

PRISON WORKING
GROUP ROUNDTABLE

Olivia Nederlandt

Aurore Vanliefde

Charlotte
Mathiassen

Ana Ballesteros
Pena

MIXED-GENDER ASPECTS OF PRISON REGIMES

IN BELGIUM, SPAIN AND DENMARK

ESC Florence
September 7th, 3:30 to 4:45pm

01

Country- specific profiles



Belgium



Belgian prisons in numbers 2023

500 women

5% of the prison population

11.500

Detainees total

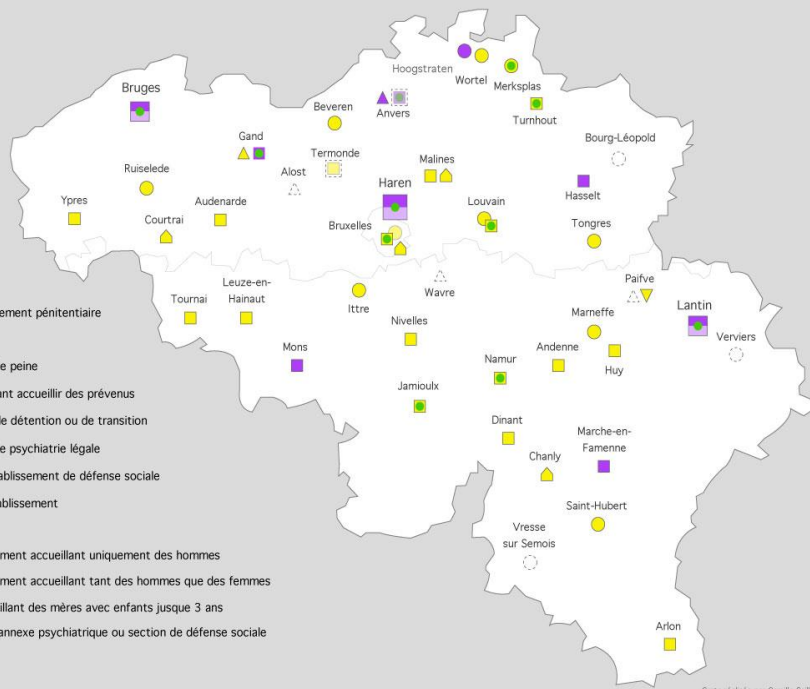
36

Prisons

10

Women's quarters
in mixed prisons

Mapping mixed-gender aspects of Belgian prisons



“Women’s quarters (WQ)” in mixed prisons → completely separated from men’s quarters

WQ in 10 prisons out of 36

- 24 prisons (remand + sentence)
(8 WQ : Bruges, Hasselt, Ghent, Antwerp, Lantin, Mons & Marche-en-Famenne)
- 10 prisons only sentenced detainees
(1 WQ : Hoogstraten)
- 2 detention houses (1 WQ : Kortrijk)

3 sizes of WQ

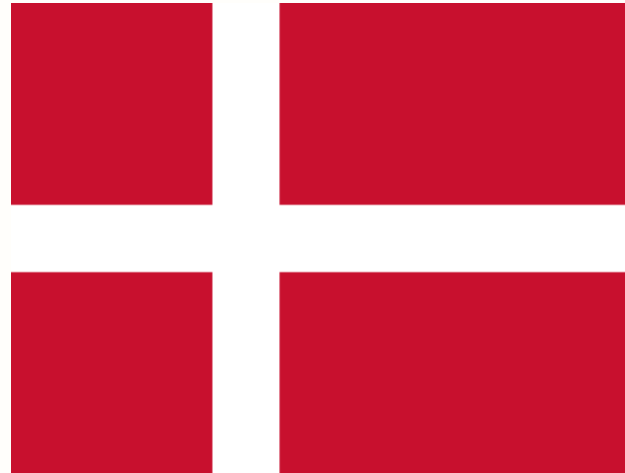
- 3 large (100 women in Haren & Bruges / 70 women in Lantin)
- 4 middle-sized (50 women: Hasselt, Ghent, Antwerp & Mons)
- 3 little (20 women: Marche, Hoogstraten & Kortrijk)

