

MAJOR EVENTS IN 2010

Budapest hosts European Conference on Prison Education

On 22-24 February 2010 Budapest hosted the international conference "Pathways to inclusion – Strengthening European Cooperation in Prison Education and Training", organized by the European Union. The Education and Culture Directorate General of the European Commission invited Hungarian Prison Service Headquarters to act as its partner in organizing the event.

About 240 participants from 30 countries reviewed the results achieved by relevant projects under various European Union programs (Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, EQUAL, ESZA), and looked at opportunities available through other programs like the criminal justice initiatives coordinated by the European Commission. In a series of thematic workshops participants discussed practical issues around prisoner training and education, prepared recommendations to decision-makers, and collected European best practice in the field.



The participants were offered an overview of the Hungarian prison system, including a documentary titled "Prison for the town", a film about Heves County Remand Prison's social reintegration project. At the end of the conference, participants could visit Budapest Strict and Medium Regime Prison and Budapest Remand Prison.

Emergency flood control

The Hungarian Prison Service made significant contribution to the flood control measures in the almost one-month emergency period that started on 16 May. More than 1800 prisoners and 850 prison officers participated in the works. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Minister of the Interior Sándor Pintér both praised the efforts of prisoners and prison service staff.

Prison service workers donated a total of HUF 430,000, in addition to two truckloads of canned food, detergents, clothing and other emergency items, to victims of the floods. The donations were delivered to Mayor János Bacsó in the town of Ónod on June 22.

Prison capacity expansion

On 6 July, Minister of the Interior Sándor Pintér, dr, visited the Solt unit of Állampuszta National Prison with Lt. Gen. Antal Kökényesi, dr, Director General of the Hungarian Prison Service. The Minister officially reopened prisoner living quarters C and D, which had been temporarily closed down in 2009.



The two units, which can hold up to 328 prisoners, had to be reopened to ease the overcrowding of prisons in the country, as well as in preparation for accommodating persons incarcerated for misdemeanours.

Prison Service Day

The Hungarian Prison Service celebrated "Prison Service Day", the day of St Adrian, for the 15th consecutive year. The celebration featured the now traditional all-staff meeting, which this year took place in the celebration hall of Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison on 7 September.



The choice of location was due to the fact that in 2010 Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison celebrated the 125th anniversary of its foundation. At the event, Minister of the Interior Sándor Pintér, dr, awarded Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison with the flag of excellence in "Prison Service Work". After the festivities the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Hungary, the Director General of the Prison Service, the Governor of Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison, and the Director of Nagyfa-Alföld Agricultural and Manufacturing Corporation (a prison enterprise) laid a wreath at the memorial of prison staffers killed in action. Before the closure of the event all participants visited the exhibition of prisoner art titled "I have a dream".

Most prison service institutions organized their own St Adrian's day celebrations on 4 September, or as a family event on 11 September. Békés County Prison joined the "Uniformed Workers Family Day" in Gyula; Heves County Prison joined the "Blue Lights Day" in Eger; Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Prison participated in the 13th Szolnok Goulash Festival; Tolna County Prison and Pálhalma National Prison celebrated together. Despite the cold weather, thousands participated in the events organized by our institutions all around the country.

Culture in prisons – prison culture

The Faculty of Law and Political Science at the University of Pécs (PTE-ÁJK), in cooperation with Prison Service Headquarters, organized a two-day international conference on 28-29 September titled "Culture in prisons – prison culture". The event took place in the main hall of the Faculty of Law and Political Science in Pécs, and in Baranya County Prison.



Speakers of the first day of the conference were Chief Prosecutor Tamás Kovács, dr; Dean of PTE-ÁJK Gyula Berke,

dr; Corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences László Korinek, Dr; and Director General of the Hungarian Prison Service Lt Gen Antal Kökényesi, dr. On the second day of the conference the participants could visit Baranya County Prison, and see, among other things, the mural project "Mural Morál" at the Regional Juvenile Prison.

Cultural activities for prisoners

Of all the cultural programs organized for and by prisoners, two deserve special mention for their novelty.

Tököl Juvenile Prison organized its first Authentic Music Festival on 6 May, where almost a hundred prisoners in 13 teams attended to prove their singing, music and dancing skill in a competition. In addition to fostering musical tradition, the aim of the competition was to discover talent among contestants. Chairman of the jury was poet and literary translator József Choli Daróczi.



