

FEFI

FINDING EDUCATION FOR FEMALE INMATES



Lifelong Learning Programme / GRUNDTVIG - Multilateral Project

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JOHANNES GUTENBERG
UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ



Rheinland-Pfalz
JUSTIZVOLLZUGSANSTALT
ZWEIBRÜCKEN



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European Results

The questionnaires showed the importance of giving a voice to female inmates and the people working with them.

Results show that:

Female inmates have different needs than male inmates

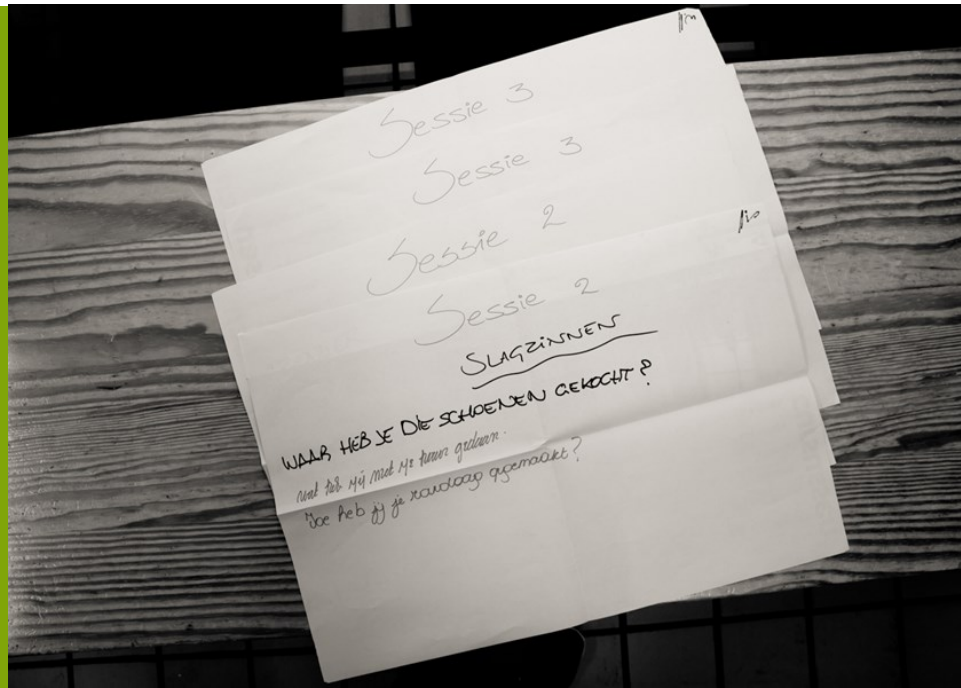
Female inmates often have a history of abuse

Female inmates have dependent children

Female inmates need courses that they see as relevant

There are interesting cultural divides between the north and south

Most complain that there is a lack of resources for female inmate training



Introduction to the Measures

Prison is a “closed system”, which is primarily committed to protecting society through keeping prisoners in a secure setting and to provide for their rehabilitation, so that they will not re-offend on release. The fulfilment of the educational mission demands that the prisons raise awareness in the prisoner of the wrongs done and helps in their reintegration. This is done through **learning systems**, using education in a **holistic approach**.

To improve the existing situation in the prisons of the different partner countries work was done on three levels:

Level 1 The needs of women in prison themselves: to give them voice by questionnaires and to create measures/learning offers;

Level 2 The experiences and needs of prison staff: their motivation for changes, skill development, needs etc. by questionnaires and creating measures;

Level 3 The requirements of the organization/prison structure/ policy makers and management: their promotion of change processes towards a holistic learning environment, support, awareness and co-operation in services.

The majority of the partners **Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Italy** and **Turkey** have decided to create interventions and new procedures on Level 1: **the needs and offers for female inmates**. **Malta** created an intervention with policy makers and management, while Cyprus and Germany addressed all three levels.



Art by a Finnish participant

Measures

Level 1: Inmates

BE, CY, DE, FI, FR, IT, TR

Belgium, Finland, France, Italy and Turkey have decided directly to intervene with female inmates.

Belgium

Sports was used as a medium of learning for the female inmates – “Ladies on the move” was the title chosen for this activity. A mixture of individual, division and group sessions were planned. Sports is a vehicle to reduce antisocial behavior and prevent social exclusion. Sports helps communication and acting in a group.

