

Press Release

Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 383a06

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

pressunit@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



46 members

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom

Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee publishes report on Hungary

Strasbourg, 29.06.2006 - The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) has published today the report on its third periodic visit to Hungary, which took place in March/April 2005. The report has been made public at the request of the Hungarian authorities, together with their response.

During the visit, the majority of the persons interviewed by the CPT's delegation indicated that they had been treated correctly when detained by the police. Nevertheless, a few allegations of physical ill-treatment by the police were received. To further strengthen the protection of persons detained by the police from ill-treatment, the Committee has recommended that they benefit from an effective right of access to a lawyer – including to free legal assistance – from the very outset of their deprivation of liberty. Moreover, in addition to being seen by police doctors, detained persons who present injuries and make allegations of ill-treatment should be seen by an outside medical expert and the case referred to a prosecutor.

Particular attention was paid during the visit to the holding of remand prisoners on police premises. Certain improvements were noted in this respect; nevertheless, the CPT has stressed that the medium-term objective should be to end completely the practice of accommodating remand prisoners in police establishments.

The majority of inmates at the prisons visited stated that staff treated them in a correct manner. However, at Kalocsa and Szeged prisons, relations between prisoners and staff – as well as among prisoners themselves – appeared to be rather tense, a situation compounded by serious overcrowding and low staffing levels. The CPT has recommended that the cell occupancy levels at the two establishments be reduced, the objective being to provide a minimum of 4 m² of living space per prisoner. Close attention was also given to prisoners placed under a special security regime (Grade 4) and the so-called "actual lifers" (prisoners who cannot be released except on compassionate grounds or by pardon). In this context, the Committee has stressed the need for refining the approach to risk assessment and reviewing the application of security measures.

The CPT also visited for the first time the Judicial and Observation Psychiatric Institute (IMEI) in Budapest, which is the only high-security psychiatric hospital in Hungary. No allegations of ill-treatment were received and patients' living conditions were found to be, on the whole, adequate. However, the Committee has reservations about the very location of IMEI, within the boundaries of a prison complex; it would be highly desirable for the institute to be re-located.

The CPT's visit report and the response of the Hungarian authorities are available on the Committee's website: <http://www.cpt.coe.int>

To receive our press releases by e-mail, contact : Council.of.Europe.Press@coe.int

A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 46 member states.