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Quality employment and quality public services

Quality of employment in prisons

Country report: Greece

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Prison facilities

In Greece there are 34 prisons (custodial institutions). There is also a Youth Education Centre, which hosts up to twenty-five minors, both Greeks and foreigners. The majority (27 institutions) operate on the mainland. Seven prisons are located on the islands of Crete (four), Kos (one), Chios (one) and Corfu (one). They are split into three main categories: general, special, and therapeutic. General custodial institutions are further divided into type A (12 institutions, for inmates awaiting trial and for convicted inmates serving prison sentences for minor crimes and type B (11 institutions, for inmates convicted to prison sentences imposed for more serious criminal acts defined as felonies, lifers included). There are special prisons including rural units (3), the central open productive unit (bakery), institutions for juveniles and young adults (4, one of them rural) and one semi-liberty centre or department in Thiva prison for women.

Women prisoners are held in sections of two general type A prisons for men, in one general type A prison (formerly also section of a prison for men) and in one general, type B institution, exclusively for women (juveniles included). A small part of the female type B prison in Thiva has been recently transformed into an agricultural unit. Male juveniles (children 15-18 years old) are separated in one establishment (formally a general, type A institution, which is actually a special, juvenile institution) and young adults (18-21 years old and, exceptionally, for educational reasons, up to 25 years old) are detained in special institutions. The three therapeutic institutions include one general hospital (operating as a first aid and long care unit, just integrated into the National Health System and renamed as "Special Health Centre for Prisoners"), one psychiatric hospital and one drug detoxification centre called "EPILOGI" (Choice).

The Tripolis and Patra custodial institutions are in practice (informally) used for specific groups of offenders; the first for sex offenders (rapists, paedophiles etc.) and the second for drug offenders. Grevena prison is also partially used for sex offenders. The certified capacity of the establishments ranges between 32 and about 1,400 spaces. Some of the 34 custodial institutions in the country are old, 19th century buildings (i.e. Corfu, Tiryns). Some others are new, early 21st century constructions (Malandrino, Domokos, Trikala, Grevena, Chania, Nigrita). In some other cases prisons have been built in various periods of the 20th century (Alikarnassos, Korydallos, Patra, Diavata, Nafplion etc.), while some were previously military prisons (Avlonas, Diavata). Some of them are one-wing (block) institutions, others include more sections and units.

The total certified capacity of the prison system, according to the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights is 9,935 places (total space available for the custody of prisoners in all custodial institutions: 43,520.45 square meters), while the number of prisoners was 10,151 in May 2018), 10,198 in June 2018 and 10,763 in November 2018. It should be noted, however, that although it seems that there is a balance between prison space and prisoners, the accuracy of these numbers is questionable since the current calculation, as revised in 2017, is based on the CPT standards as regards acceptable individual prison space in multiple occupancy cells (4 square meters) while the Greek Penitentiary Code provides for 6 square meters individual space in multiple occupancy cells. For this reason the Greek Federation of Prison Officers criticized the capacity revision. Other bodies, also, expressed their concerns, when the new capacity calculation standards were included in a draft "Penitentiary Code", published in October 2017, without, though, further legislative action being taken since then. Furthermore, the prison population is unevenly distributed, leading to overcrowding mainly in prisons for adult males.

Tasks of prison workers

Surveillance

Surveillance is the main duty of **custodial staff**. This category of prison officers is responsible for the maintenance of good order, safety and security in prisons and for all kinds of searches. Furthermore, prison officers who are assigned to specific work positions, perform the duties of the particular service, e.g. the prison officer assigned to work in the visits department should check the legitimacy of visitors and record each visit in the book of prisoners' visits. Surveillance is also the basic obligation of **external¹ (perimeter security) guards**, as they are obliged to guard prisons externally, escort transferred prisoners and guard prisoners admitted to hospitals. For security reasons, the Rules for the Operation of Custodial Institutions (art. 36, § 1), provide for the co-operation of **custodial and perimeter security staff**.

Nursing and medical care

The prison administration ensure prisoners' healthcare to the same level as the rest of the population (art. 27 of the Penitentiary Code) on a 24-hour-a-day basis (art. 3 § 1 of the Rules for the Operation of Custodial Institutions). All prisoners should be examined on admission to prison or immediately after it and then regularly, twice a year and anytime they ask for it, by either the **doctor of the prison** (who is a **member of the prison staff or a visitor** contracted to the prison administration) or a doctor of their own choice (in this case prisoners bear the cost themselves). **Nurses are also members of the prison staff**. Where no **professional nurses** work or their number is insufficient to fully cover 24-hour shifts (which is the norm), some of their duties are assigned to unskilled **custodial staff**.

Education of inmates

A small and growing number of educational and vocational training units and programmes have been operating in prisons especially since 2005. The further expansion of educational activities in all prisons is provided in a recent law (4521/2018). Primary and secondary schools, public vocational training institutes, and Greek language learning departments will be established. Teaching staff needs are covered by **staff of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. Social workers and sociologists who belong to the prison service** facilitate and support educational activities.

Integration of inmates

One of the main tasks of **custodial staff** is to contribute to the well-being of prisoners, respecting their human dignity and strengthening their self-esteem and social responsibility (art. 59, § 2 of the Rules for the Operation of Custodial Institutions). These tasks are not reflected in the particular duties of custodial staff, which are security-oriented, while they are seen as central for **social workers and other specialists, i.e. psychologists, sociologists and criminologists**, who are also **prison staff members**.

According to article 81 of the 1999 Penitentiary Code, post release integration and adaptation of ex-prisoners to their social, professional and family environment are tasks assigned to "EPANODOS" (Return), a non-profit private law legal entity, supervised by the

¹ The term "external" is used here to indicate that the mandate of perimeter security staff is to work outside of the establishments of custodial institutions, without having personal interaction with prisoners except when they escort them in transfers. They belong, though, to the personnel of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the departments they work in are part of the prison system structure. In the present report they are counted as prison personnel.

Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights. This after-care structure is located in Athens and is staffed by **volunteers and affiliated collaborators**, who cooperate with prison social services and offer counselling, vocational training, minimal financial support and short-term housing, to facilitate the social reintegration of prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Recreation of inmates

The Prison Council, a three-member body consisting of the Prison Director, one social worker and one specialist (i.e. a psychologist or sociologist) organize various recreational – cultural activities, assigned mainly to **social workers and sociologists** with the co-operation of **external public or private agencies**. Usually, though, recreation is not organized and is left to **prisoners themselves** to occupy their time, watching TV, listening to the radio, playing sports etc.

Personal assistance of inmates

Counselling, social contacts, psychological support etc. are also the responsibility of **social workers, psychologists and sociologists** (prison staff members, as already mentioned). Drug addicted prisoners can ask for counseling and treatment, offered in some prisons by **external organizations** such as the Centre for the Treatment of Addicted Persons and the Organization Against Drugs (both supervised by the Ministry of Health). One of the 34 prisons is the Centre for the Treatment of Drug Addicted Prisoners, where a therapeutic programme run and staffed fully by **the prison service** (therapeutic personnel, custodial and perimeter security staff) is offered.

Preparation and distribution of food

Food is prepared and delivered three times per day by **groups of prisoners** whose working time goes to reduce the period of their sentence served in custody, before conditional release, and **supervised by members of the prison staff (normally custodial staff, exceptionally professional cooks)**. Provision of sufficient quality and quantity of nutrition for prisoners is a state obligation (art. 32 of the Penitentiary Code). The food is checked daily by **the prison director**. The **prison doctor** drafts the nutrition programme on a weekly basis and defines special or complementary diets to individual prisoners or to special groups of prisoners according to their health condition, needs and beliefs.

Daily household related activities

In general, household-related activities are assigned to **prisoners** whose working time goes towards reducing their sentence. These prisoners are **supervised by custodial staff**. There are specific positions in each shift with particular duties for prison officers (art. 59 of the Rules for the Operation of Custodial Institutions). Hence, a prison officer (custodial staff) who is responsible for general services and searches of all kinds:

- (a) searches each prisoner entering or leaving the prison, his/her personal belongings, the clothing and the permitted food and articles delivered by visitors or purchased by prisoners themselves through the prison services,
- (b) conducts body searches, searches of prisoners' personal belongings and searches in the establishments of the institution, and
- (c) participates in regular and non-regular searches throughout the prison. Furthermore the prison officer who is responsible for the kitchen ensures the safe keeping of knives, tools and other objects that can be used as weapons and immediately informs his/her superiors of the proper use, maintenance or loss of cooking utensils and appliances. He/she is responsible to maintain cleanliness in the

room, observing prisoners and informing his/her superiors of any comments or complaints about the device.

Occupations and tasks

According to article 97 of Law 1851/1989 “Code of basic rules for the treatment of prisoners and other provisions”, prison staff are administrative officers, custodial staff, medical officers, social services staff, technical staff and “other” categories. The administrative staff consists of the director, the deputy director and the secretariat and finance department staff. Custodial staff consists of officers guarding and supervising prisoners. Doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses are included in medical staff while social workers staff prison social services. Technical staff includes agronomists, art teachers, drivers and technicians of all categories. Other staff includes priests, scientific staff (i.e. sociologists, criminologists), psychologists, teachers, trainers as well as other specialists. Also, in all custodial institutions there are perimeter security departments (“external guards”, who have belonged to the prison staff since 1999), in some cases covering more than one institution (prison “clusters” including two or more institutions, as in Korydallos, Thiva, Nafplion and Chania).

Traditionally, prison staff consisted of **custodial and administrative personnel**, performing prisoners’ supervisory and records keeping duties respectively, while escort and perimeter security duties were assigned to police forces. **Social workers** were appointed for the first time in prisons in 1973. In 2000, a group of **specialists (sociologists, psychologists, social workers and one psychiatrist)** were appointed to staff the first detoxification prison centre (Eleonas Thiva). In the same year one sociologist and one criminologist were also appointed in the central prison of the country (Korydallos Custodial Institution for men). In 2007 more than twenty psychologists were added to the small number of specialists, being the second “most represented” professionals with a scientific qualification in the field (in total 26 officers), after social workers (64 officers)².

In recent years educational and therapeutic programmes, especially Second Chance Schools and counseling for drug addicted prisoners, have been gradually expanded. In most cases, such programmes are “imported” and run by personnel of other organizations, not the prison service. In any case, the great majority of prison officers perform **supervisory, custodial and escort duties**. In many prisons there are no specialized staff (social workers, psychologists, sociologists, doctors). In the 2017 Annual report of the Greek Ombudsperson it is noted that custodial staff members (still) undertake nursing duties.

