



Summary from the preparatory meeting on Domestic Violence in Prison and Probation

Stockholm 6-7 March 2018

Domestic violence is an ongoing problem all around Europe. Domestic violence is a severe issue that refers to all jurisdictions. On the initiative of EuroPris president Nils Öberg, a preparatory meeting was held in Stockholm, Sweden in March 2018. Participants of the meeting were representatives from both EuroPris and CEP, together with experts from four European countries. The meeting highlighted the need for raising awareness, spreading knowledge, best practice and developing management on the issue.

The preparatory meeting started with a welcome by EuroPris Executive Director Kirsten Hawlitschek and CEP Secretary General Willem van Der Brugge, followed by a short personal presentation. The participating experts were: Lara Jonah (U.K.), Sabrina Reggers (Belgium), Jana Špero (Croatia), Fredrik Olausson (Sweden). CEP's Policy Officer Maria Lindström also participated in the meeting.

The Istanbul Convention, presentation and discussion on implications, Johannes Evers Gester

The first speaker was Johannes Evers Gester from the division for Gender Equality at the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Johannes gave the group a short introduction to the Istanbul convention (CETS No. 210). The convention aims at preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Istanbul convention opened for signatures in May 2011 and is now ratified by twelve countries. See slides CEP about the Istanbul Conventions for further information.

After the introduction the experts from four European countries gave a presentation about the situation on domestic violence issues in their country.

Fredrik Olausson, Sweden

The Swedish DG Nils Öberg has been appointed to lead an investigation on the treatment for offenders. Victims have been the priority in the past and now the focus shall be on offenders. SPPS has a structure that can be used in other parts of the society. Strengths are risk assessment and individual planning tools, treatment programs, STICs implemented in probation

Challenges: honour based violence, multi-agency cooperation must be developed, treatment programs in the society, support development in communities, digitalisation. See slides for more information.

Jana Špero Croatia

Croatia's focus on domestic violence has increased since they had a very tragic divorce case a couple of years ago, where the ex-husband brought a gun to court and shot his wife, the lawyer and the judge. This, among other things, made it clear that Croatia had to pay more attention to domestic violence. A new law was created that included all types of violence that are mentioned in the Istanbul Convention. A national team supervises domestic violence cases and coordinates the process on a local level. All inmates that serve more than six months are being assessed at the national diagnostic centre and then sent to the prison that can meet the needs of the offender in the best way. Croatia has treatment programs for sexual offenders, domestic violence and general aggressive behaviour (ART). Staff from different penitentiaries in Croatia are being trained. Staff in probation can have a license to provide treatment programs to offenders. Croatia is starting up a group-program for sexual violent behaviour and one for gender based violence at the moment. Jana Špero can see a need for developing a program for reoffenders. A majority of the domestic violence cases also includes problems with alcohol, drugs, PTSD or a combination. Croatia has a lot of security measures that the police can use in the domestic violence cases. One example is that the police can decide that a man is not allowed to live in the house for a certain amount of time. The Ministry of Justice has a special department for victim support with a national number that victims of domestic violence can call. Croatia also has a five year strategy in line with the Istanbul Convention, but the Istanbul convention is being debated because of the definition of gender.

Sabrina Reggers, Flanders, Belgium

Sabrina presented the way of working with domestic violence in Flanders, Belgium. Flanders uses a chain collaboration approach in tackling domestic violence and has family justice centres in every region. The goal is to stop domestic violence, to decrease the number of risk factors, increase the number of protective factors and use a systemic and individual approach. See attached slides for more information.

Lara Jonah, UK

The definition of domestic violence in the U.K. the definition includes all family members. 20,7 % of all women in the U.K. has experienced domestic violence. There are about two women each week that are killed by their family members. The U.K. implemented new legislation about domestic violence that has improved the work. The treatment programs for domestic violence were reviewed in 2010. Nowadays the Healthy Relationship Programme (HRP) is used in prison and IDAP in probation. IDAP has been debated the last years. It is seen as too confrontational and all about power and control, which is not always needed. They also work with the Build Broken Relationships programme (BBR). This programme is also aimed at non-convicted offenders. Lara can see a lack of policy regarding the subject; there are not a central policy unit that drives the subject from a strategic point of view.

David Ivarsson about RVP

Sweden has developed a new individual treatment programme for domestic violence, called Relationsvåldsprogrammet. It is a one-to-one programme and is used as a complement to IDAP.

David says that it is hard to find good studies about treatment in the field of domestic violence. RVP is developed for mid-risk offenders.

See attached slides for more information.

Meeting with SPPS Director General Nils Öberg

Nils Öberg is Director General for the Swedish Prison and Probation service and initiator of an expert group about domestic violence. He welcomes all the participants to Sweden and to the preparatory meeting about domestic violence in prison and probation. Nils explains that he got the idea to organise this meeting when EuroPris Expert Group on Family Relations stopped, when the discussion raised during the EuroPris General Assembly about getting back to the core values and also from what he has seen being the leader of a governmental investigation on domestic violence in Sweden. Sweden has done some good work in this field but there is certainly more to do. Nils has, during the work with the governmental investigation, seen some really interesting ideas around Europe within the field. It is important how we frame the issue of domestic violence. In Sweden, for example, the “police code” for an ongoing domestic violence case is “apartment disturbance”. Domestic violence is a matter of discrimination and half of the population is actually at risk to die from domestic violence.

Summary of discussion

A lot of European countries try to improve the work with domestic violence and share good practices, but there is still a lot to be done. One thing can be to identify those who are sentenced for other crimes, but possibly also have a background of problems with domestic violence. It is important to pay attention to differences in cultural and religious backgrounds and to increase the knowledge about this matter in order to tackle domestic violence in different contexts.

Domestic violence is an issue that goes through both prison and probation. It is therefore natural that CEP and EuroPris work together with a joint expert group. Both organisations have unique networks that can be used for raising awareness, exchange experiences and share knowledge.

The conclusion is to make a proposal for CEP’s Board and EuroPris General Assembly to start a joint Expert Group on domestic violence. The Expert Group aims to raise awareness about domestic violence, share knowledge and best practice, put domestic violence on the agenda in all European countries, increase knowledge in dealing with domestic violence and cultural differences, increase knowledge on honor-based violence, develop staff training, promote the use of tailored individual risk assessment tools and improve management in this field. The effect on children of experiencing domestic violence is another important issue, which needs to be taken into consideration. The expert group can also aim at preventing duplication of development regarding training, risk assessment tools etc. and to promote evaluation on the effectiveness of treatment programs. Other resources regarding domestic violence, can be developed by the Expert Group as well. GREVIO could be invited as observers of the expert group.

Another idea is a call for proposal from EU regarding an Action Grant for domestic violence with submission deadline 30 November 2018. The project could aim at digital development of treatment programs, like the Swedish RVP programme. Another interesting subject is the multi-agency approach, with Belgium as a good example. Fredrik Olausson from Sweden will explore the possibilities to apply for an AG project with Sweden as lead partner. Belgium has experience in

working with Action Grants and is interested in being a partner, Croatia as well. Lara from U.K. needs to get back to the matter. One interesting partner can be European Family Justice Center Alliance. Fredrik will inform the other participants on his progress.

Maria Lindström from CEP will make a memo from the meeting for Willem van der Brugge and Kirsten Hawlitschek to present to CEP and EuroPris during their upcoming Board Meetings. Maria will summarise the meeting, make a draft for terms of references and send out the material to the participants of the meeting.