

**RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES PROGRAMMES
UNDER THE NORWAY GRANTS 2009-2014**

ANNEX A

COUNTRY REPORTS

October 2019



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COUNTRY REPORT - BULGARIA

1 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses Programme **BG15 `Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Measures`**.

Summary of the Programme

Category	Number of Projects	Donor Partnerships	Other Partnerships	Project Grant (EUR)
Completed Pre-Defined Projects	3	0	0	7,913,555
Completed other Projects	19	2	2	1,118,740
Total	22	2	2	9,032,295

The structure of this report follows the structure of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the main report. It concludes with a summary country assessment

2 FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Prisons and Other Places of Detention

2.1.1 2.1.2 Infrastructure Development and Prison Conditions

The Norway Grants have brought about important improvements in the buildings where remanded and convicted offenders are held. *BG15 0002 Improving standards in prisons and investigative detention facilities by refurbishment of infrastructure to ensure respect for human rights* has involved building and refurbishment at nine sites.

Shumen BG15 0002

The assessment team visited a new three storey facility at Shumen which has been completely refurbished and whose function has changed. Only the external walls remain of the old building which was originally used by the Ministry of Defence for training purposes and following its transfer to the Ministry of Justice in 2006 lay empty.

The top floor is a detention facility with a capacity of 49 prisoners in 14 cells. The detainees are persons under investigation and convicted prisoners appearing in court cases. The maximum stay is six months which can be extended to 12 with the authorisation of a senior prosecutor. There is an additional cell on the ground floor for two sentenced prisoners from Varna Prison who are responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of the building.

The detention centre has replaced a facility in Shumen which comprised small cells some of which were underground and had no toilet. The old centre gave rise to a number of complaints of human rights violations.

The new centre's cells are large enough to accommodate two or three prisoners. They provide basic but decent accommodation, well ventilated and prisoners can bring their own televisions.

Cells are designated for foreigners, women and juveniles. These were not occupied on the day of the visit when there were 20 detainees in the centre. There is a high turnover of prisoners with newcomers most days

There is a small exercise yard to which prisoners have access for at least an hour per day and an area for showers. There is a well-equipped medical room, a few books available for detainees and an area for visits by legal advisers and family members. All visits from families are "closed" with communication through a telephone and no physical contact.

There are 47 staff in the detention centre and adequate office and accommodation space has been provided.

All areas apart from the cells and bathroom are covered by CCTV which is constantly monitored. The Chief Officer told us that the main benefit of the cameras is to have a record if an incident occurs. It is a way of ensuring that guards react properly and therefore helps to improve the behaviour of guards for example in response to aggressive behaviour by prisoners.

We were not able to speak to detainees, but staff confirmed that the conditions were very much better than in the previous centre. The doctor told us that he has all the equipment he needs. He worked in the old centre and told us that "you cannot compare the two facilities". We were also told by the head of the detention centre that prisoners joked that it was like a hotel, but you did not have to pay.

The detention facility at Shumen provides much better accommodation for detainees than the building which it replaced. There is no overcrowding and the cells are an adequate size. The exercise area is somewhat small.

The second floor of the Shumen facility provides office space and interview rooms for the probation service covering the Shumen region – one of 28 regions in the country. The acting chief inspector told us that previously they had been located in cramped conditions in the town with three inspectors sharing one office and no privacy when interviewing their clients. The five-probation staff each have their own large office, equipped and furnished by

Norway Grants. Each inspector has a desktop computer enabling them to access the electronic case file management system.

There is a large meeting room which is used for group work with clients, staff briefings and other meetings. Prison staff use it for their handover meetings between shifts and the multi-disciplinary commissions which decide on changes to probation orders also meet there.

The ground floor of the building is occupied by administrative staff and the Director of the facility as well as the two working prisoners from Varna.

The accommodation for probation staff at Shumen is of a high quality and fit for purpose unlike the offices which it has replaced. It allows for probation clients to be interviewed in privacy and not in the probation inspector's office. It is a much safer arrangement for all concerned.

Burgas BG15 0002

The assessment team visited the new kitchen at Burgas prison which provides three meals a day for the 350 prisoners and detainees located in the main prison campus, or corpus as it is called in the Bulgarian law. It is spacious and well equipped with good storage facilities. Prisoners are provided with 2622 calories per day at a cost of between 2-3 Euros. The kitchen can prepare general meals, vegetarian meals and meals for Muslims as well as special supplementary diets for prisoners with a medical prescription. The new kitchen opened in February 2016 and is HACCP certified

The kitchen is located in one of the buildings previously used for a prisoners' furniture workshop. It replaced the old kitchen which was located underground. This was small with a low ceiling and frequently flooded in the past.

The chef in charge described the kitchen as wonderful and had no complaints about it. It is bigger than the old kitchen and the equipment is much better. According to the prison Director the food is healthier and there are fewer complaints from prisoners – although he said that 100% will never be satisfied.

The kitchen has been well designed and constructed and has improved the quality of food served to prisoners. Modern technical equipment enables the delivery, storage and preparation of food according to contemporary standards.

Debelt BG15 0002

25 Km from Burgas, a satellite prison has been constructed near the village of Debelt. This is in effect a new prison comprising a closed section – 266 prisoners on the day of the visit – and an open section -72 when we visited.

The term used in the Norway grants documentation to describe this facility is “hostel” which is potentially misleading. This is a fully-fledged closed prison with prisoners housed in three blocks. In the Bulgarian system, prisoners with more than five years until their release must serve their sentence in the main corpus, those with less than five years until release can be allocated to a hostel.

Blocks A and B accommodate prisoners subject to a strong or common regime. Block C is still under construction and will be for those subject to a light regime. Until this totally separate block is finished, light regime prisoners in open conditions live on a separate section of B block; their experience is more restricted than it would be in the main prison corpus at Burgas. A fourth block D provides facilities for staff.

The only totally new building is the reception area at the front of the prison. The remainder of the prison has been reconstructed in buildings previously occupied by the police and fire services.

The 4 person cells are spacious and well-lit and ventilated. We spoke to three prisoners who told us that the accommodation was totally different from Burgas where they had been before. They commented on the bigger windows, in cell showers with constant warm water and tiled floor. The CPT also rated highly the conditions noting that “the cells (generally accommodating up to four inmates and measuring approximately 20 m²) were bright, airy and suitably equipped.”¹

The quality of the building work looked poor in parts with the bottom part of the walls crumbling as if there had been flooding: the gym room was not in a good state and several places in the kitchen were in need of repair and maintenance. This has been noticed by the CPT who reported on “the low quality of the materials used, and the work completed, and the already visible signs of wear-and-tear”.

Security is high with 120 CCTV cameras which reduce the need for staff in watchtowers; 10 pan tilt zone cameras; and a microwave barrier around the perimeter.

The Director of the prison told us that when the Debelt hostel opened staff and prisoners were reluctant to move there: and the local community were also hostile. Over time perceptions have changed. The local mayor is happy that prisoners contribute to cleaning the streets and river in the local town.

There are however insufficient work and training places for prisoners. There is a school for 70 prisoners and limited work opportunities. This was a missed opportunity during the construction. The director told us that discussions were underway with a private company about establishing a productive unit on the site.

Debelt hostel provides a good standard of living accommodation which has reduced severe overcrowding at Burgas prison. An opportunity has been missed to provide a

¹ Report to the Bulgarian Government on the visit to Bulgaria carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 25 September to 6 October 2017 <https://rm.coe.int/16807c4b74>

sufficient number of work /training spaces for prisoners and the standard of construction has been weak in parts.

Sliven Womens prison BG15 0002

Sliven is the only women's prison in Bulgaria accommodating 220 girls and women. The population has declined from 400 in 2006.

The assessment team interviewed senior staff at the prison and inspected the medical facilities which have been refurbished and equipped. The medical staff told us that the equipment was at a high level and met all of the regulations relating to reproductive health which have been introduced in Bulgarian legislation. Before the project, equipment dated from the 1980s; there was no ability to sterilise instruments. The same applies to the dentist's office, which is newly equipped with a dentist's chair and all the necessary equipment

The number of staff has increased from six to seven and the clinic is open 12 hours a day. The rest of the time is covered by the emergency service of the local hospital in Sliven.

We also visited the nursery which has been furnished and equipped for mothers and their babies. Two women were residing there, one with a baby and one expecting. The environment was clean, bright and well maintained. Staff told us that the main challenge was to motivate the mothers to bond with their babies.

The medical facilities at Sliven are of a very high standard with modern medical equipment. It is only available during the day however and medical emergencies in the evening are dealt with in the local hospital. The nursery is bright, comfortable and well-furnished although could be a little cramped if fully occupied.

