

Impact of austerity in prison services –
EPSU/LRD survey carried out in 2015
Recap of key findings and recent
developments

Collective bargaining project quality
employment/quality services

Brussels, 10 May 2017

Issued to be covered

- Background to survey
- Survey results
 - Number of prison population
 - Prison budget
 - Number of staff
 - Conditions for prisoners and staff
 - Union membership
 - Health and safety
 - Union demands
- Recent developments since completion of the survey

Background

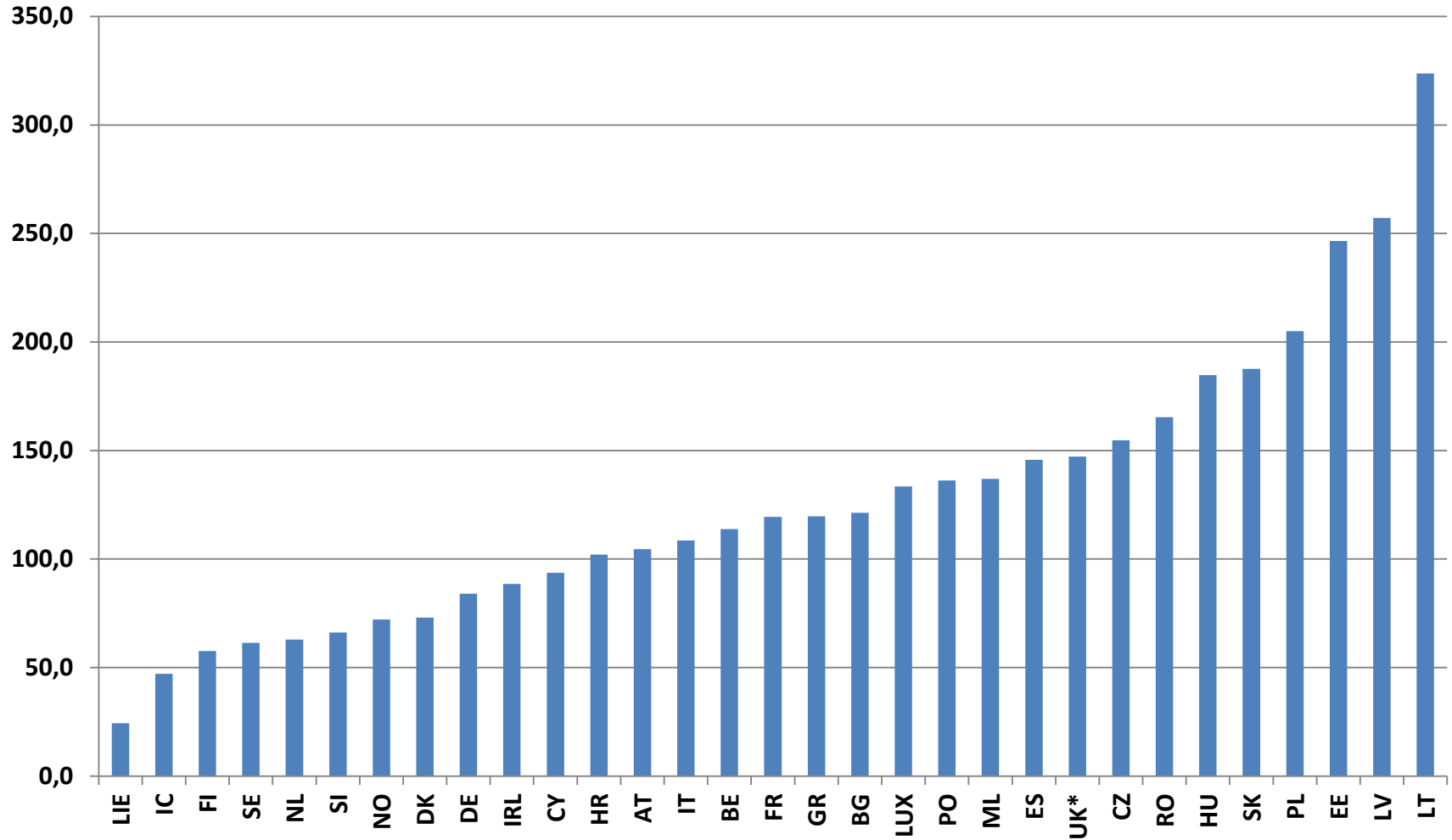
- Survey completed in mid-2015 focusing on impact of austerity on working conditions in prisons esp OSH
- Based on
- figures from Council of Europe (SPACE) that covers 47 states but survey limited to EEA states (EU 28 plus Norway, Iceland & Liechtenstein)
- National sources
- Responses from 14 EPSU affiliates from 12 countries

