roof (and if they succeed, they can sometimes take prison officers hostages); under these circumstances, the penitentiary administration takes special security measures and begins negotiations with the detainees;

➤ **Stage III - waiting for public confirmation;** the inmates are waiting to find out from the press, radio or TV about the official position in relation to their deeds - they will appoint some inmates, who will represent the entire revolted prison population in the negotiations with the prison administration, with the aim of solving the demands and receiving benefits; at this stage it is found that the leaders of the protest and their "supporters" will threaten with the use of white weapons which they got or which they made for this purpose, in order to gain control and to "attract" a larger number of detainees in the protest; they take, at the same time, security measures so as not to be surprised by a possible intervention of the prison staff.



In this stage, some of the inmates who were involved in the riot might give up protesting, trying to gain the protection of the staff, but at the same time they can simulate an affiliation with the inmates that rebelled, in order to avoid being marginalized or punished by other inmates for their lack of solidarity;

➤ **Stage IV – negotiation;** prison officers should establish methods of communicating accurate information about what is happening inside; the representatives of the inmates might ask to meet the management of the prison, negotiations will be carried out and some of the requests will be solved according to the regulations and law; some of the detainees, who withdrew from the riot, are taken over and transferred to other units to be safe.

The negotiations will continue but the initiators of the riot will not participate; this aims at enlarging the number of disappointed protesting inmates, especially when the results are delayed and the prison administration does not show any sign of weakness;

➤ **Stage V – apparent silence;** both parties (inmates and prison staff/management), being physically and mentally exhausted, need sleep and rest; one must take into account that it is a good moment for the inmates to prepare some other acts of rebellion;

➤ **Stage VI – intervention;** it is the moment when the specialized intervention forces enter the detention area with the specific means for immobilizing the detainees in order to break up the groups of detainees who have barricaded themselves/rebelled.

The subsequent actions will be:

- The inmates will be searched and separated,
- *the inmates will be distributed to cells,*
- *some inmates might be transferred to other penitentiaries,*
- *the unit is cleaned,*
- *the vandalized spaces will be repaired.*



➤ **Stage VII - the return to normality:** the administrative, disciplinary or criminal investigation is carried out, according to the situation, in order to identify the persons who initiated the riot, or who committed crimes. The analysis that will be carried out will highlight, in particular, the shortcomings of the prison administration and their responsibilities; safety measures will be established and the way the daily activities are organized will also be re-evaluated.

IV.4.3. How should the prison officer act when identifying the initial phase of a riot?

In the initial phase, when a prison officer notices that there is a certain tension amongst the members of a group of inmates in a cell, he/she, according to procedures and observing the rules for a good communication, must take the following actions:

➤ **Stage I: Observe and Inform**

- a) Observe the incident: identify the type of incident (is it a critical incident or not?);
- b) Alert the other members of the staff: use the radio station to communicate information on the type of incident and the location.

➤ **Stage II: Isolate the incident (horizontally and vertically)**

- a) Stop all activities that are carried out in the area of the incident (in the ward);
 - b) Send inmates to their cells;
 - c) Inform the staff who works in the next ward, or in the wards that are located on the upper and lower floors, about the situation and about the location where the incident happened, for them to take appropriate measures and to prevent the escalation of tensions in the other wards;
 - d) Do not allow any person to enter or exit the ward, except for the officer who is responsible for the area and who has to evaluate the situation.



➤ **Stage III: Maintain contact with inmates involved in the incident (riot)**

- a) Talk to the disgruntled inmates;
- b) Identify the problem(s) of the disgruntled/rebellin inmates;
- c) Identify the formal and informal leader amongst the rebelling prisoners while talking to them;
- d) Try to de-escalate the situation by explaining the legal procedure that has to be followed to resolve their problem(s) and try to calm them down;
- e) Try to see if the inmates have sharp weapons, if they intend to set the cell on fire, or if they have taken any inmate/staff member hostage.

