

Bonsoir à Tous, Good Evening Everyone,

It is my pleasure and a privilege to have been asked by the present CEP Board to give an account of how the CEP was founded and some of the significant events and achievements of the last 40 years.

If I was to take 2 minutes for each year of our history this evening, I'll finish in the next hour and 20 minutes! Maybe it is better if I spend a bit of time talking about the foundation of CEP and then a couple of significant periods in our history and finish in the next ten to 15 minutes?

At the outset I had visions of happy time spent in Utrecht with the Secretariat, reviewing the archives and pulling out significant events – alas thanks to Covid restrictions that has not been feasible but I am grateful to all those who have helped me by giving me their recollections and reflections of their time with CEP. My own involvement with CEP only began in the mid 1990's and only significantly developed over the last 20 years, so a big thank you to Willem, Breidge Gadd, Jurgen Mutz, Jan Schepel, Leo Tigges, John Scott, Iuliana Carbonaru and imants Jurevecius who have all been very helpful.

In November 1980 at the initiative of Dutch and German Probation organisations, representatives from 14 countries met at Reisenburg Castle near Ulm in Germany with the idea of promoting co-operation in Probation work through some form of permanent organisation rather than the more ad hoc arrangements of the time. The delegates agreed to meet a year later to agree on the structure and format for this new entity which would become the CEP – Conference Européenne de la Probation. The French Minister of Justice a M. Badinter had proposed that the Ministry of Justice would host the event – here at the Abbaye de Royaumont, 25-27th November 1981 – so our celebration of 40 years is spot on both in terms of its timing and its location!

The Conference at Royaumont was attended by delegates from 14 Member States but representing a greater number of jurisdictions and still more probation organisations; some were government departments some third sector and some private organisations – already the complexity and diversity of how Probation was organised and delivered in Europe was becoming apparent.

The 1981 Royaumont Conference was able to hear about some quite remarkable progress achieved by the organisers during the year preceding the event which helped to ensure its success.

Firstly, 2500 copies of a manual of European Probation covering principles and practice in different jurisdictions had been produced and printed in English, French and German – I think anyone involved in keeping the “Probation in Europe” web pages up to date will appreciate what a tremendous achievement that was. There was a plea from the embryonic secretariat to delegates to market and sell on the unsold copies which represented a considerable financial risk for the fledgling organisation.

The second achievement was that an international seminar on the treatment of Foreign Offenders had been held in Vienna. The seminar had been supported by both the Austrian Government and the Austrian Association for Probation Work and had also been successful in securing financial support from the Council of Europe; again a good result for a fledgling organisation and perhaps showing how strong the demand was for a European Probation Organisation.

The Conference aim then, was to discuss, develop and agree a way forward for a permanent organisation. Funding was clearly a matter to be resolved. There was an appeal for more contributions for the Royaumont event. The Conference had been able to proceed due to generous

pledges from the French and German governments with the Netherlands agreeing to underwrite up to 50% of the total costs. Nonetheless the organisers however welcomed all jurisdictions who wished to attend regardless of whether they had been able to contribute to the costs or not, in a pragmatic recognition that the prize of establishing an enduring organisation was more important than the short term financial pressures.

The Conference was clearly a success with the detailed Statute establishing the CEP complete with budget, subscription rates and the first President and Board members being dated February 1982. Breidge Gadd referred to the work of drafting it as “a tough assignment” for the Secretariat in the Netherlands and their lawyers. Despite the improvements in technology such as email I think it would be difficult to beat that timescale today.

The document recognised the diversity and complexity of delivering Probation work throughout Europe and it was possible to join as an “Active” or as an “Associate” member, the latter category arising as not all organisations felt they could commit to full membership without lengthy government enquiry and negotiation. Membership fees were linked to population size and organisation type. Individual membership was also available.

What is also clear from these early documents and the recollections of those involved is that the networking and social side of the Conference were a success and this continued into the events and meetings of the following years. Given that international travel was less frequent and more expensive in the 1980s and of course there was no internet or social media, CEP meetings were an important way for colleagues to learn from each other and share experience. I’m told singing by Board members was a feature of the early years’ meetings, and a songbook was produced – maybe something to be revived – or maybe not? The organisation grew with 17 countries being members by the 1983 Windsor conference and consultative status with the Council of Europe being achieved by 1985.