survey respondents

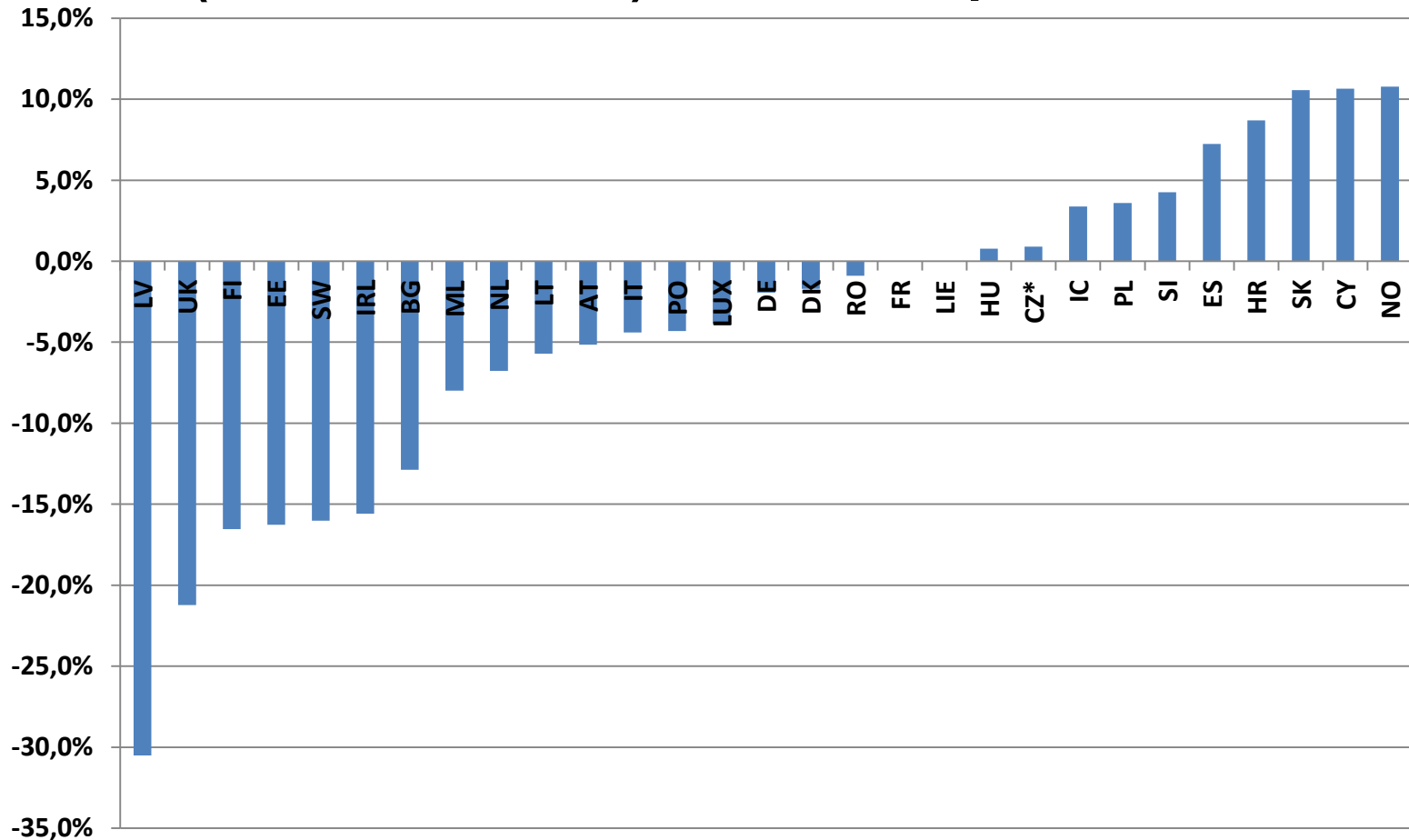
- Belgium ACV-CSC & CGSP/ACOD
 - Northern Cyprus KTAMS
 - Denmark
Faengselsforbundet
 - Estonia Rotal
 - Finland VVL (JHL)
 - France UFAP-UNSA
 - Italy FP CGIL
 - Netherlands FNV
 - Norway KY-YS
 - Romania SNLP
 - Spain USO
 - UK RCN and POA
- Plus (no longer prison staff)
- *Czech Rep. Statorg – prison staff back tbc*
 - *Latvia LAKRS*

