

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



ESF Learning Network Ex-Offender Community of Practice (ExOCOP)

Berlin Policy Forum | 18th to 19th June, 2012 | Conference Proceedings

CHAIR WELCOME: Prof. Dr. Hans-Jürgen Kerner welcomed more than 120 people committed to the ExOCOP Shared Learning Network's goals of strategic change to how education, training and employment are integrated into Europe's offender resettlement strategies.

WELCOME from Prof. Stauch, Secretary of State (Staatsrat) Senate of Justice and Constitution, land Bremen

Prof. Stauch focussed first on the valuable support and leadership which the provides in developing the tools: ExOCOP leaves behind an important legacy of Education, Training and Employment (ETE) opportunities. This is particularly true with reference to Germany's e-learning in prisons platform (eLIS), much influenced by ExOCOP and which will now roll out to more Länder nationally. Also Bremen is about to fund an important journey which it hopes will result in a structured and cooperative practical framework for offender resettlement.

Professor Stauch highlighted initial successes with the Bremen Kompetenz Centrum, a holistic approach to reintegration which allows all theses services to be brought together in an accessible way. The Kompetenz Centrum provides a one-stop-shop for offenders to work out an individual day-structure to help them back into the community, and it has changed the way Bremen thinks about its offenders.

Exchange with other German Länder is crucial: administrations must cooperate on a common strategy. The Reso NordVerbund has made a huge impact on the way Bremen and other Länder in the north of Germany work together, and the Berlin Declaration has been a foundation of our common understanding, so we can work together to getting this into practice.

Justice is traditionally a closed operation and this mind-set in itself continues to be a hindrance to cooperation. Communication, exchange and discussion such as happened in the ExOCOP workshops and seminars has genuinely changed our attitudes but we must work to continue this, stay forward looking and innovative despite the financial difficulties which lie around the corner for us all. Although as the smallest of the German Länder Bremen is sometimes light on resources, one advantage of our size is our ability to adapt and be more flexible without the burden of a big administration.

Professor Stauch thanked the European Commission and the German National Ministry of Labour – without these two organisations ExOCOP and all the lasting impacts it has had all over Europe would not have been possible.

Professor Stauch wished us all great success in our efforts to bring about a real change in the structure of how we think about and deal with those marginalised communities with whom we are dealing.

ExOCop Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



WELCOME SPEECH: Peter Stub Jørgensen: Director: DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Mr Stub Jørgensen began by reinforcing how important the reintegration of ex-offenders into the labour market is to the European Commission, as with other groups who are significantly inaccessible to the mainstream measures.

There is no common European treatise in this area, so this is new ground. But there are certain policy areas regarding how the Commission treats this target group, and these are geared towards sustainable and inclusive job growth. The Commission's 2020 focus is on 'smart' jobs and on inclusion. Despite a lack of legal ability to act, there is direct policy interest and networking tools that the Commission can provide.

For example, the 'New Skills for New Jobs' project which addresses how the working world demands that employees learn new skills for their labour market. And the Commission has a poverty programme which addresses the day-to-day issues of living on a low wage. The Commission's youth project addresses a Europe-wide need to have everyone involved in the labour market.

The Commission believes that in a good labour market reintegration programme, ex-offenders should not be singled out as a particular problem, further targeted or stigmatised. Rather an efficient programme would tailor labour market measures to bring the right capacity to also service ex-offenders.

A second driving issue for this commitment to broad integration is demography: a rapidly aging population coupled with fewer children being born requires that more hands will soon be an absolute requisite in the labour market. Integrating the marginalised groups, including ex-offenders, is one way of meeting this challenge.

The Commission recognises that the first step into employment is crucial for reintegration. Therefore it follows that the period prior to release should be working on this preface. There are a number of projects already working on this, and ESF has a long and successful tradition of contributing to this community. ESF regulation is being negotiated as part of the 2014 – 2020 budget, and depending on these negotiations, it has been agreed that it will again be 85-90 billion € over the 7 years.

And how will The Commission spend this money? This is essentially Europe's core instrument for more, sustainable jobs and inclusive growth. The Commission will budget this alongside the member states, and in agreement with the European Council, it will jointly finance the right initiatives.

