



Prison Chaplaincy in Europe Concerns & Challenges

1

R. van Eijk - Prison Chaplaincy Europe - Rome November 2019

Prison population

2

Background and composition of prison population reveal what is or should be the social and economic agenda



Crimes leading to imprisonment

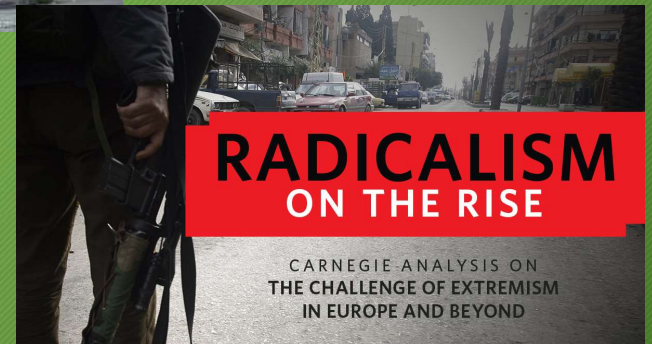
3

Crime (1 september 2016)	%
Theft	18,9
Drugs	17,5
Robbery	12,6
Homicide ()inc. attempts	12,1
Assault & battery	8,3
Rape	4,4
Economic & financial offenses	3,3
Road traffic Offenses	2,6
Other sexual offenses	2,5
Rest	15,4
Source: Council of Europe March 2018	

Radicalism

4

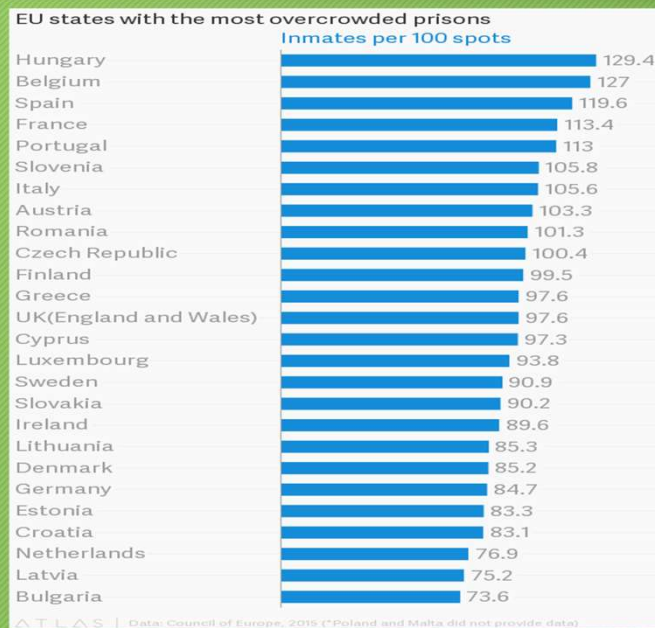
The concern to balance the fight against radicalization and terrorism and at the same time to see after human dignity and humane treatment



Overcrowding

5

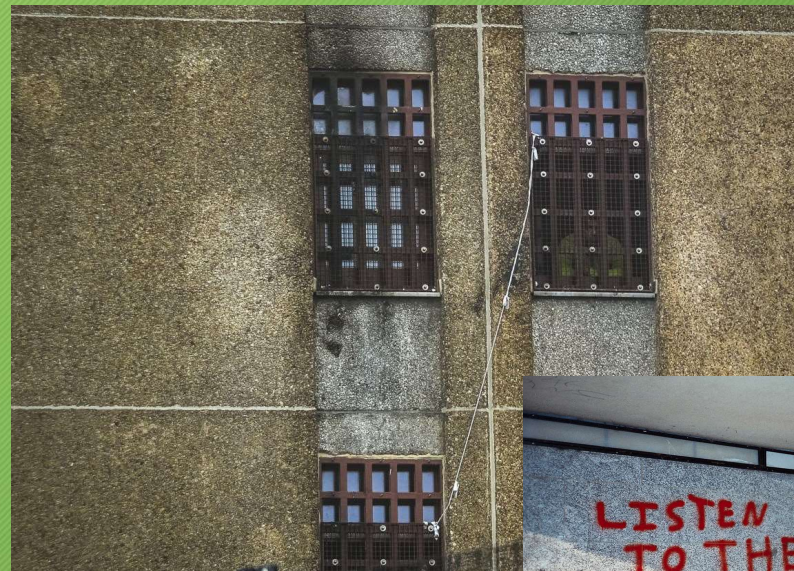
Serious threat
to health and
safety of
inmates and
staff, and the
risk of
radicalization.



Lack of attention and resources

6

prisons are the
last matter of
concern in
society and
politics



R. van Eijk - Prison Chaplaincy Europe - Rome November 2019

Stigmatisation

7

...destroying the future
of many: loosing work,
housing and social ties



Drugs and organized crime

8

Drugs crime destroys communities, but drugs addicts are better helped to be seen as patients than as criminals.