Prison population per 100,000 (2013)

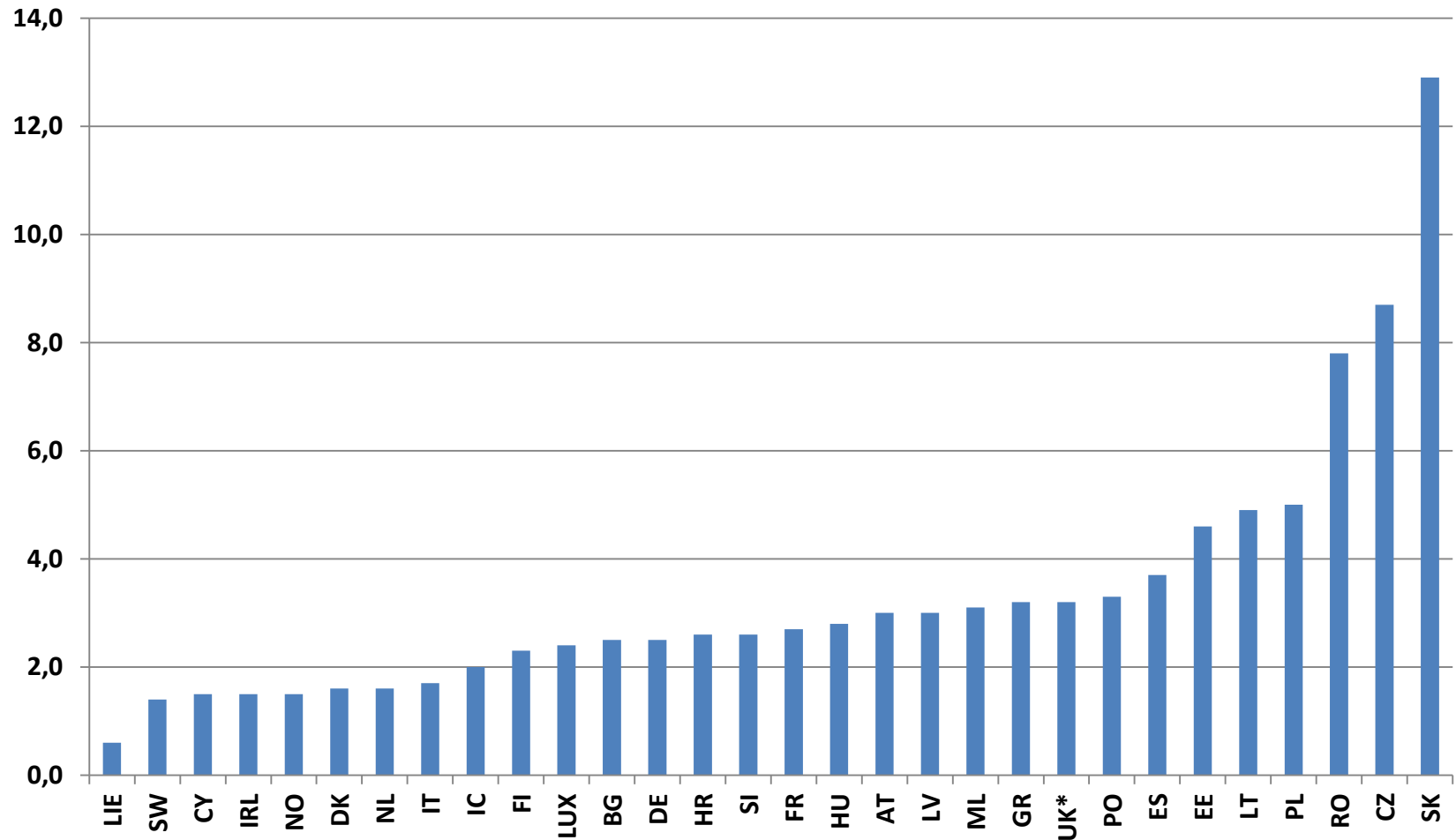
slight increase since 2008 with major national differences