➤ **Stage IV: Inform the officer responsible for the area about the situation**

- a) Allow the officer responsible for the area to enter the ward;
- b) Inform him/her about the moment you identified the type of incident and about any other detail (when did it happen?, where did it happen?, how did it happen? what happened?) and about the behavior of the detainees (reactions, attitudes, actions);
- c) Inform him/her about the measures that you took until his/her arrival;
- d) Inform him/her about the situation in the area (categories of inmates and their distribution in the cells, their state of mind, how many prisoners are outside the ward and where);
- e) Inform him/her about the kind of problems that the rebelled inmates want to solve;
- f) Inform him/her whether the formal and informal leader of the inmates has been identified;
- g) Inform him/her about everything that you noticed in the cell, regarding the rebelling inmates and about their intentions (whether or not they have sharp weapons, whether they took hostages in the cell or not, etc.).

After informing the officer in charge, the prison officer will wait for new orders in order to manage and defuse the created conflict situation.



SECTION B

Description of the "Hostage taking" practical activities

The "Hostage taking" training is a complex programme which aims at training the prison staff to effectively manage the critical situation in which they might find themselves as a hostage, in order to increase his/her chances of survival and rescue.

The "Hostage taking" training program is based on experiential learning.

Psychological reasons:

✓ After an event that puts their own existence in danger, some people start to see life differently, they gain more confidence in their own strength and become more resistant to frustration and powerful emotions.

✓ Such experiences, beyond the negative emotions they cause, might make some people aware of an inner strength which they previously did not know they had.

✓ Once going through a negative experience, one will not perceive it as powerful if it were to be repeated, and this might increase the level of self-control in a real crisis.

Risks for students/trainees:

The training program is complex and very tough, so it also involves **risks**:

1. Soft accidents and injuries, accidental asphyxiation, fainting
2. Intense mental/emotional experiences (it can reactivate or generate phobias, agitation, mental discomfort, panic attacks, insomnia etc);
3. Aggressive/exaggerated behaviour of the "aggressors";



4. Violent or exaggerated reactions of the "hostages" (Stanford risk)

Risk management measures:

Risk: Soft accidents and injuries, accidental asphyxiation, fainting

Measures:

- The practical exercise will be supervised by experienced and qualified medical personnel (nurse), who will have appropriate equipment and medicines;
- The institution will provide a car which will be ready to take any participant who does not feel well to the nearest hospital to be examined by a doctor;
- All the participants will be briefed (during the theoretical lecture and before the practical activity) about the main steps of the exercise and only those who feel fit for this kind of exercise will actively be involved in its development. Those who do not want to take part in the activity will be passive observers;
- The active participants will be given the opportunity (and will also be briefed about it) to let the organizers know when he/she does not want to continue the hostage taking exercise;

Risk: Intense mental/emotional experiences (it can reactivate or generate phobias, agitation, mental discomfort, panic attacks, insomnia etc)

Measures:

- All the participants will undergo a theoretical training regarding the subject. Moreover, they will also be explained what is going to happen during the practical exercise;
- The exercise will be coordinated by the director of the school and a teacher, both having previous experience in organizing this kind of activity;



- The exercise will also be supervised by other teachers and staff in order to prevent accidents from happening;
- The exercise will be supervised by a qualified psychologist;
- The exercise will be concluded with a debriefing which will allow the participants share their experience, feelings and ideas.

Risk: Aggressive/exaggerated behaviour of the "aggressors" (Stanford risk)

The Stanford risk emphasizes the idea that psychologically and mentally balanced persons might become aggressive in special circumstances.

Measures:

- The role of the coordinator, his assistants and the psychologist is to constantly evaluate the behaviour of the "aggressors" in order to make sure it does not escalate;
- In case of aggressive behaviour of an "aggressor", he/she will be replaced with another person.

Risk: Violent or exaggerated reactions of the "hostages"

Measures:

- "Hostages" displaying exaggerated behaviour will be asked to step aside and will be offered psychological counselling, if needed.

➤ **General objectives**

Training students/trainees on how to effectively manage extreme situations and how to react in case of hostage taking situations in a penitentiary.

