Sport in European Prisons

research team:

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exploratory study commissioned by EPAS

pictures: © De Rode Antraciet
research team

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    - Kristel Beyens

- **De Rode Antraciet** (Belgium)
  - Kris Hermans
  - Gino Campenaerts
aim and method

• to examine **how sport** is currently **structured** and **organised** in prison environments of the Council of Europe member states

• **online questionnaire**
  • developed by EPAS
  • delivered to member states:
    • Directors of Prison Administration and Probation
    • Members of the Council for Penological Co-operation
  • data analysed by a research team from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and De Rode Antraciet vzw
themes

- general data
- legislation
- sports facilities
- sports programme
- objectives/outcomes
- staff/guidance
- evaluation
- future
respondents (N=136 / 32 countries)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>senior management official (director, dept. head, ...)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prison officer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sport instructor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>head of rehabilitation/education department</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sport coordinator</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health/education teacher/coach</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juridical-Pedagogical officer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advisor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
geographical distribution

Main European regions
- Following actual state borders
- Following cultural proximities

- Northern Europe: 17.7%
- Western Europe: 22%
- Southeastern Europe: 31.6%
- Southern Europe: 16.2%
- Eastern Europe: 12.5%

Map based on documents of the institute.
Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (SIAGN)
data analysis

• descriptive statistics
• if relevant:
  • non-parametric statistics (chi-square, Kruskall Wallis or Mann Whitney test)
• independent variables:
  • geographical location
  • prison size
  • start of sports programme
  • ‘sports’ budget
RESULTS

1. General data
“How large is the population of the prison?”
“What is the percentage of female prisoners of the total prison population?”

- Less than 1%: 50%
- 1-24.99%: 43%
- More than 25%: 7%
“When did you start with a meaningful sports programme?”

- Before 1980: 21%
- 1980-1989: 10%
- 1990-1999: 19%
- 2000-2009: 35%
- Since 2010: 15%
“Do you have a special (yearly) budget for sport?”

“Special budget?”

- No: 77%
- Yes: 23%
“Do you have a special (yearly) budget for sport?”

“If yes, how much?”

- 36% for 1-4999 euro
- 32% for 5000-14999 euro
- 32% for more than 15000 euro
“Is sport part of a rehabilitation plan?”

76% Yes
24% No
RESULTS

2. Legislation
“What laws or decrees regulate sports provision in prisons?”

- national law or decree (65%)
- internal prison regulations (12%)
- no legal or other forms of regulation (7.5%)
RESULTS

3. Sports facilities
“Does the prison offer sports facilities?”

- Football: 70%
- Sporthall: 64%
- Fitness: 58%
- Basket: 58%
- Running: 30%
- Badminton: 29%
- Swimming: 3%
- Other: 46%
**“Does the prison offer sports facilities?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volleybal</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table tennis</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside court</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyvalent room</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“What are the conditions for the use of facilities?”

- Upon request: 81%
- Good behaviour: 39%
- Medical: 19%
- Obligation: 9%
- Other: 31%
“What are the conditions for the use of facilities?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of a larger programme</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending of the day/week schedule</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free access</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security reasons</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“How long can prisoners use the sports facilities per day?”

- < 30 min: 6%
- 30-60 min: 22%
- 60-90 min: 26%
- > 90 min: 45%
RESULTS

4. Sports offer
“Which sports disciplines are offered?”

Bar chart showing the percentage of students interested in various sports disciplines. The disciplines and their corresponding percentages are as follows:

- Table tennis: 79%
- Volleyball: 61%
- Basketball: 56%
- Badminton: 36%
- Athletics: 36%
- Table football: 34%
- Handball: 22%
- Cycling: 16%
- Tennis: 16%
- Boxing: 7%
- Rugby: 4%
- Judo: 2%
- Swimming: 2%
- Wrestling: 2%
- Other: 84%
Which sports disciplines are offered?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot-tennis</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“What are the percentage rates for female/male prisoners doing sport on regular basis (at least 30'/day)?”

Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Female Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Male Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Is the sports offer open to all prisoners?”

92% Yes
8% No
“Is the sports offer ... ?”

- Freely accessible: 49%
- Compulsory: 4%
- Voluntary: 62%
- Other: 21%
“Is the sports offer ... ?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On medical advise</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to a programme</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary by subscription</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited by capacities</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How is the sports programme offered?

- Guided: 49%
- Free access: 32%
- Competition (internal): 6%
- Competition (external): 1%
- Theoretical courses: 0%
- Other: 12%
“Have you identified specific target groups for the sports programme(s) offered?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with health problems</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general educ. programmes</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older inmate</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addict</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internees</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Are there specific rules of conduct for the prisoners who participate in sports?”

