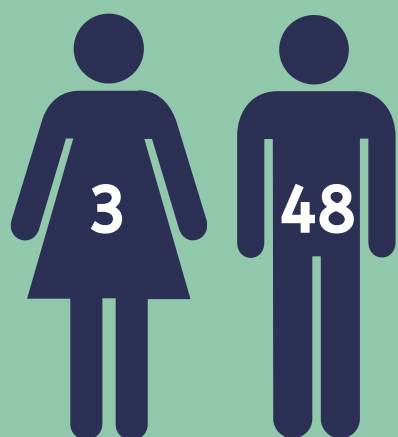


FIP2-project

Foreigners' Involvement and Participation in Prison

Interviews with 51 non-Belgian prisoners in four Flemish prisons



Nationalities



Participation in prison activities

When participating, often in multiple prison activities

Easy access to the yard, sports and library

Mainly passive recipients (e.g. attending classes, participating in sports, conducting prison work)

Wish to participate more

No need for separate/other activities than Belgian prisoners

But specific needs in terms of language, religion and country of origin/culture

Wish for more active role (e.g. organizing an activity or having greater autonomy to decide how to spend their time in prison)

"The more activities are offered, and the more time that is available for activities, the better it is."

Social contact & Social support

Fellow prisoners

A lot of support between prisoners

Emotional support (e.g. offer comfort, give encouragement)

Informational support (e.g. about the ins and outs of the prison or criminal record)

Instrumental support (e.g. translating, writing report notes)

"If we (prisoners) don't help each other, who else will do it?"

Prison staff

Little diversity among prison staff

Good contact with activity providers

Migration background is not so important, but efforts in terms of language and respectful attitude are

Family & friends

More difficult contact if family lives abroad (e.g. higher phone-cost, less/no visits)

Wishes:

- Use of Skype, Email, WhatsApp
- More flexible visit arrangements

Future perspectives

(In)security about country after detention is determined by whether or not having:

- Right of residence
- Social network
- Perspectives for meaningful use of time (e.g. work, training)

Hope for a normal life after detention

"I go to the Canary Islands and live like a millionaire... No, I would be happy with a stall selling beer and nothing special. Just a decent place to live. Just a normal life."

Re-integration

Need for assistance regarding re-integration:

- Being able to follow/participate in courses (e.g. (vocational) education, integration courses)
- Preparatory conversations
- Information + support regarding expulsion
- Assistance for applying for the right of residence
- Guidance to find work
- Assistance to acquire/maintain their home
- Supporting communication with social network to prepare for re-integration (e.g. Skype)