Mapping mixed-gender aspects of prisons

Organised by the prison	Not organised by the prison
Work (often because of the infrastructure: no workplace in the WQ) → in 3/10 prisons Activities (mainly education, sometimes leisure but rarely sport) (often for economic reasons because women are too few) → in 8/10 prisons Internal mail and visits → in the 10 prisons Prisoners consultation body → in 4/10 prisons Worship → in 1/10 prison Mixed-gender regime project in the prison of Marche since its opening in 2013: all activities, work... men and women together	Contacts in person: crossing paths when moving around (+/- numerous depending on location QF) or in certain places impossible to duplicate e.g. common visiting room, doctor's waiting room, lawyer's visiting room, shouting from the yard, use of punishment cells, etc. Contacts not in person: through intermediaries (e.g. surveillance staff) → In the 10 prisons

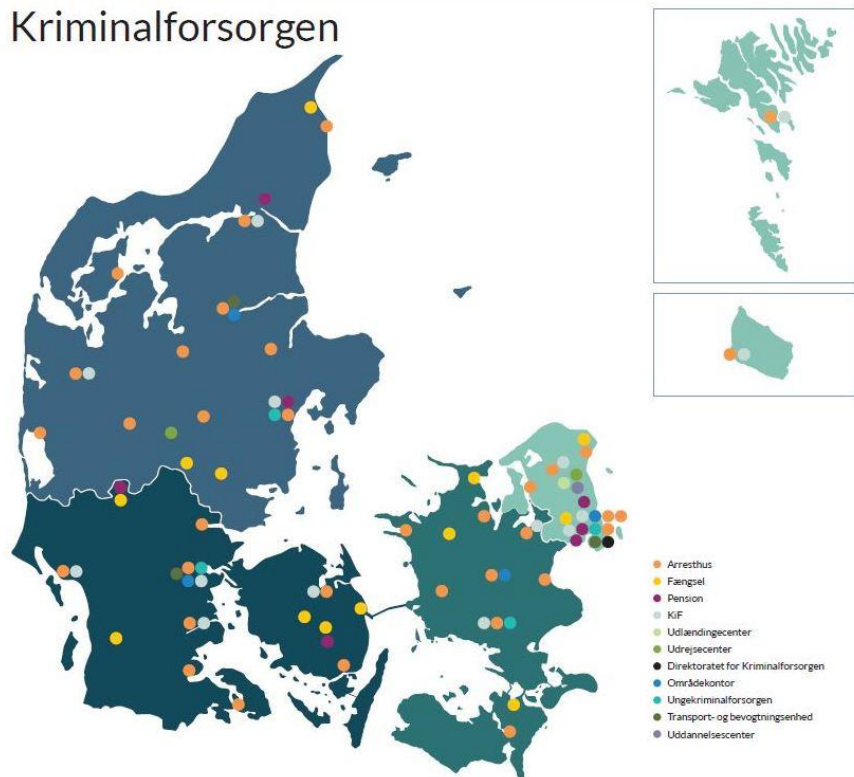


Denmark



Mapping mixed-gender aspects of Danish prisons

Kriminalforsorgen

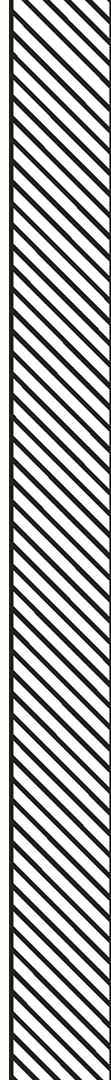


Overview of the Danish institutions and probations service

- 6 closed prisons
- 7 open prisons
- 35 local prisons
- 7 halfway houses (former pensions)
- 14 supervision- and monitoring units (KiF)
- 4 supervision units for juveniles
- 3 transportation units
- 2 departure centres (udrejsecentre)
- 1 institution for foreigners (Udlændingeinstitution)