2.1.2 Regimes and Services

Suicide and Self harm Prevention among Prisoners BG150004

A strategy for the prevention of suicide and self -harm has been introduced. Grants have been used to develop a new system. The assessment team interviewed a psychologist from Sofia prison who explained how each prisoner is now screened on arrival. Those who show suicidal tendencies are further assessed using a tool which has been developed by the project. For high risk prisoners, a plan for intervention is made, implemented and reviewed involving all of those who have contact with them including guards. The family can also be involved. The psychologist told us that the arrangements are an improvement on what happened before.

A more systematic approach to the assessment and management of risk of suicide is now in place and welcomed by psychologists.

Prevention of ethnic violence BG150004

The project aimed to prevent ethnic violence in Bulgarian prisons and promote tolerance towards difference and Roma integration. Staff were trained in delivering the developed programme and it has been piloted among inmates.

The consultant hired to implement the project reported at the outset that “there are low levels of inter-ethnic discrimination and/or violence (both physical and verbal) between prisoners and that the prison regime inhibits this to a large degree. Most offenders reported that they “just had to get on with each other”. However, there was an overall consensus amongst offenders that staff held discriminatory attitudes toward certain ethnic groups, namely Roma groups and this was also apparent in semi-structured interviews with staff. It is therefore recommended that the development of a programme should be applicable to both staff and prisoners”.

A group work course and manual based on Cognitive Behavioural principles of learning was produced and 17 social workers and psychologists were trained to run it. Aspects of the manual have now been incorporated into the basic training of prison staff. It is estimated that 100 prisoners have been through the course but finding the right numbers and mix of prisoners who wish to participate has inhibited its use.

The course has been made available to the probation service. One probation officer we interviewed said she had been involved in running it but was particularly enthusiastic about its impact. No data was made available to us about the impact of the training. The assessment team has studied the manual which appear to be somewhat theoretical and lacking in real life examples from prison life.

One of the small grants funded through the open call for proposals also sought to increase tolerance among staff and prisoners but it is not clear how this has worked.

There seems a need to address some stereotypes about Roma persons among prison staff. One prison director told us that it is difficult to get Roma persons involved in education in the prison. However, all but one of the 107 prisoners in education were Roma. He tried to explain this apparent contradiction by telling the assessment team that Bulgarians are better educated and efforts are made to persuade Roma prisoners that they need to obtain a minimum level of education before they can work. The director also told us that some Roma women deliberately commit crimes when pregnant so they can give birth in the prison where conditions are now very good. He said that they do not trust hospitals and would otherwise have to give birth at home. In fact women at Sliven do not give birth in the prison but are transferred to the local hospital. It is true that they return to the prison shortly afterwards, but the comments show potential signs of discriminatory beliefs.

We cannot judge how effective the efforts to reduce violence and promote tolerance have been. There seems a need to develop some more practical guidance on the policies and practices which should be adopted in the prison setting to combat Roma exclusion.

2.1.3 Vulnerable Groups in prison

The 19 grants made to NGO's as part of the open call include a good range of projects which have aimed to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

At Sliven, the assessment team asked about the impact of vocational training funded by the grants (eg BG150005). Women obtained skills in landscaping and floristry, hairdressing, catering, construction and cookery. These were considered by staff to have been popular with women and they told us that there was 100% success rate in completing the courses. We were told that about 10% of women do not engage with any activities that are offered and the participants for these courses were selected carefully.

Some of the women use their skills to work in the prison- cutting hair or in the kitchen. But there is no evidence about long term impact. Sustainability has not been easy because of the need for equipment and buying of equipment was not eligible under the projects (only materials). Social workers have continued to supervise certain activities such as planting and horticulture around the prison.

The Prison service accepted that while some of the small grants have stimulated continuing activity some have not. The values have been in breaking down barriers between what was previously a very closed system and civil society.

2.2 Community Based Measures

2.2.1 Impact on Alternatives to Prison

Efforts to strengthen alternatives to prison have taken place in BG15003 Increasing the application of probation measures in compliance with European Standards and programme for electronic monitoring

Following a small pilot in 2010, the grant has enabled the introduction of electronic monitoring nationally with a total of 183 placed under EM during the project period. Training about EM was provided to 282 Magistrates and a publicity campaign for EM was launched.

The equipment comprised radio frequency monitoring with one GPS tag. The project was outsourced to private company G4S.

The person in the Bulgarian prison system responsible for the project told us that it was used for monitoring prohibitions not to leave a place for those on probation orders and those on conditional release. 15% of those subject to EM during the project period had been convicted of homicide having been conditionally released; others had committed offences of drunk driving, theft, robbery and drugs.

The project has also allowed for a review of the normative regulation, analysis of the lapses identified in the national legal arrangements and the drafting of necessary amendments to the Execution of Sentences and Remand in Custody Act. This was prepared and subsequently passed by the National Assembly and promulgated in the State Gazette.

At the end of the project in 2016, EM was no longer available. ESF structural funds have been used by the Ministry of Justice to buy 250 bracelets and the programme has been available again from April 2019.

While the project appears to have worked satisfactorily, it is not clear why the decision to rent equipment was taken and why it has taken so long to restart EM following the end of the project. Despite the amount of funds invested in training of magistrates, prosecutors and staff the gap between 2016 and 2019 is one of the factors that influenced negatively the usage of EM in Bulgaria.

The probation service informed us that the numbers on probation has been falling in recent years. Certain offences such as drunken driving are no longer eligible for probation: and the maximum sentence for certain more serious crimes has been raised thereby rendering them ineligible- probation can be used only for offences which carry up to 5 years imprisonment.

2.3 Resources

2.3.1 Professionalization of Staff

Capacity building of staff was the objective of *BG15-0004 Improving the competences of staff in psychological selection and counselling* and of a number of small grants.

Prison Staff

Prison staff have benefited from an initiative to reduce professional stress. The prison service, with help from Norway has developed a strategy which involves the diagnosis of all staff using a newly developed instrument applied by psychologists.

At Sliven we were informed that two or three staff members were assessed at high risk of burnout, the remainder were within the normal range. All are given practical techniques for dealing with stress. One staff member informed us that when she goes home after a stressful day she was advised to clean the dirtiest place in the house. This helps to take the mind off what has happened before in the workplace.

Norwegian experts helped to develop the strategy by holding a series of focus groups with staff to try to identify the scale and extent of the problem, its causes and measures which might help.

The resulting strategy includes primary measures to be taken across the prison service; secondary measures for those particularly at risk; and tertiary measures targeted at those who have or are approaching the experience of burn out.

In interviews with two psychologists we were told that the number of staff seeking individual consultations with a psychologist had increased. In Sofia prison, there have been ten in the last two years with none in the preceding period. In 2018 a total of 92 prison service staff consulted a psychologist; four crisis interventions were applied, for example after a colleague had died. While some of the issues raised are work related, many more are to do with family problems.

Data was not presented about any impacts on for example staff sickness, but staff we spoke to at Burgas and Sliven welcomed the initiative.

Prison staff have also been involved in a range of training activities funded by the small grants. These include topics as diverse as human rights, violence reduction, working with vulnerable groups, paramedic training and preparation for release. Staff also had an opportunity to take part in sessions on sexual health and undertake voluntary counselling and testing.

At Sliven staff participated in courses on 167 occasions. The project team interviewed a staff member at Sliven who had participated in a course which she remembered as highly interactive with role playing and a range of different techniques on preparation for release.

We were informed that feedback from staff was positive, but the director of the prison said that participants are always happy to participate in a course outside the prison which they do not have to pay for.

While the training opportunities were welcomed, staff said that a more systematic approach to training is now needed.

Staff at Sliven said that they had limited say over the small grants schemes. When the call for proposals was made, they were approached out of the blue by NGOs with their ideas which they usually supported. But they had limited chance to amend these and no say over what was actually funded. Moreover, after the grant period, there was often no further contact with the NGO. The Bulgarian Family Planning Association who ran BG 1500018 told us a slightly different story. They had to send a letter to the prisons prior to their application, seeking for cooperation opportunities in particular fields, and that without this VISA letter from the concrete prison, they would not be able to apply.

Probation Staff

Three of the small grants have provided training opportunities for probation staff. The probation inspector we interviewed in Shumen met indicated that she had participated in a special training conducted in Sofia by a beneficiary organization of a small grant scheme project - Institute for Social Activities and Practices. As a follow up of this training, she stated that she is currently using the Handbook for Professionals, working with Prisoners, which is extremely useful for her work. The Handbook covers topics such as: Probation; re-socialization and social integration of the prisoners; Assessment of personality needs; psychological support for prisoners; practical techniques that can be used, etc.

A range of training opportunities has been provided to prison and probation staff through the small grants scheme. The assessment team was not convinced that there is sufficiently strategic approach to the professional development of staff.

