

# **CCJ4C Development of policy action recommendations based on the evidence built in the project for the development of a career guidance mechanisms in Criminal Justice Systems**

Results of a public hearing on the CCJ4C WP5 Country Report Recommendations

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## **Introduction**

This public hearing's objective was to examine and verify the conclusions of the CCJ4C Country Report, which was the outcome of two prior activities:

- In WP2, a thorough analysis of the current regulatory environment for career development, advice, hiring, and training was done.
- To test the results and confirm future requirements, in particular for Danish Prison Officers and managers, a DACUM workshop was conducted as part of WP3.

## **Agenda and Process**

The Danish Public Hearing was hosted by the Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet) and took about 1.5 hours. The Public Hearing was on 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2022. Prior to the meeting, participants were sent the agenda, presentation and the full report from WP2 named “Survey of European Prison Officers Career Guidance Needs” so that they had an idea of what was going to take place.

Participants were asked to discuss the three core areas: recruitment of staff, retention of staff and professional development. These included specific issues for which concrete solutions could be proposed to add practicality to the discussion.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss in broad terms, but also became more concrete in terms of recommendations on policies, working conditions, structures and the like. There was thus a good developmental process in the discussions.

## Participants

The Public Hearing was attended by a total of 11 representatives from various positions within the Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet). It was a mix of unit managers, union representatives, Danish regional representatives and union staff. Almost all of them had a background as prison officers, and therefore had some concrete know-how from previous work experience.





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## DACUM Report Results

The Danish DACUM workshop resulted in these identified challenges:

- General lack of understanding between administrative staff and guards, which means, you should be able to exchange knowledge and introduce job tasks across the organization;
- Lack of staff in almost all areas of prisons;
- Retaining current staff;
- The lack of new staff, this also means lack of motivation to work harder, when you are constantly understaffed and there is no incentives to do the extra work;
- Further education of staff;

Competences needed for further training are identified as:

Further courses for prison staff to be further educated, cooperation with colleagues, having more responsibility, being more mature, experience within the job to be able to exchange knowledge, support from management, having enough staff, more time dedicated to certain tasks, training in general of staff.

## Outcomes of the Discussion

### 1. Recruitment of staff, being more visible and flexible

The suggested solutions for further recruitment of staff were multiple. Participants had a clear idea that the geographical location for education and recruitment of new employees was important. It is already an ongoing process to geographically develop the education so that one can take the education in even more places in Denmark. This, and having school placements for primary and secondary schools.

It was also suggested to be present when soldiers graduate and are looking for jobs in the civilized world. The police already do this for recruitment because those kinds of people fit the profile as policemen – this would be obvious but has to be decided on a political level.

In addition, recruitment staff should be more present when, for example, factories close down. This type of people could also be interesting for the profile of prison guard. In relation to this, job centres could also promote the job and training more. Could be a direct agreement with them etc.

Another suggestion was to look at merit/credit schemes, to attract more different kinds of profiles. For example, if a social worker could be trained and given merit/credit for some of the subjects or

experience, he or she has had, this would benefit both the person and the intake of staff. More obvious areas to give merit/credit could be the military and the police.

On a simpler level, it was also discussed and suggested that the general atmosphere around prison work was poorly portrayed by journalists. Generally, people want to read the negative stories about assaults etc, but there are a lot of positive things happening too which unfortunately are not being highlighted.

In addition, something as simple as asking those who quit their jobs why they did so was suggested. Or those who don't complete the education about why they quit. The latter is particularly relevant as politicians have recently removed the State Education Subsidy (SU) from prison guard training and given them trainee pay (i.e. more pay than SU). It would therefore be relevant to know whether this has made a positive or negative difference even if it is at an early stage.

## **2. Retention of staff, professional development**

There were many suggestions for these identified problems. The problems of retaining employees start from the moment they are hired. Young prison officers in particular are typically put on the job and do not have great career prospects. This needs to be addressed bureaucratically so that people have the opportunity to see a career path as a prison staff member. Including developing in the job and acquiring new skills through experience sharing and training. This could also be an exchange of prison guards among Danish prisons, to acquire new knowledge about how the work is done in different places in Denmark.

In addition, it is also important to be flexible in administration in general. For example, it should not be a problem to move between two prisons if you want to move to another part of the country. An example was given of a person who found it difficult to move from one prison to another because of staff shortages. This is obviously a problem for both prisons, which is why it seems incredibly rigid.

Managers in prisons typically operate under their own guidelines and typically have little or no previous management experience either through training/courses or actual experience. This is incredibly problematic as you then have many different ways of managing, which ultimately works to the detriment of staff. It is therefore important to further train managers and work on their relationship with prison guards. This is both related to the managers themselves, but also to retain staff. No one wants to work under poor management conditions. In addition, leadership assessments could be held to ensure that leaders have the right soft values.

Finally, it was discussed that there is a lot of bureaucracy in general, which makes working conditions difficult. For example, you may be entitled to 5 days off per month, but you are not guaranteed when these are. This means that the system quickly becomes incredibly rigid, which may be another reason why it is difficult to retain staff.