Five, two hour sessions were conducted during this experimental program. They consisted of a mixture of sports, classroom activities and individual support. Prior to every session the teacher met every participant individually. After a classroom session was conducted followed by a sports sessions. Sports as a means of learning new skills was a success. The secret is to have a good combination between sports and education. The inmates evaluated this course positively. This experiment was conducted in the two prisons that participated in FEFI. Although the program was successful with the women that participated, there was a problem of low numbers.

Cyprus

Interventions with inmates centered on experimenting with new activities and workshops that will support the inmate's wishes identified in the questionnaire, such as housekeeping, taking care of children, cooking, and sports. Cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to facilitate employment before release was also planned.

For the first time male and female prisoners were mixed together for certain activities such as cooking and theatre. The school education program is changing its way of delivering classes through the use of media, social debates and interactions. Cyprus also held a meeting with inmates about the results obtained to make inmates aware about what is being done and how the questionnaires were received.

Germany

Rhineland-Palatinate organized and offered for the female inmates the following new courses in vocational training in the prison of Zweibrücken:

- From January to May 2015, 15 inmates were trained in facility management and all have achieved a certificate of industrial cleaners.
- Summer 2015 – a course of vocational training ‘cooking’.
- August 2015 – a course “Make-up artist”. This is done in collaboration with the Chamber of Crafts Saarbrücken.
- During Autumn/Winter 2015/2016 – A course “fashion Seamstress” is planned.

Finland

The main findings of FEFI Survey in Finland were that female inmates need more individualized support during the releasing process (inmates) and that there is a lack of personnel and financial resources (staff) to meet these needs. In regards of these findings Hämeenlinna Prison wanted to experiment two new and innovating methods for FEFI: the Mentor Program (a.k.a. Service-user Involvement Program) and the Retreat Program.

Mentor Program: Hämeenlinna Prison opened an activity centre “Monikko” in 2014 to serve as a meeting place for inmates and the NGO's that offer a variety of services and support during the releasing process. Monikko is located a few minutes away from the prison grounds.

Two former inmates wanted to help as volunteers in Monikko as FEFI was just proceeding to the “Experimentation of new procedures” phase we suggested that they act as Mentors for a selected group of female inmates. Hämeenlinna Prison gathered six women from the Releasing Unit, and scheduled four full-day meetings between the mentors and the group in Monikko. The mentors introduced themselves and shared a brief story of their background. They also shared valuable information and personal difficulties that they had faced during their releasing process a few years before. The idea was to incorporate the discussions of various different topics concerning releasing process with doing



Retreat Department 's living room

Finland continued

fun and uplifting activities together in a casual setting. The current inmates were able to get good ideas on how to prepare themselves emotionally and physically for release. The mentors pointed out that the pilot program was also helping them as Monikko is a place where they did not need to hide their criminal past and they felt free to talk about their own time in prison.

Retreat Program: There are many promising findings of the retreat's success in Swedish prisons, where it has been used as a rehabilitative program for over ten years. Hameenlinna Prison brought the concept into Finnish prisons as part of FEFI "Experimentation of the new procedures" and the pilot took place between the 31st May and the 7th June of 2015.

Ignatius Retreat is an old Christian method where a period of eight days is spent in silence to enable participants to gain a deeper awareness of themselves.

Six female inmates were chosen to participate in the Retreat Program - two from Turku Prison and four from Hameenlinna Prison. The criminal backgrounds included homicide, severe violence, drug related crimes and crimes against property. Half of the participants were foreign nationals.

Together the instructor and each participant made a personal retreat plan for the following eight days. A special time of the day was dedicated for each participant to discuss issues with the instructor. These daily meetings were optional, a participant was free to choose if she felt like talking or not. That was the only time during the day the participant was able to talk as all the other time was spent in meditation, writing and reading about the subjects in question according to her personal plan.

The retreat setting was ideal with two separate department units, one for the instructors and one for the inmates. The units shared a common yard, like a little garden, which was well used during the retreat. The inmates had free access to the outside where they were free to wander in silence. All the meals were served in the inmates' unit and were eaten together in silence. The daily appointments and the evening gatherings were held in the instructors' unit.

"Let's be quiet – good things will come!"

The Silence can be quite rehabilitating especially for inmates with the ADHD diagnosis, and for other impulsive inmates as well. The prayer and silence can heal a person entirely. In silence an inmate has to really face herself honestly without acting any role." – Finnish prison warden



A chapel in family unit



An altar in a chapel with a garden view !