In total, 4,500 staff members employed by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights work in the prison estate. About 4,000 of them are custodial and perimeter security guards, 380 belong to the administrative and technical personnel and 120 are scientific staff members (social workers, psychologists, sociologists, criminologists, doctors). Among them there are 34 prison directors, 35 heads of custodial departments, 44 heads of administration and financial departments and 7 heads of social work departments. There are also 27 heads of perimeter security departments, who are police officers who belong to the Ministry of the Interior.

According to the 2017 Organization of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, prison staff consists of custodial staff, perimeter security guards, secretariat and financial department officers (in some cases separately, in other cases under the same head

² Administrative staff, called “penitentiary officers”, who are university degree holders (law, political science, economics, sociology etc), are not considered “specialists” or “scientific staff”.

officer). In seven prisons there are social work departments, in the four rural prisons there are technical departments and in the one therapeutic institution for drug-addicted inmates there is a therapeutic programme department. Major issues for prisoners' treatment (work, leaves, disciplinary control, social contacts) are mainly assigned to three- or five- member bodies (councils) where the prison public prosecutor or the director are presiding, while social workers and other specialists participate.

The duties assigned to each category of prison staff are described in the 2017 Organization of the Ministry of Justice, the 2003 and 2005 Rules for the Operation of Custodial Institutions and the 2006 Rules for the Operation of Perimeter Security Service. The 2018 public tender for the selection of prison staff summarizes the job description of certain staff categories as follows:

Medical Doctors, (university education) (specialties of Pathology and Psychiatry):

They provide medical care to prisoners, draft necessary reports, are responsible for the supply of pharmaceutical and hygienic material in cooperation with the pharmacist. They also provide laboratory tests and vaccination for prisoners and prison staff in order to prevent communicable diseases. They also check food quality.

Social Workers, (university technological education): They perform interviews with prisoners, either individually or in groups; they facilitate communication with prisoners' families, employers, various services, organizations or individuals related to their social rehabilitation and support and oversee prisoners' conditional release.

Administrative Penitentiary Officers for Adults, (university education): They keep and update books, files and records of the administrative department, are responsible for correspondence, draft documents and reports sent to the competent authorities, issue certificates, register incoming and outgoing documents, forward documents to prisoners and keep statistical data.

Psychologists, (university education): They provide psychological support to prisoners in individual or group sessions, follow special planning in cooperation with other specialists, and facilitate prisoners' adjustment to prison life, their safety and preparation for a smooth integration into social life after release. They are also competent for the supply of the material required to accomplish their duties (tests, assessment instruments).

Nurses, (technological education): They are responsible for the timely supply of the pharmaceutical and sanitary material. They also deliver medication to prisoners, assist doctors in the examining prisoners, care for the personal cleanliness and hygiene of prisoners and perform the nursing activities assigned to them by doctors.

Perimeter Security Staff (external guards), (secondary education): They are responsible for the perimeter security of detention facilities, guard patient prisoners in hospitals and escort them during transfers to courts, hospitals etc. and on leave.

Custodial Staff, (secondary education): They are responsible for keeping order and security, contribute to the well-being of prisoners respecting their dignity, strengthening both their self-esteem and social responsibility, in view of their release.

Occupational segregation by gender

Gender targets are included in the recent (June 2018) public tender for the recruitment of prison staff. Hence, 35 positions of custodial and perimeter security staff (of a total of 557 positions) are to be covered by women. No gender-related prerequisites exist as regards other staff categories (administrative, scientific etc.). According to Presidential Decree 215/2006 for the operation of custodial institutions' perimeter security service, gender

segregation is based on statistical data regarding the men-women prisoners' ratio. Beyond this formal rule, it is important to note that in a research study carried out in the previous decade (Lambaki, 2009: 193-194, 200, 202-203, 214) female prison officers have been reported as weak or reluctant to undertake duties with increased difficulties, such as face to face contact with [male] prisoners on the landings or work at night shifts. Women also avoided demanding posts in the areas of the custodial institutions where male prisoners live, although they belong to the custodial staff, assigned administrative duties. In these cases, the reason given is lack of sufficient administrative staff. The result of this "tricky" practice is that male prison officers end up with more work in "unpopular", front-line posts. Moreover, a number of administrative positions are occupied informally by custodial personnel, usually women.

The punitive and rehabilitative function of the national prison system

In recent decades the national penal climate has reflected both authoritarian-punitive and liberal-rehabilitative international policies. In different periods, there is either an emphasis on penal austerity and security in prisons, with a sharp rise of the prison population and prison construction plans, or a focus on the control of the prison population, humane conditions, respect of prisoners' rights, meaningful activities, and expansion of the use of alternatives to custody. In the early years of the 21st century with a peak in 2012-2013, the destination of the prison system, despite the sometimes humanitarian rhetoric, was to warehouse socially excluded people. Currently, especially after 2015, the central prison administration adopts a reductionist, social reintegration oriented rhetoric and policy, promoting educational and rehabilitation interventions organized mainly in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Health, third sector organizations etc., to the limited extent current economic restrictions and the restructuring of the labour market and the welfare sector allow.

The findings of a study carried out during the above mentioned period highlight the positive attitude of prison personnel as regards the implementation of rehabilitative programmes in prisons. Nevertheless, it is noted that such programmes should be implemented on condition that the orderly operation of the prison is respected and secured (Arfaras, 2011: 149).

In February 2018 a three year strategic plan for the penitentiary system (2018-2020), drafted by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the General Secretariat for Crime Policy and sent in May 2017 to various authorities, organizations, services and other bodies for their comments, highlighted four main crime policy pillars: humanism, security, reintegration and transparency. The strategic goals for the penitentiary system, according to this document, are: i. the improvement of living conditions in prisons and the modernization of infrastructures, ii. the development and training of staff and prison management, iii. the reduction of the prison population, the expansion of credible alternative measures, the prevention and control of juvenile delinquency, iv. the preparation for social reintegration and post-release care, v. security for prison staff and prisoners, transparency and accountability and, vi. healthcare services provision in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

The initial draft of this plan has been welcomed by many but is simultaneously the subject of criticism as a general and abstract set of ideas, lacking particular reference to specific actions and necessary resources. The Greek Federation of Prison Officers, for example, considered that it was an unrealistic, unattainable wish-list, finally approved by the Minister of Justice,

Transparency and Human Rights without a prior discussion with prison staff representatives. The implementation of this strategic plan and the achievement of its declared goals, nine months after its introduction are still questionable.

Recent policies influencing the prisoner-staff ratio

Law 4322/2015 was the sequel to legislative initiatives to reduce the prison population through the introduction of early conditional release with repeated so called “emergency” legal provisions. The innovative aspect of this law was that release schemes were applicable to all sentenced prisoners, while in the past many categories of prisoners were excluded from the implementation of measures to reduce the prison population, depending on the seriousness of the committed crimes and the length of the imposed sentences. Some exceptions introduced in 2016 and extended in 2017, show a growing scepticism as regards the effects of such a policy in crime prevention and its compatibility with the constitutional principle of the separation of powers, expressed especially by the opposition and the judiciary. Courts seem to react to reductionist policies increasing the length of sentences (official statistics show that the prison population consists of lifers (approximately 10% of the total prison population) and long-termers serving sentences longer than 15 years (approximately 20% of the total prison population). The early release of prisoners with disabilities, provided for in law 4322/2015, is also criticized especially as regards the diagnosis and certification of disabilities by special bodies (Disability Certification Centres). The necessity of all these measures to keep the number of prisoners at a stable level, though, is still recognized by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, and the implementation of these measures has been expanded up to August 2019 (unless a new Penal Code is introduced earlier, as declared by the competent Minister).

In these circumstances, official data show that the (stock) number of prisoners has been reduced from 12,479 on 1 January 2012 to 9,560 on 1 January 2017 and increased again to 10,011 on 1 January 2018). Such a development could reasonably have led to an improvement of the prisoner-staff ratio, but it coincided with a reduction of prison staff due to retirements or resignations without replacement, as the prison service was not allowed to hire new staff, in order to achieve public funding reduction goals in the period of the current economic and debt crisis. In the same period, formerly vacant posts of permanent prison staff have been abolished by law 4024/2011 and have been gradually re-established since then. Some new employees, formerly Municipality Police officers, transferred to prisons with no special training, in the context of public services staff mobility programmes, simply filled the gaps of custodial and perimeter security staff, without satisfying the minimum requirements for safety and security within the prisons.

In November 2016 there were 4,450 prison officers throughout the prison estate, among them 2,083 custodial staff, 1,779 perimeter security staff and 64 social workers. In June 2018 the total number of prison officers actually working in Greek prisons was 4,258, including 2,019 custodial staff, 1,750 perimeter security staff, 369 administrative officers, 64 social workers and 56 other scientific staff. However, the actual number of prison service employees is much smaller, not exceeding 1,500 custodial staff officers who cover all posts in all shifts; approximately 300 to 350 custodial staff members are senior officers, while an additional number of 200 officers of the same category have been assigned other duties (administrative, nursing, technical, etc.) due to the shortage of staff of all categories. Prison staff trade unions refer as an extreme example to the situation where in each wing of the central Greek prison (Korydallos Custodial Institution for male prisoners) there are three custodial staff officers in each day shift and just one guard in each night shift, to supervise 300-500 prisoners (depending on the period and the prison wing).

The serious understaffing of prisons was expected to be alleviated with the imminent appointment of 588 new employees (464 positions for custodial staff, 93 for perimeter security staff and 31 positions for specialized personnel, i.e. doctors, social workers etc.) announced and initiated by the National Independent Authority for the Selection of Staff (Supreme Council for the Selection of Public Services Personnel) and the Ministry of Justice, Transparency, and Human Rights.

It has been also announced that 303 more new employees (258 officers to staff a new -not operating yet- prison in Drama and 45 in other prisons) will be appointed soon. Hence, a total number of 891 professionals will be added to the currently employed officers. Simultaneously, though, Law 4555/2018 allows former Municipality Police officers currently serving as prison staff (approximately 400 of them performing custodial duties) to return to the re-established services they were working at before the implementation of staff mobility programmes in the public sector. Consequently, even new staff is appointed in the near future, when the former Municipality Police officers leave the prison service the problem of understaffing will persist. An additional issue, which emerges from these developments, is that the distribution of new personnel positions in various prisons cannot respond to the real staffing needs of each prison, as it has been decided on the basis of data which are changing. After all, as no stable replacement rate exists (it depends on economic stability related measures), it is not possible to estimate the total personnel of the prison service in the near future and to predict forthcoming recruitment policies.

Quality of prison services

The quality of prison services is not assessed in a formal way with or without the use of defined indicators. The allocation of funding and other resources to custodial institutions depends on quantitative (numbers of staff and prisoners) and objective (location and weather conditions, condition of buildings), not qualitative data related to the achievement of predefined goals (smooth running of the prison, prevention and control of violent incidents, furloughs granted and proper use of them, suicides committed or prevented, prisoners' health care and deaths in custody, implementation of custody plans, increase of social contacts, improvement of living conditions etc.).