Mr Stub Jørgensen asked all those present to make their voice heard: tell the Commission what are these job-active priorities and what can and should the ESF do. The Commission hopes to strengthen partnerships and industry, civil society and other interested bodies, so that global financing is relevant to all those in the member states. It is keen for the transnational partnerships such as ExOCop to continue so will incentivise this by offering 10% more for transnational projects. The behind the scenes practical facilitation of these partnerships will actively continue.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



P1 - Presentation of the ExOCOP Network & The Berlin Declaration on the Reintegration of (Ex)Offenders

Panel of the ExOCOP Steering Group

Chair: Pedro das Neves

Gianluca Calzolari, Jürgen Hillmer, Olwen Lyner, Jorge Monteiro, Adrian Neagoe, George Nikolopoulos, Craig Watt, Jan Köning

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR: European Public Authorities responsible for prison regimes face complex new problems – the low skilled employ 1.8 million people behind bars last year and the population continues to grow. Prison overcrowding is predicted to increase, meaning the ETE and resettlement needs of exoffenders become even more complex and challenging tasks.

Cooperation between member states in the development of common approaches to common problems 2011 Green Paper on Strengthening Mutual Trust in European Judicial Area.

This first panel with members of the steering group presents the network and their developments, and presents the common representations which have been brought together in the Berlin Declaration on the Reintegration of ExOffenders.

PANEL OF EXOCOP STEERING GROUP MEMBERS: Trans nationality with ESF backing – in the tradition of projects such as EQUAL – is the backbone of progress in a common approach in the area of offender reintegration. Each initiative represents substantial progress towards a common approach: without a mandate to take to the European Commission, this path forced an interface between the relevant national and European administrations to bring about the education training and employment of offenders. 2008 saw the start of the ExOCOP Network, with the support of DGs EMPL, JUST and EAC as well as many national administrations and national ESF managing authorities.

The Partnership Approach was applied systematically, and ExOCOP was developed with an ambitious set of 20 themed operational workshops first formulated taking in offender sub-groups (e.g. women, youth, migrants) sub-themes (e.g. prison work, diagnosis, assessment, transition management) and networks (e.g. communities, employers). Recommendations formulated at these workshops in turn fed into a series of 5, high-level policy level seminars grouped according to mutually related themes.

ExOCOP was a Community of Practice with the pyramid structure allowing all 600 of the stakeholders who participated into the workshops and seminars to feed into the final conclusion. It also allowed practical and policy comment on the very broad range of issues which the large number issues this group needs.

9 Recommendations are presented in the Berlin Declaration which makes a contribution to the 2020 agenda and an EU strategy on exactly what needs to be done for inclusion of this marginalised community.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



1. EU wide strategy: Existing EC and national legislation, policy and funding could be coordinated to fill the gaps ExOCOP has identified.
2. Interagency working: Need for all relevant reintegration services are brought together within one organised work stream. This needs to be supported by formal agreements and tested, to see whether 'duty to cooperate' legislation is required. This should happen both on a European and national level integrating local, regional and NGO services.
3. Prison Staff Training: All of those who work with offenders should receive training so they can appreciate what this inclusive agenda is and why it is relevant to those who have been through the criminal justice service. Only then can an employee really know enough about what's on offer to allow these broad services be connected with the individual.
4. Systematic, early and detailed assessment: Effective prisoner diagnosis will get the individual connected to the right plan (so long as the resources allow the right components of the plan to develop).
5. Family and community links: More extensive work on supporting and developing an individual's family support network both inside and outside prison will make a significant contribution to their motivation and success on the outside. Training staff and family friendly prisons are both major contributors.
6. Increasing employability should be an increasing priority in the resettlement agenda: positive links with employers, the labour market will allow antidiscrimination legislation and policy to be put into action.
7. Effective and sustained funding: Funding should be identified as being given to those cost effective and useful projects. Funders should see the value in this close cooperation.
8. Research and evaluation of good practice: Gaps in EU policy and practice for ex-offenders will be filled more effectively following thorough, effective, evidence based research into improving practice.
9. Knowledge Management: There may be many effective solutions to a similar problem, according to national priorities and resources. Tools which bring the best practice to light, with a view to mainstreaming this best practice across Europe, will efficiently join and integrate effective initiatives.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



PLENARY: Keynote Speech

William Rentzmann, Director General Kriminalsoerger, Denmark

Mr Rentzmann applauded ExOCOP's efforts towards the development of a mainstream European strategy for reintegration of ex-offenders, but asked that in this, the audience does not to underestimate the daily environment of the prisoner, and the political will to move these initiatives forward. Comprehensive work captures lessons learned across borders, but it is not enough just to know what works: you must also apply this knowledge.

If we are to succeed we need a holistic approach: new, forward looking effort to strengthen and enhance initiatives in this field. But the EU is under economic and society pressure, with an uncertain future for many. Overcrowding has been resolved by transferring prisoners to other EU countries to carry out their sentence.