- No: 27%
- Yes: 73%
RESULTS

5. Objectives/outcomes
“Which objectives are pursued with the sports programme?”

- Inmate health: 88%
- Promote social skills: 72%
- Offer leisure time: 82%
- Prevent drug/alcohol addiction: 45%
- Other: 9%
“Which objectives are pursued with the sports programme?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive social-psychological outcomes (decrease aggressiveness;</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve mental health; sport as a tool for rehabilitation and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reintegration)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create positive prison climate (respect, discipline, ...)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy lifestyle</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create new interests and habits</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"How are these objectives achieved?"

- Using qualified staff: 67%
- Cooperation with outside sports organisations/local sport clubs: 53%
- Cooperation with local municipalities: 43%
- Outside funding for sports activities: 30%
- Follow up of sports programme with the outside world: 30%
- Cooperation with ministry responsible for sports: 24%
- Cooperation with ministry responsible for health: 16%
- Sports club membership: 13%
“How successful have the following objectives been achieved?”

- Prison climate
- Using qualified staff
- Health
- Social skills
- Cooperation with sport organisations
- Prevent/reduct of drug addict
- Funding for sport
“Have you observed any negative impact regarding sports and inmates?”

88% No
12% Yes
**Have you observed any negative impact regarding sports and inmates?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If yes, which?</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of anabolic steroids</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports can turn into a negative &quot;addiction&quot;</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure, bullying, mobbing,...</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How has sport impacted the behaviour of prisoners?

- More tolerant climate
- Better rehabilitation
- Improved health
- Acceptance of rules
- Fairplay
- Tolerance
- Endurance
- Discipline
- Team spirit
- Self-control
- Self-conscience
- Leadership

- Important
- Neutral
- Not important
RESULTS

6. Staff/guidance
“How many staff is involved in the provision of the sports offer?”

- Less than 1: 13%
- Between 1 and 2: 37%
- Between 3 and 10: 33%
- More than 10: 17%
“Is a person, task force or organisation directly responsible for designing a policy regarding sport in prison?”
“Who is guiding the sports programme?”

- Inmate: 4.38%
- Instructor (coach): 27.74%
- Prison officer: 50.36%
- Other: 14.60%
“Does your prison cooperate with sports clubs?”

48% Yes

52% No
RESULTS

7. Evaluation
“Do you evaluate the sports programme?”

- No: 42%
- Yes: 58%
“If yes, which main results did these evaluations deliver?”

- positive (79.8%)
- negative (2.9%)
- needs (17.3)
positive results (%)

- Positive socio-psychological outcomes among inmates 32.6
- Better prison climate in general 28.9
- Better sports programme 13.2
- More sports involvement among inmates 10.8
- Positive in general 8.4
- Better community relations 4.8
### negative results / needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>negative results</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• There are waiting lists</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inmates seem quite set in their ways and not willing to try out new things</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>needs</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Adaptation of the sports programme</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More support (professional - financial – sports technical)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“How do you evaluate the quantity of the sports infrastructure?”

- Negative: 29%
- Neutral: 19%
- Positive: 52%
“How do you evaluate the quantity of the sports infrastructure?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sports infrastructure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient equipment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited financial resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking continued improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“How do you evaluate the quality of the sports infrastructure?”

- Negative: 31%
- Neutral: 16%
- Positive: 52%
“How do you evaluate the quality of the sports infrastructure?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient facilities (old, not enough, not very sustainable, bad condition)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Is the sports offer valued by the staff in the prison system in general?"

- Yes: 79%
- No: 21%
“Is the sports offer valued by the prisoners in the prison system in general?”

- No: 8%
- Yes: 92%
RESULTS

8. Future
“How do you intend to further develop the sports activities in your prison?”

- Increase sport offer: 78% (Priority), 16% (No-priority)
- Improve facilities: 78% (Priority), 15% (No-priority)
- Diversify sport disciplines: 70% (Priority), 19% (No-priority)
- Increase hours of physical activity: 68% (Priority), 22% (No-priority)
- Improve quality of sport trainers: 56% (Priority), 33% (No-priority)
“What are the success factors for sports programmes in prison?”

[Bar chart showing percentages for various factors such as Sports facilities, Sports equipment, Accessibility (easy), Qualified staff, Guided programme, and Targeted programme.]

- **Agree**
- **Neutral**
- **Disagree**
- **Don’t know**
“Do you know any good practices of sports offers within the penitentiary system?”

- 22.1% referred to good practices primarily regarding specific competitions or events for inmates (and also staff) and collaboration with external partners
“Do you have any recommendations for policy makers with regard to sport in prisons?”

- 49 recommendations were formulated

  ➔ mostly about **investments** in general (30.6%); sports infrastructure/equipment (30.6%) and qualified staff (18.4%)
Contact

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(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

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Marc.Theeboom@vub.ac.be