Heves County Remand Prison held a ceremony on 26 November to mark the end of the first stage of the institution's storytelling therapy project. The program, which is based on the "Storybook Dads" project from England, aims primarily at reinforcing family relationships. After preparatory sessions with storytelling therapist Margó Luzsi, female prisoners from the institution selected and recorded

stories on CDs for their children and grandchildren to listen to.

Prisoners at Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Prison recorded video messages to their families for Christmas. This initiative also aims at reinforcing family relationships.

10-year anniversary of the Hungarian Prison Pastor Service

The 10-year anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian Prison Pastor Service was commemorated on several occasions during the year. The events provided an opportunity to summarize and draw conclusions based on the experience of the past 20 years. This prison organization held its anniversary conference on 13 October, in Pilisszentkereszt.



The first in the series of events was a conference organized by the Hungarian Association of Prison Pastors and held in Vác Strict and Medium Regime Prison on 5 May. László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary, leaders of Hungarian churches and missions, and pastors working in Hungarian prisons participated. The Hungarian Prison Service was represented by Lt Gen Antal Kökényesi, dr, Director General. As part of the event the participants visited the so-called APAC unit, where prisoners practice

religion, the standing exhibition at the "Doberdó" unit, and the Neo-Gothic chapel of the institution.

The Hungarian Calvinist Church organized a conference on 1 June at the Calvinist church on Felsőcsatári Street, Budapest, where Bishop Gusztáv Bölcskei, dr, Chairman of the Hungarian Calvinist Church Council celebrated a high mass. Calvinist prison pastors and prison governors also attended.

At the Baracska Unit of Közép-dunántúl National Prison Calvinist prison pastor Jonathan Sándor Szénási celebrated a praise on 15 September. Present at the event were László Szászfalvi, State Secretary for Religion, Ethnicity and Civil coordination at the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, Lieutenant General Antal Kökényesi, dr, Director General, as well as representatives of all the churches and religious missions active in Hungarian prisons.

On 13 October the Prison Administration organized an anniversary conference at Prison Service Training and Conference Centre. Participants included Károly Kontrát, dr, State Secretary at the Ministry of the Interior, and presenter Lieutenant General Antal Kökényesi, dr, Director General. Bishop János Ittész, President of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, Bishop Mihály Márkus, dr, representing the Hungarian Calvinist Church, Gábor Mohos, Director of the Bishop's Secretariat representing the Hungarian Catholic Church, and Gusztáv Zoltai, Managing Director of the Hungarian Jewish Congregations all spoke for the historical churches at the event. Other participants of the conference and praise included prison pastors, representatives of prison missions, and leaders of Prison Service institutions.

On 8 December, in the chapel of Sátoraljaújhely Strict and Medium Regime Prison, a festive mess was celebrated by Csaba Ternyák, Archbishop of Eger, and Msgr. dr. Pawel Wojtas, leading pastor of the Polish Prison Service to com-

memorate the 10-year anniversary of the chapel and the resurrection of the prison pastor service. After the mess the guests visited the Prison Museum and an exhibit of religious books and artefacts.

Prison administration leaders from Central Europe meet in Budapest

Hungary hosted the 5th meeting of the Middle Europe Corrections Roundtable (MECR) on 16 and 17 November. Directors General and deputies from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia and Lithuania, the Deputy Director General from Austria, and the Chairman of ICPA (International Corrections and Prison Association) were all present.



On the opening day Lt Gen Antal Kökényesi, dr, made his keynote speech, after which Directors General spoke about prison administration in their respective countries and then discussed current issues. In the afternoon Minister of the Interior Sándor Pintér saw the foreign guests. On the second day Maj. Gen Sándor Dömény, Deputy to the Director General for Security and Incarceration spoke about the new institutions built under a PPP scheme.

Parliamentary subcommittee meeting at Budapest Strict and Medium Regime Prison

On 18 November the Supervisory Subcommittee of the Parliamentary Committee for the Constitution, Justice and Procedures held an external meeting titled "Reviewing the legislation of and practical experiences with ordering and enforcing pre-trial detention" at Budapest Strict and Medium Regime Prison.



At the meeting, chaired by Gergely Bárándi, dr, the Prison Service was represented by Lt Gen Antal Kökényesi, dr, Director General, who also presented an overview of the current situation of the Hungarian Prison Administration. At the Committee's request, representatives of the Metropolitan Court, the Chief Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, the Bar, the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Civil Rights, the Hungarian Criminal Justice Association, and the Hungarian Helsinki Commission all spoke, and then participated in a debate of the issues raised.

After the sessions the participants learned about the circumstances of incarceration, and visited Unit A of the institution and "Kisfogház" Memorial.