Jyderup Prison

Women's
prison in
Denmark



Danish prisons in numbers 2021

Capacity

4.160

Closed places

1.069

Use

4.169

Open places

1.093

= 100,2%

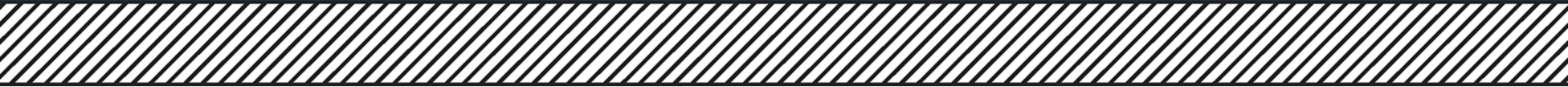
Custody

1.997

181 women

Marked gendered minority
4-5% over a certain period of time

Overview of the Danish criminal process



Different types of sentences:

Unuspended sentences

Prison sentence

- More than 5 years of prison = normally closed prison
- Less than 5 years of prison = normally open prison
- Less than 6 months of prison = possibility of electronic monitoring

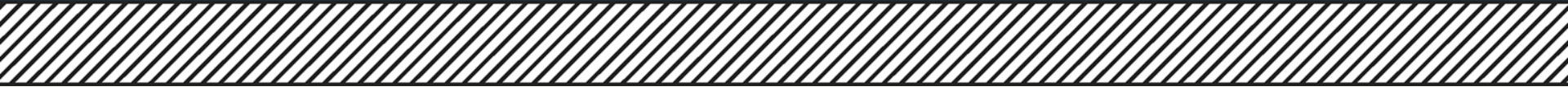
Suspended sentences

The offender is placed on probation under the supervision of The Prison and Probation Service, possibly with community service or treatment of abuse

