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MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
SECURITY AND EMPLOYMENT

MALTA

The Parliamentary Ombudsman
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Parliamentary Ombudsman
Judge Emeritus Joseph Zammit McKeon,

I refer to your letter dated 3rd April 2025.

In recent years, the Corradino Correctional Facility has been the focus of considerable investment and reform. The Grech Inquiry, which I appointed in the summer of 2021, was intended to serve as an additional catalyst for further reform. The board's composition was carefully selected to enable a comprehensive evaluation of the facility, and as acknowledged in your report, their work was of significant importance.

It is therefore important to note that while the Ombudsman's report was being compiled, further changes were underway, many of which were a direct result of the Grech Inquiry, which your report rightfully highlights.

Following the submission of the report in December 2021, an implementation programme was launched. Consequently, a substantial number of the recommendations have already been implemented, while others are currently being actioned, particularly those related to ongoing and evolving matters that require sustained effort.

The Ministry and the Correctional Services Agency administration have consistently collaborated with relevant institutions and key oversight mechanisms, including international bodies. This approach will continue to guide our way forward.

I also want to take this opportunity to underscore some of the work undertaken during the past years, which also addresses recommendations that are annexed to the own initiative report published on the 31st of January 2025.

Subsidiary Legislation 260.7 established the Commissioner for Prisoners Welfare and Development office. Experience shows that persons in prison refer to this office in great numbers, which shows trust in its independence. The monitoring board was also strengthened through the publication of L.N. 475 of 2021, and other changes suggested by the Grech inquiry also took place with the publication of L.N. 474 of 2021 and L.N. 49 of 2022.

An ongoing programme of infrastructure investment is underway, highlighting that such projects not only enhance the environment for persons in prison but also facilitate operational changes, including those suggested in the Grech inquiry. As a result of this a refurbishment programme and an admissions hub for new persons in prison was introduced, with a second one currently in progress. Refurbishment in other divisions is also occurring, with some divisions or cells completely demolished and being rebuilt. Visitors' areas are being refurbished to introduce facilities for family visits. A new facility outside the Corradino Facility was also opened to provide a space for persons in prison meeting their children outside the prison grounds. There are aspects that extend beyond the recommendations in the reports referenced in your report, such as the mother and child section introduced in the female section. Preparatory work is also underway to publish a tender for the rehabilitation project, with the excavation of the foundation area already completed.

Other ongoing projects include the extension of the kitchen, which replaces cells previously used. This project is also important for sustaining and providing more work opportunities for persons in prison. Nearly 300 individuals are currently engaged in work or education, and initiatives that promote and facilitate this are being sought and encouraged. The collaboration with Puttinu Cares to furnish the



London apartments and the periodic initiatives themed 'il-Forn tal-Ħabs' serve as a testament to the authorities' commitment to this aim.

A brand new learning hub has also been completed, featuring a training hall and a new library. This facility is used by persons in prison as well as for the continuous professional development and recruitment processes of employees. The prospectus for recruiting correctional officers has been updated to reflect the need to encompass both security and care. The presence of a psychologist during interviews has also been introduced, and additionally, staff are being trained in mental health first aid by the Richmond Foundation.

The CSA workforce nowadays includes 87 professionals who work as part of a multidisciplinary team focused on rehabilitation, and the need to address the psychological and medical needs of persons in prison. New services such as dentistry and ophthalmology were also introduced.

Rehabilitation work is also complemented with a strong working relationship with non-governmental organisations, and official and signed partnerships have also been established and are in place. In collaboration with RISE, a third halfway house will open in the coming months, marking it the first halfway house for women. Partnership agreements are also in place with Mid Dlam Għad-Dawl and the CSA also collaborates with Caritas, religious organisations, and other entities to provide professional assistance and ensure sensitiveness to the different realities of persons in prison.

While ensuring that we do not take any measures that could jeopardise security, the Ministry and the administration have been mindful of the need to provide regulated access to the media, which is facilitated through an established media protocol. Media representatives have visited the prison according to this protocol, and recently, both the Times of Malta and Newsbook visited the site, and the Times of Malta has already published its extensive report from within the prison. The

Parliamentary Social Committee and the Opposition spokesperson for home affairs were also among those visiting the prison.

While the above outlines some of the main initiatives and may also clarify certain points, given that the last few years have seen extensive changes, both the Ministry and the CSA administration remain committed to implementing further initiatives in the interest of the persons in prison, while always considering the victims of crime and society. The success of any initiative also depends on the workforce within the facility, where the government continues to invest with a second collective agreement for correctional officers and the first one for administrative staff, signed some weeks ago. I must state that I am grateful for all the work they do in an environment that is challenging.

Thus, your office may appreciate the significant transformation that has taken place at the CSA in recent years, turning a facility once plagued by widespread drug abuse and lacking effective rehabilitation, into a system genuinely focused on the rehabilitation of individuals.

The coming years will also bring new opportunities for rehabilitation and restorative justice, including the introduction of initiatives such as electronic monitoring, which is currently at committee stage in Parliament. Additionally, work has commenced on revising the parole system.

The Ministry and the CSA remain fully committed to continuing this important work and implementing the necessary reforms.



Byron Camilleri

Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment