

Provisions of the Hungarian Prison Service

As a primary measure, an operative body (hereinafter: the Body) was established on March 5, 2020, with the involvement of the relevant field leaders of the Hungarian Prison Service Headquarters. The task of the Body is to continuously coordinate the work of the prison institutions, to evaluate and analyze the data received from the institutions, to provide guidelines for the prevention of the virus infection, for its minimization and for its elimination as soon as possible.

The entire staff was informed in connection with the measures of action issued by the National Center for Public Health. Contact persons have been appointed to liaise with the public health department of the territorially competent district and county government office, as well as with the city medical service and the local bodies of the National Ambulance Service.

In order to carry out its tasks as efficiently as possible, the Body has issued action plans at local and central level five times since 05 March 2020. To support the prison institutions, the Body also publishes professional protocols and guidelines for the prevention of viral infections, as well as measures to be taken in the event of occurrence.

In addition, measures have been taken to procure sufficient quantities of skin and surface disinfectants available in the prison institutions, the supply shall be enough for at least 30 days. Instructions on the proper use of these disinfectants were made. In terms of staff, 28 008 medical mouth masks, 350 FFP2 masks, 488 protective clothing, 224 non-contact thermometers, and 3 600 rubber gloves were distributed. For the inmates 10 000 textile masks were distributed. For prevention, continuous surface and device disinfection has been ordered at least twice a day.

The bug-out bag of the staff has been surveyed, and the notification system of the Hungarian Prison Service HQ and prison institutions is constantly monitored on a monthly basis. We assessed the availability of personal protective equipment as well as protective equipment for the prison institutions. Procurement of protective equipment is ongoing and equipment has been allocated to prison institutions five times so far.

Staff rooms and rooms for separation/confinement of staff have been designated and renovated where necessary, and measures have been taken to organize the possible alimentation of staff. In addition, permits of visit have been revoked concerning local and foreign delegations, vocational schools and students; furthermore visits to the institutes were suspended for an indefinite time.

Procedures have been established for cases of suspected infection within the territory of the prison institutions; mobilization reserve kits have been checked. The supply is continuous in case of medication, as well as the consumables needed to operate the medical and emergency devices.

Non-contact thermometers are in mandatory use at the entry points of the prison institutes, for which we conducted procurement three times. In order to ensure the safe and fast reception and delivery of goods, pick-up and drop-off points have been set up in the area of the prison institutes, and a pick-up time has been defined.

We have checked our possibilities on the minimum number of staff required to maintain the lawful and proper functioning of prisons. Also, we continuously monitor the situation of our staff members with children.

National transports of detainees are carried out only on the basis of a specific provision, with a minimum number of detainees and transport vehicles. The escorts to public authorities take place in the form of remote hearings, after consultation with the National Office for Judiciary and the Office of the Prosecutor General.

Prisoners are regularly informed about contact rules, changes in contact forms and the current epidemiological situation through individual and small group sessions, closed-circuit television broadcasts, prison radio and on bulletin boards. In order to achieve this, all the cells that house detainees were equipped with televisions. The information is continuously provided to the contact persons through the central website of the Hungarian Prison Service and through the local websites of the prisons, as well as through a newly set up Call Center.

In order to fully inform those detained, who are placed in reintegration custody, prison institutions took action through probation officers. The newly admitted prisoners are confined and monitored for 14 days from the date of admission. Temporary leaves were suspended indefinitely. Visits are carried out in complete isolation of detainees and visitors, with the help of inside-telephones. Occasionally, detainees may receive a maximum of two visitors, excluding children and relatives over the age of 60.

The system of employment of prisoners has been revised with regards to the necessity of the work carried out: in some employment facilities the processes must be ensured continuously, but in several areas work can be reduced or possibly terminated.

The mental care, education and vocational training of prisoners are carried out within the prisons but without the presence of external civilians. Practical trainings are suspended, education is conducted with the use of written materials, DVD recordings and sound recordings. Programs involving larger groups of prisoners, such as staying in the open air, eating out, and employment, will be carried out in smaller groups. On individual request of the detainee, the use of the gym is provided free of charge. Duration of telephone call is increased by 15 minutes. Upon request and individual assessment for detainees who do not have an in-prison mobile phone, the Hungarian Prison Service will provide the opportunity to make telephone calls at its own expense for a period of 3x5 minutes per month. Contact persons are authorized to order 2 packages per month from the prisons' webshop page for the inmates.

It is a priority task for psychologists to prevent and manage staff and inmate crises, with the necessary therapeutic intervention.

The Central Hospital of the Hungarian Prison Service (herein after: Hospital) is prepared for the admittance of inmates who may develop any symptoms of the disease. As of 2nd April, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer of State has designated the Hospital to perform this task. In the event of an epidemic lockdown, contact can only be made by telephone, Skype or mail correspondence, for which the prisons will provide letter, paper, envelopes and stamps free of charge for the detainees with, if necessary.