Prison directors draft and submit to the Ministry of Justice annual reports on the penitentiary and financial performance of each custodial institution, which are simply descriptions of the establishments and accounts of the activities, not used to assess and evaluate the level of each service operation. On the other hand, evaluations of staff (currently of head officers from their inferiors) include leadership skills and work performance criteria, taken into consideration for their professional career prospects, but there are many doubts and precautions as regards the objectivity of the followed procedures and the validity of the tools (questionnaires) used.

Funding of prisons and outsourcing

Prisons are publicly funded and run institutions. However, in addition to the State Budget provisions for the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, some money from other public sources is many times directed to the prison system. Furthermore, charities also support the provision of goods to poor prisoners. Prisoners themselves contribute to the funding of the system working in the establishments and buying goods from prison shops and canteens. During the years of the economic crisis, austerity measures also affected the prison system. To understand the general situation one should compare the total budget

allocated to prisons in the beginning of the economic crisis and the following years. From € 137.4 million euros allocated in 2009 to prisons (facilities, staff, infrastructure etc.) the budget has dropped to € 118.8 million euros in 2015 and to € 117.7 million euros in 2016, followed by an increase by € 3 million for the year 2017.

A working group for the calculation of the cost of the prison system, set up by the Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, collected data from all sources of public funding for the prison system from different departments and ministries. The working group concluded that in 2014 the total amount spent for the prison system was € 127.5 million, the average daily public expenditure per prisoner was € 28.18 and the respective annual cost was € 10,287.49. This cost would be increased if the investments made in buildings and the hospitalization costs of prisoners in public hospitals, schools operating in prisons and feeding of prisoners who stay in police stations during their transfers, were taken into consideration.

The [Greek Federation of Prison Officers](#) has noted that, over the last few years, the daily amount of money spent per prisoner for three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), formerly € 3.20, has been reduced to € 1.80 to € 2.50, which is quite low to safeguard the sufficient quality and quantity of food.

The private sector (profit making construction or security companies, civil society organizations, charities and volunteers) is involved in particular (prison building) works, in some prisoners' post-release ("after-care") and social reintegration initiatives, in the implementation of electronic monitoring for prisoners on educational leave, in providing goods and necessities to prisoners the prison administration cannot afford to undertake especially in times of public spending cuts.

Organization of prisons

Greek prisons are regional public services functioning at the level of directorate under the administrative control of a central governmental authority, the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights. Their operation is coordinated by the General Secretariat for Crime Policy assisted by the Directorate for Prisons Operational Capability and Crisis Management (established in 2015), and the General Directorate for Crime and Penitentiary Policy. The General Directorate is split into two departments, one dealing with crime policy and the second being competent for the organization and operation of the penitentiary system. Prisons are monitored by the Body for the Inspection and Control of Custodial Institutions, coming under the General Secretary for Crime Policy. Independent monitoring and investigation of arbitrary incidents in prisons is designated to the Ombudsperson, which is the Greek National Prevention Mechanism according to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). Public prosecutors assigned regularly to prisons as interim judges for the execution of sentences are competent for the observance of prison rules and regulations and, in general, the legality in the treatment of inmates.

In the [Greek Federation of Prison Officers](#) view, the establishment of the Directorate for Prisons Operational Capability and Crisis Management, in combination with the operation of the General Directorate for Crime and Penitentiary Policy resulted in the overlapping of competencies at the central prison administration level. The coexistence of these two administrative units is considered, according to the Federation, a source of confusion as to the orders and guidance given to prison governors and controversy as to their powers. The Federation is also criticizing the Body for the Inspection and Control of Custodial Institutions, claiming that their inspection work is selective and partial. They call for the abolition of both,

the Prisons Operational Capability and Crisis Management Directorate and the Inspection Body, proposing the creation of an independent inspection authority, staffed properly to conduct financial checks.

Prisons include custodial staff departments, secretariat and financial departments (in some cases separately, in other cases under the same head officer). In seven prisons there are social work departments, in the four rural prisons there are technical departments and in the one therapeutic institution for drug-addicted inmates there is a therapeutic program department. Major issues for the inmates' treatment (work, leave, disciplinary control, social contacts) are mainly assigned to three- or five- member bodies (councils) where the prison public prosecutor or the prison director are presiding and play the most decisive role. Conditional release is granted by judicial authorities (normally by judicial councils and when prison population reduction measures are implemented, by public prosecutors).

Treatment specialists (social workers, sociologists, psychologists etc.) where they exist, are also members of these councils. Although all employees are headed by prison directors, decision making as regards prisoners' treatment is collective and some crucial (i.e. budgetary, staffing and occupancy) issues are decided by the central prison administration (the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights) or judicial authorities. Prison directors' autonomy to determine policy within their institution is thus reduced mainly to internal resources allocation and staff guidance as regards priorities (i.e. formality over flexibility, control over care, punishment over correction and vice versa, physical and procedural over dynamic security etc.). The general social climate within each prison, although left to prison directors' and custodial head officers' discretion, is strongly affected by the policy orientations of the central prison administration and the perceptions of prison public prosecutors and the judiciary.

Moreover, there is not a certain and clear leadership style prison directors and other head officers should adopt, namely a particular approach they should use to inspire, motivate, empower, influence, communicate, transform, address, deal with staff, prisoners, the community and so on. In the post 2nd world-war period the vision, the aims and the values of the prison service can be found in draft-laws explanatory reports and prison legislation, directed to the ideals of prisoners' rehabilitation and social reintegration, but actually focused on secure containment considerations.

Reintegrative measures have been reluctantly implemented, if at all, for prisoners held without classification and assessment, in warehousing conditions, with staff distanced from them, informal controls and codes of conduct prevailing over formal prison rules and lack of political and administrative accountability. Prison everyday life was meant as the undemanding, in terms of what prisoners are called or obliged to achieve, but meaningless deprivation of liberty of inert and irregularly allocated people. In the above mentioned February 2018 strategic plan for the penitentiary system staff development, education and training are repeatedly mentioned and their importance is stressed, but the proper leadership style and the respective management approach to transform these expectations to reality is not clarified and analyzed.

Training, skills and recruitment

The recently issued tender for the appointment of new prison staff has established a new set of standard requirements for custodial and perimeter security officers. These requirements are common for both staff categories, as follows: a. (main) Vocational Training

Institute of Technical School Certificate with specialisation as security officer b. (auxiliary) Vocational Training Institute of Technical School Certificate with specialization as guard of museums and archaeological sites, c. (further auxiliary) any other certificate of secondary or post-secondary education regardless of specialty. The introduction of these criteria, especially the priority given to vocational training institutes, caused reactions from prison officers' trade unions and interested candidates holding university degrees.

The Greek Federation of Prison Officers argues that people trained to observe museums and archeological sites should not be considered as properly prepared to undertake prison employees' duties. Moreover, the Federation criticism is focusing on that, contrary to previous staff recruitment and selection procedures, only candidates residing in specific regions of the country will profit from additional bonus points granted for "locality" based criteria and that the fulfillment of military duties i.e. in the Special Forces is not taken into account, while Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights officials mention that the curricula of the selected Technical Schools are quite relevant to prison staff work and that military service experience is not a practical competency required for a candidate prison officer.

A number of positions are reserved for candidates belonging to specific social groups (according to the number of family members and particularly children, disabilities, origin, and, also, place of residence). Specific requirements are candidates' height, health condition, sports performance, scores in psychometric tests etc. Contrary to the past, the selection will be made by the competent body (the National Independent Authority for the Selection of Staff - see previous question).

The 2006 Rules for the Operation of Perimeter Security Service provide that the minimum requirements for the appointment of external guards are Greek citizenship, secondary education certification, age up to 30 years, good physical health, high readiness and sensibility. Candidates are examined by an ad hoc selection committee which is appointed by the Minister of Justice, and the appointment of those selected follows the successful completion of a two-month basic training programme, attending a School run by the Ministry of Justice, with the cooperation of the Police as regards training in the use of arms, self-protection and self-defense techniques. Similar requirements, with the addition of previous service in special military forces where considered in previous years for the selection of custodial staff. The latter should attend also, immediately after appointment an introductory training programme, obtaining the status of the permanent prison officer when they successfully complete it (see below).

On-the-job training of new recruits

Prison administrative staff, including treatment interventions specialists (social workers, psychologists, sociologists etc.), are appointed and start their career without getting any training as regards the penitentiary system, the social organization of prisoners, prison staff professional role and ethics etc. Custodial staff, the front-line personnel responsible for the daily supervision of inmates, should undergo introductory training at the beginning of their professional career. The successful completion of this training is a presupposition for their permanent appointment. The length of this compulsory training, once lasting six months, was continuously reduced due to lack of resources (initially to four, then to two and finally, in 2016, when the training programme was offered for the last time, to one month), while some officers have never attended any courses at all, as the training school is not a permanent structure. It operates irregularly, depending on the will of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the available funds and accommodation facilities.

In the Greek Federation of Prison Officers view this training is totally inadequate and superficial. Many times prison employees attend it years after their appointment. The Federation stresses that some prison employees appointed in 2007 and 2009 have not attended the initial training yet. Recently, the Ministry announced that the full reorganization and the operation of the prison staff training school is planned in the facilities of the Women's Prison in Eleonas, Thiva, close to Athens. Perimeter security guards should attend a two month basic training school. Actually this category of staff is being educated and trained by police in order to use the weapons provided to them. The need for more training, including life-long training courses, and employer's support with the provision of necessary equipment and clothing is stressed by both staff unions. They recognize that their training is insufficient and they claim that there is a need for continuous training (as the law provides - see also below).

Training and education after recruitment

The law provides for life-long training but no such schemes were in place for many years, although it is a criterion for employees career prospects. Custodial staff members are promoted mainly due to their professional experience and they can be only head officers of custodial departments. Perimeter security staff are still, after approximately 20 years of in-service experience, headed by police officers. Prison directors come from administration or financial departments. In-service experience and training programmes attendance is taken into account in promotions. Moreover, five forms of public servants mobility exist, namely placement, movement, reassignment, detachment and transfer, which offer opportunities for work change within the same service or between different services of the public sector.