2.3.2 New Technology

There was limited use of technology in the project other than CCTV in prisons and EM.

3 FINDINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The prison infrastructure projects have continued to operate up to the time of this assessment and there is no reason to think that they will not now form part of the permanent prison estate. The refurbishment of the Debelt hostel is not complete but the construction of the separate block to accommodate prisoners in light regime and open conditions is almost ready.

The electronic monitoring programme (EM) came to a halt at the end of the project period but is now underway again – two years after the project funding finished- thanks to funds from the ESG Good Governance fund. This raises questions about the decision to outsource the scheme and effectively rent the equipment during the project period.

The two-year gap in the operation of EM will have weakened the impact of the training of magistrates and other stakeholders that was carried out during the project. For one thing the 250 new bracelets which have been purchased under the new scheme include 50 which can track offenders via GPS. All but one of the bracelets funded by the project were limited to curfew monitoring. For another, the lapse of time may have reduced familiarity with the system on the part of the institutions responsible for ordering its use.

The measures to reduce stress among staff are continuing and data has been presented about the number of staff who are seeking individual consultations with psychologists. Staff at the prisons we visited have mentioned the availability of help in this field. The multidisciplinary scheme for suicide prevention and self-harm is also contained in a strategy and we were informed was in operation.

The implementation of both of these strategies places demands on the 35 psychologists working in the prisons. It will be important to keep under review whether this is a sufficient number.

The 19 small grants have mostly funded training courses and other initiatives which came to an end when the funding was completed. During the assessment visits, staff have shown us manuals but it is difficult to assess whether these are being used. The same is true of the training course on the prevention of ethnic violence.

Good follow up was achieved by BG15 00018. After running training courses and offering voluntary testing and counselling in three prisons, the Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association produced two brochures which were circulated to all prisons setting out the steps that should be taken to reduce risks of blood borne and other infections. These recommendations were sent to various stakeholders including Ministry of Justice, Ministry of health, Ombudsman, etc. They are now being examined by a working group set up by the General Department for the Execution of Sentences (GDES) which is responsible for prisons within the Ministry of Justice.

In terms of replication and wider effects, the infrastructure developments have taken place in the context of a national plan to improve the standards in detention facility. This was drawn up following the pilot judgement in the European Court of Human Rights in the 2015 case of Neshkov.²

The assessment team observed that following the opening of Debelt, the reduced population in Burgas prison has allowed Burgas to be completely refurbished. While Norway grants paid for the kitchen, the cells have been refurbished with state funds. Similarly, we observed major refurbishment underway at Sofia prison which is being undertaken with state funds.

Another wider effect of the project relates to the relationship between prisons and the civil society sector. The small grants programme has enabled a variety of non- governmental organisations to work in cooperation with the prison service, training staff or prisoners and developing other practical initiatives. The prison service informed us that as a relatively closed institution, the creation of these partnerships and relationships has had a positive effect of the culture of prisons- whether or not specific projects have continued after the end of the funding period.

As for policy change, the final programme report claims that “a notable public effect has been achieved with the issue of the inadequate material conditions now permanently on the agenda of the Bulgarian institutions.”

It certainly appears that after many years of neglect, a sustained and comprehensive programme of modernisation is underway. The CPT have commented in 2017 that the situation in penitentiary establishments had generally improved since the 2015 ad hoc visit, due to a number of factors: a significant drop in prison population (in most establishments visited, except Sofia Prison and the IDFs in Sliven and Sofia, the official norm of 4 m² per prisoner was respected in practice); legal amendments making it easier to allocate inmates throughout the available accommodation and to release prisoners on parole; and efforts to refurbish and reconstruct prison estate.

The assessment team was informed however that there had been some recent changes in the law which had resulted in a fall in the number of people on probation. Restrictions on eligibility for probation do not always result in more use of immediate imprisonment. But greater use of conditional or suspended sentences instead of probation can run the risk of increasing prison numbers. If the prison population starts to rise again, this could in turn put at risk the sustainability of the positive changes seen in recent years, to which the Norway grants have made a significant contribution.

² [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-150771%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-150771%22]})

4 FINDINGS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

4.1 Donor Project Partners

4.1.1 Norwegian Government at project and programme level

Although not a DPP, Norway's Corrections Service KDI was involved, alongside the CoE in both the infrastructure and probation projects. There is a question of potential duplication of effort and whether the involvement of both partners provided added value.

Norwegian experts have played a role in the work to develop strategies to reduce stress in staff and reduce suicide and self-harm among prisoners. They conducted focus groups and provided advice. The Bulgarian prison service made clear that this was not a question of importing a Norwegian model of practice as there are important differences in the way services are organised. In Norway, health and social care services for prisoners are not provided by the prison service but by the mainstream departments and agencies responsible for those services.

Norwegian partners were also involved in two of the small grant projects.

4.1.2 Council of Europe (CoE) at project and programme level

The Council of Europe (CoE) has been the DPP for Programme BG15 and also a Project Partner in pre-defined projects BG15-0002 relating to infrastructure improvements; and BG15-0003 concerned with probation and electronic monitoring.

According to the final programme report, "The Council of Europe has been actively involved since the start of the programme preparation". The Council of Europe informed us however that they only became involved at a later stage.

In terms of infrastructure, the CoE has advised and assisted in developing technical specifications and requirements for designing and reconstructing the facilities in line with their standards. These standards are contained in the European Prison rules, standards of the CPT and judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

At a later stage the Council of Europe has followed the implementation of the activities to ensure the achievement of relevant standards and best practices. The Prison service told us that this involvement was very helpful. This supports the finding of a detailed assessment of CoE involvement in Norway grants which found that in BG15, the prison service was "*very much satisfied with the opportunity to work together with their critics*" from the CoE.³

On probation, experts of the CoE have taken part in the activities as trainers on alternatives to imprisonment and made additional contribution by drafting reports with recommendations.

³ Rapid Assessment of the Council of Europe's Involvement in Programmes and Projects of the EEA and Norway Grants page 11

In an interview with CoE representatives, we were told that the CoE provided some additional input from their own funds- for example. They found the opportunities for obtaining funds from the grants programme to be overly bureaucratic and a “cumbersome and inflexible system”.

At the initiative of the CoE, Bulgaria became involved in a funding programme from the Human Rights Trust Fund⁴ which, according to the final programme report “complemented the results of programme BG15.” the collaborated on the implementation of the project “Support for the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights judgments and European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment standards and recommendations in Bulgaria (Prison Reform)”. The project was funded by the Human Rights Trust Fund and implemented by the Council of Europe in the period 2016-2018. The project and further strengthened the cooperation between the PO and the DPP.

Country Assessment

Bulgaria has used the grants to help with long overdue investment in prison infrastructure but has balanced this with assistance to the probation service. It was possibly a mistake to rent rather than buy the EM equipment with a resulting gap in provision. Institutional capacity for ensuring staff training is sustained may be lacking but the small grants produced some valuable work and strengthened the relations with civil society. Further efforts are need to combat Roma exclusion.

⁴ Support for the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights judgments and European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment standards and recommendations in Bulgaria (Prison Reform)

COUNTRY REPORT – CZECH REPUBLIC

1 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses **Programme CZ 15 Judicial Capacity-building Cooperation and Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions**

Summary of the Programme

Category	Number of Projects	Donor Partnerships	Other Partnerships	Project Grant Euros
Completed Pre-Defined Projects	7	4	0	3,971,690
Completed other Projects	0	0	0	0
Total	7	4	0	3,971,690

The structure of this report follows the structure of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the main report. It concludes with a summary country assessment.

2 FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Prisons

2.1.1 Infrastructure Development and Prison Conditions

The Norway Grants have brought about important improvements in the buildings where convicted offenders are held in particular by increasing the opportunities for training and employment.

Pribram Prison CZ 0006

The assessment team inspected the large new hall constructed to accommodate vocational training and employment opportunities at Pribram Prison 50km from Prague. The prison holds 1,000 convicted men approaching the end of their sentences. 400 are employed, 190 outside the prison and the rest inside. The prison lacked space for educational, vocational and leisure activities, which would support resocialisation and reintegration and subsequent successful return of inmates into society.

The hall has been constructed to a high standard, and furnished with the necessary equipment -IT, consumer electronics, home appliances, kitchen equipment, workshop equipment and furniture.

The new hall allows 50 prisoners who are unable to work outside prison for security reasons to undertake a variety of paid jobs such as the assembly of car parts and electrical equipment. The work is provided by a private company. One other prisoner was involved in unpaid work making ceramic pottery

The assessment team was able to observe the work which was being conducted in a quiet purposeful way. Some of it was extremely routine. A new task was being tested which involved the pulverisation of Compact Discs sent from the UK.

