

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0392/05
by Antonio De Poli (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Situation in the women's prison in Venice

On the Giudecca in Venice, Italy there is a prison for women and girls only. The building, which has not undergone maintenance for about ten years, is old and inadequate, particularly inside the cells, which do not ensure respect for human dignity.

The questioner, Antonio De Poli, has visited the prison in person and did not find it overcrowded. The introduction of experimental projects designed to educate the prisoners (such as running a pottery workshop, the cultivation of gardens producing vegetables, fruit and flowers and a laundry service, which should soon be expanded to take on work from outside) has produced excellent results, creating an atmosphere of cooperation and solidarity and allowing the prison authorities to pursue a similar policy.

The prisoners can keep their children in the prison with them until they are three years old and there are play areas for them. The children benefit from this, but improvements to the prison buildings would surely make the enforced stay of these children less unpleasant.

Can the Commission say whether it is aware of this situation? Does it consider that it can undertake to assess requirements and use the means at its disposal to make improvements to the women's prison on the Giudecca in Venice and to exploit its existing resources to greater advantage? Can it say whether any other prisons in Europe have adopted similar initiatives and, if so, take steps to extend this good practice to other Member States?