A doctoral study, conducted in prisons in the previous decade, concluded that although the formal qualifications of prison staff are more demanding than ever, no specialized training or education during their working life exists; officers themselves often mention this lack and request appropriate training (Lambaki, 2009: 175). In another doctoral dissertation (Arfaras, 2011: 154-155), a different, "neutral" attitude of prison staff appears in relation to training programmes. Prison officers' ability to attend these programmes is limited due to staff shortages. However, according to the findings of the same dissertation, younger employees are more interested than their older colleagues to attend such programmes. Importantly, 44% of respondent prison officers consider that knowledge in solving conflicts and crisis management is crucial in prisons and they think that lack of training in these particular topics is a main deficiency. This view is a more or less expected consequence of the daily situations officers have to deal with in crowded prisons where prisoners with completely different backgrounds and characteristics coexist. 21% of the respondent mentioned that there is a need for training in forensic sciences and psychology, 17% referred to self-defense and self-protection, and 9% preferred criminal and constitutional law topics (Arfaras, 2011: 117).

A more positive attitude was expressed by officers who attended the recent (2016) introductory training seminars. Hence, evaluating the programme, they expressed the view that training is useful and that the content of the training was satisfactory but the training material (mainly texts with prison rules and regulations) did not cover fully their needs. They welcome training closely connected with their daily work, bridging theory with practice. They ask for more training opportunities not only for themselves, but also for their more experienced colleagues.

Previous research findings show that awareness to learn how to deal with difficult situations seems to be the reason employees with a higher level of education seek further training /

education (Lambaki, 2009: 175). Arfaras (2011: 115) reports that 30.2% of prison officers who participated in his research had attended at least one training programme and 58.8% had never attended training programmes.³ Finally, a questionnaire was drafted in late 2016 by S. Athanassiou, a prison director and member of the Central Scientific Council for Prisons, to investigate the frequency and quality of prison staff education and training, as well as to record employees' proposals on the duration and content of initial and further training etc. The questionnaire has been forwarded to the directors of all custodial institutions, and in the end was filled in by two hundred and forty (240) employees from sixteen (16) custodial institutions, 173 men and 67 women, from all staff categories (88 custodial staff officers, 70 perimeter security guards, 54 administrative officers and 28 scientific staff members). The majority of them (51%) believe that the level of their knowledge is "very good", although 67% have attended no more than one education or training programme.

After a long period of training inertia, in October and November 2016 and in May, June and July of 2017, in late 2017 and in the first semester of 2018 several training seminars have been held, to tackle the educational gap of the past. Employees who had never attended introductory training courses were selected to join the 2016 programmes (in some cases more than five years after their appointment), while the 2017-2018 courses attendees participated in the training seminars voluntarily, after a call issued by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights. The subjects taught in these seminars include a) security issues and crisis management and b) social reintegration. On 4 May 2018 six educational seminars in which 150 custody and perimeter security officers from 17 different prisons participated was completed in cooperation with the Institute of Training of the Greek National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government. Furthermore, the partial funding of studies in the Undergraduate Programme "Public Administration" of the Hellenic Open University for twenty prison officers has been announced on 12 March 2018, also for custody and perimeter security staff.

Finally, other seminars and training events have been also conducted recently, in some cases for all categories of prison staff (stress and burnout, Islam culture), prison scientific staff (motivating prisoners for their reintegration) or front line staff – custodial and perimeter security officers (fire fighting, crisis intervention readiness) etc. The general impression given after all, is that these efforts to offer training opportunities to prison staff are not organized according to a specific central plan, but that they are the result of personal initiatives and contacts with eager people, organizations, services and institutions. The Greek Federation of Prison Officers opposed the operation of these seminars, on the grounds of the training programmes content, the teaching staff appropriateness, and the suitability of the places where the seminars were held. They refer that such training is ostensible and does not deeply explore issues of radicalisation and crises management in prisons, not to mention coping with prison officers' psychological problems such as stress, which are dealt with in a totally inadequate manner.

The importance of soft skills and detention/surveillance skills in training

Since no prison academy with a stable and structured education and training programme exists, prison staff education and training initiatives are organized on occasion, according to the each time existing possibilities. For instance, the recent organization of circles of various seminars is based on the positive response of the National School for Public Administration to the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the topics discussed show

³ It is noted that all public servants in Greece are obliged to attend introductory seminars for the operation of public services in general. These seminars are not related to specific prison staff education and training.

that emphasis is put on dynamic security, crisis / serious incidents management, prisoners' rights and social reintegration interventions. One might observe the interest of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights to promote the four pillars of crime policy referred to its current strategic plan where humane, reintegrative treatment and security coexist (see above, Question 1), improving staff/prisoners communication and relations. Taking into account the "low road", hierarchical and centralized elements of the prison system and the circumstances of its operation, especially understaffing, staff-prisoners distancing and the deregulatory results of unsupervised prisoners overpopulation, their social background and cultural diversity, the question is if such a policy is attainable.

Role of trade unions and collective bargaining

In recent years, crucial issues regarding public services staffing levels and staff qualifications, public servants' salaries, pensions, working time, access to health services, social security, tax payments, have been discussed and decided in the context of the obligations of the Greek State to its creditors (the EU, the IMF etc.) and the introduction of austerity measures to deal with the public debt. Trade unions demonstrated, struck and in general opposed appointment controls and restrictions, salary cuts, increase of pension age-limits and rise of tax contributions as well as all other measures which have undermined their social welfare, but the influence of collective bargaining was minimal and the outcome of negotiations between the government and the creditors was more or less predetermined. With the exception of an allowance still given to custodial and perimeter security staff for the dangerous and unhealthy conditions of their work (abolished for all other prison staff categories) and the different (lower) age and (less) total working time presuppositions for retirement (which have been also been worsen for custodial and perimeter security staff in comparison with the pre-crisis period), all austerity measures affected negatively prison staff as all other public servants.

Labour market regulation

Prison employees' work is regulated in accordance with the general provisions for staff of all public services. Some exceptions do exist (as regards the duration of their shifts and the distribution of the total weekly working time, their extra remuneration for the demanding, unhealthy and dangerous nature of the work of custodial and perimeter security staff with a specific allowance amounting to € 150 per month -not applicable to administrative, scientific or other categories of staff-, the overall in-service time before retirement –also not applicable to other categories of staff but custodial and perimeter security officers etc.). The normal shift lasts 6 hours and 50 minutes for custodial staff and 8 hours and 30 minutes for perimeter security staff, while administrative and scientific personnel work in 7-hour shifts, with additional arrangements made for the completion of the obligatory weekly working time (i.e. short time work over the daily shift time, when searches are conducted or prisoners' counts take place).

As public servants, prison officers after their appointment (and, as regards custodial and perimeter security staff, the successful attendance of introductory training) are permanently employed until retirement, unless they commit a serious disciplinary or criminal offence, which results in the end of their employment. Prison officers' employment relation to their employer, the State, is regulated by specific laws, so they do not sign contracts or other individual documents. Their appointment is valid with the publication of the respective decision of the Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights to the Governmental Gazette and they undertake their duties after taking an oath.

Employment protection

Having the status of public servants, prison officers of all categories work until their retirement, unless they resign themselves (voluntary attrition or turnover) or they are accused or sentenced for the commission of certain serious criminal or disciplinary offences, they lose their citizenship, their position is abolished, they suffer from serious physical or mental health problems, which result in their disability to perform any duties (involuntary attrition or turnover). These provisions are generally implemented throughout the public sector. There are no provisions for loss of employment because of poor professional conduct or other similar situations. Such an option is possible when they are absent from their work without reason continuously for a long period or for many single days within the same year.

The right to strike

Prison officers, as public servants, have the right to express their views, though obliged to be confident as regards information they possess due to their professional status, to raise public awareness for their demands and strike for the satisfaction of these demands, as Law 1264/1982 provides. This industrial action is notified to the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and to all competent authorities at the start of each year.

As regards striking particularities, considering the long standing problem of understaffing, all prison officers are working as “emergency staff” on strike days, as all the routine functions and procedures within the prison do not stop. The form their strikes take is the suspension of prison visits, legal or social and prisoners’ admissions and transfers, unless an emergency for health or judicial reasons appears. This practice, initiated by prison staff unions, is not welcome by the current leadership of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, and, thus, it is a point for confrontation between syndicates and the Ministry. As the Greek Federation of Prison Officers put it, it is the first time since 1982 that a Minister of Justice (of the current government) has asked trade unions to change their industrial action, substantially undermining the employees right to strike. This way of striking is negatively commented by some human rights activists and groups of prisoners (i.e. the Human Rights Department of one of the two government coalition parties, the Prisons Struggle Committee), who claim that this kind of action is not directed to the prison staff employer (the State), but it affects prisoners themselves, their contacts with the outside world, their defense rights etc.

Welfare provision

Greece is currently experiencing a long and stormy crisis and its results, particularly economic. The market economy has collapsed in various aspects. The public debt is huge. Austerity measures imposed initially eight years ago and still being implemented, changed dramatically the everyday life of the lower and the middle class, with a serious deterioration of living standards. The same measures demolished the previously weak welfare state, which suffered from unbalanced protection of groups (emphasis on the elderly rather than family), low efficiency, inequality in funding, and corruption, causing high rates of poverty and unemployment. The economy shrank by 25% in the years of the crisis, a quarter of the work force lost their job-based insurance, spending cuts were imposed on pensions, health care and education. Approximately 1.5 million people, most of them young and unemployed, found themselves in conditions of extreme poverty, deprived of basic food items, telephone services, clothes and vacations. Depression is comparable to a post-war

condition. Social cohesion is seriously threatened, as taken-for-granted economic, social and political rights are dismantled in a context of necessity and instability.

Reasonably, such a context should put more pressure on the prison system, contributing to the increase of the prisoners' population and the decrease of its resources. Nevertheless, the social characteristics of the prison population have not changed substantially over the last decades. The typical inmate is male (approximately 93-94%), young (more than 65.5% under 40 years old), unmarried (almost half of the prisoners) and of low educational level (only 1/4 having completed secondary education and some of them having continued to higher level studies). The change is impressive, though, as regards the national composition of prisoners. Foreign prisoners, being a neglected category in the early 1990s, increased in two and a half decades to approximately 2/3 of all inmates, the great majority of them coming from Asia, Africa and the Balkan countries.

The structural economic and social inequalities that make prisons to detain the poor and dispossessed are now present and stronger. Recently, though, a small section of the prison population is formed of people from the middle and upper classes. This development is in line with the current de-structuring of the economy and its repercussions. On the other hand, the expected further rise of the prison population, observed up to 2013-2014, did not happen due to legislative interventions favouring deinstitutionalization for juveniles and young offenders, whose imprisonment is a last resort measure, treatment alternatives for drug-addicted offenders and early conditional release schemes for sentenced prisoners, with special provisions for the sick, the disabled and other vulnerable categories.

Minimum employment standards

No particular standards exist as regards conditions which may affect the employment of prison officers. On the contrary, their working environment is in some aspects lower and more demanding in comparison with other public servants conditions of work, because they are potentially or actually exposed to harmful (even violent) conditions as regards their physical and mental health, even their lives, combining elements of social welfare, health care and police work. Officers working inside custodial institutions do not have sufficient (if any) self-defending training and equipment. The prison administration relies on the police to deal with prisons disturbances and riots. Fire safety regulations and protocols are not in place, nor are plans or procedures to be followed in cases of natural disasters (earthquakes etc.). Hygiene, contagious diseases protection and first aid guidance is also insufficient.