Probation with a condition of treatment

Psychiatric treatment either hospitalized or outpatient

Historical overview of mixed-gender aspects in Danish prisons

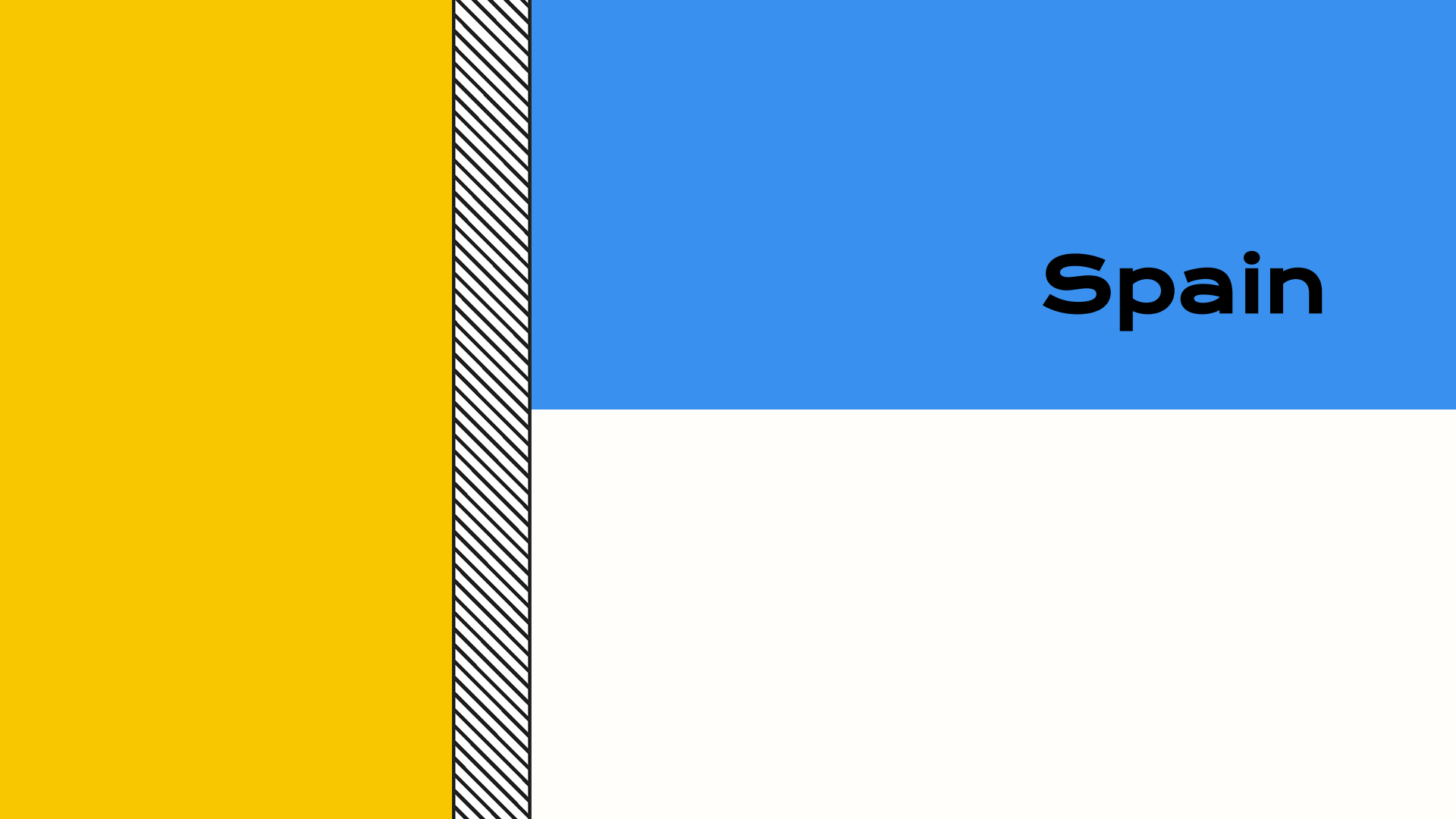


4 men's prisons housed women,
1 big and some smaller, local remand prisons did too

Either in gender-mixed wings or separated

Mixed at work, leisure time, school – programs were sometimes mixed too

If mixed wings – slept separately (few couples with kids lived together)
If separated wings – conjugal visits if the prison deemed it safe



Spain

**Spanish
prisons in
numbers
2023**

55.097

Total prison population (2023)

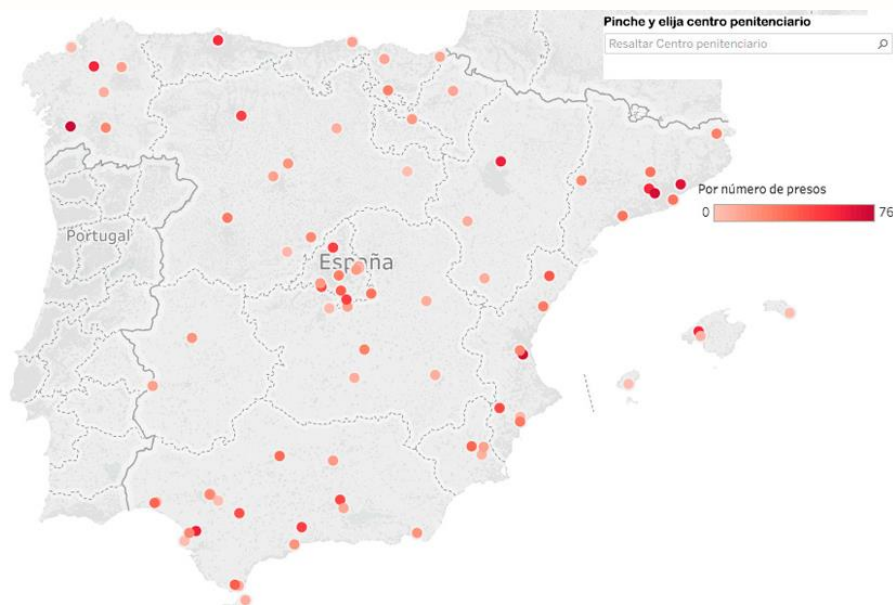
51.172

Men (92,9%)