It was not clear whether prisoners could obtain similar jobs after release although the Director of the Prison told us that employers were often not happy with the performance of prisoners after release even when they had a good record of work during their sentence in prison. He told us that some ex-prisoners were employed by the prison after release.

In another part of the hall six-month vocational training courses are provided for prisoners who want to learn cookery, food service or IT skills. During project implementation, 70 inmates took part in the courses of cookery work and simple service for restaurants and 56 inmates took part in the PC courses. All participants passed the final exam and received a certificate.

The cookery teacher who has worked at the prison for 20 years told us that the new facilities were much better than in the past with a separate classroom and kitchen. Students are well motivated. She did not know whether prisoners found work in the catering industry after release although she had heard that some had done so.

The assessment team interviewed one of the prisoners who told us that he hoped to use his skills in paid employment after he left and had some experience as a cook beforehand. He told us that the course was good for him because it was something to do and offered a chance to learn something new. He said that the atmosphere was good and the staff were helpful.

The prison has established a small garden outside the hall where fruits and vegetables were being grown for use in the cookery courses.

The classroom spaces are also used for a variety of other treatment and recreational activities.

The hall has added much needed space for prisoners to undertake training and paid work. These prisoners would not otherwise be able to work.

Novo Sedle CZ15 0004

At, a 450-place closed prison for men, a boiler house has been converted into a training centre where prisoners can take part in education and work activities. Several inmates were involved directly in the reconstruction works. The new premises were furnished by necessary equipment, tools and devices for carpentry and gardening, consumer electronics,

and IT equipment. During the project period, 40 inmates took part in vocational training courses and 72 in work activities.

The assessment team interviewed the manager responsible for education via video link. He explained that half of the prisoners had only elementary education. Only a third of prisoners used to work full time before going to prison, with another quarter employed part-time. The rest were not working.

The training courses provided are in woodwork metal work and garden/land maintenance. We were informed that there are opportunities in the labour market for these skills, especially work in parks and gardens. Two thirds of the prisoners who graduate get a job in the prison. There is no collection of feedback on prisoners after release- "when they leave, they leave".

The training is targeted at prisoners who have drug addiction problems and are accommodated in a separate drug treatment zone in the prison. Only twice have they had to go outside the drug zone to get participants.

The head of training considered that the Norway grants had enabled a more systematic approach to training. "Before we had activities, now we have a system".

Vocational training and treatment opportunities have been extended to a group of offenders at high risk of re-offending.

Kurim CZ150007

At Kurim, a 660-place prison in Moravia, new construction has enabled young prisoners aged 18-26 to be held separately from older and more experienced criminals. The aim has been to increase the effectiveness of their preparation before the release.

One-storey superstructure of an existing building was built for accommodation and provision of special educational programme. There are 8 bedrooms, shared bathroom, cleaning room, therapeutic room, self-service room (washing, cooking) and culture room. A separate walking court was built as well. The premises were equipped with the necessary furniture and appliances. The target group of inmates was relocated from unsatisfactory premises, where they were accommodated together with older more persistent criminals.

The assessment team interviewed the Chief of the Penitentiary Department of the prison and a psychologist via a videoconferencing link (see below). They told us that before this project, no separate provision was made in Czech prisons for young adults. This project, which accommodates young adults on a separate floor, prevents young adults coming into contact with older prisoners and reduces the influence of the criminal subculture.

The regime in the unit involves vocational training courses in building and decoration for 20 young people plus a range of therapeutic activities. These include group discussions about crime, addiction and the social environment; sports and education programmes.

There are six mandatory education programmes covering working habits, avoiding crime, job club, basics of English, personality development and communication skills. All 32 residents study these topics in six groups.

The project was a 12-month pilot, with those successfully graduating being moved to a milder type of prison where they will be able to work. Their chances of conditional release are higher if they complete the 12 months on the unit.

We were informed that up to five young adults fail the programme each year, usually because of drug abuse, possession of a mobile phone or a breach of the law. First infractions are met with a warning; after a subsequent one a commission decides what to do.

Staff were specially trained during the project period with some visiting Norway. Since the project ended, specialist training has been provided through state funds but replacing staff who leave has proved a challenge. One staff member is on long term sick leave.

The assessment team asked the psychologist to provide some outcome data about the 95 young men who had participated in the unit since the pilot phase in 2016. The data shows that 44 of the 95 are still in prison. Of the 51 who have been released, 11 (21.5%) were sentenced again and are in prison, 2 (4%) are currently remanded in custody, and 38 (74.5%) are still at liberty. This is a good success rate for young offenders leaving custody.

There is growing recognition of the need to provide a distinctive approach to young adult offenders. This initiative for the first time helps to prevent contamination and provides specialised rehabilitation opportunities for young people.

Opava Womens prison CZ150005 ¶

The objective of the project was to increase the capacity for treatment of imprisoned women in prison and the Institute for Security Detention in Opava, to increase the effectiveness of their preparation before the release.

The former coal-fired boiler house has been refurbished and facilities have been created for the education and employment of imprisoned women. The premises were equipped with the necessary furniture and equipment including IT technology. Sufficient space for work and employment of imprisoned women was created that will contribute to increased employment of sentenced women, especially those who cannot work in external companies for security reasons.

The project involved training in labour law, financial literacy and practical skills, 63 inmates were trained and obtained a certificate. The PC course was attended by a total of 24 inmates who received a certificate of completion. 25 convicted women worked in the premises of the reconstructed building, dealing with the sewing of large-capacity bags in cooperation with an external employer.

Opportunities for women prisoners have been expanded through this project.

2.1.2 Regimes and Services

Provision of support to foreign inmates (CZ150003)¶

A number of measures have been introduced to improve the experience of foreign national in prison. There are more than 1700 foreign national in Czech prisons.⁵ The assessment team was told by a social worker at Pribram prison that the largest number are from Slovakia (for whom language is not usually an issue) followed by other Eastern European countries but that prisoners from countries such as Vietnam are not uncommon.

Measures include:

- a) translations of materials into foreign languages; information related to Czech legislation, prisoners' rights and duties, conditions of stay in the country, steps after release were drafted and translated into 16 languages reflecting the linguistic composition of imprisoned foreigners.
- b) the provision of individualised consultations to 328 prisoners. We were told by the social worker that this did not constitute legal advice, but social work help which could include how to get legal advice from NGOs if needed. The majority of the consultations concerned the provision of advice about how to live outside prison, where they could learn the Czech language and information about Czech culture.

Development of new intervention programmes for prisoners and extension of existing intervention programmes. (CZ150003)

The Prison service gave us information about the programme and participants which is shown in the Table below.

Programme Type	Participants	Prison(s)
Short term for Drug Users	32	Svetla
Long Term for Drug Users	40	Belusice
Short term for Violent Offenders	20	Slavkov, Jirice, Opava, Ostrov, Rapotice
Perpetrators of Sexual Violence on Children	25	Veznice, Horni, Slavkov, Svetla
Perpetrators of Traffic Offences	10	Veznice, Hradec, Kralove, Ostrov

While numbers of beneficiaries are small, the range of treatment available through programmes has been extended to a variety of specific groups of prisoners.

⁵ <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/czech-republic>

2.1.3 Vulnerable Groups in Prisons

Measures which benefit women, foreign nationals and young offenders have been described above.

2.2 Community Based Measures

2.2.1 Alternatives to Prison

The impact on alternatives has been confined to *CZ15-0002, A system of further education for employees of the Probation and Mediation Service of the Czech Republic*. This is discussed in 2.31 below.

2.3 Resources

2.3.1 Professionalisation of Staff skills

A system of further education for employees of the Probation and Mediation Service (PMS) CZ15 0002

The PMS currently has 420 employees in field and a further 40 at headquarters. It is responsible for supervising about 27,000 clients, most of whom are sentenced to penalties as alternatives to prison with about 20% on parole after a period of imprisonment. PMS is also involved in offering mediation between victim and offender in suitable cases.

A system of further education for probation staff has been introduced to raise the quality of services, create a national training system and create courses in specialised topics.

The project has built on previous work carried out in partnership with the Norwegian Correctional Services which involved the training of internal lecturers. But this involved only fairly basic education, and there was a demand from staff for more lifelong learning.

The current project has produced six educational modules and 43 lecture manuals with 113 training courses carried out. Supervision was provided to 37 trainers. 50 employees have successfully passed the SFE final exam but a total of 276 staff members participated in parts of the training – a total of 1998 attendances.

The assessment team interviewed probation staff who had been involved in the training. They explained that the pilot system funded by the project produced specialised training materials covering five strands of specialised work: community service (unpaid work), work with juveniles aged 15-18, work with people on probation, work with people on parole and conflict resolution. The courses are for state PMS officers who have passed an exam after a “probationary” year of practice and basic training (2 initial days plus 288 hours while practising). After qualifying, each probation officer chooses a specialism and undertakes one of the new courses.