Change in number of prison staff (%) (2008-2013)- CoE Space data



Ratio of inmates per custodian (2013)- no changes in 2015



Worsening prisoner to staff ratios-2008/2013

Country	Staff change 2008-2013	Prisoners change 2008-2013	Ratio of prisoners to staff	
	Percent	Percent	2008	2013
Austria	-5.2%	11.8%	2.1	2.5
Bulgaria	-12.9%	-17.6%	2.3	2.2
Croatia	8.7%	-8.1%	1.9	1.6
Cyprus	10.6%	-2.4%	2.2	1.9
Czech Republic	0.9%	-20.7%	2.0	1.5
Denmark	-1.7%	18.5%	1.0	1.2
Estonia	-16.3%	-10.9%	1.9	2.0
Finland	-16.5%	-11.5%	1.3	1.4
France	0.0%	17.5%	2.3	2.7
Germany	-1.9%	-9.4%	2.0	1.9
Hungary	0.8%	21.4%	2.0	2.4
Iceland	3.4%	8.6%	1.6	1.7
Ireland	-15.6%	15.4%	0.9	1.2
Italy	-4.4%	16.1%	1.3	1.6
Latvia	-30.5%	-20.5%	1.9	2.2
Liechtenstein	0.0%	-10.0%	0.6	0.6
Lithuania	-5.7%	24.2%	2.4	3.1
Luxembourg	-3.8%	6.5%	1.6	1.8
Malta	-8.0%	0.0%	2.7	2.9
Netherlands	-6.8%	-38.4%	1.6	1.0
Norway	10.8%	11.3%	1.0	1.0
Poland	3.6%	-5.0%	3.1	2.8
Portugal	-4.3%	32.2%	2.0	2.7
Romania	-0.9%	21.5%	2.3	2.8
Slovak Republic	10.6%	22.1%	2.1	2.4
Slovenia	4.3%	3.2%	1.6	1.6
Spain	7.2%	-5.1%	2.6	2.3
Sweden	-16.0%	-14.4%	1.2	1.2
UK	-21.2%	0.8%	1.7	2.2
EEA (excluding Belgium and Greece)	-5.0%	1.5%	2.0	2.1

Prison budgets

- Money has increased (4)
 - Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France
- Money has stayed the same (1)
 - Romania
- Money has decreased (7)

Northern Cyprus, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, UK

- *Council of Europe Space 2015* “*Spending per inmate in European prisons has decreased during the economic crisis.*”
- CoE figures seem to indicate that countries with the highest expenses are generally those with a lower prison population

Conditions for prisoners

- Have improved (4)
 - Belgium, Estonia, Romania, Italy (reduction of overcrowding)
- Have stayed the same (5)
 - Northern Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Spain
- Have got worse (3)
 - France, Netherlands, the UK
- Council of Europe: reduced spending on prisons “has likely caused a negative impact on the quality of life of persons in custody”; CPT reports
- Reports of European Prison Observatory: Prison overcrowding remains a key concern despite European principle of individual cells. e.g. England and Wales with 60% of prisons overcrowded, France esp in remand prisons

Conditions for prison staff

- Have improved (0)
- Have stayed the same(7)
 - Belgium, Northern Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Italy –impoverishment of prison staff and their families
- Have got worse (5)
 - France, Netherland, Romania, Spain, the UK –fewer staff and increased violence