➤ **Specific objectives**

- After the course, the students/trainees will be able to:
- ✓ Understand the concept of "hostage taking" and the causes leading to hostage taking in the penitentiary environment;



- ✓ Understand and apply the basic rules of behavior in case they find themselves in the situation of being taken hostage.
- ✓ Effectively manage a crisis situation such as a hostage taking event;
- ✓ Know the correct way of reaction in case of being taken hostage;
- ✓ Know, evaluate and correctly control their emotional and psychological resources in crises situations;
- ✓ Assess and manage the aggressive potential of the attackers in crises situations, in a correct and efficient manner;
- ✓ Accept and effectively manage humiliating, stressful and painful situations in crises;
- ✓ Accept and endure situations of prolonged stress;
- ✓ Become aware of the fact that the pieces of information they acquired during the training will help them survive in crises situations.

➤ **Operational objectives:**

O.1. At the end of the course, all students will be able to understand the concept of "hostage taking" and the implications that a crisis situation might have;

O.2. At the end of the course, all students will know how to react in case of a hostage-taking situation which occurs in the penitentiary system.

➤ **Resources:**

a) Human resources: 4 teachers, a psychologist, a doctor/nurse;

b) Teaching methods:

- ✓ *lecture;*
- ✓ *conversation (catechetical and heuristic);*



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

- ✓ **role play**;
- ✓ **observation**;
- ✓ **socio -drama**
- ✓ **personal reflection**.

c) Teaching materials:

- video camera, video projector, laptop, loudspeakers;
- 15-25 handcuffs;
- black hoods for aggressors;
- 15-25 hoods of 40 cm x 60 cm (or pillow cases);
- 15-25 straps/belts for leg immobilization;
- strings (approx. 15 m.);
- cutter or scissors;
- drinking water (minimum 5 bottles of 0.5 ml each);
- medical first aid kit.

➤ Necessary spaces:

- a classroom for lecture and debate (with a minimum of 40 seats), for training the "hostages";
- room for training the "aggressors";
- room for the immobilization of the "hostages" ("dark room");
- room for carrying out the actual practical activity/role play.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE PRACTICAL ACTIVITY:

➤ Teacher responsible with coordinating the practical activities (teacher/trainer 1)

He/she is a trainer who has the role of coordinating the entire training programme, of organizing the practical activities, having the authority to stop the activity at any time; he/she has the following duties and responsibilities:



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

- Ensures the management and coordination of all practical activities, with the participation of other staff, who has been previously selected for this purpose;
- Is responsible for organizing and carrying out the activities in such a way as to avoid injuries, intentional bodily harm, exaggerated physical aggression, which exceeds the acceptable limits of a simulated violent context;
- Organizes the practical activities only after the theoretical training on "hostage taking" situations;
- Briefs the students about the scenario of the practical activities, in the presence of the staff involved;
- Divides the students into 3 groups: immobilization group, aggressors group, hostages group; observers may also be involved;
- Verbally requests the students' agreement to participate in the role-play within the practical activities; students cannot be forced to participate in the role-play and can withdraw from the activity at any time (in this case they become observers);
- Assigns and briefs one teacher to coordinate each group of students;
- Briefs the psychologist and the medical staff assigned to supervise the practical activity, regarding their roles, responsibilities and competences;
- May interrupt the practical activities at any time if he/she considers that the life or physical integrity of the students/trainees is endangered;
- In case there are students/trainees who request the interruption of the activity or who cannot continue for emotional, medical or physiological reasons, the teacher will make sure that they exit the role-playing "stage" and become observers (if their state of mind / health allows);

➤ **Assistant teacher/trainer 1 (head of the "immobilization" group)**



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

He is an expert (usually a teacher/trainer), who has the role of coordinating and supervising the activity of the group of students who will immobilize the students who will be taken "hostages"; he has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Supports the coordinator in the development of the practical activity (teacher/trainer 1);
- Briefs the immobilization group, made up of students/trainees);
- Establishes specific roles and tasks for the members of the group;
- Coordinates the activity of the immobilization group;
- Makes sure that the students in the "immobilization" group act according to the roles and tasks they have been given;
- Prevents any action that might endanger the physical integrity of the hostage students while they are in the "dark room";
- Advises the coordinator to interrupt the practical work if he considers that the life or physical integrity of the students/trainees is endangered;
- Allows the students/trainees who request the interruption of the activity or who cannot continue due to emotional, medical or physiological reasons, to withdraw from the role-playing activity and to remain observers (if their state of health allows).