There are some common materials for all five courses. Those covering the issues of risk assessment and debt management are compulsory. The staff told us that in evaluations of the training probation staff were most enthusiastic about modules covering mediation and motivation. The only topic that was not rated highly concerned the evaluation of work and collection of data. Participants felt that the training was too focussed on scientific theory on statistics and not enough on the difficulties of measuring impacting in a practical way. The module has been suspended and more practical approaches to the topic are being developed.

The plan is to build further on the project in three ways. The first is to look to develop more in the way of treatment programmes. At the moment the focus of much work by the PMS is on getting offenders to accept responsibility for what they have done rather than on therapeutic approaches. One staff member told us that “we would like to do more programmes not just case management.”

Second, plans are in place for a common system of training with the prison service in 2020. Probation lacks any training facilities and already uses prison service premises. There are certain topics that are obviously common to both professions- dealing with prisoners debt, self -defence, avoiding burnout and management skills were those mentioned to the assessment team.

Third there are plans for an expansion of multi- disciplinary, multi- agency meetings to identify gaps in the criminal justice system and propose remedies. It is hoped that funds from Norway will support this, but it has already started in advance.

The plans to sustain and expand the experience of the project may be at risk from lack of resources in the PMS. Officers already have up to 120 cases to supervise compared to a limit of 30 in Norway. The PMS is facing reductions in staff and was told that there are only three training coordinators in the service.

Important improvements have been made to the training and professionalisation of probation staff which both build on previous experience and set a platform for further development.

Prison Staff

One of the strands CZ150003 involved was the development of methodology of lifelong training for prison staff. More than 800 staff participated in courses and a system was introduced in which staff members each have an educational plan focussed on their professional development. This has been built on by an ESF programme which has enabled the prison service to standardise the training offered to staff.

A representative from the prison service told the assessment team that the training of staff covered seven topics:

- Management training for heads of department
- Criminology and penology

- Treatment of prisoners with Learning Difficulties
- Treatment of prisoners with Personality Disorder
- Crisis intervention
- Financial Literacy
- Work with indebted clients

While detailed evaluation was not available, we were informed that participants found the last two topics on financial and debt management to be particularly useful.

A combination of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills has been made available to a good number of prison staff.

2.3.2 Role of New Technology

Implementing videoconferencing in the resort of justice

Project CZ150001 aimed to increase the efficiency of and improve processes in the justice system through the introduction of videoconferencing. 164 videoconferencing kits have been purchased and installed in more than 90 courts, 39 prisons and 12 other settings including prosecution and probation offices. Ancillary equipment such as document cameras and a tape library have also been bought.

In September 2016 - April 2017 it is estimated that videoconferences were used on 849 occasions (significantly above the original estimate of 300). Since then, usage has increased to 1000 cases per month. 1200 people have been trained in the use of the equipment

Using videoconferencing significantly has reduced financial costs, speeded up communication, and increased safety without the need to transfer prisoners to hearings.

It is possible to carry out remote communication in criminal and civil proceedings without the need of travel and personal participation of witnesses, experts, interpreters or prisoners. It is possible to conduct court hearings by default and to ensure full testimony of participants in the process without the need for their personal participation. The project allows national and cross-border interrogations of detainees, accused, convicted, witnesses (including vulnerable witnesses), experts or interpreters. Videoconferencing can also be used for training, conferences and presentations. Courts at all levels are involved as well as the prosecutor's offices and all prisons. Connection is also being made also to the videoconferencing facilities of the Czech Police and psychiatric hospitals.

The assessment team interviewed the official from the Ministry of Justice responsible for the programme. She told us that it is up to the judge to decide whether to make use of videoconferencing. Some are more enthusiastic than others with the result that some courts use it more than others. One of the commonest uses of the equipment is for hearings relating to conditional release. We were told that prisoners generally like to use it as it is easier for them than being transferred to a different new prison.

The assessment team also interviewed a judge of the first instance court and a judge of the Appeal court about the experience of videoconferencing. They explained that it was not used in serious crimes and in their experience was particularly useful for interrogating foreign witnesses. One of the judges said he would welcome greater use of the electronic transfer of documents. Video conferencing can cause a problem if the defendant or witnesses produces a document which then has to be photographed and shared with the parties. This can lead to delays.

There is also a question of whether the lawyer should be with the defendant (in the prison) or in the court with the judge. In Prague where the prisons are relatively close by there is not so much use of videoconferencing. Most judges prefer to see the person face to face so they can study the body language. The judges could see the benefits for the prison service in avoiding the need for transportation. They were not sure whether prisoners prefer it. Some in their experience like to have a trip out of prison and appear in person. On occasions this might give them the chance to see their family at court although not in conditional release cases which are held privately.

The judges did not think there was any adverse effect on the quality of justice. Technically it was reliable although could lead to minor delays. The two hours training they received was too theoretical when really, they needed to know how to switch the machine on.

The assessment team made use of videoconferencing facilities in the Ministry of Justice (funded by the project) in order to interview staff at Novo Sedle and Kurim prisons. The picture and sound quality were excellent and there were no technical problems experienced.

Videoconferencing is an important improvement to the justice system which allows for a safer and more cost-effective approach to court hearings and other meetings.

3 FINDINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The four infrastructure projects are still being used: at Opava, each year, a minimum of 109 women participate in educational, training and work activities; at Pribram the new premises continue to provide cookery and food service courses for least 60 inmates and IT courses for 50 . At Novo Sedle every year at least 40 inmates undergo carpentry and public greenery maintenance courses and at least 60 inmates are involved in working activities. At Kurim, 32 young adults are included in the educational program and painter and bricklayer courses are attended by at least 20 convicts.

The assessment team were informed that other prisons have started similar programmes inspired by Kurim. It is not clear the extent to which the treatment programmes for prisoners have been sustained.

Probation training is continuing with plans for expansion although there are risks because of a shortage of staff.

The videoconferencing is continuing to be used with plans to extend its use to a wider variety of settings such as psychiatric hospitals.

In terms of policy developments, the CPT have explained that in October 2017 the system of security classification of sentenced prisoners has been revised. There are now two categories of prison (high security and normal security) placement in which is decided by the court at sentencing. Inmates placed in a normal prison are further internally classified as low, medium and high security prisoners. This “internal differentiation” is decided by the governor of the prison, on the basis of a recommendation made by a multi-disciplinary team (composed of a deputy governor, a psychologist, an educator, a social worker, the head of the department of the execution of sentences, etc.).

After having served a quarter of the sentence (but at least six months) and 10 years in the case of life-sentenced prisoners, the prisoner may apply to the court to be transferred from a high to an ordinary prison. The main purpose of the new classification system is to enable the setting up of treatment programmes for sentenced prisoners which will be more individualised to meet the specific needs presented by individual inmates.

After the first year of the implementation of the new system, the number of inmates classified as low security prisoners (i.e. now the lowest security classification) has increased by 50%. This allows them to work outside.⁶ It has reported that companies are increasingly interested in employing prisoners.⁷

In addition to this, a minimum-security prison modelled on the Norwegian Bastoy Island facility has also been opened in Jiřice, northeast of Prague. There are plans to evaluate the experience before deciding whether to replicate it.

4 FINDINGS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

4.1 The Role of Donor Project Partners

4.1.1 Norwegian Government at project and programme level

The Probation service’s cooperation with the Norwegian Correctional Service built on previous experience under the Norway Grants 2004-2009. Four study visits to Norway and two study visits to the Czech Republic were implemented with 55 employees from the Czech Republic visiting Norway and 22 employees from Norway visiting the Czech Republic. A bilateral conference was organised in the Czech Republic.

⁶ Report to the Czech Government on the visit to the Czech Republic carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 2 to 11 October 2018

⁷ <https://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/czech-firms-increasingly-keen-to-employ-prisoners>

The Czech Probation and mediation service has highlighted the benefits of learning about the intensity of supervision within probation and an overall system involving education, employment, learning to change behaviour and accepting responsibility. The KDI introduced the possibilities of working with clients in a very intensive form for a shorter period of punishment, new types of punishment, the entire “Community sentences” system. The Norwegian partner shared experience and good practice in the field of electronic monitoring, probation and parole, prison system and half-way houses.

Elements of the new knowledge were reflected during preparation of new training courses but one of the experienced probation staff interviewed by the assessment said that in her view “Norway doesn’t have great education system for the probation service.”

On the prison side the project, a partnership was established with the Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service KRUS, and Ullersmo, Ila and Ringerike prisons.