France

The **French** partner also decided that the best domain of intervention would be on female inmates in two prisons. Together with local employment centers, courses were identified. Such courses aimed at assisting female inmates to find employment when released. Course will be delivered starting September 2015. The 2nd prison is adopting a skills validation for prior experiential learning. This allows inmates to get a diploma for prior education that has not been certified during schooling.

Prison of LIMOGES, FR – Female wing « **Valorization of prior learning competences** »

To give female inmates a chance to be judged in a formal way on the skills they have gathered during their past work experience. The French national system, the so called VAE (or 4th way to hold a diploma) was not yet running in this prison when the FEFI project started. FEFI experimentation allowed the involvement of VAE counselors as well as teachers in prison to prepare the administrative part of the examination. As one learner was released during the procedure, it has been necessary to develop an inside/outside bridge with on going services in another region so as to help and sustain the candidate.

FEFI gave the chance to answer individual needs of female inmates who participated in the initial project's survey by developing a singular measure which already exist in French national Education but was not yet organized inside this prison towards female inmates.

*For more information about VAE please go to
<http://www.euro-cides.eu/FEFI/download/download.php?cat=87>*

*For more information about an exploratory study in prison please go to
<http://www.euro-cides.eu/FEFI/download/download.php?cat=88>*

Prison of SAINTES, FR – Female wing « **Vocational training with certification** »

The aim was to create one training session focusing on « Business hygiene and prevention » with the goal to be able to include male inmates volunteer to join one female group during lessons to prepare for a diploma. This FEFI experimentation did not fit the normal school year when it was asked to start it, so it was postponed to 14/21 September 2015 thanks to the extension of the project duration.

FEFI gave the chance to answer individual needs of female inmates who participate to the initial project's survey linked to the fact that it was an opportunity to work with the employment public service to determine the field of economic activity that was needed in the area.

*For more information about this please go to
http://www.euro-cides.eu/FEFI/upload/worksheet_for_training_activity_as_fefi_measure.pdf*

Italy

The Italian partner's intervention, nicknamed *Donne Volanti* (Flying Women) was aimed at involving the whole female section, by creating a 'learning space' in the form of a home atmosphere. Women would be encouraged to explore their situation, learn from it and grow. Using digital media (in the form of CD-Rom) the milestones important for women would be addressed - education, marriage, motherhood, family, work etc. This would help inmates evaluate their lives, identify problems that are keeping them back and help to discover their strengths and weaknesses to aid in their re-integration into society. Cell doors were left open, social spaces in which the educational activities of various kinds can be performed with the help of voluntary associations that deal with cultural activities were identified. The kitchen was used for the inmates to prepare food but also to engage them positively during their stay out of the prison cell. A DVD collecting all the material was prepared. The overall experience of inmates was very positive with inmates showing great enthusiasm in attending the sessions.

Turkey

"Handmade Toys" was the activity chosen by Turkey. According to the results of the questionnaires that had been done with 124 female inmates, inmates wanted to develop creativity, to gain occupational skills, to spend quality time in prison, to relax psychologically, to gain money after being released (work in companies that produce toys, touristic and gift goods), in short to become productive members of society.

Therefore, from March to June 2015, 6 courses of Handmade Toys were opened with the cooperation of Aliaga Public Training Center. Two teachers taught female inmates how to make handmade toys in the prison education classes. Each course consisted of 64 hours. Female inmates who finish the course successfully got a certificate from the Aliaga Public Training Center. A total of 57 female inmates participated in the courses and 31 of them were successful and got the certificate. Inmates' reaction to this course was positive.



FEFI

PARTNERS

BELGIUM

CYPRUS

FINLAND

FRANCE

GERMANY

ITALY

MALTA

TURKEY

Measures

Level 2: Staff

DE, CY

Working on Level 2 with the prison staff means to help staff reflect on their role as part of a learning system.

Germany

In Rhineland-Palatinate work with staff and the prison structure means working holistically.

The prison of Zweibrücken decided to implement the idea of the "Ressourcenfinder" with inmates. The "Ressourcenfinder" is a member of staff who will support the inmate in difficult situations. This person will be the mentor of the inmate from entry to exit point. She(he) will help the inmate to discover her strengths and build on them. This will enable them to restructure their lives and to prepare them for release. The "Ressourcenfinder" can help female inmate, however, at the end the inmate must take responsibility of herself.

