

## **European Analysis**

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In this short presentation I will be giving a global view of the research results that were obtained from the questionnaires. The research was conducted with female inmates and members of staff working with them. In total 440 questionnaires were conducted with female inmates and 134 questionnaire with staff members. Inmates' questionnaires were distributed according to the population of female inmates found in the regions that were participating in the research, so there results do not necessarily reflect the situation of the countries. One could call the sample – a random represented sample of convenience. As can be seen in the table, the breakdown of the questionnaires was as follows: Belgium - 91; Cyprus - 14; Finland - 78; France - 47; Germany - 57; Italy -17; Malta - 11 and Turkey - 125 inmates. There is an obvious over representation of Turkey, when we looked at the inmate data, thus was kept in mind when drawing the conclusions.

### **Inmates involved in the study**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Prisons</b>	<b>Number of questionnaires with inmates</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	PCBruges, Lantin, Ghent, Mons, Hasselt and Antwerp	91
<b>Cyprus</b>	Cyprus Prison	14
<b>Finland</b>	Hameenlinna prison, Turku Prison and Vanaja Open prison	78
<b>France</b>	Pau, Agen, Angouleme, Limoges, Poitiers, and Bordeaux	47
<b>Germany</b>	JVA Zweibruchen and JVA Rohrbach	57
<b>Italy</b>	Casa Circondariale Trapani	17
<b>Malta</b>	Corradino Correctional Facility	11
<b>Turkey</b>	Izmir Woman Close Prison	125

When we look at the interviews conducted with staff members we see that the balance of these interviews was better represented, with less likelihood of a skewing of the sample, with the larger prisons being more represented. For example Malta and Cyprus have a total of 6 interviews each, while Turkey, Belgium and Finland have over 20 staff respondents each. The largest number worked as security staff (47%), some were social workers, teachers, psychologist, managers and so on. The number of respondents that were security staff varied from a high of 73% in Germany to a low of 29% in France.

## Staff involved in the study

Country	Prisons	Number of questionnaires with staff
Belgium	PCBruges,	25
Cyprus	Cyprus Prison	6
Finland	HAV, Hameenlinna prison, Turku Prison and Vanaja Open prison	36
France	Pau, Agen, Angouleme, Poitiers, and Bordeaux	17
Germany	JVA Zweibruchen and JVA Rohrbach	15
Italy	Casea Circondariale Trapani, UEPE	8
Malta	Corradino Correctional Facility	6
Turkey	Izmir Woman Close Prison	21

**I have chosen, what I consider to be some interesting findings to present here...**

The Mediterranean presents more single women in prison. Only Turkey and Finland present high figures of married women.

The respondents were serving various lengths of prison sentences from months to multiple life sentences. Individual data can be divided into countries where most prisoners had sentences of less than 3 years (Germany, France and Finland) and those which had sentences of more than 3 years (Cyprus, Italy, Malta and Turkey).

This data might indicate that countries such as Cyprus, Italy, Malta and Turkey might be culturally reluctant to sentence women to imprisonment. This results in longer sentences being issued for women once the court decides to issue a prison sentence.

Sentencing plans, or the lack of them prove problematic. There is a total lack of sentencing plans in Malta and Cyprus. Other countries have some

form of sentencing plans, however in none of the countries did all the respondents confirm that they had or knew about sentencing plans.

The stereotypical image of the female prisoner coming from a low socio-economic background, unemployed, with a string of children, surviving on unemployment benefits does not necessarily hold true in most cases. The most important network remains the family (66.7%), followed by children and partner

The overall conclusions from these questionnaires show that there is a high level of nonparticipation in activities by female inmates. The reasons for this could be varied, however there seems to be a feeling that education conflicts with work, that the opportunities for education in female divisions are few (i.e. there are more opportunities in the male divisions) and the few educational opportunities available are of the wrong kind, i.e. there is more emphasis on classical academic education rather than on vocational training and therapy. These thoughts are reflected in both the inmates' and the officers' questionnaires.

It is important that there is more encouragement for female inmates to participate in educational activities. How this is done is culturally dependent. Here we see a north-south divide, with the northern countries needing more information to be distributed to the staff so that they can pass this on to the female inmates, while the south speaks of motivation and convincing female inmates to attend courses.

The relevance of prison education is an important aspect that comes out in these questionnaires. Inmates need to find a job once they leave the prison. They also prefer to work and earn money. Any educational

program needs to have meaning, relevance and is aimed at make inmates feel better, for it to succeed. Prisoners ask for support, they need a care-plan and the possibility of speaking with someone about their problems and the care-plan. This could be the educational counselor, a psychologist, a social worker or any other professional who is willing and capable of helping. Here also we see a north-south divide. It seems that the south suffers from lack of staff and appropriate resources such as rooms. Why we have this situation is not clear. Lack of finance is a perennial problem in all prisons as is lack of communication.

There seems also to be a common problem of mental health issues with women inmates. These problems vary from distractibility to the more serious psychological problems. This indicates the need of the helping professionals being employed in prison, but also the need to address these problems, through therapy and vocational counseling before any real educational work can start.

**Thank you.**