Exchange of information and close cooperation must be a priority for EU prison regimes. Yet regimes must avoid the one sided focus on security: maintain the current positive momentum despite the challenges because we know that it works.

Mr Rentzmann reflected on the DG EAC 'Pathways to Inclusion' conference 2010 in Budapest, where some ExOCOP workshops were embedded. Council of Europe 'Working Together' initiative promoted the social reintegration of prisoners. The transition from prison to freedom is the most vulnerable time, when we will see if the probation service is able to continue and develop the beginnings made by the prisoners. CEP representing probation and the newly started EuroPris for prison regimes foster this close cooperation between two of the most relevant European actors.

Even though we are facing harsh challenges, there is political recognition that it pays to reduce recidivism. Optimism and innovation are better equipped if we collaborate and learn from each other.

The environment and how traditional prison activities interlace with new initiatives is where opportunities could be revolutionary. We must organise our prisons as the outside community would do, only giving correctional measures where necessary: normalisation is a fundamental of a decent and humane prison and probation service. But if we do not organise the everyday life of prisoners to promote ownership, respect and motivation to leave crime behind them, then all the initiatives in the world will be of no use. We need staff with the right values, who take responsibility for reintegration just as for security: we need user-driven innovation which promotes in-house communication, and we must not be afraid to continually raise the base line of our resettlement and ETE offers. Is what we are doing good enough? Do we really believe we can change people's futures?

The starting point must be the individual inmate: initiatives must treat whatever brought them into prison,

1. We must believe we can change people, decently and humanely.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



2. Local authority training and cooperation, including clear written agreements between the probation services and the local authority specifying the contact persons and responsibility
3. Inmates sentence must have a post-release perspective.

It is therefore a task of the ESF to improve occupational opportunities and integrate the individual is directly in line with our objectives. 'Competences' of the inmate allow for the assessment and acknowledgement of abilities as a stepping stone for education and ultimately for employability.

The outside world gives us dedicated and experienced personnel, who lend us the expertise we need, for example the chefs who have conducted apprenticeships within prisons, successful because of the motivation and dedication of the leader. Giving offenders a clean sheet with no negative expectations is key to their motivation.

It does pay to invest in the social inclusion of offenders, but there must be through the gate post-release measures and the cooperation of authorities is essential. This is where we must invite society into our prisons. In Norway, local civil authorities have a responsibility to provide offenders with housing support post-release and follow up.

This means too improving their digital knowledge, to stay in step with outside society and to use in education, training and employment. In the UK they are developing a virtual campus, and Belgium has something similar, but it does create a future challenge for prisons for the years to come.

Mr Rentzmann went on to remember that 2012 is the year of active aging and intergenerational solidarity. Involving senior citizens may be involved in mentor schemes, and in connecting prisoners with visitors and employers. Create relations of trust and confidence with inmates.

High priority given to this field in the ESF combined with cooperation, an opening prison system and the possibility of a strong strategic cooperation at a European level opens this up to many opportunities, and offers us a solid basis for the forthcoming advance.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



PANEL: Discussion on ESF policies in the prison and resettlement context

Chair: Clemens Russell, Xit, Berlin, Germany

Luigia Mariotti Culla, Ministry of Justice, Italy

Dorin Muresan, Ministry of Justice, Romania

Marion Stancovici, Director General of National Prison Administration of Romania

Marek Nickorski, Director of Transnational Programmes, Prison Administration of Poland

Dr. Gero Meinen, Senate of Justice, Berlin

Mark Nickson, NOMS, UK

CHAIR BRIEF INTRODUCTION: Clemens Russell elaborated on his current role as project leader of the UN research into Human Rights in the Penal System in the Brandenburg area. Two years ago Mr Russell began a transnational programme within HIS, which was very successful and already use today elaborated practices learned through this project from co-partners.

Luigia Mariotti Culla, Ministry of Justice, Italy: Italy has been accessing ESF monies since the EQUAL projects in 2005, and the Internal Ministry of Justice which runs the prison service in the Federal Italian prison system is the central focus of a wide range of regional prison facilities and resources. Mrs Culla introduces the InterRegional Programme, which her federal department established with a view to coordinating regional resources and sustaining the inter-agency cooperation essential to treating this target group. Mrs Culla speaks about training of prison and probation staff in the Italian penal system, and how we must focus on opening the doors of the prisons and the minds of the prison and probation staff if we are to offer offenders the motivation to make the first few vital steps of change.