Kriminálexpo

On November 23 the Hungarian Corrections Association and the Hungarian Prison Service jointly organized a professional conference at the Institute and Museum of Military History. The meetings took place as part of the 18th international crime prevention, law enforcement and justice conference and exhibition Kriminálexpo 2010, and dealt with issues around the topic of corrections education and training in the past, present and future.



The participants could listen to several outstanding lectures by prison experts, researchers, university professors and representatives of other law enforcement organizations. The host of the conference was György Vókó, dr, University Professor, Prosecutor and Department Manager at the Chief Prosecutor's Office. The Prison Service was represented by Lt Gen Antal Kökényesi, dr, Director General.

As usual, the Prison Service set up its own stand at the trade fair.

Renovation works at Márianosztra Strict and Medium Regime Prison

In 2010 renovation works were undertaken by several institutions. Of these investments, the greatest in scale took place at the 152-year-old Márianosztra Strict and Medium Regime Prison, a building originally built for a Paulist monastery.

On 10 October the penitentiary and the Roman Catholic Parish of Márianosztra celebrated together the renovation of the Paulist Square, the facade of the prison building, and the prison chapel – all made possible by the support of the European Union through co-financing under the European Regional Development Fund. Works continue in 2011 with, among other things, the construction of a museum for corrections and religious exhibits open to the general public. The old prisoner cemetery will also be renovated.

Under the New Hungary Development Plan the institution received HUF 277 million on tender from the National Development Agency to be used for environmental and energy projects. The investment involved replacing central furnaces with energy-efficient new devices, and replacing aged insulation, old windows and doors. On 17 December, after works had finished, the institution held an opening ceremony where Péter Harrach, dr, Member of Parliament also attended.

Special training of staff

In accordance with the objectives of the Prison Service programme "Responsibility and preparedness", new and progressive training courses were developed and introduced. Two of these courses, Prison Service Critical Incident Negotiation training (Bv-KIT) and Stress Reaction Training (SHRT) were developed specifically for the prison service environment, using best practice from other countries and published research methodology. The purpose of the Bv-KIT programme is to prepare prison personnel for managing situations referred to in international literature as "critical incidents" (threats of suicide, cell blockade, hostage taking, rebellion) by way of negotiation, and be able to eliminate or disrupt the situation, or, in the case of a violent outcome, mitigate the risk of damage. We offered this course twice in 2010, in April and September, at Budapest Remand Prison Unit II, and a total of 28 staff members participated.

The aim of the SHRT training is to offer participating colleagues practical training in high-risk, unexpected, stress-inducing, intensive service situations, and help them learn more about the psychological, physical and cognitive reactions to such situations in order to enable them to control their thinking, actions and decisions. The training course was held on 4-8 October at an unused building of Állampuszta National Prison in Mikla. The 15 volunteering participants had to undergo medical and psychological testing before entering the course.

National Prison Service sporting events

The various institutions of the Prison Service always organize sports competitions and participate in championships, but the national Prison Service Cups are always a good challenge for the teams and sportspersons of the institutions. Regular championships are the following: military patrol competition, judo, small-court football, shooting, chess, cross-country running. Like in previous years, 2010 competitions were organized by Prison Service Training and Conference Centre.

29 April was the day of the national prison service cross-country running championship at Prison Service Training and Conference Centre. 32 institutions participated with a total of 485 players. For the third time in a row, the Pálhalma National Prison team won the cup, and this time the cup remains theirs to keep.

On 16 June six teams played the finals of the national small-court football championship at the National Police Headquarters RSZKK sports facility in Budapest, Vágóhíd Street. First place went to the Tiszalök National Prison team.

Prison Service Training and Conference Centre hosted the military patrol championship on 8 July, with 27 teams participating. The winner was the Vác Strict and Medium Regime Prison team.

The national shooting championship took place on 16 September at the shooting range of Márianosztra Strict and Medium Regime Prison. 31 teams participated with 124 players, and first place went to the team of Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison.

On 14 October Prison Service Training and Conference Centre hosted the finals of the national chess competition, with 6 participating teams. The winning team belonged to Márianosztra Strict and Medium Regime Prison.

The 2010 national Prison Service judo championship took place on 17 November at the Megyeri Street building of UTE in Budapest. 15 institutions participated with 22 teams, and first place went to the team of Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison.

On 10 December law enforcement organizations and the Ministry of the Interior organized an award ceremony in Siófok for all sports competitions of the year. Károly Kontrát, dr, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior presented the cups, certificates and other awards to winners. The overall winner of the Prison Service sports championships of the year was Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison.