Prison staff wage-standards are responding to the respective provisions (in terms of qualifications and time of employment) for the wider public sector personnel. Although no data as regards the salaries of prison officers exist, it is noted that the basic introductory salary for a public servant is € 780 and the allowance paid to custodial and perimeter security staff for the special conditions of their work is € 150 (see above). Higher salaries and additional allowances exist for public servants (a) with educational qualifications (university degrees, postgraduate and doctoral studies), (b) holding positions of responsibility (heads of departments, directors, general directors), (c) having parental responsibilities and (d) having long in-service experience.

Salary cuts due to public funding restrictions (sometimes up to 50% of net annual income) have forced many prison officers to retire early, while regular retirements continued. At the same time, since 2009, the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights was not allowed to recruit new prison officers, with the exception of some hundreds of former

municipal police officers, implementing public sector mobility programmes in 2013. This situation resulted in extreme understaffing (shifts with 1-2 prison guards supervising sometimes 400 or more prisoners, officers working continuously for weeks without a day-off). Nonetheless the new staff's recruitment process (588 employees) has started and it is expected that sooner or later it will be completed. According to the calculations of the Greek Federation of Prison Officers, the salaries of the new prison service employees will not exceed € 700 per month, a fact that ranks Greece at the low level of the remuneration of prison staff work.

Social welfare provision

Custodial and perimeter security staff are excluded from the implementation of current increased retirement and pensions age limits put into force for other employees of the public sector. In the last years, they have the right to retire with full pension after 37 years of service or upon the completion of their 60th year (before the public debt crisis the same categories of staff had to work for 25 years, at least 10 of them in prison facilities). As mentioned above, they receive an allowance due to the dangerous and unhealthy conditions of their working environment. Other social welfare provisions particularly for prison staff have not been introduced.

Work-related stress and burn-out

Staff shortage has been a core problem for the prison service. In July 2018 the Federation of Prison Staff announced that 83,615 day offs and 22,303 days of regular leave are owed by the prison administration to all categories of prison employees in all custodial institutions of the country. Lack of personnel results in employees continuous and exhausting work for additional time, without the necessary rest, which many times is not even remunerated (a practice which is not accepted by prison staff trade unions) due to budgetary restrictions and while the transfer of regular leaves in future is not allowed, according to a Supreme Court judgement. This situation not only results in overtime unpaid work, it also makes employees regular leaves planning extremely difficult.

Quite recently, during some of the organized training seminars (May-July 2017), trainees referred to serious guidance and leadership gaps in some prisons and emphasized that there is a huge need of employees for psychological in-service support. In the previous decade, two studies examined, among other issues, custodial staff working stress. Arfaras (2011: 131 ff) refers that custodial staff (454 officers from 13 custodial institutions) show signs of anxiety, low job satisfaction and low self-esteem. Koulirakis & Agrafiotis (2010: 947-948) found low levels of both overall stress and stress either caused by situational factors or as a characteristic of their personality, with women officers developing a greater degree of stress as a personality trait (244 respondents from 13 custodial institutions).

Various reported incidents of prison officers being attacked and victimized by prisoners or other, unknown perpetrators, are obviously relevant to feelings of insecurity expressed repeatedly by their trade unions, calling the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights to take prison safety and security issues seriously and prioritize prison violence prevention and control.

Koulirakis & Agrafiotis (2010: 948) research found that more than half of participant employees recorded high levels of depersonalisation and had a low sense of personal achievement. Many prison officers (above 25%) were experiencing high levels of emotional

exhaustion, positively correlated with the days of their sick leave during the year before the research and with their regular leave days during the last 3 years. The older the participant employees were, the greater the feeling of personal achievement was and the lower depersonalisation signs appeared. There is no information on the extent of drug and alcohol abuse among prison officers.

Job satisfaction

Work satisfaction of prison staff has been studied in the two aforementioned doctoral dissertations, in the first decade of the 21st century. It is connected with a set of factors, personal, such as prison officers' gender and education, or organizational, such as liberal and flexible leadership and management, such as the positive, cooperative, communicative orientation of prison directors, building trust and positive professional relations with other head officers and other employees (Lambaki, 2009: 184). The positive social relations atmosphere in custodial institutions between officers themselves, between staff and administration, and between staff and prisoners, make employees feel satisfied, willing to work dedicated to their roles, despite low earnings and bad conditions. On the contrary, when the prison director adopted an authoritarian and strict management approach, employees felt disregard for both their work and the prisoners.

In the same study (Lambaki, 2009: 186-187, 214, 217, 221) women officers appeared to be less satisfied with their work. She also reports that respondents were quite satisfied with their work. More specifically they expressed greater satisfaction as regards their relations with prisoners and less satisfaction for the conditions of their work, influenced by the institutional context and the management style (Lambaki, 2009: 137-138, 141-146). On the other hand, Arfaras (2011: 159-160) points out that when prison staff, who usually enter the prison service to satisfy their need to find a permanent job, realize that being a prison officer is a demanding work and the salary they get is disproportionate to its high difficulty, a feeling which reduces the degree of job satisfaction.

Absenteeism and sick leave

Although relevant statistical data are not available as regards officers' absenteeism and sick leaves numbers, frequency and reasons, it is easy to notice that they are often observed. Research studies conducted in the previous decade (see above) connected them with officers' low job satisfaction and heavy workloads. Prisons are understaffed and in many cases overpopulated services, even if the acceptable prisoners / staff ratio is not defined in any means. Many staff positions are not covered at all and at many shifts (especially at night) the number of employees on duty is the minimum possible (one officer supervising tens or hundreds of prisoners, depending on the prison establishments). Many posts are not covered.

The shortage of staff results in serious need for overtime work without sufficient rest-time between shifts, which is obviously exhausting for employees (see above). Due to this condition, there is an (undocumented) impression that officers use sick leave provisions not for the reason they have been introduced, but to meet other needs and respond to other obligations. Such an impression is strengthened by legal provisions allowing public servants to be absent from their work up to totally eight days per year, either declaring themselves that they were sick (up to two days) or presenting a doctors' note where their sickness declaration is confirmed and abstention from work is recommended (up to six days). Beyond these, there are also officers who just declare illness and avoid their shift, without

presenting any document to justify their absence, or without following the formal procedure to do so. These officers are disciplinary charged for unjustified abstention from work.

Staff turnover

As already mentioned (see Question 1, above) there is not a prison officers' replacement rate as the appointment of new employees depends on public debt crisis related measures and the need to reduce public spending on salaries etc. For many years prison officers retired or resigned without being replaced. In the post 2009 years only 575 former Municipal Police officers joined the prison service in the context of staff mobility programmes in the public sector, when Municipal Police was abolished (in 2013-2014). After their placement in prisons, though, hundreds of planned positions of prison staff remain uncovered (according to 2017 data, 968 out of totally 5,555 prison personnel positions where vacant and among these vacancies 572 where custodial staff positions and 194 where perimeter security staff positions). Nowadays, after the Municipal Police was re-established, its former staff have the right to return to their previous work, making the problem of prison understaffing more acute, while –at least- the appointment of 588 new staff members (among them 464 custodial and 93 perimeter security employees) is pending (see above, Question 1).

Strikes and other social conflicts

Prison officers' trade unions public announcements, interventions and strikes are not rare. They are connected to understaffing, underpayment, overtime and non-paid work, not granting of day-offs and regular leaves which result in exhausting working conditions. Prison staff trade unions are mainly opposing central choices of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights as regards the inappropriate distribution of staff among services, for lack of will and boldness to introduce substantial reforms, tolerance of prison violence and inertia in dealing with it, lack of sufficient knowledge of the field, indifference for prison employees' personal and family needs, arbitrariness in the selection of head officers, the irregular operation of bodies competent to decide on staff mobility and disciplinary issues etc. Sometimes tensions and conflicts are related to political entities, activists and prisoners' rights defenders or to journalists for the distortion of their intentions or prison realities. On the other hand, some politicians, members of Parliament and journalists appear to accept and support the demands of prison officers, especially as regards understaffing and conditions of work.

Smuggling

It is widely accepted that corruption in prisons is a systemic problem, as the institution is itself the fertile ground for illegal actions related to prisoners access to prohibited goods and services. Although inspection and monitoring activities by competent authorities and bodies take place, their work does not prove the systematic involvement of prison staff in various forms of smuggling in prisons. On the other hand, prohibited goods (usually mobile telephones, drugs, alcohol, knives and other subjects which can be used as weapons) are often found at the disposal of prisoners during various kinds of searches, and this is a serious indication for active or passive staff involvement in illegal actions. Two recent examples of prison officers caught in action prove that smuggling drugs and mobile telephones are illegal activities where staff members and prisoners cooperate.

Serious violent -even lethal- events among prisoners or between prisoners and staff show that in some cases informal and illegal transactions may take place and trigger various incidents. In prison officers' trade unions opinion, corruption is related to individual actions and relations and staff members who perform illegal acts are not colleagues, but simply people working in the same service who do not belong to the great majority of decent employees and should be identified and dismissed. It is correct that the number of prison officers who have been caught committing illegal acts of smuggling is very small, in support of the view that such incidents are isolated. On the other hand the nature of the prison and the "pains of imprisonment", the frequency of the events reported and the number and variety of illegal goods prisoners possess and use, create major concerns as regards the extent and the characteristics of the problem.

The number of prison officers exercising another profession or having another occupation for additional income is not available. Statutory documents allow all public servants to apply for permission to exercise a remunerated work, on condition that their duties are not affected and their second job is offered in working hours different than the hours they have to be on duty.

Nature of prison officer tasks

Custodial and perimeter security staff is focused on physical and procedural security duties. It is important to mention the prison officers, in conditions of understaffing and overcrowding merely act as "turnkeys" and prisons operate as warehouses, as the CPT reports. Far from dynamic security standards emphasizing staff-prisoners communication and interaction, custody, supervision and escorts are the main tasks of custodial and perimeter security staff, who work separately and cooperate only in emergencies. On the other hand, administrative, scientific and other staff have concrete sets of duties (different for social workers, psychologists, sociologists, secretariat officers etc. – see above, introductory questions), not facilitating cooperation and group work to the benefit of the prison administration, the prisoners and the wider society. In general the "model" of prison staff work in Greece favours fragmented labour with narrow tasks and incomplete jobs.

