



PRESS RELEASE

Human rights protection of Foreign National Prisoners in multi-ethnic penitentiary settings

The international report on training needs assessment of prison staff - newly released by the EU-funded project B-COMPETENT - highlights weak spots, good practices and training needs of prison civilian staff in six countries

December 2020 - The international research, elaborated by the University of Barcelona – OSPDH, stems from the national reports and surveys carried on by Partner organizations in Albania, France, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Spain from February to October 2020 within the EU-funded project “B-COMPETENT. Boosting competences in penitentiary staff in Europe”. Despite the challenges encountered by the researchers due to the COVID-19 outbreak, B-COMPETENT has successfully reached the goal of thoroughly evaluating prison staff training needs and gaps in all six countries.

Albania - The main training needs highlighted in Albania’s country report are: i) limited number of civilian staff and interpreters; ii) the continuous training is mainly targeted at uniformed bodies in prisons, while civil staff training is not a structured practice. A dedicated fund for interpreters should be provided in order to support foreign national prisoners. The trainers are professionals, but the training programmes are not regularly revised and it causes training contents and curricula overlapping.

ALBANIA: COUNTRY FOCUS

The prison administration should have enough financial resources to improve living conditions, social activities and training as effectively as possible regarding the specific situation and specific needs of foreign prisoners

France - General lack of proper training indicates that staff training on the issue of foreign national prisoners is meagre. The prison administration in France receives assistance from external organizations such as La Cimade, which provides assistance and advice to foreign prisoners. **There is no evidence of a solid targeted approach towards foreign national prisoners in staff training practice.**

METHODOLOGY

The National Reports employed a methodological framework based on: 1) desk analysis of existing training programs; 2) online and offline surveys targeting prison authorities, prison managers, prison staff and front line prison civilian staff; 3) focus groups.

9 focus groups and more than 500 questionnaires delivered

NEXT STEPS:

- design and development of an e-learning course
- multilingual handbook for prison civilian staff
- production of animated videos with case scenarios
- organization of 6 cross-border train-the-trainers workshops in Italy, Albania, Spain, Montenegro, Greece and France.

PARTNERSHIP:



GREECE: COUNTRY FOCUS

The Country Report underlines the need to develop staff recruitment policies and to re-organize both introductory education and on-going training for prison officers, producing structured education programmes, courses, and training curricula and manuals.

continuously reduced due to lack of resources, while some officers have not attended any courses, as the training school is not a permanent structure.

Italy – The educational training is mostly addressed to penitentiary police, due to the prevalence of uniformed staff with respect to educational workers. Trainings formally include notions about prisoners' basic rights and best practices in everyday life in prison, but multicultural knowledge and skills are not properly addressed.

Montenegro - The issues of non-compulsory nature of the training courses and the scarcity of their offer are particularly evident in Montenegro, where the following gaps have been underlined by interviewees: i) prison staff do not attend trainings before entering into duty; ii) there is no specific staff appointed to work with the foreign prisoners; iii) lack of training about the rights of foreign prisoners, cultural diversities and foreign prisoners' special needs.

SPAIN: COUNTRY FOCUS

The Catalan administration created the Orientation and Reception Services, whose main goal is to facilitate communication between foreign inmates and prison workers through interpretation and translation facilities for FNPs.

Spain - Since 2002, the prison services of Catalonia have pursued structural, organizational and socio-educational improvements to meet the needs of FNPs. CEJFE offers one online training on migration issues targeting prison management units, but the course addresses legal issues only. In 2020, among the training offer, there is no course focused on how to deal with foreign inmates.

ITALY: COUNTRY FOCUS

The "original sin" of the Italian Penitentiary administration is the disproportion between prison staff units and the total number of prisoners and consistency with the provisions of Rec. 1999(22) of CoE, concerning prison overcrowding and prison population inflation.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide language courses for foreign inmates enabling them to communicate more effectively with prison staff.
2. Grant appropriate access to interpretation and translation facilities for Foreign National Prisoners.
3. Provide prison staff with specific skills to properly work with foreign inmates (in every prison a central office should be set up to deal with foreign inmates' special needs and problems and to solve conflicts).
4. Equip prison workers with adequate skills and competencies regarding:
 - (a) international and national standards and regulations on foreign prisoners' rights and special needs;
 - (b) mechanisms to take into account the social, familiar and cultural context of the foreign inmates.

The full Report is available at:
www.bcompetent.eu

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