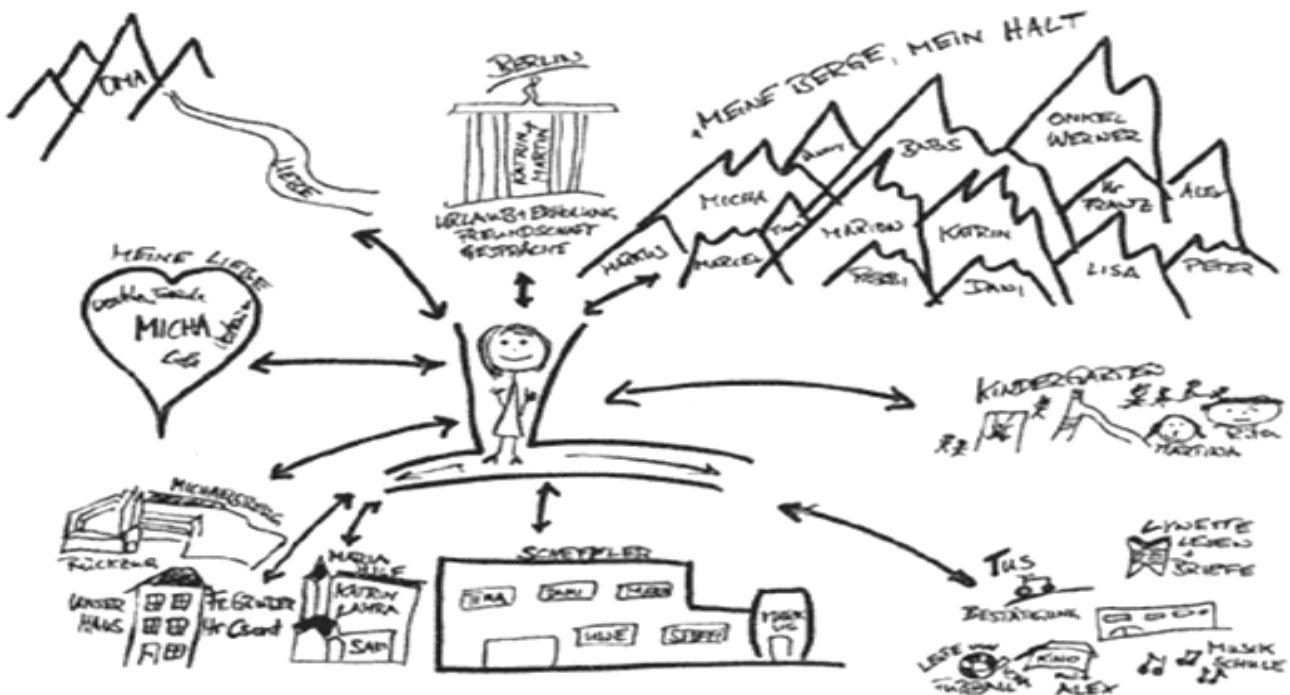
The inmate is also assisted through the construction of the ProfilPASS, which is an instrument to help the inmate identify her abilities and skills. It also helps the inmate in self-learning, through making visible formal, non-formal and informal acquired skills. Most inmates are not aware of the skills they have, the ProfilPASS helps them connect their past with their present and future. It is a self-exploration tool, helping inmates to draw their biography and motivate future learning.

Cyprus

A seminar on the results of the questionnaires was conducted with the staff to **raise awareness and to motivate them to help inmates**. In the long run staff needs **to be trained to design sentencing plans**. There is also a need to train the personnel, to issue certificates of education and to increase the number of social workers and psychologists. In April there was the employment of 2 professionals for six months to draw up sentencing plans.

Ressourcenfindung –Why?

- to develop stability
- to care for oneself
- to find one's equilibrium
- to discover the right way for oneself
- to perceive one's borders
- to esteem oneself
- to outgrow oneself
- to discover internal resources
- to activate resources





Germany

The University of Mainz conducted Seminars in prison on the results of the questionnaires to **raise awareness** on the situation of female inmates with regards on both: staff and policy makers. One group for taking over a new role, the other to support the necessary conditions.

