

Call for nominations

Joint Expert Group on Prison Overcrowding and Probation Netwidening (EuroPris & CEP)

For a new expert group starting in 2026 we are looking for 8 experts (4 from CEP, 4 from EuroPris) interested to join the Joint Expert Group on Prison Overcrowding and Probation Netwidening run in cooperation between CEP and EuroPris.

If you are interested in becoming a member of this Expert Group please [submit a nomination](#) on behalf of your jurisdiction by **7 July 2026**. Please note that the first physical meeting of the Expert Group is to take place **8 December 2026** in **The Hague, The Netherlands**.

Background

The launch of the Joint Expert Group has been initiated by CEP and EuroPris to address the issues related to increasing number of people in prison and under probation supervision.

For prison, overcrowding remains one of the most persistent and structurally embedded challenges across European prison systems. In many jurisdictions, prison populations continue to exceed official capacity, placing significant strain on infrastructure, staff, and the delivery of rehabilitative services. Overcrowding undermines safe and humane detention conditions, exacerbates tensions and violence, and limits access to healthcare, education, and reintegration support. It also reduces the system's ability to respond effectively to complex needs, including mental health and substance use disorders.

For probation, netwidening creates a structural paradox: a community sanction that now supervises more people than prison. According to the latest data, in 2024 there were approximately 1.4 million persons under probation supervision compared to 1.0 million people serving prison sentences. A broader and more appropriate use of alternatives throughout the criminal process is needed, at national and European levels, to reduce netwidening and avoid the expansion of mass supervision.

While often driven by broader criminal justice policies and sentencing practices, overcrowding and netwidening are also linked to excessive use of alternatives to custody, limited early release mechanisms, and inefficiencies at different stages of the criminal process. Addressing prison overcrowding and netwidening therefore

requires coordinated, system-wide approaches that combine policy reform, operational adjustments, and stronger alignment between custodial and community-based measures.

The aim of this expert group is to strengthen understanding and responses to fight the phenomenon of the prison overcrowding and netwidening in probation by translating shared knowledge into practical, system level action. This includes clearer decision making and triage to prevent unnecessary use of prison or probation and ensure interventions are proportionate and well targeted. The group aims to share knowledge and good practices, analyse the impacts of these challenges, strengthen EU-wide cooperation, and promote safeguards that support the effective use of prison sentences as well as alternatives to custody.

Membership

The Expert Group consists of 4 CEP members and 4 EuroPris members. The membership takes 2 years (2026-2028) with possible renewal/extension for another 2 years. We are looking for steady members of the Expert Group that will be part of the team and bring new knowledge, expertise, experience, and will, at the same time, be committed to the work of the Expert Group. The meetings take place annually in-person and additional ones online, also contribution to an event is possible.

Travel and accommodation

Travel and accommodation costs for participating in the face-to-face meeting once a year are reimbursed by CEP and EuroPris. Other costs related to the Expert Group shall be borne by the Expert Group member's organization or by the expert.

Basic criteria

- CEP membership (full, individual, associate);
- a CV (preferably [Europass](#) format) - *to be uploaded in pdf*;
- a short motivation letter (maximum 150 words) outlining the relevance of the topic, demonstrated expertise and experience in blending theory, empirical analysis, practice-based insight, and system-level understanding - *to be uploaded in pdf*;
- optionally, a recommendation letter from your organization (maximum 150 words) - *to be uploaded in pdf*;
- commitment to international working groups, appropriate time allocation for the tasks;
- not being a current member of another CEP Expert group/network.

Responsibilities of expert group members are to:

- attend and actively participate at the expert group meetings (face-to-face or online);
- represent their jurisdiction on the topic of the expert group and benefit from broader European knowledge and expertise;
- report back to their agency / share knowledge, expertise, and information within their own jurisdiction (dissemination and promotion of the work and results);
- stay updated on the latest trends on the topic of the expert group and actively contribute to development, implementation and optimization of the meetings, action plan during and in-between the meetings;
- work between meetings to produce a specific common outcome such as guidelines, mapping, among others – if needed;
- contribute to the professional development in the given topic;
- develop their professional skills and expertise;
- contribute to the development of specific topic-related events within the CEP/EuroPris work programme (webinars, workshops, conferences).

Please note that in the composition of an expert group aspects such as geography, gender, background and other relevant aspects shall be taken into consideration.

For more information, please contact CEP Secretariat (secr@cep-probation.org).