



Expert Group Meeting on Sex Offender Management (online)

18 January 2022

Participants:

- Professor Kieran McCartan, University of the West of England, United Kingdom (group chair)
- Laura Negredo, Ministry of Justice, Spain
- Yvonne Morick, Ministry of Justice, Baden-Württemberg Germany
- Jo Inge Svendsen, Norwegian Correctional Services, Norway
- Anvars Zavackis, State Probation Service, Latvia
- Willem van der Brugge, CEP Secretary General
- Mirjam van der Kooij, CEP (notes)

CEP Secretary General Willem van der Brugge opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He proposed to do a short round during which everyone could introduce him- or herself, especially for Jo Inge from Sweden since he joined as a new group member.

After the introductions Willem handed over to group chair Kieran McCartan. Kieran started by saying that the results of the questionnaire, sent out by CEP, gave a good view on what was going on in Europe concerning sexual offender management and treatment programs – a so called “contemporary landscape” of the actual situation. He mentioned that also the Council of Europe was very interested in the results.

Then he asked the group if anyone, before going through the questionnaire and its results, would like to share something special with the others like new developments or other issues worth mentioning?

Jo Inge Svendsen (Norway) wanted to check if indeed there had been no reply from Norway as he saw in the document? Kieran said that this was indeed the case, after which Jo Inge apologized and said that he would follow it up. He said that there were actually a few new good programs that were very much worth mentioning, for example for juvenile offenders. Kieran promised to downsize the length of the questionnaire so it could be completed after all.

Yvonne Morick (Germany) indicated that in Baden-Württemberg a research project on sexual offending had been done together with the University of Hamburg. Besides that she had been in contact with Mechtild Höing from the Netherlands regarding CoSA – this would be a very interesting practice for Baden-Württemberg as well.

Laura Negredo (Spain) told the group that in her country there were some new pilots going on, among which one on Restorative Justice. Workshops had been done with inmates who had already completed a treatment programme, and this was a big success. Laura also mentioned CoSA and she said that at the end of 2021 the first Circle had started.

A third new thing was a pilot on sexual offending and social interventions (different from the regular psychological approach). In this pilot social workers included family members in the treatment, and the idea was to start up group sessions with offenders as an add-on to the already existing forms of treatment.





Her last point worth mentioning was the closer cooperation between the Ministry and the police regarding offenders who were already in an open regime. In this way more supervision was possible – up till now there was never much support for offenders who had already reached the phase of semi-liberty.

Anvars Zavackis (Latvia) said that in his country the management staff of the Probation Service was looking at options for a bigger use of internet as an add-on to face-to-face meetings with offenders. For example, online group meetings or training programs could be very useful for people coming from different cities, thus saving travel time and costs.

The second point he mentioned was that research had been done to see if enough was being done for medium and high risk offenders in order to provide more support for the reduction of crime.

Mike Cutland (Jersey) told the group that the Probation and After Care Service in his jurisdiction was now working more collaboratively with the prison service – the two organizations also followed trainings together. He said that since Jersey was a small community it was relatively easy to tailor the treatment programs. In fact most sexual offenders were sent to prison and only very few were treated in the community. There was no post-custodial supervision, but this might change because of a new law to be implemented in the near future. Mike emphasized that many of the offenders were young men who did not see a future on such a small island as Jersey, and who for that reason were subject to criminal behaviour.

Kieran thanked everyone for their input and agreed that indeed in Europe there was a wide scale of risk assessment tools. He completely understood Mike in the sense that when in a small place like Jersey someone is released from prison then everyone would know such a person – something that might lead to a high suicide rate. He summarized the group members' comments by saying that the main joint points were the service user interest and CoSA.

Then Kieran went back to the survey that was set up before, based also on CoE questions. He wondered if it would be a good idea to go back to the countries that had not yet replied and still ask them for their feedback? Or would it be better to work on the basis of the received results? He indicated that anyway he would make a word document out of the received data and send this to the group for their comments. Yvonne reacted that this would be really great as she would like to add some answer options.

For the first findings that came out of the replies Kieran mentioned mainly the wide variety in activities, and the fact that some countries were more established than others.

Willem proposed to indeed approach the missing countries, however this time via a personal message instead of a general email.

Kieran agreed and said that indeed there was a lot going on in the field. It would be really great to, once having the (nearly) full data set, identify key issues and current good practices to be shared via the CEP website. He promised to make a short (3-4 pages) report of the main outcomes of the questionnaire to go online as a "landscape description" on the state of play in Europe. This could either be country by country or by area of topic – the latter for example via infographics.

Willem agreed that indeed the raising of awareness was of utmost importance.





Kieran suggested that after these steps it would be good to make a one page document on the main key issues, and try to organize an event regarding this in the course of 2023.

Anvars agreed to this and said that it would be really useful to have a look at all the replies to identify the main challenges and current issues. *“There are many similarities”, he said, “But also big differences.”*

Laura indicated that unfortunately she had to leave due to other commitments, but she indicated that she was very much in favour of collecting such information and then organizing an event.

Yvonne said that she was very impressed by the presentation that Johan Bac, director of the Dutch Probation Service, had given during the CEP Directors General conference in November 2021 in Paris (see [here](#)) – perhaps this information could be used for future actions or activities?

Mike proposed to ask clients what they found useful and not in the work of the probation services, to thus learn more about effectiveness?

Kieran acknowledged that – indeed the voice of the offender should be heard, especially since there were always so many prejudices like “they would be lying all the time”.

Then Kieran closed the meeting by summarizing the main points and indicating the next steps:

- Kieran will send out the data from the questionnaire in a word document for the group
- Kieran will send a similar but slightly different document to Jo Inge and CEP for the purpose of concretely contact additional people
- The aim is to have the data complete by Summer 2022 and then identify the main issues and topics for future use
- Possible events next year: a series of round tables? A conference?