➤ **Assistant teacher/trainer 2 (head of the "aggressors" group)**

He/she is an expert (usually a teacher/trainer) who has the role of coordinating and supervising the activity of the group of students/trainees who will have to control and "dominate" the students who were taken "hostages".

He/she has the following duties and responsibilities:



- Has to make sure that the students in the aggressors group follow the orders given by the coordinator of the practical activities (teacher 1);
- Briefs the group of aggressors, made up of students/trainees;
- Establishes the roles and the tasks of the members of the "aggressors" group, as well as their places in the room.
- Makes sure that the students/trainees in the "aggressors" group act according to the roles and tasks they have been given;
- Monitors and coordinates the activity of the "aggressors" group;
- Is responsible for the physical integrity of the "hostage" students while they are in the "obedience room" (the room where the "hostages" are taken after they are "captured");
- Advises the coordinator to interrupt the practical work if he considers that the life or physical integrity of the students/trainees is endangered;
- Allows the students/trainees who request the interruption of the activity or who cannot continue due to emotional, medical or physiological reasons, to withdraw from the role-playing activity and to remain observers (if their state of health allows).
- **Assistant teacher/trainer 3 (assistant in introducing the hostages into the "dark room")**

He/she is an expert (usually a teacher/trainer) who has the role of coordinating and supervising the "hostage" students when they enter the "dark room" for immobilization.

He/she has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Supports the coordinator in the development of the practical activity (teacher/trainer 1);
- Briefs each "hostage" student/trainee before entering the "dark room";



- Maintains order and discipline and makes sure that the procedure for introducing "hostages" into the "dark room" is observed;
- Advises the coordinator to interrupt the practical work if he considers that the life or physical integrity of the students/students is endangered;
- Allows the students/trainees who request the interruption of the activity or who cannot continue due to emotional, medical or physiological reasons, to withdraw from the role-playing activity and to remain observers (if their state of health allows).

➤ **The psychologist**

He/she is a qualified psychologist (he/she may also be a prison psychology teacher/trainer or a human resources psychologist), who supervises the organization and development of the practical activities.

He/she has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Participates to the briefing of the staff assigned to coordinate and supervise the practical activities;
- Participates to the briefing of the students/trainees assigned to play the "hostage" role;
- Participates in the debriefing stage with the students;
- Has the obligation to request the coordinating teacher to interrupt the activity if he/she notices that the established psycho-pedagogical limits are exceeded or if she/he identifies any danger for the mental and emotional state of the students/trainees;
- Provides psychological assistance for the students who request it, or in case the coordinating teacher suggests that assistance should be offered to any of the students/trainees.



➤ **The doctor/nurse:**

He/she is a qualified doctor/nurse and has to supervise the development of the practical activity: when the "hostages" are immobilized and during the role-playing activity.

He/she provides emergency medical assistance during the development of the practical activity, having the obligation to request the coordinating teacher to interrupt the activity when noticing any sign of danger that might affect the health or physical integrity of students/trainees.



ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRAINING ACTIVITY

Lesson stage

1. Preparation (time: 1')

The activity of the teacher/trainer	The activity of the students/trainees
The necessary training materials are prepared.	

2. Energizer/Ice breaker (time: 1')

The activity of the teacher/trainer	The activity of the students/trainees
Exercise / energizer activity (teacher's choice).	Students participate in the exercise

3. Communicating the topic and objectives of the practical activities objectives of the practical activities (time: 3')

The activity of the teacher/trainer	The activity of the students/trainees
The teacher will inform the students that they will participate in a "hostage taking" activity in which, in turns, each student will go through both situations: "hostage" and "aggressor". The teacher will coordinate the activities and the main teaching method that will be used is sociodrama. Thus, the students/trainees will be asked to take every moment of the activity seriously so that at the end they could be able to analyze the potential situations that might occur in a prison. The purpose of the activity is to make the students use this experience in order to learn the basic rules regarding their behavior in this type of event in order to prevent or to manage potential hostage	Students will listen to what the teacher says.



takingsituations in the prison facilities they will work in.	
--	--

4. Revision of the knowledge presented during the theoretical lecture (time: 15')

The activity of the teacher/trainer	The activity of the students/ trainees
<p>The coordinating teacher will ask the students:</p> <p>a) How can we define the hostage taking?</p> <p>b) Which are the factors that can lead tohostage taking situations in the penitentiary environment?</p> <p>c) What are the types of victims in hostage-taking?</p> <p>d) Which are the basic rules of behavior for an employee who has been taken hostage?</p>	<p>Students answer the questions.</p>