Malta

The results of the questionnaires indicted that the problems in female educational services were far beyond a problem of staff and inmates. The staff needed help, especially from policy makers, to deliver a sound educational program. Due to this it was decided that our intervention would have a major possibility of success if we addressed this issue with management and policy makers. We conducted a seminar on the results of the questionnaires to raise the management's awareness. This was well received and we have already seen some improvement in inmate courses. More courses are being introduced. There has also been an indication of issuing calls for psychologist and social workers to work full-time in prison. Two seminars were also delivered to staff members (one to adult prison staff and the other the juvenile prison staff) to motivate them to assist female inmates in education and to make them aware of the inmate's needs.

In addition, a parallel project was conducted including, sewing and textiles, beauty/nails technician and working in a kitchen for female inmates. Training was successful in terms of female outputs particularly for the beauty/nails technician and the sewing and textiles courses.



Measures

Level 3: Structure

DE, MT

Working on Level 3: the requirements of the organization/prison structure/ policy makers and management, has to take into account the promotion of change processes towards a holistic learning environment by policy makers and prison management, to create and support a common coordinated mission towards learning and raise awareness of the staff and co-operating institutions on the subject.

The **Recommendations** of the project are inspired by what has already been recommended by the "International Study on Women's Imprisonment Current situation, demand analysis, "best practice" from Frieder Dünkler, Claudia Kestermann & Juliane Zolondek (2005) and the Grundtvig-Project Reintegration into Society through Education and Learning (RISE).

"International Study on Women's Imprisonment "
page 41ff, from 06.05.2015
http://www.rsf.uni-greifswald.de/fileadmin/mediapool/lehrstuehle/harrendorf/Reader_womeninprison.pdf

RISE Position Paper
page 31 ff., June 2013
http://www.zww.uni-mainz.de/Dateien/RISE_PositionPaper_FINAL.pdf

Finding Education for Female Inmates: The Seven Key Principles

Placing the person at the centre:

Helping female prisoners to express their needs; Recognizing competences; Boosting self-awareness and esteem

Holistic approach:

Combining Education, training and therapy; Ensuring the continuum from inside to post-release (courses and qualifications)

Active involvement of prison personnel:

Sensitizing, qualifying, improving communication skills; Transforming officers into motivators and counsellors

Managing prison as a learning institution:

Raising governors' and authorities' awareness of female inmates' needs; Improving provision of learning opportunities

Equal importance of security and education:

Boosting the role of education and training; Addressing over-emphasis on security wherever possible

Transition management as the central focus:

Enabling inmates to re-engage with the world outside; Ensuring continuity of support; Fostering cooperation among agencies and with civil society

Dismantling the „rhetoric-reality divide“:

Ensuring the necessary budget and workforce for creating a positive prison environment and successful release

“There is only one thing in the long run more expensive than education: no education.”

(John F. Kennedy)

Recommendations

Principle 1: Placing the person in the centre

Helping female prisoners to express their needs; Recognizing competences; Boosting self-awareness and esteem

This recommendation is very important for all prison projects. This is one of the ways in which prison education reflects trends, developments and priorities in adult learning. There should be no conference today without this principle. The validation of the skills, competences and knowledge, that the person is often not aware of, is very important. All this serves increasing self-awareness and esteem. Improving counseling and guidance arrangements are necessary for person-centered intervention.

Principle 2: Holistic approach

Combining Education, training and therapy; Ensuring the continuum from inside to post-release (courses and qualifications)/ by combining the education training inside prison to the job requirement outside

Women's correctional facilities should be organized in the sense of a holistic approach according to

- the principles of successful treatment of female prisoners concerning their multivariable problems within the framework of social-therapeutic institutions, as well as
- a Continuum of Education and Learning for the time after release.

The project results show that the important elements of a social-therapeutic approach are as well necessary elements for increasing motivation towards learning activities:

- ⇒ "The reformation of communal life through allocation to living-groups / units that enables intensive communication among inmates as well as between inmates and prison officers [Good Practice Model (GPM): Flying Women, Italy]
- ⇒ The continued allocation of well-trained, motivated and empathetic officers to the groups of prisoners living together [GPM: "Resourcenfinder", Germany]
- ⇒ A gradual opening of the prison regime through relaxations, long-term (family) visits, prison leave, work-release as well as the accommodation in halfway houses and aftercare after the final release [GPM: Activity Centre "Monikko", Finland]
- ⇒ Offers in informal and non-formal learning as well as formal educational offers, vocational trainings and possibilities of work must be available for female prisoners despite the small number of female inmates.

