



## Press Release

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# Council of Europe anti-torture Committee publishes report on Ireland

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Strasbourg, 10.02.2011 – The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has today published a [report](#) on its fifth periodic visit to Ireland, which took place from 25 January to 5 February 2010, together with the [response](#) of the Irish Government. Both documents have been made public at the request of the Irish authorities.

In the course of the visit, the CPT reviewed the treatment of people detained by the Irish police, the Garda Síochána. It also examined the treatment of inmates and conditions of detention in a number of prisons, as well as visiting three psychiatric hospitals, and an institution for persons with intellectual disabilities.

The information gathered in the course of the 2010 visit indicates that progress continues to be made in reducing ill-treatment by police officers; nevertheless, the persistence of some allegations makes clear that the Irish authorities must remain vigilant. The CPT recommends that senior police officers remind their subordinates at regular intervals that the ill-treatment of detained persons is not acceptable and will be the subject of severe sanctions.

As regards prisons, the CPT notes that most inmates interviewed stated that they were treated correctly by prison officers; however, a number of allegations of ill-treatment were received. The Committee stresses that resolute action by senior managers is essential to combat ill-treatment, as recognised in a policy document on the investigation of Prison Complaints issued at the beginning of 2010. In the light of its findings, the CPT also expresses serious concern about the continuing high level of inter-prisoner violence at Mountjoy Prison; the Committee recommends that the Irish authorities intensify their efforts to tackle this phenomenon.

A series of concerns relating to the provision of healthcare at Cork, Midlands and Mountjoy Prisons are raised in the report, including as regards the administration of methadone and the prescription of medication. The CPT also criticises the use of special observation cells and encourages the authorities to continue to improve access to psychiatric care in prisons. More generally, the CPT observes that several of the prisons visited remained overcrowded with poor living conditions, and that they offered only a limited regime for prisoners. Recommendations are also made in relation to the disciplinary process, complaints procedures and contacts with the outside world.

In the two psychiatric hospitals of St. Brendan's (Dublin) and St Ita's (Portlaine), and St. Joseph's Intellectual disability service (Portlaine), the CPT found a significant level of violence, both between patients and directed towards staff, as well as poor living conditions for patients. The CPT also expresses concern as regards the understaffing in all three institutions. Further, the Irish authorities are urged to make progress in adopting a new Mental Capacity Bill in order to replace the outdated 1871 Lunacy Regulation (Ireland) Act.

As regards the Central Mental Hospital in the Dundrum area of Dublin, the CPT notes positive developments concerning the treatment of patients and staffing levels.

In their response, the Irish authorities provide information on the steps being taken to address the issues raised by the CPT. In particular, they acknowledge the rapidly expanding prison population and the subsequent challenges while outlining various measures being taken to redress the situation. Reference is also made to a number of

reviews in the areas of health, complaints procedures and the use of special observation cells. As regards mental health institutions and institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities, the authorities refer to the recruitment of additional staff and investments in both new and existing infrastructures.

The [report](#) and [response](#) are available in English on the CPT's website: <http://www.cpt.coe.int>

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