Mark Nickson, NOMS, UK: UK NOMS has been accessing ESF since 2002, co-financed to remove barriers to accessing employment. Just being an offender is a barrier, then follow potential problems of drugs, mental health, housing or social condition. A small group of offenders have huge motivational barriers who cannot access the mainstream provisions, and who are at greatest risk of reoffending. This provides additionality, which allows DWP and Skills and Funding agency work with NOMS to service the small group and making them more employable so they can access the mainstream provision.

Screening process to get them on to the programme, and if they are already engaging the mainstream services, NOMS won't work with them. Lifers, travellers and veterans and young gang members are some of the hard to help groups they access. Targets might be very low, but it reflects motivational level, but small successes have huge rewards for the individual and in terms of reoffending rates. Smaller providers have given us specialised learning and knowledge, so a condition of the contracting process was to engage with these providers.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



Key to ESF for NOMS is transferring knowledge and allowing a focus on additionality and the most difficult group: The only way we will move forward within criminal justice is to move about, learn from partners and move to practice and apply what we have learnt. You cannot learn without being in situ, and make sure that front line staff are actively exchanging, not just the Director Generals: front line staff in prisons really are the agents of change.

Dorin Muresan, Ministry of Justice, Romania: In 2006 Romanian Prison Service created a transnational department in order to exchange international good practice in order to reform the prison service, the new influx of money from international programmes represented an integrated structure which we had not previously been able to finance in order to develop the Romanian Prison Service. Over the years it has developed at local and national level so that all projects have a strong transnational components. The department follows three steps

1. Learn: create a knowledge system which will improve how we transfer theory
2. See: visit real life institutions to see how colleagues put in practice what we learn
3. Adapt: make good practice work for us in Romanian Prison Service

When we develop a transnational project, we have to identify local or foreign partnerships, so we are dedicated to the 'lessons Learned' approach. E-learning from Austria, transition management from Danes, social economy from Italy all have increased exponentially the quality of the prison service.

Marek Nickorski, Director of Transnational Programmes, Prison Administration of Poland: The first big ESF and prison project ran in Poland in 2005 'No Way for Ex-Offenders'. The way this was finance gave the Polish Prison Service new rules, and allowed a lot of learning to take place. The project ran successfully across 15 prisons, offering professional courses with 500 prisoners actually graduating from these in 2008. This became transnational partnerships within the projects New Horizons, and Didalous with Spain, Slovenia etc. Learning from colleagues was a huge bonus in each one of these projects, and continues apace.

The new operational programme will run to 2015 and is 35 billion euros, in 150 prisons in Poland, all of the beneficiaries, 50000 prisoners. Continuing on from Equal to 'Human Capital' prepare people to come back to the labour market. Statistics from evaluations are so far are very good, and this is encouraging for further projects. Integration in labour was 30% and is now 60%. Main goal is education of prisoners, thanks to ESF they can fund professional courses.

Poland is also in discussion with Norway, as a way to sustain funding and transnational exchange in key areas.

Dr. Gero Meinen, Senate of Justice, Berlin: Dr Meinen reminded us that Berlin likes Europe! The ESF has had an input into Berlin's programming since 2001, creating a completely new theme in Berlin, bringing real employability to prisons were traditionally there is just outdated handicraft work to keep the prisoners occupied. Digitalisation is also now high on the agenda, despite the difficulties with internet provision in prisons: Open prisons offer a good option for Berliners to stay connected with society and with the labour market in particular.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



Transnationality: we have to see what you do, learn from it and reproduce good practice. One example, NOMS have shown us how we have to work much harder with local authorities to get added value from this partnership.

Diversification: within 10 years we would like to be on a similar level to our colleagues as to transfer the programmes without having to so many discrepancies about how and why things have developed so in their countries. Standardisation can bring efficiency BUT diversification should not be underestimated – our cultural and regional differences and goals are real and Dr Meinen calls upon us to remember it is important to build into the picture.

PLENARY: Keynote Speech: Tapio Säävälä, DG Education and Culture

Tapio Säävälä, Head of Unit in DG Education and Culture, spoke first about the Commission's Education and Training 2020 Work Programme, which sets key targets and objectives for Europe, and a renewed agenda for adult education in Europe.

Mr Saavalaa explained how the programme has been developed, the work areas which have been identified as a focus, and how the programme embraces both formal and non-formal learning in a broad, individualistic approach to lifelong and 'life-wide' learning.