General Assemblies took place every three years with 10 additional CEP events being hosted by 1995 as well as a number of other seminars and conferences organised by member jurisdictions. All events were translated into the three official languages of the CEP; English, French and German; an expensive and complex practice which did however have inclusivity benefits for some us.

The subject matters considered included a continued interest in foreign national offenders – a common concern then as now for most if not all our jurisdictions, along with developing alternatives to custodial sentencing, improving practice and discussion about establishing minimum standards for non-custodial sanctions through the Council of Europe leading to the C o E issuing a recommendation to member states in 1992. It was clear that CEP had quickly established itself as a professional and influential body within Europe and a centre of expertise for Probation and prisoner rehabilitation.

1989 and 1990 were significant years for Europe with the wave of democratic revolutions in the former Eastern bloc and subsequent elections of reform minded governments. Before long CEP was inviting observers from these jurisdictions to CEP events and subsequently CEP delegations visited in turn and offering advice and expertise in developing Probation Services.

Two colleagues from my time on the CEP Board Iuliana Carbonaru and Imants Jurevecius were kind enough to offer some reflections on the influence of CEP in the evolution of their Probation Services in Romania and Latvia. The Romanian Ministry of Justice joined CEP in 1999 a full two years before establishing their national Probation Service in 2001. The Ministry was determined that the new service should reflect the values and the standards laid out in the Council of Europe Probation Rules

and benchmark their standards against them. The CEP was instrumental in assisting the new service to move from a pilot project to a national service.

Imants described their Service being hungry to learn from the more developed services of Western and Nordic Europe, enthusiastically attending CEP events and using the CEP to find answers to Probation related questions.

These new services have developed and in turn now contribute to the European knowledge base on Probation, resettlement and restorative justice with the more established services learning from them, as well as contributing to Governance through Board membership.

Now I have to mention the CEP 25th Anniversary celebrations in Jersey. I would have had to have got Jersey into the presentation somehow but the Secretary General at the time Leo Tigges reminded me that it was a significant milestone for CEP. Like all anniversaries it was an opportunity to reflect and there was a mandate given to the Board by members to further professionalise, and to become financially self-sustaining.

At the request of the Board a “business case for growth” was prepared by Sjef van Gennip the DG of Reclassering Nederland and presented and agreed at the Talinn General Assembly in 2007. It recognised the opportunities presented by an enlarged Europe and the emerging evidence base that Probation was effective and recommended an expansion of the secretariat and improving information exchange between members.

The budget approved for the following years necessitated a change to the CEP statutes and contributions became based on the relative wealth of the CEP member jurisdiction rather than simply the size of their population. Seeking operating grants from the EU also began during that period. These changes allowed CEP to become financially independent of the Dutch Probation Service for the first time and also recruit to three additional posts in the Secretariat.

This investment in resources paid off with CEP becoming increasingly active in a number of areas. One area was work in the promotion and implementation of the EU Framework decisions around mutual recognition of non-custodial sanctions and alternatives to pre-trial detention. There was the 2010 CoE Recommendation on Probation Rules building on the 1992 recommendation, and the establishment of the SPACE statistical data collection.

A significant new workstream concerned the evidence base for and implementation of Electronic Monitoring (which was invaluable to me at the time as a Chief Probation Officer). The importance of developing links with Academia to facilitate the transfer of research into practice was recognised and improved.

CEP was involved in the founding of Europris, Criminal Justice Platform Europe, and also became increasingly involved in developing practitioner skills through amongst other things the European Forum for Restorative Justice and the Barcelona Summer schools.

Outside of Europe there have been affiliation arrangements with North America, Australia and of course the involvement with the World Probation Congresses as we were hearing earlier today.

In short the CEP we recognise today developed. Today it is hard to imagine Probation work in Europe without CEP. In many jurisdictions Probation Services act as a form of bridge and facilitator their Criminal Justice Systems, and CEP does this at a European level. It also continues to provide a comprehensive knowledge base for practitioners, directors and policy makers. Forty years on CEP is recognised as the voice of Probation in Europe. Thank you, Merci pour votre attention.