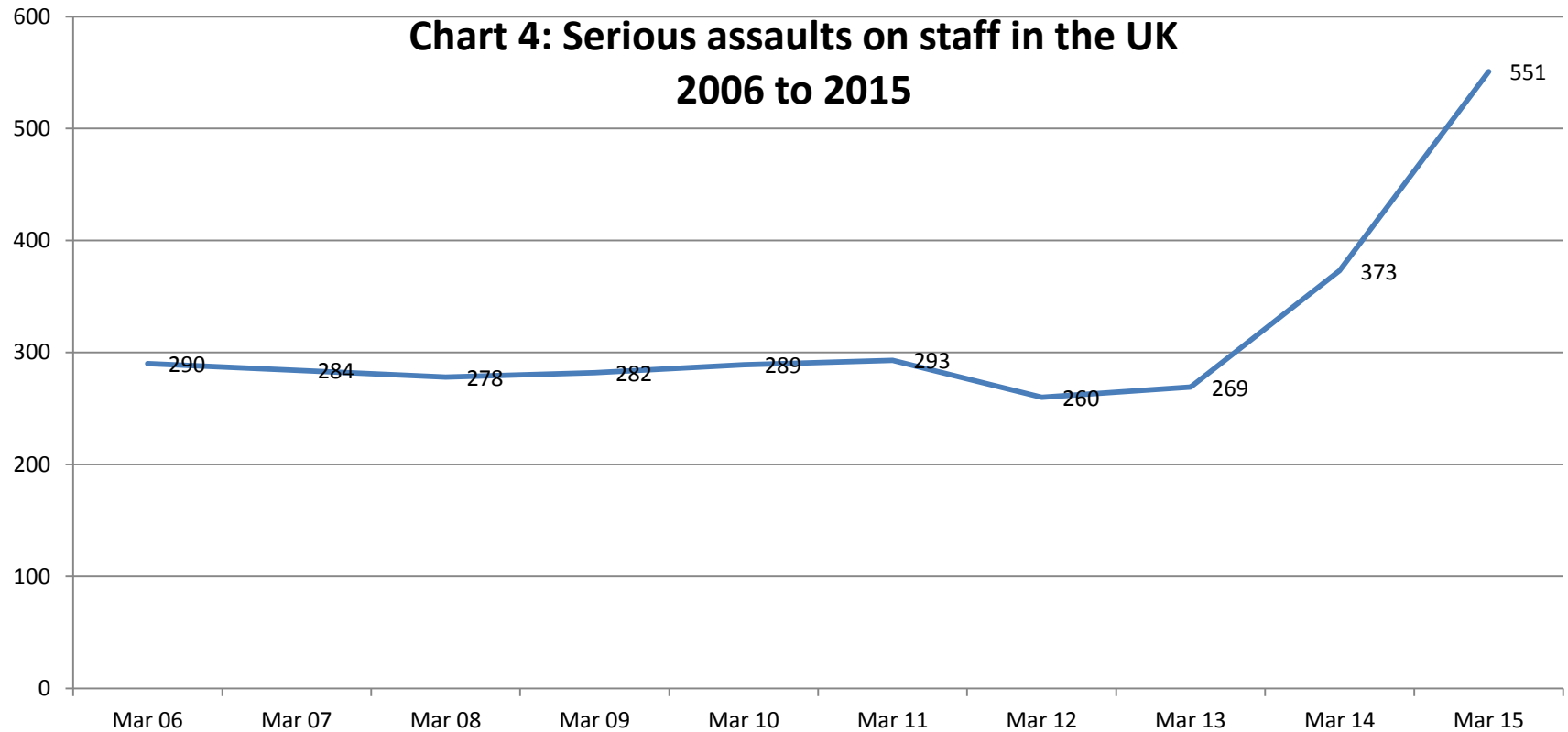
Health and safety of staff

- More of a problem than five years ago (7)
 - Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, the UK
- The same (4)
 - Northern Cyprus, Finland, Norway, Belgium
- Less of a problem (2)
 - Estonia, Romania

Violence

- Violence directed against staff by inmates as major health and safety issue
- Has increased (9)
 - Belgium (of 1,000 accidents a year, 700 are the result of attacks), Denmark, France, Netherlands (but records are poor), Romania (prisoners are more demanding, staff are older and conditions are worse), Spain (reduction in number of staff worsens security), UK (increase by 36%), Italy
 - A number of unions can provide more details, but not all due to poor monitoring system (e.g. NL)
- Has remained the same (4)
 - Estonia, Finland, Norway, Belgium
- Has decreased (1)
 - Northern Cyprus

UK: official figures on serious assaults on staff (per quarter)



Stress among staff

- Against this background, no wonder stress levels have increased according to most respondents
- Has increased (9)
 - Belgium (increased workload, difficult to take holidays), Northern Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia (increased workload), Finland (people are worried about their jobs), France, Netherlands (austerity and concerns about their future in prison service), Romania (poor conditions, increased workload, high-profile prisoners, financial crisis), Spain (pay cuts, reduction in staff, lack of transfer possibilities), UK (study found that work-related demands are higher and support from management lower in prisons than in other “safety critical occupations such as police or fire and rescue services’), Italy (Padua university study, bullying and military hierachy)
 - stress can be more highly stigmatized in prisons with little support and training available, fear that support would not be confidential and reluctance to take sick leave due to job insecurity and fears for the safety of colleagues or prisoners
- Has stayed the same (1)
 - Norway
- Has fallen (0)

Sickness absence among staff

- Has increased (3)
 - Netherlands (it has gone up since 2012, when it was 7%, but no figures), UK, Italy (9-10% higher due to an ageing workforce)
- Has stayed the same (8) incl: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Norway, Romania, Spain
- Has fallen (1)
 - Northern Cyprus

Prisons covered by same health and safety provisions as elsewhere?

- Yes (7)
 - Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Romania
- No (3)
 - Northern Cyprus, France, Spain (government always tries to keep prisons outside the regulation applying elsewhere, citing security concerns)
- Little or no training on health and safety

Staff representation

- Unions can represent all staff (11)
 - Belgium, Northern Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, UK, Italy
- Some staff are excluded from representation (1)
 - Finland (unions cannot represent prison directors)

Union membership density varies but rather high compared to other sectors

- Very high – above 70%
 - Faengelsforbundet (Denmark)
- High – 50% to 70%
 - VVL (Finland), SNLP (Romania), ACAIP-USO (Spain)
- Medium – 25% to 50%
 - ACV-OD (Belgium), KY-YS (Norway)
- Low to medium – 10% to 25%
 - Rotal (Estonia)
- Low – below 10%
 - KTAMS (Northern Cyprus)

Membership trends

- Union density rising (5)
 - Belgium (ACV-OD), Estonia (Rotal), France (UFAP-UNSA), Netherlands (FNV Overheid), Norway (KY-YS)
- Union density unchanged (4)
 - Northern Cyprus (KTAMS), Denmark (Faengelsforbundet), Finland (VVL), Spain (ACAIP-USO)
- Union density falling (1)
 - Romania (SNLP)

Reasons for increasing membership

- “Prison staff face lots of problems” (Belgium – ACV-OD)
- “Better understanding of union – better advertising” (Estonia – Rotal)
- “Impact of union activities and employees’ uncertainty about job security and economic prospects” (Netherlands – FNV Overheid)
- “Focus on working conditions. Union is attractive to younger staff” (Norway – KY-YS)

Right to take strike action

- Yes (6 – although not fully in Spain)
 - Belgium, Northern Cyprus, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain (but in reality the work classified as essential services –and therefore obligatory – during a strike is more than in normal conditions)
- No (6)
 - Denmark (prison officers are like police officers), Estonia (state-employed workers do not have right to strike), France, Italy (polizia penitenziaria) Romania (this right was removed unilaterally in 2011), UK (unilateral restrictions in 1994)

Pay is set by

Normal collective bargaining (5)

- For whole service (4)
 - Belgium
 - Denmark (80-90% centrally, 10-20% locally)
 - Finland
 - Netherlands (for all civil servants)
- Less clear cut
 - UK (advisory pay review)
 - Italy (relaunched)
- Varies between prisons (2)
 - Norway (varies by districts)
 - UK (private prisons)