Fragmentation of labour and narrowness of prison officers tasks (see above), with emphasis on the maintenance of prison order, a goal not easily attainable in the conditions of prisons operation in the last decades, facilitates repeated daily routine activities. While task packages vary, their content is poor, but can be challenging either for surveillance officers or for other categories of staff, when particular cases with no precedents appear and must be dealt with (i.e. a new category of prisoners, a new institution, a legal reform etc).

Prison officers' duties, are various and differentiated according to the specific position each officer is placed on. Description of duties and procedures is adapted to routine activities and conditions of smooth operation. Guidance for action in special circumstances, emergencies and so on, although it is common wisdom that such cases may happen anytime in prisons, is a neglected field for the prison administration, which many times has to control serious incidents instead of preventing them. Operational preparedness exercises and readiness to deal with unsuspected events are only exceptional.

Prison officers are informed of the specific post they have to work before their shift starts. In the Rules for the Operation of Perimeter Security Service it is provided that officers are informed of their shifts and posts one day before. Weekly shift programmes are issued by the competent office of prisons custodial departments. In general, though, officers are

aware of the wider tasks they have to perform and the area they will work at, while some of them apply for certain shifts and positions presenting personal reasons, family obligations etc. The positions they hold include a set of particular duties (gate keeping, reception and admission search, head offices, visiting rooms, canteens, therapeutic or educational activities areas, kitchen, control room, wings, landings, courtyards, corridors, prisoners' escorts, transfers, releases etc.), which do not change for a period of time, unless the each time competent officer cannot perform properly. Some officers are placed in particular positions, requiring a degree of specialization for long periods of time, while others work on rotation. Prisons operate according to a time schedule and particular activities take place on specified times (i.e. opening and closing cells, courtyards, counting prisoners, delivering food, observing visits, work and other activities).

As referred in the description of prison officers' duties, there are positions where they perform repetitive routine actions, such as locking and unlocking the doors, counting inmates, delivering food, escorting prisoners moving from one area of the prison to another for specific reasons, conducting search upon prisoners admission, keeping records, handling correspondence etc.

Role conflicts for prison officers

Punitive and rehabilitative elements coexist interchangeably in the Greek prison system, sometimes with control aspects prevailing and other times care given priority. Arfaras (2011: 141) found that 41% of the respondent prison officers consider that the orderly operation of the prison is the most important issue and only 13% believe that rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are more important. In general, such programmes should be implemented on condition that the smooth running of the prison is respected and secured (Arfaras, 2011: 149). In general, even if the double role prison employees have to play is producing conflicts and dilemmas as regards the strict imposition of prison discipline and the humane contact between staff and prisoners, the former are usually accountable for order and security of the custodial institutions, not for the social reintegration of prisoners.

Autonomy of prison officers

Prison officers' autonomy in their work planning is limited due to the hierarchical organization of all prison services. Of course, there are different levels of staff conformity obligations and work restrictions, depending on their position and specialization as well as the model of decision making. Scientific staff enjoy a higher degree of in-service flexibility, it is easier for a social worker or psychologist to work individually or in groups with prisoners on specific dates than front line custodial staff working on the landings to allow prisoners access to different prison areas when the wing is closed, perimeter security staff to move away from their watchtower during their shift and to administrative staff preparing prisoners release documents to refrain from this activity and keep records for newly admitted prisoners. As mentioned above (see Question 1) prisoners' treatment issues are decided by collective bodies, so even head officers' ability to plan when and how they will work is more or less restricted, depending on the detailed or not orders of competent collective bodies. In the already mentioned Arfaras' doctoral dissertation (2011: 121), prison officers admit that "the prison public prosecutor holds the greatest power and authority, followed by the prison director and then come the head officers of the custodial department, prisoners and finally the social service". Of course, an emergency is sufficient to cancel planning efforts of all kinds.

Discretionary power of prison officers

Discretion is one of the most useful tools for power holders, allowing them to differentiate, individualise and justify their decisions, on condition that they make up their minds in a fair and just way, being able to define similarities and particularities of each case they deal with. One of the main principles guiding actions of public services, as prisons, is the principle of legality, which sometimes does not leave room for discretion (i.e. once observed and reported, a prisoners' disciplinary offence shall be brought before the competent collective body, children are entitled to visit their imprisoned parents) while in other cases it is up to the administrative authority to undertake action or not (when prisoners are anxious and aggressive, it is up to the custodial staff to consider if their behavior is insulting or not and put them on report, when prisoners' close relatives want to visit them applying for permission to an open visit, the visiting details and conditions are defined by the prison council etc.)

Arfaras' study (2011: 142) found that younger employees (up to 30 years of age) and employees with short in-service experience (up to 5 years) agree that they possess discretionary power, contrary to their older colleagues (51 years and more) and officers with longer professional history (over 16 years) who are more reluctant to accept this. It seems as if older and more experience professionals prefer to work in a more strict and clear environment within a narrower field of options and young, less experienced officers are more enthusiastic in dealing with challenges and show their capability to solve problems. Furthermore, custodial staff members seem to generally agree that informal methods of discipline in some cases are more efficient.

The current situation shows that, despite all these, prison staff interventions are limited, and that control at least in some prisons has been ceded to groups of influential prisoners, who threat or assault other prisoners and officers. Far from being a matter of officers' discretionary powers, this development shows that power redistribution and imbalance is one of the characteristics of the prison operation.

Relationship between prison officers and management

The daily tasks of prison officers depend on the staff category they belong to and the specific work position assigned to them. These tasks are described in prison rules and regulations, where it is also provided that staff meetings are organized regularly (at least once a month) and guidance is given daily from head officers to the staff of their departments. Officers undertaking duties are also informed by their colleagues of the previous shift of any particular events, changes or new decisions, orally and in some cases in written form (by reports and announcements).

Social support

No formal system for the support of prison officers is in place. In some cases they rely on their colleagues for guidance and advice, in other cases they refer to professionals, either working in the field or other experts, undertaking then the cost for counseling and other forms of support. Only recently the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights in cooperation with other services and organizations, initiated and organized activities for staff skills development and readiness to deal with emergencies.

It is absolutely up to each prison director and other head officer (discretion!) to develop a supportive relation with their staff and colleagues. In addition to building positive social relations, based on trust, communication, understanding etc., high rank officers may facilitate their staff to attend training and educational activities and programmes, respond to their family and other obligations, improve their professional knowledge, change posts and experience different work challenges etc. This is not a formal policy of the prison service, although some of these principles are found in legislation regulating the operation of public services.

Diversity of inmates

Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights statistics show that from 1.1.2003 to 1.1.2018 the total number of prisoners has been increased (from 8,418 to 10,011) reaching a peak on 1.1.2014 (12,693 prisoners). The increase is reflected in the number of pretrial detainees (from 2,084 to 3,260), foreigners (from 3,858 to 5,291), women (from 394 to 551) and lifers (from 599 to 933). On the contrary, in the same period there has been a drastic reduction in the number of juveniles and young offenders (from 449 to 139) and offenders imprisoned for drugs (from 3,386 to 2,159) due to post 2014 decarceration and reductionist policies (see above, Question 4). In the first years of the 21st century the lack of prison places became acute, as a chronic prison population inflation problem became part of prison routine.

Up to 2014 prison occupancy exceeded 100%, and in some establishments (Korydallos, Ioannina, Komotini) reached, or surpassed, 300%. Since then a noticeable drop in the overall number of prisoners is observed. The incarceration rate in 2015 was significantly reduced (-18.8%). Greece belongs to the group of countries found in the middle of the Western European punitiveness ladder, based on the number of prisoners in the total population of each country and calculated as the number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants.

Figures show that the rate of imprisonment in Greece in the 21st century is 90-120 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants [90 in 2006, 104 in 2008, 116 in 2014, 89 in 2016, 95 in 2018 - the calculation is based on daily (stock) data]. According to official data, the numbers and percentages of Greek and foreign prisoners on 16.11.2015 were 4,416 (45%) and 5,333 (55%), respectively. As it has been noted, “the constantly increasing number of foreign prisoners not only creates difficulties in communication between staff and prisoners, but also among prisoners themselves. In fact, there are violent incidents and conflicts in custodial institutions between groups with different ethnic and racial characteristics” (Arfaras 2011, 41). Such incidents are often reported during the last years (see the following points of this question).

The CPT in their March 2011 public statement concerning Greece observed “a steady deterioration in the living conditions and treatment of prisoners over a decade”, “unsuitable material conditions, the absence of an appropriate regime and the poor provision of health care”, “totally inadequate staffing levels”, “severe overcrowding”, “the absence of an effective system of reporting and supervision, and inadequate management of staff”. After their April 2015 visit they reported that “the Greek prison system is reaching breaking point [...] prisons in Greece are merely acting as warehouses” (the report was published in March 2016 and caused the reaction of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, announcing that important improvements were under way and the Greek Federation of Prison Officers, commenting that the CPT echoes their voice for the abandoned prison system).

All these negative findings show how demanding is the work of prison officers and how difficult it is to deal with situations exposing them to the activities of strong groups of prisoners and to real risks of harm. Since then some things, especially occupancy levels and living conditions have been improved, reintegrative activities for prisoners and staff training initiatives are expanding, a three year strategic plan has been drafted, health care reforms are under way. Time will tell if the overall situation will finally meet the European standards as the CPT recommends and many prison critics in Greece wish.

State of prison infrastructure

As far as the prison infrastructure condition is considered, it is differentiated by relevant factors, including the age of the facilities (see above, introductory questions) and the conditions of detention. Studies suggest that the buildings in many prisons are obsolete (Arfaras, 2011: 166, Lambaki 2009: 184-185.) Crowding in prisons for male adults impede maintenance and observance of security requirements and safety conditions (Arfaras, 2011: 41). The Greek Ombudsperson as the National Torture Preventive Mechanism (NPM) declare in their 2015 annual report that “overcrowding of the Greek prisons remains a critical issue for ensuring the hard core of the fundamental rights, in particular with regard to the unsuitability of the largest part of the building infrastructures, the insufficiency of medical care and the lack of specialized staff.

In the 2016 annual report, the NPM confirms prison population reduction and improvement of conditions, but, again, define the same deficiencies with old infrastructures, lack of meaningful activities, insufficient health care and hygiene provision, understaffing etc. The most recent report of the NPM (2017) highlights that positive steps have been made towards the improvement of life in prison (such as the closing down of some old disciplinary cells). However, special reference is made on the lack of specialized personnel, i.e. doctors, criminologists, sociologists etc., the lack of meaningful activities for the prisoners and the need to take legislative measures in order not only to reduce the prison population but to improve life in prison as well (i.e. infrastructure of buildings and adequacy of prison staff should guarantee safety and respect of human dignity).

