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## **Russia's Membership in the International Project "Northern Dimension" in the Provision of Health Care to Prisoners**

**Key words:** *Northern Dimension, prison, medical care.*

**Annotation:** *The article contains the information about Russians membership in the international project "Northern Dimension" in the provision of health care to prisoners. Denotes the importance of the problem and its solutions. Given the information on the role of the Northern Dimension Partnership in solving the problems of public health in European Northern countries.*

Since 1999 in Europe the Northern Dimension Partnership is working. Initially, The Northern Dimension is a joint policy between EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland. Now it had in its structure also Belarus, US (observer status), Canada (observer status) and some other countries. The policy aims at providing a framework to: promote dialogue and concrete cooperation; strengthen stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation; promote economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe. The policy covers a broad geographic area, from the European Arctic and Sub-Arctic to the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, countries in the vicinity and from north-west Russia in the east, to Iceland and Greenland in the west.

The Northern Dimension has a wide range of areas: The environment, nuclear safety, health care, energy, transport, logistics, trade and investments, research, education and culture, etc. The Northern Dimension operates through four partnerships: partnership "Northern Dimension" in the field of public health and social well-being (NDPHS), Environmental partnership "Northern Dimension» (NDEP), a partnership "Northern Dimension" in the field of transport and logistics (NDPTL) and partnership "Northern Dimension" in the field of culture (NDPC).

"Northern Dimension" works closely with the regional councils and other organizations on the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and the Barents region.

"Northern Dimension" is aimed at strengthening dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its northern Member States, EEA countries (Norway and Iceland) and Russia. Also in the framework of the "Northern Dimension", prepared by the European Union on the initiative of Finland, in order to give dynamism to the development of Northern Europe, develop the joint project work in the north-western regions of Russia in the field of public health and social welfare.

The changes taking place in northern Europe, opening new perspectives for regional and interregional cooperation. Now the Russian North-West area became the neighboring regions of the EU. It has developed steadily and solve many complex problems. This also applies to the economic and social development, and the formation of market institutions, to overcome the development gap between the EU and North Russian regions.

In the documents of the EU emphasizes the role of the existing regional organizations in Northern Europe in the implementation of the concept of the "Northern Dimension". This, above all, the Arctic Council (AC), the Barents Euro-arctic Council (BEAC), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM).

Several groups of experts working in the framework of the NDPHS. There are: Expert Group on antimicrobial resistance (ARM), Expert Group on alcohol and substance abuse (ASA), Expert Group on HIV, TB and associated infection (HIV, TB & AI), Expert Group on Non-communicable Diseases related to lifestyles and Social and Work Environment (NCD), Expert Group on Occupation Safety and Health (OSH), Expert Group on Primary Health Care (PHC), Expert Group on Prison Health (PH). As an Associate Expert Group working as Expert Group on Baltic Sea Network on Occupation Safety and Health (BSN) and Expert Group eHealth for Region Network (eHfR).

In 2016 the Expert group on Prison Health as part of NDPHS begin to work. Its appearance is due to the fact of persons ill socially significant diseases concentration in the prison system. Expert group on Prison Health first meeting was held in Berlin (Germany) at 11th to 12th 2016.

It was attended by the representatives of Germany, Poland, Finland, Estonia, Norway. The problems for all Northern European countries are simple: infectious diseases, mental health and the health of staff are major problems as well as the lack of professional medical staff. For instance Russia currently has 600,000 prisoners and with that the 3rd largest population in prisons (1st USA, 2nd China, 3rd Russia). The country has been working on prisons health problems for the past 10 years but the coordination and management is difficult due to the great number of prisoners, the size of the country and its different time zones. Major problems are HIV, TB and mental health problems as well as co-infections. Also the staff is exposed to non-communicable diseases and mental health problems, burnouts.

The branch of Research Institute of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia operates in Russia more for 10 years. Its areas of research - medical problems of the penitentiary system. Such research organizations do not exist in all developed countries. Since 2016 the branch has been actively involved in the project of "Northern Dimension" in penal medicine.

One of the important problems of the penitentiary science is the study of a special group of prisoners - women. Globally, they account for between 2 and 9 percent of the size of prisonary population. In Europe, in prisons there are about 100 thousand women. In Russia in 2015, in prisons was contained more than 52 000 women.

Women prisoners usually are representatives of the marginalized strata of society, which are characterized by high levels of ill health and social distress. They have weaker physical, mental

and social health than the general population, there is a wide prevalence of socially significant diseases, smoking and the abuse of alcohol, drug addiction, mental disorders, risky type of behavior.

A large proportion of women are mothers-convicts, and the negative consequences of staying in prisons are experiencing not only they, but also their children. One of the complex issues -is how to optimally organize the accommodation of women with children in prison. Now the branch of Research Institute of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia is actively working to solve these problems.

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