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70th Annual Delegate Conference of the POA (Ireland)

Galway, 27-28.04.2017

The Prison Officers' Association of Ireland discussed its matters of current interest at its 70th annual conference in Galway, a city on the country's west coast.



General Secretary John Clinton, together with Deputy General Secretary Jim Mitchell and Assistant General Secretaries Gabriel Keaveny and Karl Dalton gave a survey of the activities they were involved in in the past year.

Contacts with the members always come first. Thus the General Secretary regularly represented members who experienced difficulties in cases related to sick leave, equality complaints issued by prison officers, prisoner complaints, disciplinary cases and attended sessions of the National Civil Service Council and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Public Services Committee.

Following the introduction of a code of discipline in the general civil service last year, this code will also be introduced in the prison service this year. For duly informing its members, the trade union plans training sessions. As regards pensions, as is the case in many European countries, prison officers in Ireland are also faced with the increase of their retirement age.

The trade union keeps close contacts with colleagues from the United Kingdom and in particular Northern Ireland and Scotland on matters of common interest.

The trade union also attaches great importance to its relations with colleagues from European countries within the framework of the Justice Trade Council of Eurofedop.



Bert Van Caelenberg, Secretary General of Eurofedop, attended the conference. He held a speech in which he gave a report on the seminar which Eurofedop organised one month before in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The seminar's theme was the way in which current circumstances of terrorism and migration make European governments decide to reinforce their security policy and how this affects employees of public services.

For example, prison officers are confronted with the presence of radicalised Muslims in prisons and have to develop skills of properly engaging with such prisoners.