

SUMMARY

EPTA Cross-Border Training: Practical Crisis Management for Prison Managers

17–18 June 2026
Kalisz, Poland

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

- From 16–18 June, the European Penitentiary Training Academies (EPTA) network had the pleasure of organising the Cross-Border Training on Practical Crisis Management for Prison Managers, hosted and facilitated by the University of Justice in Kalisz, Poland. The two-day programme brought together representatives from ten countries— the Netherlands, Spain, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Romania, and Croatia—creating a diverse and collaborative environment for learning, exchange, and hands-on practice.

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

- ~23 participants from 10 European countries**
- The participant group represented a diverse mix of senior leaders, managers, specialists, and frontline professionals from correctional and security services. It included prison officers, trainers, psychologists, operational managers, and senior decision-makers, such as governors, deputy directors, heads of departments, and security managers, reflecting a broad range of expertise and responsibilities across the sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to the University of Justice for hosting the training and for their professionalism, expertise, and warm hospitality throughout the event. The EPTA Cross-Border Training in Kalisz provided an invaluable opportunity for international cooperation and knowledge exchange.



Programme Overview

- The training opened with welcoming remarks from Rector-Commander Michał Sopiński, who highlighted the importance of international cooperation and the continuous development of crisis-management competencies within prison services. His introduction set the tone for a programme designed to combine academic insight with practical, scenario-based learning.
- The first day featured two expert lectures that provided a strong theoretical foundation. Agnieszka Nowigrodzka, delivered an in-depth session on the psychological impact of highly stressful situations on frontline prison staff. She explored the mechanisms of stress, its effects on decision-making, and evidence-based strategies for managing pressure in crisis environments. This was followed by a lecture from Vice-Rector Katarzyna Adamiak, who examined leadership in crisis contexts, emphasising the role of communication, responsibility, and adaptive decision-making in maintaining operational stability.
- In a complementary workshop, Iwona Dudziuk guided participants through crisis-scenario exercises focused on both prison operations and training academy environments. Through group analysis and structured discussion, participants explored how different types of crises unfold, how they can be mitigated, and which response strategies are most effective in maintaining safety and order.



Practical Crisis Simulation

- A key highlight of the programme was the practical training conducted at the Former Prison in Kalisz. Under the guidance of Michał Łacny and Grzegorz Kostrya, participants were immersed in a simulated hostage situation requiring them to assess risks, coordinate actions, and execute an intervention.
- This hands-on exercise allowed participants to apply the principles discussed earlier in the programme, reinforcing the importance of teamwork, communication, and rapid situational assessment in high-pressure environments. The realism of the setting and the intensity of the scenario made this component particularly impactful.
- During the second day, the participants received a presentation of service weapons and equipment used within the Polish prison system, offering participants a closer look at the tools and technologies that support crisis-response operations.
- This was followed by an engaging workshop led by Maja Zawadzka, who introduced communication techniques and psychological interventions used to support prison staff affected by trauma. Her session underscored the importance of post-incident care and the long-term well-being of personnel exposed to critical events.



ABOUT EUROPRIS

The European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) is a membership association founded in 2011. The initiative to establish EuroPris was taken during the Swedish EU Presidency in 2009 and was brought forward by the European countries of the International Roundtable for Correctional Excellence.

Membership is open to those European national Prison and Correctional Administrations who are able and willing to support the agreed aims and objectives of EuroPris. Public institutions or organisations in the Council of Europe region, which provide prison or correctional services on a legal or statutory basis can become members of EuroPris.

EuroPris brings together practitioners in the prisons' arena with the specific intention of promoting ethical and rights-based imprisonment, exchanging information and providing expert assistance to support this agenda. The organisation exists to improve cooperation among European Prison and Correctional Services, to improve the lives of prisoners and their families, enhancing public safety and security; reducing re-offending; and advancing professionalism in the prisons' field.



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