3.925

Women (7,1%)

Mapping mixed-gender aspects of Spanish prisons



*Mainland Spain
(the map does not include the Canary Islands)*

Total prisons: 78 + 32 Social integration centres (semi-open facilities)

Women's only prisons: 4 women's prisons (Alcalá I Madrid, Brieva-Ávila, Alcalá de Guadaira-Sevilla & Wad Ras-Barcelona)

Women's wings: 96 located in 45 prisons + at least 4 women's wings in 4 prisons in Catalonia

Gender mixing facilities: at least 14, according to data SGIP 2022+ 1 family unit)

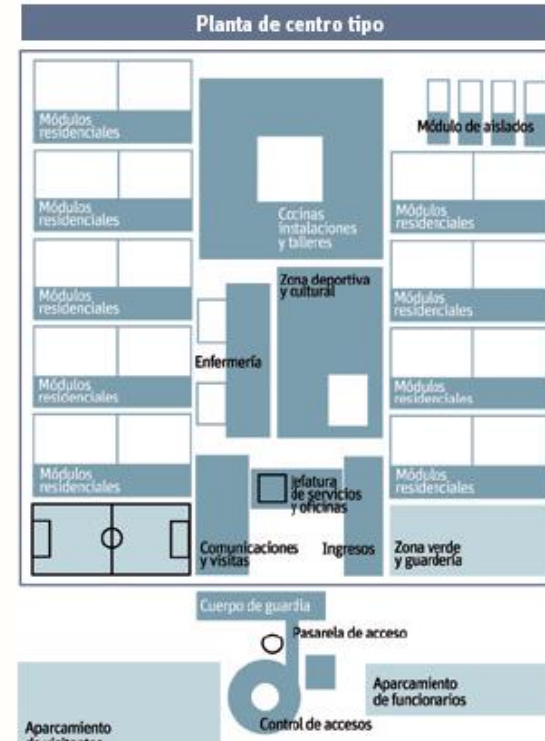
Facilities where they are currently only men: 22 facilities + 4 in Catalonia

Regarding the Social Integration Centres (CIS). Two only for men (dependent ones), the rest with places for women.

Mapping mixed-gender aspects of Spanish prisons

Number of prisoners	Prisons	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
+ 1000 prisoners	17	21,79%	21,79%
701-1000	19	24,36%	46,15%
401-700	15	19,23%	65,38%
101-400	20	25,64%	91,03%
100 or -	7	8,97%	100,00%

Women only prisons: CP Ávila-Brieva (74), CP Sevilla-Alcalá de Guadaira (88), CP Alcalá I Mujeres (392) and CP Barcelona Mujeres (535)



Source:
General
Secretariat of
Penitentiary
Institutions.
Ministry of
Interior

Mapping mixed-gender aspects of Spanish prisons

- The situation depends on the type of unit where women are incarcerated.
- **Prisons with one unit or two units for women:** units are self-sufficient so some of the activities of the day are separated (training, sport, meals, etc.). Some organized activities outside the unit can be mixed-gender, others not. Frequently jobs outside are separated and gender segregated.
- **In mixed-gender facilities:** they share daily life activities, meals, etc. but the cells are located in different floors in the unit.
- **Intimate relations:** Before 2020, prisoners needed to documentally prove a 6 months relationship with the other person (who can be inside or outside) to enjoy intimate visits, after 2020 a new regulation determines that a social report can be substituted by the documents.
- Mixed-gender facilities are promoted as a way to guarantee equal access to activities & facilities– gender equality??