5. Carrying out the activity/ Role play (time: 5')

The activity of the teacher/trainer	The activity of the students/ trainees
<p>The coordinating teacher will divide the students into 3 groups: Group "I" (immobilization group), Group "A" (aggressors group), Group "H" (hostages group), ensuring that the students/trainees choose their group as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the students in Group "I" will play the role of "inmates who immobilize the hostages", ➤ the students in Group "A" will play the role of "inmates who take the prison officers hostage" in the detention ward. ➤ students in Group "H" will play 	<p>Students listen to the role play briefing and then choose the roles they want to take on.</p> <p>Each group of students is briefed by the teachers/trainers regarding the scenario and the students practice the roles.</p>



the role of "prison officers taken hostage"	
Stage I: Group briefing (time: 5')	
<p>➤ Students in Group "I" will move to the "dark room" to be briefed by assistant teacher 1.</p> <p>Each student in Group "I" will receive specific tasks (handcuff the "hostages", put hoods on, immobilize the arms, etc.)</p>	<p>The students will listen to the briefing; they might ask questions regarding the role they have to play, the use of techniques and materials to immobilize hostages and the limits they have to observe for the use of force when applying means of immobilization.</p>
<p>(time: 10')</p> <p>1. The students in Group "A" will go to the simulator ("obedience room"), used as a "detention ward", to be briefed by Assistant Teacher/trainer 2, regarding the specific tasks the students/trainees have to carry out: immobilizing the "hostages", avoid harming them, rules to follow in case of accidents or in case the "hostages" react aggressively, as well as the limits they have to observe for the use of force when applying means of immobilization.</p> <p>The students in Group "H" remain in the classroom to be Briefed by the coordinating teacher, in the presence of assistant teacher 3.</p>	<p>The students will listen to the briefing; they might ask questions regarding the role they have to play: immobilizing the "hostages", avoid harming them, rules to follow in case of accidents or in case the "hostages" react aggressively, as well as the limits they have to observe for the use of force when applying means of immobilization.</p> <p>The students will listen to the briefing; they might ask questions regarding the role they have to play as hostages: avoid harming the "hostages",</p>



	the way to behave in case of accidents or aggressive reactions;
Stage II – Immobilization of the "hostages" (time 1 min/each hostage 25/25 hostages)	
<p>Assistant teacher 3 prepares and takes one student at a time into the dark room.</p> <p>Upon entering the dark room, the students in group "I" immobilize each student with handcuffs, puts a hood on his head nad hands the "hostage" over to group "A", which is located in the simulator ("obedience room").</p>	<p>Each "hostage" student enters the dark room looking down, keeping in mind that he/she was previously told not to struggle, and listens to the instructions of Assistant Teacher 1.</p> <p>The students in Group "I" receive the "hostage" student, hold him not to fall and handcuff his hand behind his/her back.</p>
Stage III – taking hostages	
<p>Under the coordination and supervision of the Assistant Teacher 2, each studentin group "A" take one immobilized hostage and places him/her, in standing position, on the places which were established during the briefing;subsequently, they tie the legs of the "hostages" with string or immobilization belt.</p> <p>Everybody waits until the last "hostage" studentis brought to the room.</p>	<p>The handcuffed "hostage" students enter the simulated "ward", one by one, their headsare covered by hoods, they do not struggle and listen to the instructions given by students in Group "A".</p> <p>Each student in Group "A" receive the "hostage" student, holds him/her not to fall and carefully takes him/her to the place which was established during the briefing; then</p>