A seminar followed by 4 study visits to Norway special treatment programmes, qualification of prison staff, staff management, and dynamic security. Information gained during the seminar was used to formulate the content of the training course for the of Czech prisons management as well as for development of the new intervention programmes. Study visits have stimulated new practices in the Czech prisons, for example, extended activities supporting the relationship between the prisoner and the child.

An additional partnership was formed with Norwegian NGO Alternative to Violence (ATV). Three joint seminars with ATV on anger management were held in the CR. Which have helped in the management of violent offenders. The Czech prison service is interested in implementing programmes that are available in Norway such as the Motivation Programme and Father's Programme.

Cooperation on the issues of women’s imprisonment was established in the context of the Opava project. Experiences were shared in two study visits with a focus in particular on education, contact with the outside world and preparation for release and the challenges of reintegration.

The Czech authorities have reported on practical lessons of their cooperation with Norway.

4.1.2 Council of Europe (CoE) project and programme level

The CoE were involved as a programme partner but only after the programme had been defined. The Czech authorities have reported favourably on the cooperation, for example the links that were provided to the CPT.

The CoE have informed this assessment that their involvement was limited. According to the assessment carried out of the CoE’s role across the Norway grants, the cooperation was “characterised by discernible frustration due to miscommunication of roles, role confusion and lack of clarity on the modus operandi of the partnership.”⁸

⁸ Rapid Assessment of the Council of Europe’s Involvement in Programmes and Projects

Summary Country Assessment

The Czech Republic has made solid infrastructure investments together with considerable innovation. The Kurim young offender unit shows particular promise. The Prison work is balanced by strengthening the quality of probation work and the innovative video-conferencing project. Useful staff training has taken place along with the development of programmes for offenders but the sustainability of these was not always evidenced.

COUNTRY REPORT - LATVIA

1 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses **Programme LV08 Reform of the Latvian Correctional services and police Detention Centres**

Summary of the Programme

Category	Number of Projects	Donor Partnerships	Other Partnerships	Project Grant (EUR)
Completed Pre-Defined Projects	3	5	9	13,752,752

The structure of this report follows the structure of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the main report. It concludes with a summary country assessment.

2 FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Prisons and Places of Detention

2.1.1 Infrastructure Improvements and Prison Conditions

The Norway Grants have brought about important improvements in the buildings where alleged and convicted offenders are held. These have been made through LV08-0003 Improving the standard of Latvian State police detention centres and LV08-0002 New unit at Olaine prison, including construction and training of staff.

Police Detention Centres

The assessment team inspected the changes that have been made at Ogre Police Station, outside Riga. This is one of 43 police stations in Latvia each of which contains cells for temporary confinement of suspects for up to four hours and 19 of which – including Ogre – contain short term detention facilities where people under arrest can be detained for up to 10 days. The facilities are the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior.

Among the changes that have been made at Ogre are :

- Refurbishment of cells with improved ventilation and lighting. The single cells are more than 6 sq m and cells for four persons are of adequate size.
- Better sanitation facilities

- Repairs and extension to the walking areas where detainees take exercise
- The introduction of security cameras enabling surveillance of all areas
- Improvements to Staff quarters
- New beds, mattresses and other furniture in cells.

On the day of the visit, there were 6 detainees in the short term detention centre. The capacity is 26 and the average number about ten, women and 5 minors.

The Deputy Head of Main Administrative Office of the State Police Renate Fila-Rože confirmed that 21 centres had been renovated and equipped during the Project and equipment provided in a further five centres.

The Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has visited three of the centres renovated in large part with Norway grants and found “material conditions of a generally good standard; indeed, comparing them with several old establishments seen during previous visits is like comparing day and night”.⁹

The police told us that there were few complaints about conditions in renovated facilities. Indeed there has been a reduction in the rate of uncompleted administrative arrests. Persons facing arrest are less likely to go into hiding to avoid detention because the conditions they will face have been improved.

The Annual report of the Ombudsman shows the number of complaints about police detention centres. In 2018, 5 out of 18 complaints regarding police detention centres were addressed to quality of facilities of detention centres (heat during summer, problems with ventilation)¹⁰. In the Annual Report of 2016, the Ombudsman mentioned that during supervision of police detention centres, several renovated centres were attended. The Ombudsman admitted the significant positive improvements of accommodation achieved by renovation¹¹.

A positive impact has been made on the conditions of detention in police detention centres which benefits several thousand arrested persons per year.

Prison Establishments

On the prison side, important new infrastructure has successful been constructed at Olaine to enable the implementation of a therapeutic community approach for prisoners with addiction problems. There are eight 24 place living units comprising 12 double cells. One of

⁹ Report to the Latvian Government on the visit to Latvia carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 12 to 22 April 2016 <https://rm.coe.int/pdf/168072ce4f>

¹⁰ Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia (2019). Annual report of Ombudsmen of the Republic of Latvian in 2018. (in Latvian), p.260. http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/tiesibsarga_2018_gada_zinojums_1550749223.pdf

¹¹ Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia (2017). Annual report of Ombudsmen of the Republic of Latvian in 2016. (in Latvian), p.110. http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/lapas/tiesibsarga_2016_gada_zinojums_1489647331.pdf

the units is for women. Each of the units has a name – for example Meadow or Mountains unit -rather than simply a number. At the time of our visit only five of the eight units were operational because of the low numbers of residents.

The units are centred around a homely common area where meals are taken and include cupboards for prisoners to store possessions, a room for prisoners to do their washing. There are rooms for group meetings and individual sessions with psychologists and contact persons- the term used for the prison staff who work in the centre. A one way mirror enables security staff to monitor the common areas in the centre without prisoners knowing they are being observed. The main approach to security is “dynamic security”-achieved through constructive relationships between prisoners and staff.

The construction of the buildings has been successfully completed to a high standard, with a good overall design in the shape of an H. Living units are along the two sides with educational, and recreational facilities located in between them. The building has been recognised in the category "New Public Structure" in the competition "The Year's Best Building in Latvia in 2016".

According to the Head of the Centre, since the Centre opened in 2016, 303 and 42 women have been accepted there. More than a hundred have successfully completed their programmes. 28 persons have been sent back to prison for failing to comply with the requirements of the regime and a further 29 left the programme because their needs and risks turned out to render them unsuitable for the Centre. In addition, 5 had health problems which meant they could not continue. On the day of the visit there were 44 prisoners with a further six due to start in the next few days. The highest number of residents has been 80.

Each individual resident has to make an application to come to Olaine while they are serving their sentence in a regular prison. Each prison has a coordinator who is responsible for interviewing applicants three times to ensure that they are sufficiently motivated. Prisoners can apply from any type of prison or regime level.

There are two basic eligibility criteria. The first is that the prisoner must have an addiction problem -to drugs or alcohol. This is verified by checking the prisoner’s file. The offence will not necessarily be directly related to drug possession or trafficking. Most of the residents have committed crimes of robbery, violence or theft but all have been motivated to a greater or lesser extent by addiction problems.

The second requirement is that the prisoner speaks the Latvian language. This is because the treatment and group work at the centre is all conducted in Latvian.

The final decision to accept a prisoner is made at prison service headquarters.

The Olaine project has created important infrastructure which provides benefits to prisoners.

The numbers of prisoners benefitting from the Centre’s activities has so far been lower than anticipated and research should be undertaken into why this has been the case and

what might be done to enable more prisoners to benefit from the excellent facilities and programmes on offer there.

2.1.2 Regimes and Services for Prisoners

Prison regimes for addicted persons

The senior staff at Olaine Addiction Centre informed us that the prison service has estimated that up to 80% of prisoners in Latvia may have some form of substance misuse problem. According to the survey of prisoners of 2018 about drug usage among Latvian prisoners for the Centre for Prevention and Disease control, lifetime prevalence of drugs usage before imprisonment is 71%, and in the last year before imprisonment prevalence is 46%; lifetime prevalence of drug usage in prisons is 33%, and in the last year in prison prevalence is 18%¹².

In the context of these figures, developing a therapeutic community regime for those prisoners with addiction problems who want to change therefore is a very positive development.

During our assessment the assessment team was able to explore with staff and residents at the Olaine Centre the nature of the regime.

New residents start their period at the Centre in an assessment unit where an individualised plan is drawn up. It is here that in certain cases it emerges that an individual may not be suitable for the programme.

The programme is demanding. All of the residents undertake a 12 Step Abstinence Programme called Atlantis. Prisoners who are close to the point of release additionally participate in a programme called Pathfinder which aims to prepare them for life outside prison.

In most of the units the daily regime involves waking at 6.30 am, leaving the cell at 7am and doing some exercise before breakfast. Residents watch daily news on Television before commencing group work at 9am until 12 noon. Lunch is followed by an hours rest before group work resumes until 6 pm when dinner is taken. At 7 pm, residents have free time but must be involved in cleaning and other tasks. A further hour's exercise is scheduled during the day. The residents return to their cells for the night at 9.30 pm.

