



**Joint Project between  
the European Union and the Council of Europe**

**“Efficient Prison Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**

**Conference: ‘Prison Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the way ahead’**  
**21 September 2010**

**Conclusions**

There are still poor prison conditions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and this project will not, of itself, make them immediately better. What is done, however is to raise awareness amongst key actors about what *could* be done. Not all improvements require additional resources. For example, a clear mission statement or vision of *what prisons in BiH are for*, together with related strategic objectives would be an important step. This should lead to a holistic and joined-up approach. These steps have been undertaken for Community Sanctions by the relevant working group and the high level objectives could be similar as far as prisons are concerned.

This is an important step as all further development should be linked to achievement of these strategic objectives. BiH will undoubtedly receive further development funding for prisons and community sanctions in due course and will commit some national resources. Work should begin now on identifying the further project work needed in key areas such as security, incident management, methodological improvements ( eg assessments of likelihood of harm / risk of re-offending ) categorisation and allocation of prisoners, education and training facilities, early conditional release processes etc. In addition there is a pressing need to improve the quality of management and to introduce systematic staff development (training, appraisal etc). If this planning is undertaken it will mean that the right programmes will be funded. (The alternative is that when funds become available they will be programmed unsystematically).

Prison reform ( including community sanctions) cannot be successful unless there is a discourse about wider criminal justice reform. There is a pressing need to improve the information flow between police, courts, prosecutors etc. In addition any proposed changes to the Penal Code require simultaneous attention to the criminal procedure code and to the law on the execution of penalties. Without this attention to detail the policy objectives can be frustrated by technical legal obstacles.

This was a successful final conference which could provide the momentum for successful action on prison reform. The six strands of work in this project have all produced good outcomes and groups of committed stakeholders.

From the statements made at the conference and the hard work and commitment in all the working groups, there is clearly a willingness to embrace reform amongst key officials at entity and state level.

However the political context clearly remains as the major challenge. Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot have a modern European prison system that provides safe, effective punishment of offenders and the co-ordinated re-integration of these offenders into society unless there is genuine co-operation and partnership across the whole country. This is the most important message from the international community to senior politicians and policy leaders.