

***Welcome Speech for the Workshop
„Probation meets Prevention“
within the German Congress on Crime Prevention***

by

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Welcome Speech for the Workshop „Probation meets Prevention“ within the German Congress on Crime Prevention

Dear Participants,
dear Secretary General Leo Tigges,
dear Professor Kerner!

First of all I would like to thank the Mayor of Leipzig to let us use his town hall to start our workshop. It will be a pleasure to stay in this attractive city and I think the stimulating atmosphere will have a positive influence on our capacity for work.

It's a great honour for me and a pleasure as well to welcome you all to this workshop on behalf of the German Congress on Crime Prevention. And I take the chance to combine my welcome with my thanks to the CEP that this important internationally working organization has accepted the offer of the congress organizers to arrange this workshop.

The CEP believes that a society built on the principles of social inclusion provides the best protection from the harm and distress caused by crime. Preventing (re-)offending is an important concern of the CEP.

The desired effect of the German Congress on Crime Prevention is to present and strengthen crime prevention within a broad societal framework. Thus it contributes to crime reduction as well as to the prevention and the decrease of becoming a victim and of fear of crime.

The targets' intersection of the two associations suggested itself to organize a joint meeting to the benefits of the organizations and those who work in the field whether as professionals or as volunteers.

I am sure you will benefit not only from this workshop but also from the wide range of other interesting events of the German Prevention Day. For it belongs to the main objectives of the congress

- to present and exchange current and basic questions of crime prevention and its effectiveness
- to bring together partners within the field of crime prevention
- to function as a forum for the practice and to foster exchange of experiences
- to help to get into contact at the international level
- to discuss implementation strategies
- to develop recommendations for the practice, politics, administration and research.

Ladies and gentlemen, in my opinion probation means more than drawing up social investigation reports, supervision, help and control. An outstanding aim of probation is to prevent further crimes - with other words: Crime prevention!

My demand is: The probation officer should not restrict his efforts to the individual case. Probation officers are experts in analyzing criminal behavior. They know from their many supervised probationers the personal, social and economic circumstances which encourage the development of offending. The senior management of the probation services should give a certain priority that the great wealth of experience and knowledge of probation officers should be made useful beyond the case work. For instance:

- Probation officers could and should take on lessons in schools and youth centres. They can talk about the effects of a group dynamic process and how to escape a negative influence. They can describe the fate of addicts and show ways out of the dilemma. They can report on the positive influence of useful leisure activities. In short: They can inform, clarify and warn about offences and their consequences.
- Probation officers could and should advise local administration and parish councils how to handle social problems in the community; they know about the effects of bad housing and missing leisure facilities.
- Probation officers could and should contribute actively in local committees on crime prevention, making use of their professional expertise.
- Probation officers – as fighters for internal safety - could and should make convincing public relation work.
- I would like to add a last point: Probation manager and probation officer should be anxious to arouse the awareness of politicians that probation work is a part, an important part of crime prevention work, which is necessary for the protection of the public. This will make it easier for members of parliament to include in their political programme the demand for a high-quality probation service in satisfying quantity and they will be more likely prepared to spend money for it.

Ladies and gentlemen, please understand that I left the frame of a welcome address and started already to speak about the topic of our workshop. But probation and prevention are very close to my heart – particularly as I was president of the CEP for some years and since many years I am the chairman of the board of trustees in the German foundation for crime prevention and offenders' support, a foundation which is the organizing body of the congress in the background.

I wish you a successful workshop, pleasant days in Leipzig and before parting the satisfying feeling that you have made the right decision to join this meeting.

Jürgen Mutz

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