The measure of Finland shows that there are approaches for more opening opportunities of working together inside-outside. Cyprus initiated possibilities of training for female and male prisoners together. However one must take into account the violence these women may have experienced by men

Principle 3:

Active involvement of prison personnel

Sensitizing, qualifying, improving communication skills; Transforming officers into motivators and counsellors

The mentioned problems and needs of female inmates must be addressed by means of **sensitizing and qualifying prison personnel**:

Raising and increasing awareness of staff, reflection of their role in motivation and encouragement towards improving information and activities in educational/ training/rehabilitation working offers.

Improving communication, motivation and counselling skills. [GPM: "Resourcenfinder", Germany]

The process is to change the attitude of prison officers from key turners into motivators and counselors.

Principle 4: Managing prison as a learning institution

Raising governors' and authorities' awareness of female inmates' needs; Improving provision of learning opportunities

- "In brief, a well-managed prison is one in which the environment is decent and humane. In practical terms, these features can be measured by the quality of human relationships between the prisoners who live there, the staff who work there and anyone who comes to visit for any reason.
- The best managed prison systems are likely to be those which have a clear understanding of their objectives, mission and values."

Prison organisational development is a learning process with the principles: 'Person at the centre' (Inmates and staff) and a created 'Common coordinated Mission' to clarify expectations, roles, tasks and responsibilities of each member of the personnel. Create a communication and collaboration culture as well as prison policies to motivate inmates towards learning. Good Practice Models are made by the measures in Malta and by the experiences in Germany.

The institutional framework needs to be reflected - Equal payment of all activities (education, therapy, vocational training, work) motivates all female inmates in all activities.

Since almost all inmates eventually will re-enter into society, the prisons should fulfil the duty to protect **society and function as a learning institution.**

Principle 6: Transition management as the central focus

Enabling inmates to re-engage with the world outside; Ensuring continuity of support; Fostering cooperation among agencies and with civil society

"The preparation of female prisoners for release from prison by means of a wide-ranging relaxation and opening of detention conditions is being widely neglected." This is not justifiable in light of the low security risk that female prisoners present. Here as well the Good Practice Model: Activity Centre "Monikko".

Principle 5: Equal importance of security and education

Boosting the role of education and training; Addressing over-emphasis on security wherever possible

"The current structure of correctional facilities over-estimates safety and security needs. Women's correctional facilities could be managed „predominantly in free forms." (The type of crime, the length of the sentences, the number of previous sentences, limited places in open prisons for female inmates).

- Reflections are necessary towards this security aspect by a low number of female inmates and restricted finances in all countries. A good practice towards the opening for society can perhaps give the Finnish example: Activity Centre "Monikko"
- FEFI-contributions show this very eloquently. If possible we should think less about security and more about the rehabilitation process of the prisoners after the end of the sentence. That means more emphasis on educational training and personal development during the sentence.

Principle 7: Dismantling the „rhetoric-reality divide"

Ensuring the necessary budget and workforce for creating a positive prison environment and successful release

There is only one thing in the long run more expensive than education: no education"

(John F. Kennedy)

CONTACT THE PARTNERS

**Zentrum für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung (DE)
FEFI Project Leader**

www.zww.uni-mainz.de
thimm@zww.uni-mainz.de

**Ministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz,
Rheinland-Pfalz (DE)**

Prison of Zweibrücken

anja.rohr@vollzug.mjv.rlp.de

Prison of Rohrbach

daniela.bergmann@vollzug.mjv.rlp.de

Tmima Filakon Kyprou (CY)

Cyprus Prison Department

dirsecretary@prisons.mjpo.gov.cy
o_tassos@hotmail.com

Hämeenlinnan Vankila (FI)

www.rikosseuraamus.fi
ulla.sundholm@om.fi

Ufficio di Esecuzione Penale Esterna (IT)

uepe.trapani@giustizia.it

GIP FCIP Limoges (FR)

www.reseaugretalimousin.com
dominique.antony@cegetel.net

University of Malta (MT)

www.um.edu.mt/criminology
sandra.scicluna@um.edu.mt

IZMIR Women Prison (TR)

www.izmirkkcik.adalet.gov.tr
berfu.altay@adalet.gov.tr

FOD Justitie, DG EPI (BE)

Lieve.Decaestecker@just.fgov.be
Bert.Vermeulen@just.fgov.be

Visit the Site:

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