02

Discussion

(Dis)advantages of
mixed-gender
aspects of prison
regimes





NEGATIVE ASPECTS

1. Heterosexual relations between inmates = problem of managing inequality
 - Generates jealousy and tension
 - Disrupts the "calm" of the prison and the smooth running of activities
2. Risk management problem: risk of sexual abuses on women

As a result: increased workload for staff: extensive surveillance of heterosexual relationships; various measures taken to prevent contact between men and women



NEGATIVE ASPECTS

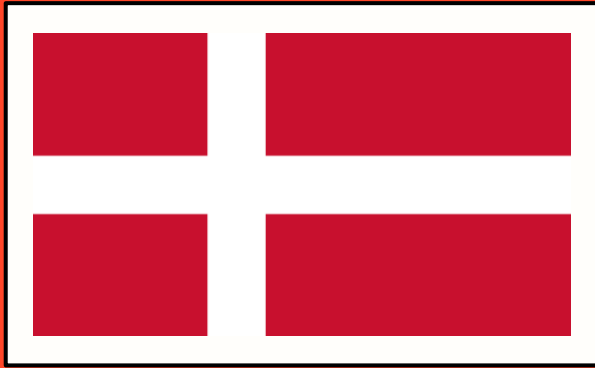
! These two problems may be relativised!

Problem of managing inequality

→ “Normal problem” in detention

Risk management problem: risk of sexual abuses on women

→ This risk exist already even where no contacts between male and female inmates are organized



NEGATIVE ASPECTS

- Sexual and other types of harassment
- Due to the marked inequality in numbers within a limited budget: Conflicts of interests concerning education, work, treatment and leisure time activities
- Stated differently: The sometimes rather stereotyped ways of interacting outside of prison were enacted during imprisonment
- Negative types of dependence between men and women

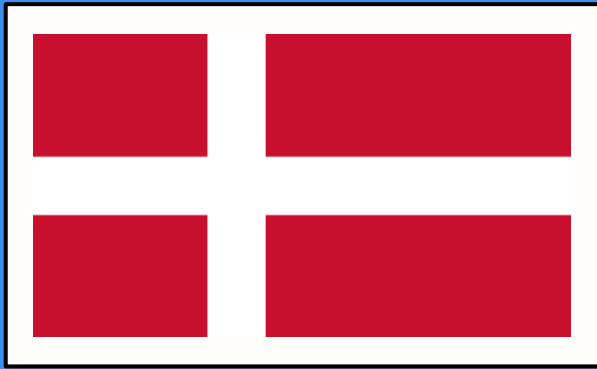


POSITIVE ASPECTS

- Normalisation/preparation of reintegration
- Diversity and tolerance
- More opportunities for women prisoners (with the exception of work)
- Mitigating the negative effects of gender stereotypes

→ Under 4 conditions only!

- Only for work and activities
- Keeping non-mixed activities
- Maintaining a specific offer for women (protecting the minority) + developing a policy to prevent gender-based violence
- Creating activities and spaces for the inmates couples



POSITIVE ASPECTS

The Danish Correctional services have decided not to have mixed gender facilities (2018 – 2020 - >

1. Due to safety
2. Due to better possibilities of education, work, school, leisure time and treatment

→ Mixed positive?

- Mixed facilities should only be possible if the numbers are more equal than was the case in DK
- Staff is needed to assist and facilitate accept of diversity and tolerance – to live with dignity
- Just mixing genders are not ‘normalizing’ when the inequalities are as outspoken as is often the case
- When the imprisoned people feel safe progressive and nourishing relations can of course develop in mixed gender facilities



The floor is yours!

DISCUSSION

THANKS

Do you have any questions?

Olivia.nederlandt@usaintlouis.be

Aurore.vanliefde@kuleuven.be

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**.