Mr Säävälä made reference to four major pieces of work which the Commission has undertaken recently in lifelong learning but which also has an impact on offender education:

- 1) The 'Pathways to Inclusion' conference held in Budapest in 2010, in which some of the ExOCOP workshops were embedded. The conference brought together 200 stakeholders from 30 countries with an interest in prison education from over 30 European countries. Here, some of the main outcomes of the initiatives supported by European funds were brought together, to further foster the mainstreaming of good practices by drawing them to the attention of policy-makers. The conference also promoted networking and exchange of experiences between organisations and experts, and identified future needs for European cooperation, in light of overall policy trends
- 2) A literature review of all European work on the four main themes of prison education and training took place in early 2011, offering a complete overview of available literature for 12 specific themes relating to prison education.
- 3) The Survey on Prison Education and Training in Europe was an on-line undertaking towards the end of 2011. The aim of this survey was to provide an overview of the current state of play in prison education provision in Europe. It involved an electronic survey of national coordinators of prison education (or equivalents) as well as a small number of interviews with both national and international stakeholders and a small scale review of relevant literature.

The findings of the survey are presented in a report due for publication in the summer of 2012, but initial results indicate some interesting points. Well defined lines of responsibility are prioritized, and access to education is highlighted. Equity of access should also encompass equity of outcomes, so

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



that prisoners can use the qualifications outside in the world, a point which touches again on the digitalization of society and ICT in society.

4) A recent Commission Staff Working Document provides an overview of prison education and training in Europe today and brings together key messages emerging from the series of work outlined above. Examples from across Europe have been included in this document to highlight in practical terms what is happening on the ground.

Reflecting on how Key Competences developed in 2006, have changed in this new digital society, Mr Säävälä moved forward to a recent Cedefop forecast of skills which will be needed by 2020. These show a shift from low to high skills, with all key competences, creativity and ability to innovate whilst simultaneously drastically reducing the amount of jobs available. There will also be a focus in the Commission's work to create a more level playing field for all to undertake high quality learning and generate a broad skills base, social and civic competence, and digital ability and entrepreneurship. Low carbon and digital technology industries will be a focus of new skills training, as will health care and infrastructure skills: the labour market is changing, and a career is not chosen but constructed.

This wholistic approach to lifelong learning must rest upon a good basic education: there is a direct correlation between this and national competitiveness. Competences now are those soft skills which allow your entrance into the labour market, such as knowledge of the mother tongue and neighbouring languages, basic maths, critical thinking. These might not be subject-related in traditional schooling and require a huge paradigm shift. What does this mean for cross-curriculum learning, and how then can schools cope with teaching these competences? The 'hidden profession' of teachers who teach teachers needs to be clearly addressed and national learning outcomes for these teacher-educators must be set which reflect more holistic teaching goals.

Students would benefit from engaging in the learning goals and feeding back into assessment targets. For those who have always been taught top-down, so that the school system alienated and demotivated them, this means a new lease of life for education. There is now a consensus that education has a rehabilitative role and contributes significantly to prisoners' successful re-entry into society.

Adult learning: policy makers and learners need to become aware of the benefits of learning, and the area of adult learning requires more legislation, a difficulty compounded by a lack of data which reflects the target group. The Commission in the short term are pushing smart and effective funding to institutions to evaluate their adult learners, so that they can be targeted in future policy.

EPAL is a new digital platform for adult learning allowing teachers to exchange initiatives. This will launch in 2014.

Early school leavers: 6 million in Europe, most of them male and with a high instance of migrant background. This is not only a school issue, and there is a challenge reflected in the ExOCOP model, to promote inter-agency action to help this target group. Despite good instances of European 'second

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



chance education' interventions, there is a severe lack of data of early leavers which prevent these interventions from being mainstreamed into preventative national actions.

Basic skills: Offenders have very low relative levels of literacy and numeracy, and this is currently the subject of much policy discussion. Promoting literacy is the subject of a high-level group report which will be released in September 2012. In 2013 a policy handbook is being released on how to support maths and science education.

Different models of prison education and training can be observed across Europe – but there is no one single approach. Common goal is to prepare prisoners for employability and reintegration into society, and this should be addressed too by staff in prisons, not just the educators.

Closing with some key challenges, Mr Säävälä noted that prison populations across Europe are rising, and with them the diversity of prisoners is increasing. This brings a high numbers of prisoners with low levels of education, basic literacy and numeracy. And yet participation in educational interventions in prisons levels remain low - prisoners face a number of institutional and situational barriers to participating in learning, some of which are addressed in the one-off examples of projects presented by ExOCOP. Even so, prisoners who have achieved basic education often find it difficult to continue with higher level learning.