Health and safety

Violence against prison officers, namely actions that jeopardize both their health and safety is a long standing phenomenon and it is not limited inside prisons, it is also observed outside them. Recently violent victimization of prison officers by prisoners is attributed to qualitative changes in serious criminality and the changes it produced in the composition of the prison population, the density of this population and its cultural diversity, serious understaffing and distant personal relations between officers and prisoners, administrative and political tolerance of prison disorder, lack of staff training and proper self defense equipment, organizational deficiencies etc.

Prison officers say that violent events nowadays have been part of the daily prison life. Such events, including hostage taking incidents and armed attacks, usually causing bodily injuries and sometimes lethal, have been reported from 2010 to 2018 mainly with announcements and press releases of the Greek Federation of Prison Officers. They have taken place in many different prisons (indicatively: Corfu in 2010, Thessaloniki in 2014 and 2017, Alikarnassos in 2014, Kos in 2018, Korydallos in 2011, 2013 and 2018, Larissa in 2018, Trikala in 2013 and

2018, Avlona in 2010 and 2018, Volos in 2018, Nigrita in 2018, Nafplio in 2013, Komotini in 2012, Malandrino in 2013 and 2014, Domokos in 2015 and Patra in 2011).

Some of these incidents took place during routine daily controls within the prisons and were impulsive and spontaneous (expressive). Other incidents, though, were planned and organized, sometimes with external support and characteristics of terrorist attacks (instrumental). Two of these events were lethal, one against the head custodial officer of Domokos Prison, shot to death with 43 bullets in front of his residence by unknown perpetrators acting in the name of “popular justice” (2015) and another against the deputy head custodial officer in Malandrino Prison, stabbed on duty by a prisoner, when he was informed that his application for a leave had been rejected (2014). A raid of an armed group who shot and injured three perimeter security officers took place when prisoners attempted an escape from Trikala Prison – eleven of them succeeded (2013).

Prison employees safety issues emerge as serious incidents can happen suddenly and dealing with them is a rather difficult process in institutions where movement and access in specific areas is restricted, doors are locked and windows do have bars. Life protecting features, regulations and protocols, evacuation plans in areas clearly marked, procedures to be followed in emergencies (fire, earthquake and other natural disasters) are not given the importance they deserve, if they exist at all.

Staff health is yet affected by prisoners’ health problems and health care structures operating in prisons. Many prisoners belong to groups of the population with high morbidity levels, as drug dependent and HIV and hepatitis C, B and infected persons. Mental disorders are also disproportionately widespread among the prison population (see a review of the literature in Milioni, 2017: 54-56). Although no data exist as regards drug dependent prisoners and prisoners with communicable diseases, an important part of the prison population are accused or sentenced for drug related crimes (changing from 1/5 to 1/3 at different times), and it can be reasonably assumed that many of them are drug users, as the operation of counseling and therapeutic programmes shows.

Recently, in the context of the support for HIV infected prisoners a preventive initiative including condoms delivery to prisoners through prisons medical offices took place. The long standing insufficiency or lack of nursing and medical staff and the inadequate health care services in prisons indicate that prison staff is also exposed to health risks. Initiatives to transfer health care services for prisoners to the NHS are still pending (see also Introductory Questions, above, as regards the currently taking place integration of the General Hospital for Prisoners into the National Health System).

Custodial Institutions Security Regulations (in force since December 2014) provide for the smooth, orderly operation of prisons focusing on physical and procedural, not dynamic aspects of security. Emphasis is put on surveillance and restrictions of movement, searches, escorts and controls, not on communication and close contact of prison officers with prisoners, which improve the general climate within the institution and contribute to a safer and more protected occupational environment.

To illustrate the extremely serious issue of violence against prison staff, the Greek Federation of Prison Officers has listed violent incidents which have taken place during the last two years.

	INSTITUTION	INCIDENT
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DATE		
11/10/2016	Korydallos	bomb attack of a head of custodial staff officer's car
10/03/2017	Nigrita Serron	arson of the deputy director's car
04/04/2017	Nigrita Serron	assault with a knife against the head of custodial staff officer
05/04/2017	Thessaloniki	attack against the head of custodial staff officer
07/04/2017	Corfu	assault with a knife against the head of custodial staff officer
24/04/2017	Korydallos Prisoners' Psychiatric Unit	arson of a prison officer's car
02/05/2017	Korydallos Prisoners' Psychiatric Unit	arson of a prison officer's car
16/06/2017	Nigrita Serron	attack against a prison officer
22/08/2017	Alikarnassos	attack against a prison officer
09/11/2017	Korydallos Prisoners' Psychiatric Unit	arson of a prison administrative officer's car
22/12/2017	Volos Institution for Young Prisoners	beating of two prison officers
12/01/2018	Korydallos Prisoners' Hospital	punching of a senior prison officer by a HIV-positive prisoner
05/02/2018	Kos	beating of two prison officers
05/03/2018	Volos Institution for Young Prisoners	attack with Molotov cocktail
09/03/2018	Korydallos	"whipping" of a senior prison officer
23/03/2018	Trikala	attempted murder with a a knife against the head of custodial staff officer
25/03/2018	Trikala	hostage taking of a senior prison officer
27/03/2018	Nigrita Serron	attack against a nurse
03/05/2018	Korydallos	beating of a prison officer
28/05/2018	Thessaloniki	attack against prison officers with one of them injured
02/06/2018	Korydallos	attack against a prison officer
03/06/2018	Patra	attack against two prison officers, with both of them injured
	Larissa	beating of a senior prison officer in the visiting area

The Federation argues that prison employees health and safety is not a priority for the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights. They claim that despite serious cases of prison officers' murders inside and outside prisons, bomb attacks against their houses and family members and incidents of violence, threats and degrading behaviour against them inside prisons, there is no plan to protect them either when they are on duty or after they leave their workplace. On the contrary, they allege that specific cases of beatings against prison staff have been concealed or downgraded.

Health and safety systems

No occupational health and safety regulations are implemented in prisons, either general or adjusted to the institutional particularities (see also the answer to the previous question), although the legal context for the services of the public sector exists since 1985. Many prison establishments are illegal and operate without building permits. Recently, some steps to the direction of improved safety and security are taken with prison staff repeated circles of training programmes which include relevant topics.

To the extent that staff health is related to prisoners health, it can be mentioned that for a long transitional period and until the imminent transfer of health care services for inmates to the NHS, expected to contribute also to prison personnel health improvement, prisoners' healthcare is provided with a) a small number of permanent medical employees, who work for the prison service or work in NHS units which cooperate with the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights to alleviate serious lack of healthcare services in prisons, b) specialist doctors' visits in prisons, privately contracted with the prison service, who offer their services occasionally, once or twice a week, c) the transfer of patient prisoners to Korydallos Prisoners' General and Psychiatric Hospitals. These are two separate units, within Korydallos Prisons Cluster. The two units accept exclusively male prisoners as in-patients and out-patients and the General Hospital accepts females only as out-patients and d) the transfer of patient prisoners to hospitals of the NHS.

Wage trends

As already mentioned, prison staff wage standards are responding to the existing respective provisions for the wider public sector personnel. An extra allowance is paid to custodial and perimeter security staff for the special conditions of their work. It is estimated that salary cuts due to public funding restrictions in the period of economic crisis reach sometimes 50% of employees net annual income (for more details and the conflicts produced after funding cuts initiated by austerity policies see Questions 3 and 4).

Working time

Working time for public servants increased from 37.5 to 40 hours per week within the economic or public debt crisis. Services with particularities (24 hours / 7 days a week operation, staff work in shifts, demanding work etc.) though, continue to operate according to their specific regulations, and working time for their personnel is reduced. Night work, Sundays and other holidays work, afternoon shifts, overtime work are introduced and the competent Minister is allowed to define extra work time and employees compensation for work in excess of compulsory hours. Reasonably, the particularity of prisons is recognized in law, with the introduction of reduced working time and all the consequences of their 24 hour-basis operation. In practice, though, prison officers many times work more than it is provided for by prison regulations due to understaffing, without being paid for all their overtime presence. Moreover, for the same reason it is difficult to get their leaves and day-offs, and a huge number of these is owed to them (see, also Question 3). Accordingly, in normal conditions, perimeter security officers' shifts last 8 hours and 30 minutes, four days a week and their weekly working time is 34.5 hours (the missing half an hour is used for staff meetings and is calculated on a six-month basis).

The respective working time arrangements for custodial officers are 6 hours and 50 minutes, five days a week. Other prison officers' shifts last 7 hours (on Fridays this working time is half

an hour less). The Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights has approved: a) 129,890 hours of evening overtime for 4,501 prison employees for the year 2018 setting the upper limit of 20 hours per month and per employee, b) 77,792 hours for custodial and perimeter security staff working over 5 days per week for the year 2018, c) 502,435 hours for the completion of the weekly compulsory work for employees working inside custodial institutions for the first semester of 2018, d) 558,240 hours for the completion of the weekly compulsory work for perimeter security employees for the first semester of 2018, e) 20,994 hours for work over the compulsory time, for prison staff, directors and heads of custodial staff departments, also for the first semester of 2018.

Temporary contracts

Prison officers are appointed to work as permanent public servants. A very small number of prison employees (administrative accountants, drivers and technicians) are working with open ended private contracts. In the context of special programmes to combat unemployment and to facilitate access in the labour market, unemployed professionals sign fixed time short term contracts (6 to 8 months) and cover post of administrative staff, nurses etc.

Current training and education programmes

As explained (see Question 2) no permanent staff training structure (i.e. an Academy) exists. "Introductory" training courses in the so called School for Penitentiary Staff have been organized after a long period of inertia, in October and November 2016, for two groups of already experienced custodial and perimeter security officers, to terminate the after appointment apprenticeship period. Perimeter security staff are being educated and trained by police in order to use the weapons provided to them. After May 2017, several training seminars have been held and are continued, to tackle the serious lack of education. Two of these seminars are run in cooperation with the Training Institute of the National Centre for Public Administration of the National School for Public Administration. The first one is entitled "Mental Health and Crisis Management in Prisons" and the second is about "The role of prison staff in treatment and reintegration of prisoners".

