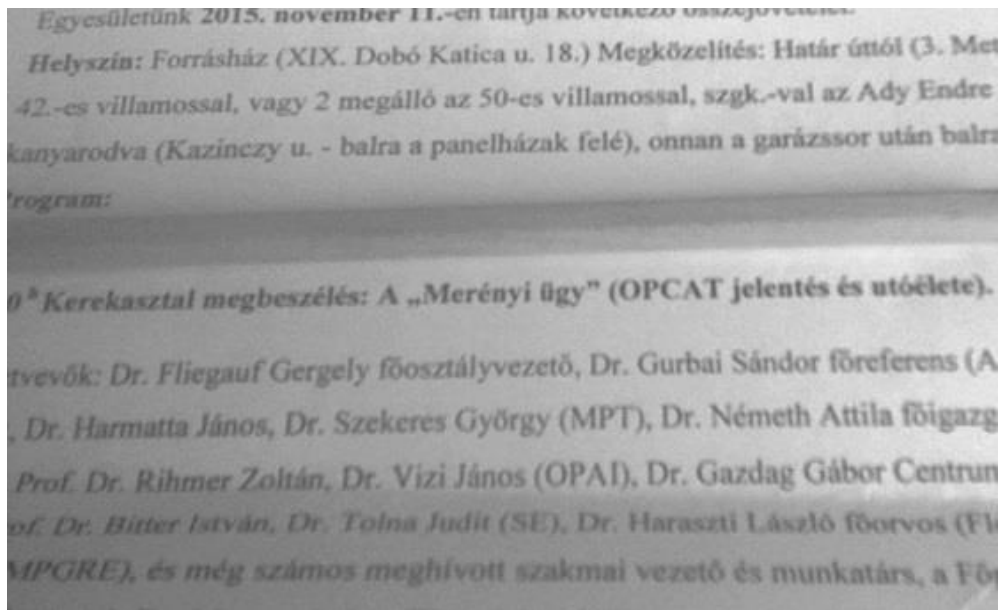


Professional consultation and dialog on the Merényi Report



On February 26, 2015, staff-members of the Ombudsman's Office, monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the ban on torture, cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment or punishment, conducted an on-the-spot inspection in the Psychiatric Ward of the Merényi Gusztáv Hospital. The report on their findings prompted a large-scale social and professional dialog.

Within this framework, on November 11, 2015, two staff-members of the OPCAT NPM Department, Head of Department Gergely Fliegauf and senior advisor Sándor Gurbai, author of the report, attended a professional consultation, organized by the Metropolitan Association of Psychiatric Ambulatory Care Facilities (FŐPSZICHE) in Budapest. In addition to the staff-members of psychiatric ambulatory care facilities, the roundtable discussion was attended by the representatives of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association, National Psychiatric and Addiction Treatment Institute, ESZSZK-Merényi Gusztáv Hospital, Semmelweis University, Flór Ferenc Hospital, the psychiatrists of the Regional Association of Hungarian Psychiatric Ambulatory Care Facilities and the members of FŐPSZICHE.

During the meeting, the representatives of the Office gave a short introduction of the OPCAT NPM Department's activities, explaining why the closed units of psychiatric wards should be considered as places of detention; differences between torture and other forms of ill-treatment also received some coverage. The participants engaged in a proactive exchange of views on how various related professions could facilitate the harmonization of the prevailing legal regulations with international legal obligations, and how it could provide grounds for providing better care to and paying more attention to the rights of persons in need of psychiatric care. The participants of the roundtable discussion called for creating such conditions and establishing such new structures that would build upon the proposals and comments of both the users of psychiatric care and those who provide it.

The representatives of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights drew the attention to the need to organize an OPCAT workshop and professional consultation for the psychiatric profession and the relevant authorities in 2016.