Government decision (5)

- For whole service (3)
 - Northern Cyprus
 - Romania (set by law)
 - (In practice)Spain (for all Spain except Catalonia)
 - Estonia
 - France
- Varies between prisons (2)
 - Estonia (depending on size and location, up to 30% difference)
 - France

Employee representation at workplace

- Works council (or similar body) (3)
 - Belgium, Netherlands (plus active union groups), Spain (each prison used to have its own committee but now only one in each province)
- Unions (6)
 - Denmark (plus cooperation committee), Estonia, Finland, Norway, Romania, UK
- No details
 - Northern Cyprus, France (unions play a strong role)

Privatisation

- Some prisons already run by private companies (1)
 - UK: Only country amongst those responding with 14 private prisons operated by G4S, Serco and Sodexo
 - France: expansion planned
- Plans to increase private involvement (3)
 - Belgium: new private prison planned
 - Denmark: pressure for some tasks – transportation – to be put out to competition
 - Spain: increasing number of services in private hands – including exterior security
- No private prisons and no plans (6)
Northern Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Netherlands (but some youth institutions privatised), Norway, Romania
- Detention centres: greater private sector involvement in many countries , pending EPSU report

Main union concerns

- Denmark: cost savings and privatisation
- Estonia: a reduction of workers' rights
- Finland: threats to jobs
- Netherlands: job security, pay health and safety, training and education
- Norway: export of prisoners
- Romania: low priority given to prisons, leading to reduced budgets, fewer staff and worse working conditions
- Spain: ageing workforce, more radicalised inmates

Main union demands

- Belgium: maintain employment and pensions, no privatisation, end minimum service restriction on right to strike
- Denmark: better pay and conditions, sufficient staff, better education, special schemes for older people
- Estonia: better working time arrangements, reduced workload, equal pay between prisons
- Finland: more money for the prison service
- Italy: relaunch of collective bargaining, end job freeze, recruitment via open competition not armed forces
- Netherlands: employability for all workers, especially older ones, no privatization, improved health and safety, better training
- Norway: better wages and the standardisation of prisons across Norway, to maintain policy of reintegrating prisoners into society
- Romania: reintroduction of the right to strike and a modernised statute for prison workers in line with labour code
- Spain: recovery of economic rights that have been lost, possibility of annual transfers, better health and safety, a specific labour regime for prison staff
- UK: return to collective bargaining right instead of annual pay review (POA), safe staffing levels, investment in new nursing posts and end of downgrading of existing posts (RCN)

Recent developments at European level

1) EU Social dialogue Committee for government

- Agreement on workers' rights to information and consultation pending implementation by Council decision – will apply to ALL central government employees and civil servants
- Project on psycho-social risks and third party violence incl prison staff views; research and guide available in many EU languages, adoption on 15 May, raising awareness

2) ETUC pay rise campaign: EPSU to focus on low pay workers, gender pay gap and right to collective bargaining, first action on 23 June International Public services Day

Other developments

- 3) European Commission: funding for modernising penitentiary system, reinsertion of prisoners, alternatives to imprisonment (letter by 12 EU Justice ministers asking for more resources)
- 4) CoE's Committee on Prevention of Torture : report
 - Overcrowding still a central concern, although in a number of countries closing down of prisons
 - Remand prisoners : last resort, alternatives to imprisonment
 - Foreign nationals
 - Ad hoc visits : migrants “reception and identification centres (hotspots) in Greece, Belgium amid strike action last year, Turkey following the failed coup, FYROM, Russia

Other developments

5) European parliament

- own-initiative report on detention conditions currently discussed, rapporteur Joëlle BERGERON, shadow rapporteur Eva Joly
- Also resolution of 13-12- 2016 on the Situation of fundamental rights in the EU, the EP expressed concerns regarding overcrowding, pre-trial detention, ill-treatment, the situation of vulnerable prisoners such as children and persons with mental disabilities and the phenomenon of radicalisation. In previous resolutions EP called on the European Commission to develop and implement minimum standards for prison and detention conditions in the EU and on the Member States to keep the issue high on their political agenda and to devote appropriate human and financial resources to addressing the situation.