The contents of the one month training organized in 2016, drafted by Professor Sophia Vidali and divided in two main parts, were the following:

A. Theoretical education

1. Penitentiary system and enforcement of custodial sentences:
 - a) Introduction to the system of execution of sentences depriving liberty: development and presentation of basic concepts of criminology, penology and penitentiary science
 - b) Penitentiary policy and prisons: structure, organization and operation of custodial institutions- description of staff duties, responsibilities and employment status.
2. Occupational integration of custodial and perimeter security staff in the professional environment:
 - a) good practices for the familiarization with the job;
 - b) socialization in the prison environment; formal and informal framework;
 - c) staff duties and responsibilities;
 - d) treatment and rights of prisoners – terms and institutional framework;
 - e) perimeter security of custodial institutions - terms and institutional framework.
3. Treatment of prisoners and problem solving:

- a) legality and decision-making, institutionalization and behavior of detainees, professionalism and rights;
 - b) management of problems in the institutional treatment of prisoners and escorts - understaffing, drug dependent detainees and trafficking of illicit drugs, influential groups and discrimination, discriminatory practices as a feature of prison life, risks to staff, respect and exercise of power, fear of victimization, corruption, violence among detainees, subculture of prisoners, time in prison, staff - prisoners relationships, tensions and conflicts management.
4. Prison Security:
- a) prison security and safety of prisoners and staff - human rights, surveillance, guarding and security,
 - b) Contemporary trends in prison security:
 - i) dynamic security, intelligence and detainees' protection (international standards and applications),
 - ii) physical security: control in prison, security of establishments, surveillance and control, searches, institutional framework for prisoners' supervision and guarding, organization of security, security plans - criteria and standards, transfer of detainees, escort and guarding in hospitals,
 - iii) protection and actions in natural disasters.
5. Crisis Management: Crisis typologies, institutional framework, procedures and personal protection, protection of third parties and good practices in crisis situations: abstention from food, hunger strike, suicides, self-harm, clashes, escapes, riots, collective unplanned or planned violence, hostage taking, first aid for the sick and injured people.
6. Hygiene: Hygiene of prisoners; Hygiene of detention facilities; infectious diseases, protection measures, precautions, HIV / AIDS prevention and, treatment.
- B. Operational education
7. Security, self-defense and self-protection:
- a) Institutional framework - practical training, staff positions and areas of responsibility, patrols, raids - use of authorized means of coercion and defense. Organization and dealing with security issues, search, control, raids, visits, riots, revolts and other emergencies, development of observation, communication and contact skills. Transfers of prisoners. Means of control and escalation of their use. Development of means of control. Techniques of staff position during controls. Use of batons and handcuffs; body search techniques, defense - dangerous prisoners arrests. Escort holds. Avoiding strikes with hands, feet, etc.
 - b) Readiness, psychological pressure, response, monitoring suspects, behavioral monitoring. Control and search of interior areas; riots - basic and special methods of response.
8. Use of weapons and chemicals (for perimeter security staff): Training in artillery shooting: use of weapons (theoretical and practical), types and use of chemicals.
9. Key public order and security issues in intelligence, searches, hostage taking situations. General themes. Classification of information. Improvised explosive devices. Searches for drugs, hostage taking and violent events.

In addition to these thematic areas and topics, training included individual tactics and physical education.

The seminar on “Mental Health and Crisis Management in Prisons” includes presentations on the following topics: Prison community and characteristics of prisoners. Particularities of Greek prisons, prisoners’ subculture, vulnerable groups of prisoners and their treatment. Mental health and prevention of self-harming behaviour. The pains of imprisonment, addictive substances, the profile of prisoners, suicide. The role of staff in self-harm prevention. Interculturalism / Cultural diversity in Greek prisons. Management of serious incidents: incidents analysis. Violence, group clashes, escapes, riots, hunger strikes, abstention from prison food. The role of staff in the prevention and control of serious incidents.

The themes presented in the seminar on “The role of prison staff in treatment and reintegration of prisoners” are: Prisoners’ rights and the importance of reintegration. The process of reintegration as a continuum. Statutory problems and obstacles. Proper reintegration and reduction of recidivism. Vulnerable groups of prisoners. The role of the family and the development, maintaining and restoring of family bonds. Opening the prison to society. Dealing with stigmatization and social marginalization. The role of custodial and perimeter security staff in prisoners’ treatment and reintegration. Dynamic security. Contemporary trends and security models in prisons. Promoting basic issues in the field of prisoners’ rights protection from the Ombudsperson’s action and point of view.

Career opportunities

Custodial staff members (secondary education staff) can only be head officers of the respective departments, unless they apply to change staff category when they hold higher educational qualifications (post secondary, university studies). In their hierarchy there are only three ranks (guard, deputy head officer and head officer). Perimeter security employees (also secondary staff) are headed by police officers after almost twenty years in service, despite their service regulations provide for five ranks (guard, deputy head officer B, deputy head officer A, head officer B and head officer A). Scientific staff members cannot be head officers or directors, only social work departments, where they exist, are headed by social workers.

Administrative staff employees can be heads of administrative and economic departments, and employees who are “Penitentiary Officers” (see footnote 2) are eligible for prison directors’ positions, positions of heads of the Directorate for Prisons Operational Capability and Crisis Management, and the General Directorate for Crime and Penitentiary Policy in the Central Service of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights. In a nutshell, there does not seem to be any appropriate system in place for staff promotion and most employees have limited (if any) career perspectives. Especially as regards custodial staff, it is noted by the Greek Federation of Prison Officers that heads of custodial departments (principal prison officers) are selected on the basis of objective criteria provided by law for all public servants. Principal prison officers’ deputies are senior prison officers who are selected by each prison director, without transparent and merit-based criteria, as the political leadership of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights has not accepted a relevant proposal made by the Federation.

Consultative bodies

Prison Officers Trade Unions (first degree unions) operate in individual prisons. There are two different unions of this kind, one for perimeter security staff and one for all other categories of prison staff, especially custodial staff. They operate with 7 members

administrative councils, elected by their registered colleagues. They are represented in the second degree unions: OSYE, the Federation of Prison Officers in Greece, member of the Confederation of Civil Servants - ADEDY, third degree union and POYEF, the Panhellenic Federation of Perimeter Security Officers. Both Federations are directed by a 11 elected persons administrative board.

OSYE was established in 1986 and operates as both a trade union and a consultative body. POYEF was established in 2002 and has similar purposes. Trade Unions representatives work for the advancement of democratic values and the well-being of the employees they represent, and they can participate in discussion and decision making processes with a wide range of interventions (information, counseling, support, legal representation, negotiations, complaints, demands, demonstrations, strikes).

Trade unions and the industrial relations climate

The trade union movement in prisons has been established in 1955. Since 1987, employees of all specialisations (custodial staff, scientific staff, nursing staff, technical staff, administrative staff, etc.) -but perimeter security guards, see above - in each prison are represented at a primary level by the local union. At a secondary level, employees and local unions are represented by the Greek Federation of Prison Officers. Prison trade unions express not only the interests of the employees they represent but also, major social concerns. According to the Federation data, the number of registered and active members of the unions exceeds 90%, constituting, thus, one of the highest membership percentages of employees in the Greek public administration and in the public servants' trade union movement.

Their impact in decision making seems to decline as time passes by; this is sometimes due to a weakening of the representative position and role of the trade union movement in general, as it happened in Greece during the debt crisis of the last years, when public policies and reforms were dictated by creditors; other times it is due to tensions stemming from different understanding of mission, roles, powers and intervention limits between trade unionists and the central prison administration, as it seems to be the case regarding in particular the relation between the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the Greek Federation of Prison Officers. This relation is deeply conflictual, as the Federation press releases show. These press releases express the total disagreement of the Federation with central priorities and policy choices of the Ministry, from prison organization and management models, including staff occupational development, directors and head officers selection and placements and styles to prison staff understaffing, employees overwork and underpayment, staff recruitment criteria and requirements and personnel training topics and contexts.

In this context, over the last three years, the prison officers' trade union leaders claim that circles of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights attempt to curb their action and interventions, with persecutions and subtle arrangements. On the other hand, the Federation of Perimeter Security Officers adopts a more soft, modest approach, expressing their concerns for the deteriorating conditions of their work and calling for improvements in levels of staffing, funding, training, equipment and safety. Both federations participate in strikes for issues related with their occupational field and wider social issues produced during the post 2010 crisis and austerity period.

Workers' participation

Work councils or other similar bodies do not exist. High rank administrative officers and governmental bodies are negotiating directly with first and second degree trade unions representatives. Various staff professional status, mobility and disciplinary control issues are discussed in a special five member body for custodial institutions officers, consisting of three representatives of the administration and two elected representatives of employees. Neither are there are consultative bodies for prisoners.

Consultation procedures

Consultation procedures on a stable basis do not exist. Employees representatives ask or are invited to participate in meetings with competent parliamentary committees, the competent Minister, General Secretary, General Director, Director and other high ranked administrative executives and experts, depending on the particular issue discussed each time or are expected to respond to publicized initiatives, expressing their views in public discussions.

Views of the social partners on quality of employment in the prison system

It does not seem that prison officers in Greece have created or developed social partnerships. Of course other services of the public and the private sector and volunteers have access and undertake functions of the prison system (prisoners education, therapeutic programmes, cultural activities, charity). These interventions, though, indicate an interest for prisoners' treatment, not for the quality of the prison staff employment, which is affected by them (enriching the daily programme of the prison, improving the climate in the institution, and, also increasing bureaucratic and supervision needs. Teachers, other educators, therapists, doctors, volunteers who visit prisons cooperate with the prison administration, without interfering with prison staff employment issues, .

The Austrian Technical Assistance Programme for the Reform of the Greek Judicial System a serious lack of identification of prison staff with their profession, any kind of "corporate identity". Unpaid and uncompensated overtime hours and days exhaust prison officers, result in lack of individual motivation of the employees and increase the danger of "burn out" and the risk of quitting the job.

Political or media coverage of prison quality issues

Understaffing is a popular issue when overcrowding and insufficient security problems are publicly discussed and political concerns and journalist surprises are expressed for the situation. The results of understaffing (overtime work without leaves and day-offs) is another area of interest for politicians, raised in the parliamentary discussions, where the competent Minister is asked to present his intentions and planned actions for dealing with them.

Prison staff is a neglected feature in public discussion and academic research for prison policy and penology. The present study is a good opportunity to raise awareness on prison employees related issues and to enrich the penological agenda, realizing that it is not sufficient to care for prison conditions, prisoners' rights, treatment and social reintegration

without the equally important factor for the balanced operation of the prison system, its officers.

Sources

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MS Theodora Pantelidou, PhD, Sociologist, Panteion University and Ms Sofia Spyrea, PhD Candidate, Sociologist, Democritus University of Thrace contributed with research in the internet (webpages of the Ministry of Justice, the Federation of Prison Officers, the Federation of Perimeter Security Officers etc.) and with the selection of texts relevant to the present research issues.

Moreover, three doctoral dissertations (all in Greek) have been taken into consideration:

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- Lambaki, K. (2009), *Men-Women Correctional Officers: A Gender Study on their role perception and prisoners*, PhD thesis, Panteion University
- Miloni, S. (2017), *Health and healthcare of female prisoners in Greece*, PhD thesis, University of the Peloponnese

Finally, Koulierakis, G. & Agrafiotis, D. (2010) research “Stress, burnout, mental health and coping strategies among the staff of Greek correctional institutions”, *Archives of Hellenic Medicine*, 27(6): 944-952 (in Greek), has been also used.