

# RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

## Brussels: Prisons and Reintegration

The voices of those attending the seminar in their majority, demanded of the representatives of the Prison Institutions in attendance, one service above all others, that of social and work reintegration. The public and private organisations represented at the seminar (from Western, Eastern and Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East) formed the classical picture of the network of aid for substance abuse with legal and criminal justice problems: in-prison substitution programmes, outpatient programmes for prisoners on parole, etc. And within this framework, it seemed to us that the discourse and presence of organisations whose main programme is the therapeutic community, occupies a space of professionalisation and synergy with the other organisations, something that just a few years back would have been unimaginable.

Those attending who offer TCs demanded a place in the reintegration itinerary, offering an intermediate facility between prison and full reintegration into society. Their service is based on a residential programme used to complete stabilisation of the relationship between patients and their drugs of reference, whilst planning their return to the normalised citizen networks relating to work, health, education etc.

Another issue highlighted was the need to improve in-prison methadone substitution programmes, above all with reference to the consumption of illegal drugs by the inmate during treatment; as well as the improvement of facilities and greater hiring of qualified staff. They also observed the need to implement spaces to work on abstinence with inmates who do not want substitution; in other words, the creation of therapeutic communities within the prison, which would resolve the problems of consumption by inmates in treatment, because without protected spaces in the prison for them, giving up consumption is very difficult.

By way of a conclusion, looking at the medium to long term, we think that therapeutic communities could eventually sign agreements with the prison authorities that would be beneficial to both sides, as well as to the inmate and to society, as we often forget that prisoners will return to society once they have completed their sentence. It is necessary to take advantage of their time in prison to normalise the inmate to the maximum extent possible, investing in programmes and the personnel to carry them out; otherwise, we will be converting the prisons into quarries of society's enemies.

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