	<p>he/she waits for the instructions of Assistant Teacher 2, constantly paying attention to the physical state of the "hostage" and talking to him.</p> <p>If the hostage resists, other authorized restraint techniques might be used.</p> <p>If the hostage shows signs that might indicate that he/she does not feel well or that he/she wants to give up the activity (verbally or through gestures), the student informs the assistant teacher immediately and releases the "hostage" in question.</p>
<p>Stage IV – "dominating" the "hostages" (time: 10'-15')</p>	
<p>Under the coordination of teacher 1 and in the presence of all the Assistant Teachers, the "hostage" students, who have their hands and feet immobilized and their heads covered by hoods are placed by the "A" students, simultaneously, in different uncomfortable positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - kneeling position; - lying with their faces down; - turned on the left side; - turned on the right side; <p>Loud background noise is provided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each student in Group "A" will be responsible for one student "H". ➤ On the order of the coordinating teacher, the "A" students will make the "H" students take the indicated positions, paying attention not to cause unjustified/unnecessary suffering or bodily harm;



through speakers and students "A" "interrogate" the hostages.

On the coordinating teacher's (teacher/trainer 1) order, the hostages sit in the kneeling position. On the coordinating teacher's order, there is 10-15 seconds of total silence.

On the coordinating teacher's order, noises/cries of a person's extreme distress are played over a loudspeaker for 10-15 seconds.

On the coordinating teacher's order, after a total silence of 3-5 seconds, the hostages located on the right side of the room are ordered to remove the hoods from their heads and they are summoned to look at the hostages on the left side of the room, placed in front of them, for 10 seconds. The hoods will be placed on their heads again afterwards.

On the coordinating teacher's order, ask the hostages arranged on the left side of the room to do the same (remove the hoods from their heads and look at the hostages on the right side of the room).

Then, on the coordinating teacher's order, the hostages will be asked to stand up and the handcuffs will be removed. After a 5-second pause, the legs will be untied and all the hoods will be removed.

Throughout this stage, all the teachers involved, the psychologist

thus students "A" will carefully place students "H" in the indicated positions, taking care to protect the head and to avoid twisting their arms.

➤ Students "A" will avoid controlling the movements of students "H" by positioning their arms in the neck area (to avoid accidental strangulation), making sure that the students "H" will be placed in the required positions by applying pressure on their shoulder or by taking them by their arms.

➤ Under no circumstances will "H" students be jostled, slammed, hit or subjected to any other physical suffering, other than those that are usually caused by the immobilization of the hands and feet.

➤ If "H" students try to resist, authorized restraint and control techniques may be used, according to the approved procedures that the students know.



and the medical staff will constantly evaluate the state of the "hostage" students and the actions of the "aggressors" and intervene whenever they notice any sign of danger that might affect to students, (which exceed the limits that were set for the practical activities) or any abusive/exaggerated behavior of "A" students.

➤ The way the "A" students should act has been previously taught, during the theoretical class; the students practiced it in stage I - the briefing stage.

➤ Throughout all the stages, the students will listen to the instructions and carry out, exactly and on time, the instructions of the coordinating teacher.

➤ In this stage, students "A" will interrogate students "H" loudly, in order to intimidate them, asking them questions regarding their professional activity (related to weapons, prison safety, staff data, access, salary etc.). No person will talk when instructed to keep silent (when the coordinating teacher orders silence).

When student "A" notices signs that might indicate that student "H" in his responsibility does not feel well or that he/she wants to give up the activity, student "A" will immediately notify the



	<p>medical staff and release student "H"; first, he/she removes the hood, then releases the arms and, at the end, releases the legs.</p>
--	--

Stage V – end of the practical activities (time: 15')

<p>The coordinating teacher announces the end of the practical activity and asks the students to relax, take a deep breath and get out of the role.</p> <p>After the students take their seats, the teacher asks each "hostage" student to identify his "aggressor" and hug him/shake hands with him.</p> <p>Then everybody takes a 15-minute break, during which all students and assistant teachers move to the school yard for a walk and relax.</p> <p>After the relaxation break, the students will return to the simulator.</p>	<p>Each "hostage", when invited by the teacher, will try to identify his/her "aggressor"</p>
---	--

Stage VI – debriefing and debates (time: 30')

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After returning to the room where the practical work has been carried out, the "A" and "I" students are seated in front of the "H" students; - The teacher asks each student-hostage about his/her impressions regarding the experience they went through; 	<p>Students will freely and openly express their impressions, feelings, emotions and fears that they experienced during the practical activity.</p> <p>Students will identify the benefits they have</p>
---	--