DG EAC remain engaged and present to help those involved in Prison Education achieve their aims of equal and effective education, training and employment for all offenders and ex offenders to facilitated their re-entrance to the labour market.

PANEL: Discussion on the Future Policy Perspectives on Active Inclusion

Chair Jörg Jesse

Lena Axelsson (EPEA), Hans Meurisse (EuroPris/ICPA), Sarah Salmon (Eurochips), John Stafford (CEP); Mike Stewart (EOEF), Gudrun Tolzmann (EPRF), Sonia Zdorovtsoff (EJJO),

CHAIR'S WELCOME: Jorge Jesse, reviewed briefly the previous days discussions in terms of what Europe's professional organisations have to offer, what they contribute and what they expect from coming policy and strategy changes.

Mike Stewart introduced himself as the representative of the European Offender Employment Forum (EOEF), a group with a long history which represents over 600 stakeholders in offender employment throughout Europe.

Mr Stewart focussed on the challenges of bringing the recommendations into practice, particularly given current scarce resources. Although collaboration and cooperation are pivotal, professional organisations have to consider how they can deliver potential strategic and operational solutions to the Commission.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



Mr Stewart reminded of us of how different conditions can be within and between Europe's member states within a highly heterogeneous prison population. Common features can be addressed in a more sophisticated strategies, but the reality is that it is fruitless to look for the Commission to find a single strategy. Hard and robust evidence from evaluative measures would help this progress significantly.

Collaboration should be strategic, not personality driven, and approached with a positive and proactive approach to applying the collaboration into a framework for policy and practice. Financial constraints do foster enhanced mutual learning and need, but NGOs need to be increasingly aware that the lines between private and public can become blurred, and that their goal must remain firmly directed at their target group.

Lena Axelsson introduced herself as the Chair of the European Prison Education Association (EPEA), a transnational NGO which promoting the principle that all prisoners should have access to education in prison.

Ms Axelsson focussed on the skills, competencies and qualifications which prepare offenders to work in the outside world. Therefore education in prison must be of the same quality as on the outside, and work qualifications and experience must correspond to the real labour market on the outside. In re-thinking prison education, career counselling could prove useful, as could involving local communities and in consultation with the local labour markets.

Ms Axelsson reminded the audience that we have a duty to take outcomes from this and previous conferences with us, and that strategy will come out of continued collaboration and networking.

John Stafford introduced himself as the representative of the CEP, a permanent platform of knowledge exchange in the European probation sector for mutual cooperation representing 59 member organisations in 34 European countries.

Mr Stafford considered 'settlement' is an issue, not just resettlement. Education and employment resources must also take prevention into account. He also considered the holistic consideration of the offenders' needs, particularly in terms of prisoner's motivation and self esteem which can be significant barriers to education and employment efforts.

The CEP acknowledged from the start that they could not operate in isolation, and supports the idea of a broad range of prisoner organisations working together within a platform. They facilitate inter-organisation influence and learning via EuroVista, their network publication.

Europe's prison population is diverse and resources are unevenly spread, but collective agreement on what ExOCOP wants to achieve with a clear rationale based on what it's going to achieve for the target group will clear the way for Commissioners to make key strategic decisions.

Professional organisations must model productive and positive partnerships so that this can be replicated on the ground level. Again, this becomes more crucial as resources are squeezed and organisations involved in prison, probation and arrest become more reliant on one another.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



Sarah Salmon introduced herself as the representative for European Network for Children of Imprisoned Parents (EUROCHIPS), a network representing 28 members in 18 countries, to bring the issues and rights of the children to the attention of policymakers.

Ms Salmon reminded the audience of the stigma and socialisation issues suffered by children of prisoners and their families. The financial impacts on families also lead to housing issues and a breakdown on family relationships which can severely affect the children's physical and mental health. Family ties and connection with children must be flexible and good quality. Research shows that when families are helped to stay strong, intergenerational recidivism can be avoided.

A top down strategy for improvement would further existing human rights legislation. The UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child is highly ratified across Europe but the agenda still needs to be pushed and lobbied internationally. Bottom up, the digitalisation of prisons will facilitate both communication between families but also informing families in online forums which but support and inform the families.

Ms Salmon again pointed to the job of professional organisations to foster an expert culture and tirelessly lobby responsible ministers who may know little or nothing about the issues at hand.

