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世界保護観察会議

Facing the Challenges in Response to the Terror Attacks in Belgium: The Role of the Probation Service, Including Judicial Victim Support

Tokyo – September 13th, 2017

Belgian context: Houses of justice

What?

Core business

Conditional Sentence

Mediation (Prosecutor)

Community services

Conditional Release

Civil cases

Judicial Victim Support

Electronic monitoring

Probation

Innovation

Information to citizens

Front-line legal services

Collaboration with/financing service providers

Offender Programmes

Community work Programmes

Victim-offender mediation

Belgian Context

Since 2015 : 3 probation services

Belgian Context

- **2012**: First people leaving to Syria
  - Not considered as violent extremism, at first
  - Recruitment by jihadi militant groups & atrocities reaching Europe through media changed our view→ departures became a problem and even a threat to our society

- **2014**: Shooting in Brussels Jewish Museum
  - Carried out by a former Foreign Terrorist Fighter
  - 4 people killed

- **2015**: Round-up of a terrorist cell in Verviers
  - 2 FTF killed

- **2016/3**: Terror attacks at Brussels international airport and Maelbeek underground station
  - 32 people killed

Challenges for the organisation

Terror attacks aim at hurting the society and its values

Harming as many victims as possible

Crimes committed by offenders with different profiles
But also different types of crime

Terrorism: a **worldwide** and **multiform** issue

Belgium: a country directly affected by terror attacks

In Belgium the same organisation is entrusted with both the judicial victim support services and probation services, which implies an interesting balance

Probation services and victim support services have a crucial role in ensuring that victims' rights are enforced and in engaging offenders in a disengagement process

Importance of re-assuring and mentoring the probation officers (specific training)

Challenges for the organisation

A **new reality**: use of new words (radicalisation, violent extremism, …); how to deal with this **undefined reality** in a context of **political, media and public pressure**?

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Guidelines for prisons and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism: **a reference framework** in preventing excesses and reaffirming **basic values**

Promoting a **safer** society and ensuring compliance with **core values** (Human Rights)

Impact on the day-to-day work of probation officers

New penal offences qualified as terror acts → new case types
(*even the intention of perpetrating such acts*)

Interest of intelligence services in our cases/work → demand for information

How to manage violent extremism in a probation environment during a period of crisis? Importance of reassuring and mentoring the probation officers → need for training of probation workers, evaluating the use of supportive tools (risk assessment)

Dealing with political decisions and public pressure → the way media and politics intend to react to certain events does not always correspond with our goals of social (re)inclusion and re-integration of offenders → definition of disengagement process = important to put focus on social integration

Need for multi-agency approach (communities, national security and police services, probation services, prisons, health-care services, etc.): a diverse number of services and agencies are involved in the follow-up → new ways of co-operation and information sharing are explored (professional secrecy under review)

Challenges for Judicial Victim Support Services

- Targets: the State and the society
  - → huge emotional impact on the whole society
  - → importance for the authorities to give an adequate response to victims
- Large number of people involved
- Large number of foreign victims
- How to reach all the victims?

Impact on the day-to-day work of the Victim Support services

Requirement to adapt to the specific needs of victims

Some types of intervention :

- Outreach and contacts at different stages of the procedure
- Organisation and assistance – meeting with Victim Identification services and forensic scientists
- Organisation and assistance – filing a claim for civil damages
- Restitution of belongings
- Collective information sessions
- Viewings of on-site CCTV footage

Co-operation

- Necessity of a new inter-agency approach: importance of learning how to work together (information sharing, difference in goals and contexts, …), and identifying best practices
- Contacts with and referral to regular partners
- Legal amendments to the professional secrecy (case management)

Co-operation

Judicial Victim support

- Close collaboration with the Federal Prosecutor's office
- Collaboration with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassies
- Contacts with and referral to organisations/people competent for compensation

Supervision of offenders

- Follow-up at the local level
- More intensive collaboration with different partners (prisons, local community, etc.)
- Access to a shared database of the security services ("FTF" database)

Conclusions/Perspectives

- Still much to learn: all actions must be cautiously considered

  (little empirical evidence, lack of studies, need to keep respecting the core values of probation work)
- No miracle solutions - change processes are complex and take time
- Long-term approach
- Importance to have good frameworks at an international level
- Values of restorative justice to support a disengagement process
- Need for an individual approach
- Need to develop co-ordination
- Need to include victim perspective (but risk of inequality between victims of other crimes)

Thank you for your attention !

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