Responsibility for adhering to the schedule is in the hands of the residents. Each week a different resident is chosen as leader and other tasks- such as deciding which channel on TV to watch – are allocated by the residents. The group work has a particular focus each week- such as how to say no; or why people change.

¹² Žabko, Oksana, Evija Kļave, Linda Apine, Līva Kriekē (2018). Atkarību izraisīto vielu lietošanas tendenču analīze ieslodzījuma vietās Latvijā 2018. gadā (in Latvian), pp.25-31; pp.33-37. https://www.spkc.gov.lv/upload/Petijumi%20un%20zinojumi/Atkaribu%20slimibu%20petijumi/Diana/biss_atkaribu_lietosana_ieslodzijuma_2018_redits_002.pdf

Unlike normal prison, residents are not permitted to have their own televisions, play stations or personal refrigerators. Visits from families are also more restrictive- once a month compared to once a fortnight. The monthly family days at the Centre are designed to engage the resident's family in their recovery from addiction.

While the therapeutic community approach is designed to give residents a high degree of responsibility for their daily lives and those of the group, the staff has a very important role to play. There are currently 46 staff although the full complement of staff is 68. The majority are so-called contact persons – prison officers who combine responsibilities for supervision, rehabilitation and security. They work in two shifts 6.30 to 3pm and 1pm to 9.30

The role is very different from that of a traditional prison guard. They do not wear uniforms and are encouraged to play a role as mentors to the residents. Much less significance is afforded to ranks than in a ordinary prison setting. Perhaps as a result, one third of staff has left. Conventional security staff are also employed. One of their tasks is to ensure that Contact persons and residents do not become too close in their relationships.

We interviewed two staff members. One was an experienced prison officer who had worked in a number of ordinary prisons and found the work at the centre very different and much more satisfying. She had attended study visits to Norway and while finding them useful considered the Olaine Centre to be superior to what she had seen in Norway. The second officer worked in the women's unit. She had previously worked as a Judge's assistant and was encouraged to apply to work at the centre. Both staff members said that the opportunity to work closely with the residents and help them to make changes in their lives was the best part of the job.

The assessment team held a focus group with eight residents. They told us that the centre was not like a prison. One mentioned in particular that the sub culture which operates in prison was totally absent and that for people who wanted to change, the Centre offered an opportunity. "If you want to follow the old way it is better to stay in prison". Another prisoner mentioned that there are more psychologists than in other prisons.

But the main point was that in normal prison, people forget about you whereas at the centre there are programmes to help each individual. One prisoner told us that "in other prison you are an animal, here you are human".

2.1.3 Vulnerable Groups in Prisons

There is a women's unit Olaine Addiction Centre and the improvements in police detention will apply to vulnerable groups.

2.2 Community Based Measures

2.2.1 Alternatives to Prison

The Norway grants scheme has contributed a great deal to the development of the state probation system under LV080001 Increasing the application of alternatives to imprisonment (incl. possible pilot project on electronic monitoring).

Probation currently works with about 8,000 people on any one day with about 18,000 cases per year. People on probation are either serving sentences imposed as alternatives to prison or subject to parole supervision following early release from a prison sentence. The development of probation is one of several reasons for the sharp decline in the number of prisoners in Latvia. In fact, the numbers of probation cases has declined since 2008- from 25,000 cases during that year to 18,000 in 2018. The focus of the service has been on work with the kind of offender who might otherwise go to prison and minimise so-called net widening of penal supervision.

Trends in the numbers in prison are shown in Figure 1 based on Data from Latvian State Probation Service



Other causes of the fall in prison numbers include increasing numbers of young men working outside Latvia and changes to the criminal code in 2013 which reduced sentence lengths for some kinds of offences.

In 2014 amendments were made to the system of parole which has made it easier for prisoners to apply and more likely that their application will be successful.

The specific contributions of the Norway Grants Scheme have been in relation to strengthening the capacity of the probation service, in large part through the training of staff (see below); and through the introduction Electronic Monitoring.

Electronic Monitoring (EM)

Norway Grants has enabled the purchase of 200 bracelets and base units so that it is possible to know when persons under probation supervision are not at their place of residence when they are not supposed to be – or are at their place of residence when they are not supposed to be.

Key features of the Latvian system are:

- a) EM is limited to cases of people on parole – the so-called back door model with offenders
- b) eligible to apply for parole with EM at an earlier stage in their sentence than without EM
- c) There is a comprehensive process of assessing an offender's suitability for EM
- d) The period of EM is fixed by the court granting parole and is most commonly one year.
- e) In each case, there is more to supervision to the monitoring of a curfew
- f) The whole process is managed by the probation service, with alerts about failures reported by the EM unit to the offender's case manager for follow up
- g) After two written warnings for non-compliance an offender is returned to court for breaching the conditions of their parole.

The first person was made subject to EM in August 2015. Between then and August 2019 a total of 267 persons have been monitored. Of the 238 for whom the monitoring is finished, there was a 93% success rate. Only 16 persons were returned to prison following violations. No offences were committed by offenders while subject to EM although three clients have been accused of offences allegedly committed earlier. In 18 cases courts have agreed to revoke EM because of good behaviour.

On the face of it, the numbers of offenders made subject to EM are disappointingly low and well below the capacity of the system to manage. The highest number at any one time has been 57 although the contract with the supplier pays for 100 bracelets to be in operation at any one time.

The success rate of 93% is encouragingly high and reflects the careful process of assessment and selection. Since EM was established, 771 people applied for release on parole with EM. Of these, 148 recalled their application during the assessment and 611 reports were prepared. Of these 314 were assessed as unsuitable. 75 of these were unsuitable because they had no suitable place to stay; 239 were unsuitable because they had not sufficiently addressed addiction or other problems and presented too high a risk.

The "Electronic monitoring application evaluation" (conducted in 2017) research shows that the results of the research indicate that the vast majority of the electronic monitoring customers are satisfied with model and, predominantly, successfully integrate into the society.

The current contract with the supplier of EM comes to an end in 2020 and consideration is being given to how the scheme might be expanded.

The assessment team interviewed Dr Riga Lasnaca, an expert in social work, who said that the introduction of EM marks an important change in Latvia which requires a change of culture and attitude not only from the side of the authorities and the public but from the prisoners' side. The requirements to meet criteria, and to follow certain rules while living in the community represent a new and different approach. She suggested that some prisoners may not apply for EM or may withdraw their application preferring to wait in prison until they are eligible for parole without EM. Any further expansion will require additional support for prisoners to prepare them to be clients of electronic monitoring – for example motivation programmes.

The results of Electronic Monitoring are extremely positive although the numbers subject to it are lower than expected. This is partly a function of the elaborate assessment process and the large numbers of applicants who are deemed unsuitable.

2.3 Resources

2.3.1 Professionalization of Staff

Police Staff

101 police personnel working in short term detention centres and temporary places of detention received training in project LV08-0003. The training comprises 40 hours and covers a wide range of topics including:

- human rights and national legislative acts;
- evaluation of physical and mental condition and risks of detainee (including list of criteria which should be evaluated and list of questions which should be asked to detainee regarding his/ her health like has the detainee any complaints regarding health, does the detainee want to see a doctor, does the detainee need to take in any medicine etc.); explanation of influence of various illnesses (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, heart diseases, claustrophobia etc.) on overall condition and behaviour of detainee;
- principles of communication with detainees (including language, emphasizing respect to detainees and approach to detainees which have perception difficulties – easy words, slowly speech etc.);
- dealing with emergency situations;
- provision of the first aid to detainees (including detailed description of general principles and specific measures for some conditions).

The training was well received by the police. Several rounds of training were implemented, at the end of each of them testing of obtained knowledge of participants and evaluation of training programme was conducted. The overall evaluation of training programme was high – mean value was around 9 points out of 10 (the lowest evaluation obtained was 8,8 points out of 10). Some useful comments were obtained during trainings, for example, to develop

standard questionnaire for evaluation health condition of detainees which would be helpful in work with deaf detainees. This questionnaire should be translated into several foreign languages that will help to communicate with foreign nationals. According to trainees, more attention should be devoted to topics like control of emotions of the police staff to avoid provocations.

We interviewed the Police Officer who was working in the Control Room at Ogre Detention Centre on the day of our visit. He had been a police officer for 9 years and was positive both about the material changes at the Police station and the training. He recalled that the training had taught him and his colleagues detailed procedures for receiving detainees, methods of restraint when these were necessary. He told us that while it was not the case that police officers did whatever they liked, the training has introduced consistent procedures. The Deputy Chief of Main Administrative Office of the State Police who helped to devise the course told us that practice has been harmonised between different police stations.