Migration and human trafficking

9

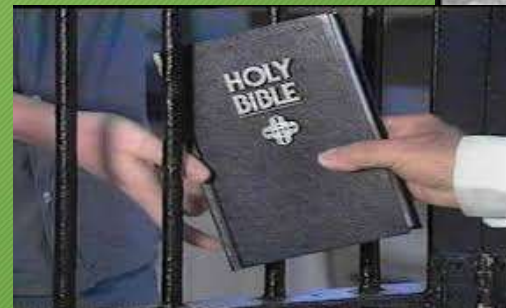
- The ignorance of migration reasons to leave their countries and families is a denial of global problems like the ecological crisis, poverty and the lack of political and social justice.



Lip service

10

- Prison chaplaincy is in many countries in majority done by lay people and not by clergy: why wasting your time on these people?



R. van Eijk - Prison Chaplaincy Europe - Rome November 2019

Need for recognition and clear structures

11

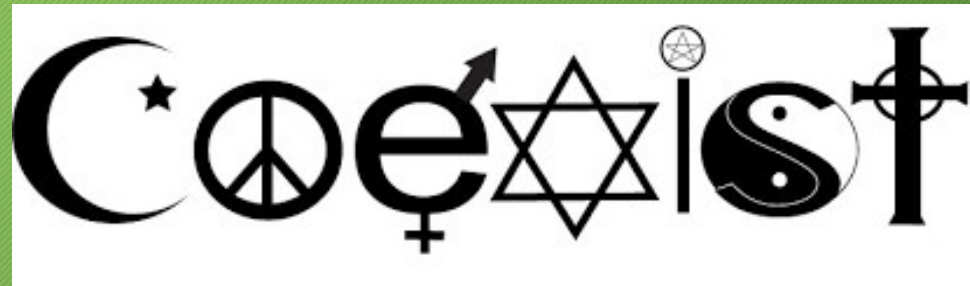
Prison chaplaincy should be recognized as core business and as a special ministry by the church and should be well structured



Respecting religious freedom and diversity

12

How to reach the point
that every inmate
receives the spiritual
care (s)he wants?



Always a prophetic aspect

13

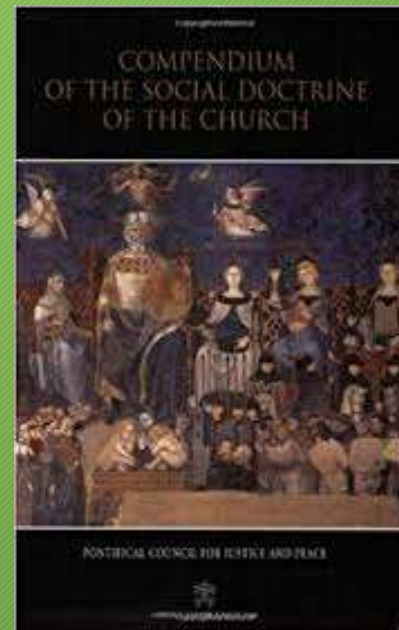
there is always
a prophetic aspect involved
in this ministry



Social teaching

14

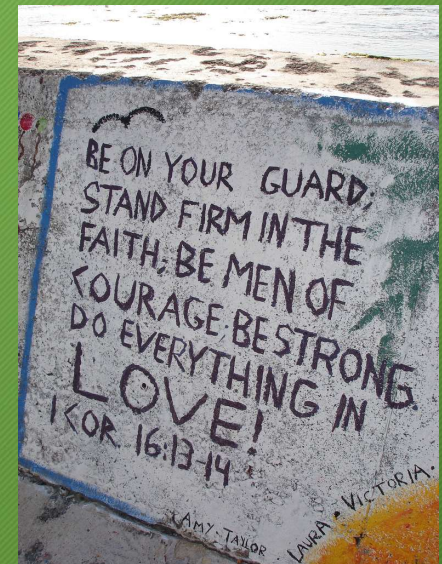
a consistent and balanced vision
in the catholic social doctrine
between retributive and
restorative justice



Request

15

A papal publication on justice, imprisonment, punishment and prison chaplaincy;
Promotion of theological reflection and teaching on justice



And why all this...?

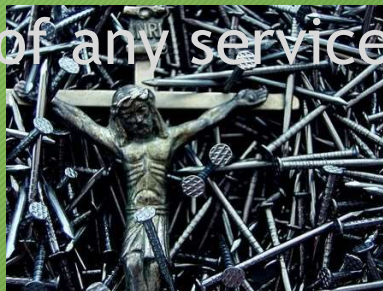
16

“It is not that we find God there;
it is that God finds us there.
That is where our faith is nurtured
and bears fruit.

There where we expect to meet monsters,
we meet God instead.

The opportunity to serve God
lies there among the prisoners
who have been reckoned
to be least deserving of any service at all.”

L. Griffith



“...we believe that God is the
architect of creation and we
are instruments in his hands so
that all men and women may
be respected in their dignity
and rights, and able to fulfil
themselves as individuals.”

Pope Francis