Sonia Zdorovtsoff introduced herself as the representative for International Juvenile Justice Observatory representing children's rights representing a pool of 80 experts divided into three groups representing the NGO's on the ground, an academic section and a public administration section to work with ministries.

Even more willingness for the Commission to consult the IJJO on relevant matters. She also focussed on prevention and on not using detention as the easy solution to deal with children in Europe, but to use other perhaps more family- and community-based measures within the child's environment will lessen the necessity for resettlement.

IJJO interacts extensively to inform and support the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe. It also remains in constant contact with local and regional NGOs and key individuals. Key findings and possible solutions are put forward in policy papers which promote the needs of children at key budgeting points in the timelines of these relevant administrations.

Gudrun Tolstman introduced herself as representative of the European Prison Regime Forum 1995 informal meeting of Justice Ministries in order to promote offender work through exchange of best practice and networking.

Facilitation of networking and shared experiences are of key importance to the EPRF. But Ms Tolzmann also focussed on the burden of responsibility of the community, not just the prison, in resettling an offender back in society and the labour market. Active community awareness of the issues involved in resettling offenders would bring positive and innovative solutions. Professional

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



organisations must each use their political influence to illustrate to the Commission how important good resettlement is and the potential solutions to it.

Representing European Ministries of Justice, the EPRF offers the Commission an independent discussion forum and extensive expertise on Europe's offenders, employment and resettlement issues, particularly with reference to how policy and practice could be integrated into existing national frameworks.

Ms Tolzmann stressed what she considered to be the goal of financial independence from the support of the ESF in this field: whilst this financial support is invaluable for establishing project, current financial pressures dictate that the project should be designed to – at some point – function and thrive by independent means.

Hans Meurisse introduced himself as the representative of EuroPris, an organisation which exchanges practical information and structures, collaborating between national and regional prison services and the European Commission.

Lack of a common youth policy for ETE in Europe, and a need to implement broad social Systematic and tailored to EU Networking interface to bring about practical measures, positive action on an operation level. EuroPris works on chain related thinking , a platform in which all the data from arrest past the end of the sentence is accessible for all those who work with that prisoner. By working on prisons which are business and process driven will help accommodate the heterogeneous and growing prison population. Mr Meurisse referred to EuroPris' societies in Europe have changed: digital prisons offer the prisoner a responsible pathway for education and training throughout their time in prison and beyond. Mr Meurisse finished by reminding us that European Commissioners are actively looking for concrete strategic actions, and it is the duty of the professional organisation to deliver timetables for these potential solutions.

Europris hopes to construct mutual trust between practitioners in the field and build bridges which could offer easy practical solutions transnationally. By sharing internal prison processes, the daily life of inmates can provide both business intelligence and valuable data for future policy decisions. Digitalisation of prisons again becomes attractive in this respect. Best practice should be shared immediately with other prison administrations, so as to offer good value strategic improvement at every level.

Working together and collaboration between DGs has to be possible given current shortage on resources.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



PANEL: Future Action and Berlin Declaration on the Reintegration of (Ex-)Offenders

Chair: Allen Mercer (AIEDL and ExOCOP Steering Group Member)

Agnieszka Bochniewicz (Justice, PL),

Jürgen Hillmer (Coordinator, ExOCOP),

Rutger Krabbendam (Justice, NL),

Serenella Pessarini (Juvenile Justice, IT),

Alan Smith (Independent expert);

Iliana Taneva (COE),

Craig Watt (NOMS UK)

Serenella Pessarini (Juvenile Justice, IT), Ms Pessarini works for the Juvenile Justice department where they have various different approaches each with a strong focus on resettlement but recidivism is only around the corner. Her department has accessed various ESF funds both on a national and regional level and have taken very positive things away from transnational experience sharing.

Agnieszka Bochniewicz (Justice, PL): Resettlement starts when a prisoner first arrives, and should not just be the task of the prison staff, since it is the task of prison to help prisoners function within outside society. Families, NGO's and local communities are integral to this and need to be supported, but much work has first to be done overcoming the stigma of prison and prisoners.

Rutger Krabbendam (Justice, NL): presented the 'New Vision' which NL began in 2008. This combined cooperation with local and institutional partners (housing, probation, healthcare and so on), with an individual approach to an offender's programme for reintegration. This is made by a social service coordinator in conjunction with the prisoner, so he sets some goals to reach. A digital platform combines information within 2 weeks, so his daily programme can be adapted quickly and reactively.

NL has also just begun a new staff training programme, so that all prison staff are trained in motivational interviewing, and higher level staff have higher education.