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will be asked to identify the benefits of the experience they have lived; - Students will be asked to think about their possible reactions within a similar exercise in the future; - After listening each student, the teacher draws some conclusions, reviewing the information included in the theoretical, correlating the pieces of information with the professional activity; - The teacher asks a few students- aggressors about his/her impressions regarding the experience they went through. - After listening to the students, the teacher draws some conclusions, reviewing the information included in the theoretical, correlating the pieces of information with the professional activity; <p>The teacher asks questions to the students/students and invites them to be interactive, to ask questions, to draw conclusions, and speak about their feelings and impressions.</p>	<p>acquired by participating in the practical activity.</p>
---	---

Stage VII – video analysis (time: 25’)

<p>The teacher will watch, together with the students, the video recording of the practical activity.</p> <p>While watching the video recording, the teacher stops the recording at different important</p>	
---	--



<p>moments of the activity and invites the students to debate upon those moments and to speak about the feelings they had at that time, as well as about their reactions.</p> <p>- After each intervention of the students, the teacher draws conclusions which he correlates with the theoretical information and with the professional activity in the prison. The teacher will conclude by drawing attention to the importance of knowing the basic rules of behavior in case of being taken hostage in a penitentiary and in crisis situations, in general.</p>	
---	--

Stage VIII – evaluation of the training activity (time: 15')

<p>The teacher will hand out an evaluation questionnaire (Appendix no. 1) to each student/trainee who participated in the practical activity</p> <p>After collecting the questionnaires filled in by the students/trainees, they will be handed over to the human resources psychologist to be analyzed.</p> <p>The results of the questionnaire will be included in the training programme assessment analysis which will be presented to the staff and to the students/trainees who were involved in the practical activity.</p>	
--	--



Annex 1– evaluation questionnaire for the "hostage taking" practical activity

1. What is your overall impression about the experience you had during the hostage-taking practical activity?

.....
.....
.....

2. After participating to the practical activity, are you aware of any benefits that might support your future professional activity?

.....
.....
.....

3. Name at least 5 basic rules of behavior and reaction that you have learnt, applied and that you would be able to apply in a real crisis situation:

.....
.....
.....

4. Do you think that after today's role play experience some students/trainees might need counseling or support from the teacher or from the psychologist?

.....
.....
.....

5. What were the peak moments of panic when you felt like you were close to giving up mentally? Why?

.....
.....
.....



6. Did the role play exercise trigger any good change for you?

.....

7. Did the role play exercise have any negative impact on you? How?

.....

8. Do you think that this kind of role-play should not be used to train prison officers?

.....

Please write down an "X" in one of the columns below (true, half true/false or false) for each of the statements (from 1 to 20), in accordance with your opinion regarding to the "Hostage Taking" practical activity:

No. crt.	Statement	True	Half true/false	False
1.	At the beginning of the class I was nervous about what was to come			
2.	I would like to attend more classes like this			
3.	Today's experience mentally traumatized me			
4.	I would recommend the school to stop organizing			



The European Penitentiary Training Academies Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents only the views of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

No. crt.	Statement	True	Half true/false	False
	such courses			
5.	During the lesson I had moments of extreme panic			
6.	I will be afraid to be alone among the inmates			
7.	The experience I went through today is useful for my professional activity			
8.	I can use today's experience in my personal life			
9.	Every employee in the prison system should go through such a training programme at least once in his/her career			
10.	Starting today I feel stronger and braver			
11.	The experience I have undergone within the training made me realize that I am capable of overcoming any difficult situation			
12.	I think that such situations can happen often in a penitentiary			
13.	I am more confident in myself after today's experience			
14.	I would recommend others to go through such an experience			
15.	Such courses should not be organized			



No. crt.	Statement	True	Half true/false	False
16.	After the practical activity I learned that I am a weak and fearful person			
17.	After participating in the practical activity I think I would be able to handle a real situation well			
18.	The experience I had within this practical activity is useful only at work			
19.	The experience I had within this practical activity helped me realize that I have to pay more attention to those around me			
20.	The experience I had within this practical activity will help me remain calm in any situation			

Additional impressions, suggestions, opinions:





Street Tisești, nr. 137

Târgu Ocna city, Bacau country Romania

Phone: +40 0234 344 149

Email: smaptgocna@anp.gov.ro