

Rome, 26 march 2020

Please find below some recent provisions adopted in the Italian penitentiary system concerning:

- a) Receiving parcels and packages from outside
- b) Assignment of an inmate if suspected to be affected from Coronavirus
- c) Family visits and effective communication

A) *Parcels from outside prisons*

The Italian law provides for the possibility for inmates to receive parcels from outside the prison. The following instructions are issued upon the COVID-19 emergency:

- *Despite parcels are a sign of sympathy and affection to inmates by their family, the exceptional rules currently in force restrict the possibility to move around the national territory, and thus cancel the possibility to hand over parcels in person and strongly limit the possibility to have parcels delivered by couriers.*
- *In compliance with the provisions of WHO, the staff receiving and/or checking parcels shall wear personal protective equipment such as disposable mask and gloves and shall wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap or with disinfectant gel after handling the parcel.*
- *During the parcel check, the worker shall avoid to touch his/her mouth, nose or eyes with his/her hands.*
- *To disinfect surfaces such plastic, metal or glass, the staff shall use disinfectants containing 75% alcohol (ethanol) or chlorine-base 1% disinfectants.*
- *As for the items contained in the parcel, it is preferable to send new, sealed clothes. Where the family sends the clothes of an inmate back to him/her after washing, the items can be delivered to the recipient only if they are in good hygiene conditions.*
- *The prisoners shall be immediately informed so that they invite their families to ensure that the parcels content is prepared very scrupulously and in compliance with the hygiene recommendations issued to the community and so that they explain to their families that those provisions are issued to protect the inmate's health.*
- *Upon reception, the content of the parcel will be split into smaller bags and handed over to the prisoner, in order to avoid the introduction into the prison of any packaging."*

B) Assignment of an inmate if suspected to be affected from Coronavirus. Tests upon transfer

On 21 March 2020, an amendment was introduced based on his previous provision concerning the management of prisoners:

- *Where an inmate, already in the prison, shows symptoms compatible with SARS-CoV 2, **he will be transferred to a dedicated room**, previously identified by the prison governor. Here, the medical doctor shall visit him. If there are specific elements requiring to take a swab sample from the subject, this procedure shall be carried out by the Local Healthcare Agency medical or nursing staff, who will access the prison and go in the space where the inmate is confined to take his/her sample.*
- *Where a prisoner who is to be transferred to another prison needs to undergo a swab sample test, it will be necessary to wait until the negative outcome of said test, before transferring him/her.*

C) Family visits, compensations and effective communication

On 21 March 2020, a provision was issued on the topic of family visits and their compensation with other items.

- *The stop to family visits in all our prisons is based on the Laws by decree approved by the Government last week, providing strong restrictions to the movement of the national population.*
- *It is crucial to carefully and thoroughly inform the prison population about the meaning and the aim of the provisions adopted so far, with particular emphasis on the protection of health and safety of both inmates and prison staff.*
- *It is of utmost importance, in order to lessen tensions and discontent, to highlight the need to protect the inmates' health, the health of their families and of the whole community.*
- *For the best communication of what above to the prisoners, the prison governors may avail themselves of Healthcare Services specialists as well as of the Ombudspersons for prisoners' rights, at local and national level.*

While informing inmates of the necessary limitations of visits, the following compensation shall be highlighted:

- *The procurement of more than 1,600 mobile phones and the next purchase of 1,600 more by the Penitentiary Administration. The remote conversation between*

inmates and their relatives will be made through Skype video-connection as well as through video-calls between mobile phones.

- The possibility to have video talks free of charge for all inmates, even belonging to High Security category.
- The increase in the telephone calls, beyond the limits set by the legislation currently in force, free of charge for all inmates.
- The possibility to make telephone calls also to mobile phone numbers.
- The use of the prison laundry service without expenses for prisoners
- The possibility for inmates to receive bank transfers online.
- The increase in the limits of expenses for all inmates.

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