Mr Krabbendam stressed that whilst this approach works, it is not easy to achieve, particularly in times of restricted budget.

Iliana Taneva (COE): Partnership approach, which rely upon multi-agency and individualistic approach are very favoured by the Council of Europe, and Mrs Taneva is pleased to see such evidence of this approach in ExOCOP.

Two future problems which she highlights in Europe are overcrowding, which hampers quality of daily life, education and all reintegration initiatives. The second issue is detention of foreign

ExOCop Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



prisoners, for which there is no Europe-wide legislation on how they are treated, and what measures are specific to their social reintegration. Mrs Taneva urged the audience to share experiences with national policy makers to push the agenda and change core practice on these two points.

Craig Watt (NOMS UK): Mr Watt focussed on the processes of lessons learned during ExOCop, and the issues of data management and integrity being captured in a structured way so that the Commission can genuinely assess which initiatives in the field are successful and why, in order to mainstream them.

Jürgen Hillmer (Coordinator, ExOCop): Mr Hillmer focussed on the importance of prison work being of the same quality inside as outside prison, so as to prepare offenders for the swift advances of local labour markets. He will be concentrating on bringing together a network so as to share European structures and resources for a practical plan for taking prison industries forward in member states.

Alan Smith (Independent expert): Presented in his context as independent expert recently retired from DG EAC where he was deeply involved in ETE for offenders.

As the Commission's current funding programmes are currently drawing to a close, Mr Smith presented a proposal for a Europe-wide programme which he named PAROLE, or the Programme of Action for the Rehabilitation of Offenders through Learning and Employment. This programme draws upon the large degree of consensus about what it is which has to be done for this target group, and the potential economic and social savings, but takes into account the very diverse situations of prisons all over Europe.

PAROLE would be a focal point in the Commission to coordinate targets for the many policy dimensions from which to derive European support (such as peer reviews, evaluation, indicators and regular reporting). And it would also have a programme dimension to bring together the different funding strands on a community and national strands.

PLENARY Keynote Speech: Hans Meurisse (ICPA; EuroPris) EU Professional org.

Mr Meurisse began by stressing an expanding Europe puts unique strain on prison and correctional services: political demand for prison service savings, combined with rising prison populations and difficult economic choices have left it difficult to deliver good services to prisoners themselves.

Easier movement across Europe has changed the landscape of prison rehabilitation, and there is a need for a single voice for policy makers to listen to. EuroPris pushes the agenda and gives this voice to prison administrations which began with the work of the Council of Europe. The need to reinforce mutual trust and knowledge is key, and EuroPris binds both members to each other and to other professional organisations so as to standardise what is required and to effectively implement these standards.

EuroPris fully intends to contribute to European policy on the basis of their professional knowledge and expertise: a resource for policy makers to offer support and provide a forum for better shared understanding and collaboration.

ExOCOP Policy Forum Berlin: CONFERENCE REPORT

**Permanent Representation of the
Land of Bremen to the Federal Government**
Berlin, 18th – 19th June, 2012



PLENARY Closing Speech: Szilárd Tamás, DG Employment

Mr Tamás stressed that his speech has a practical basis with three messages from DG EMPL at the end of this Network:

DG EMPL is fully satisfied with the objectives and performances of the ESF Learning Networks. However, this network brought together prison with ESF monies and funding opportunities, and this connection was particularly highly valued. The ESF is substantial enough to scale up and mainstream pilot projects, but it can and would gladly finance national structural reform, so it is important for administrations and Managing Authorities to work together to this end. Therefore the Learning Network funding will be continued into the next funding period, and the call opened on May 14th 2012.

Mr Tamás flagged that communication is very important: prison services are aware that Programming Structures in the next 6 months, so please be in touch with your department of regional development if you would like to access ESF monies about how and why you would like to use ESF. Absorption capacity and the structure of measures should be aligned with your professional area, and these discussions must take place on your national level over the next half year.

The third message is that this next programming period will be results oriented: if you engage, results should be delivered. The Commission offers significant simplification tools, so as to simplify the tools to make the outcomes the most important aspect of your programme, less impetus on how you reach these outcomes.

Finally, trans national cooperation is considered key by the Commission, therefore the Commission will make this mandatory for all ESF projects. This can be bilateral, mobility or partner based, and the Commission services would coordinate the actions of the member states and help with networking.

DG EMPL thanked those present for their input into ExOCOP and urged all those present to continue.

End of Conference: Thanks to everyone for their expert participation in the fruitful discussions!