

COVID-19: WHAT IS HAPPENING IN EUROPEAN PRISONS?

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Portugal

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EUROPEAN
PRISON
OBSERVATORY



WHAT DOES THE "NEW NORMALITY" LOOK LIKE IN PRISON?

During the Covid-19 emergency, the European Prison Observatory has released [weekly updates](#) on the situation of prisons around Europe. Most European prison systems took several actions to face the virus, such as the introduction of restrictions to the entrance of family members, staff, and volunteers, decarceration measures to facilitate social distancing hence lowering the chances to spread the virus in prisons, or more phone and video calls to favour contacts with family members who were not allowed anymore to visit their detained relatives.

After the first emergency phase, restrictions started to be lifted. However, the situation is not back to a complete normality because the risk of contracting the virus is still very real; therefore, the partners of the European Prison Observatory have decided to publish new issues of the series [Covid-19: what is happening in European prisons?](#) to try to depict the "new normality" in prison systems around Europe.

The following information on prisons in **Portugal** has been collected in the last few weeks thanks to the work of EPO's member **ISCTE-INSTITUTO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA (ISCTE-IUL)** and is updated to 21 September 2020. The information published here and the upcoming updates will be available on the [European Prison Observatory website](#).

Other information can be found on the following websites.

The **Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)** has launched an [information hub](#) of news and resources, including on how different actors in the criminal justice, penitentiary, healthcare and oversight spaces are responding to the COVID-19 situation around the world.

The **European Organization of Prison and Correctional Services (EUOPRIS)** has set up a [webpage](#) where it gathers and shares all regulations/protocols/approaches European Prison Services or related organisations have drafted or taken in order to deal with the Covid-19 virus.

Prison Insider collected in a [webpage](#) the measures that countries around the world are taking to guarantee the safety of all prisoners and prison staff and the consequences of the pandemic on the living conditions in prisons.

World Prison Brief is compiling a [list](#) of news articles from around the world on COVID-19 and prisons which will be updated regularly.

Fair Trials has launched the [COVID-19 Justice project](#) to monitor how criminal justice systems are being affected by the pandemic and their response.

WHICH COVID-19 RULES STILL CURRENTLY APPLY TO PRISONS?

Weekend visits are provisionally suspended, with visits on weekdays prevailing (one visit of 30 minutes with a limited number of two people). Transfers of prisoners between prisons are suspended. The regime open to the outside in areas identified as at risk is suspended. Also prisoners who came from outside are put in quarantine. Although, an NGO (APAR) and inmates' families denounced the lack of care and protection in prisons, especially quarantine compliance. The release measures were suspended on May 29. For more information see [here](#) and [here](#)).

HAVE IN PERSON FAMILY VISITS RESUMED?

Yes, from June 15 till the end of the month visits were gradually resumed in all prisons with special rules and severe limitations. The state made an investment of 300.000€ for the [installation](#) of 675 visitation booths in prisons and in youth detention centers.

HAVE ACTIVITIES PREVIOUSLY CARRIED OUT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING RESUMED IN PERSON?

There were practically no activities carried out via videoconferencing.



ARE VOLUNTEERS AND/OR OTHER PERSONNEL (NOT BELONGING TO PRISON STAFF) ALLOWED TO ENTER IN PRISONS?

No.

IS TECHNOLOGY (E.G. PHONE CALLS, VIDEO CALLS, EMAILS) STILL USED TO MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH THE FAMILY AND/OR FOR OTHER ACTIVITIES? WHICH ONES?

Yes, detainees have the right to 3 phone calls but they have to pay for them and for video calls to contact family; however, the majority of prisons have no resources and conditions to permit video calls.

CURRENTLY ARE THERE INMATES POSITIVE TO COVID-19?

There is no official data about inmates or staff positive to Covid-19.

HOW MANY INMATES HAVE BEEN POSITIVE TO COVID-19 SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC?

In the last months DGRSP and DGS reported on social media more than 10 cases of inmates positive to covid-19. For more information see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#).

WHAT DOES THE "NEW NORMAL" LOOK LIKE IN PRISON?

The "new normal" is causing the deepening of isolation from outside, limits to visits and contact with families and friends, the suspension of education, cultural and artistic programs. There are also more difficulties to access information about what is happening inside prisons.



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