Probation staff

148 training courses were organised under LV08-0001 in which 1760 persons from Probation staff (and 728 persons from prison) took place. The trainings covered several topics like behaviour correctional programmes for youth, development of communication skills, application of risks and needs assessment instrument, good practice in work with youth etc. These training programmes have been integrated into training system of Probation Service.

The capacity of the probation service has been improved in several ways. Research has been undertaken to validate the risk and needs assessment tools used by the service and to investigate the best ways of measuring recidivism. Programmes have been developed such as mediation for young offenders and mentoring with 100 staff trained to undertake each activity. The numbers who have put the training into practice is between 20 and 30 for each activity. Volunteers have been recruited and trained to mentor offenders and 35 probation staff have been trained as trainers. Inter-agency cooperation has been strengthened both with the prison service and with the full range of criminal justice stakeholders. Internal standards and quality assurance have been developed.

Prison Staff

Under LV08-0002 Staff at the Olaine Centre have been trained in the skills needed to apply the Therapeutic Community approach as well as to run the specific Atlantis and Pathfinder Programmes.

3 FINDINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The refurbishment of the police detention centres has undoubtedly brought about highly needed improvements not only in the specific centres where grants were disbursed but across the whole estate. Plans are being made to rationalise the number of centres but we were assured that none of the centres refurbished with Norway Grants will be closed down.

The process of refurbishing police detention centres stimulated wider improvements in conditions for detainees via legislative amendments which have banned smoking in the centres, defined a minimum area of 15 square metres for exercise yards and increased from 30 minutes to one hour the minimum daily period of exercise to which a detainee is entitled.

The training course developed for detention staff has been integrated into the basic training for new staff and together with a handbook for staff is available digitally on the police intranet.

On the prison side, the Olaine project has had several positive spin offs. Drug free wings have been created in three ordinary prisons so that prisoners returning to them after their treatment at the addiction Centre can maintain the progress they have made. A decision is due to be made about the construction of a long-awaited new prison at Liepāja, which will aim to apply some of the learning from Olaine. Cellular accommodation will be used to prevent the possibility of the development of a negative sub- culture. The Olaine site will also be used to construct a new prison staff training facility.

Probation are also planning to further develop their activities using ESF and other funding to develop standard office accommodation for staff and clients.

On policy change, it was intended that work would be undertaken with assistance from Norway grants to examine the possibility of reducing or eliminating the use of administrative detention. We were told that administrative detention has been curtailed and is due to be completely abolished at the end of 2019. It remains to be seen whether this will result in more criminal cases coming before the courts.

On criminal policy more generally, substantive change to the criminal law has undoubtedly helped to reduce the use of imprisonment. At the time of the appraisal of the Norway Grants projects in 2012, the Ministry of Justice hoped to reduce the prison population to below 5,000 by 2020. This has easily been exceeded.

The probation service has used funds to increase awareness of the benefits of alternatives to detention and promote their work. For example, television advertisements were produced to show the benefits of EM.¹³ Officials have also been interviewed on television about the benefits of EM.¹⁴

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAOWfj3PD8I>

¹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plg_t6OJ3cc at 0.30

Based on public opinion polls, it is reported that 74% of population support introduction of electronic monitoring in Latvia, 61% of population share view that EM is smart long-term solution.

The Olaine Centre has also come to symbolise a new philosophical approach for the prison service. According to the governor of the prison , among policymakers and those working in the justice system the aims of rehabilitation and treatment are well understood and accepted although among the general public, there is still a quite wide spread (~20-25% population) view that funds should not be spent on criminals but on public services such as health and education.

A new ESF funding period support the development of re-socialisation programmes/ work in prison and after imprisonment. Further investments in staff trainings and volunteering are also to be introduced.

The assessment team interviewed Anhelita Kamenska from Latvian Centre for Human Rights who said that the Norway investments are useful; she supports that the new system has been introduced step-by-step, keeping high quality standards. The investments have partly influenced the environment in other prisons, but many things depend on their staff.

She thinks that the higher management of Prison Administration and Probation Office is very competent and interesting in development of re-socialisation of prisoners and that helps to keep achieved results. She is even more convinced that Probation staff are doing a good job, but she is not sure whether staff of Olaine Addiction Centre receives necessary support (wages, positive evaluation) against burn-out.

4 FINDINGS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

4.1 The Role of Donor Project partners

4.1.1 Norwegian Government at project and programme level

The Directorate of the Norwegian Correctional Service was designated as the donor programme partner (hereinafter – DPP), and there were 15 operational project partnerships established during the implementation period with an aim of providing expertise, organizing study trips, etc..

Project partners from Norway included the Oslo Probation Office who provided assistance on the complex development of electronic monitoring and various administrative issues concerning the project; a prison who developed a course on motivational interviewing for probation and prison staff ; and the Norwegian Mediation service who focused on work with Probation to develop Victim-Offender mediation, Restorative justice and Multi-agency co-operation regarding young offenders.

The deputy Director of the Probation service informed us that the Norwegian assistance has been very important in building the service up to its current position. The cooperation has

been longstanding since 1997. ¹⁵ The assessment team spoke to an expert in social work Dr Riga Lasnaca who confirmed that “training provided by Norway Grants was very important for the staff”.

On the prison side, four partnership agreements were concluded in respect of the Olaine project. As this was a completely new initiative in Latvia’s Correctional Services system, the prison administration have said that they felt it was very important to sign the bilateral cooperation agreements not only with the Correctional Service of Norway Staff Academy (KRUS), and Oslo Prison but with the Central Board of Prison service of Poland who had experience of one of the treatment programmes that was to be offered at Olaine.

Representatives from KRUS and Oslo Prison trained the staff of Centre how to work with addicts, how to implement and adapt the Pathfinder programme already implemented in Oslo Prison. The trainings lasted for six months and there were 3 training groups. All students had great opportunity to visit Norway correctional services and after the graduating trainings to exchange knowledge and experience. KRUS assisted the Latvian Prison Administration with the planning of the curriculum for new staff members that should work in the center for addicted inmates, while experts from Oslo prison helped to train the newly recruited staff members.

The resocialization programme “Atlantis” was implemented and adapted on Centre as well in cooperation with colleagues from Poland correctional services. The representatives from Oslo Prison provided two follow-up visits after closure of project to give an advice and support for staff of Centre.

4.1.2 Council of Europe (CoE) at project and programme level

In the police project LV08-0003, the Latvian authorities have described the cooperation with CoE as “crucial”. CoE provided an assessment of the police facilities and advised on the detailed specifications of the necessary refurbishments.

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences provided advice on the training materials for police staff, with representatives of Latvian State Police undertaking a study visit to the academy.

¹⁵ Previous cooperation projects include
Nord-Balt Prison Project» of the Council of Europe (1997-2003)
Mediation Service of Norway (2005-today)
Norway Grants Projects of the Probation Service:
«Introduction of Mediation Method «Conferencing» into Practice of the State Probation Service on a Basis of European Experience» (2009-2010)
«Preventive Measures to Reduce Adolescent Crime in Zemgale’s District» (2009-2011)
«Strengthening Capacity of Personnel of Latvian Prison and Probation Systems» (2008-2011)
«Development of Specialized System for Work with Sexual Offenders in Latvia» (2009-2011)

Summary Country Assessment

Latvia has implemented a very balanced programme which has served to raise standards in detention centres, introduce a highly innovative therapeutic community approach to addicted prisoners and strengthen alternatives to prison. The prison population has fallen sharply. Numbers at Olaine and subject to EM are lower than forecast but, in both cases, this is largely because of a cautious approach to implementation of new models.

COUNTRY REPORT – LITHUANIA

1 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses **Programme LT14 - Correctional Services including Non-custodial Sanctions**.

Summary of the Programme

Category	Number of Projects	Donor Partnerships	Other Partnerships	Project Grant (EUR)
Completed Pre-Defined Projects	5	2	11	7,235,473
Completed other Projects	1	0	5	343,355
Total	6	2	16	7,578,828

The structure of this report follows the structure of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the main report. It concludes with a summary country assessment.

2 FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Prisons and Places of Detention

2.1.1 Infrastructure Improvements and Prison Conditions

The Norway Grants have brought about important improvements in the buildings where alleged and convicted offenders are held.

Juvenile Detention Centre

The assessment team inspected the school which has been constructed at Kaunas Juvenile Prison under *LT14-0003 Improved Conditions for Inmates of Vulnerable Groups in Prison*.

Six classrooms and a computer room have been built to teach up to 70 14 to 18-year olds on remand at the Centre which is the country's only closed institution for children. The institution dates from 1968 but the remand prison opened in 1998. The newly equipped school opened on 1 December 2015. The seven rooms comprise 199 square metres and are well equipped.

The number of students enrolled, and certificates gained was as follows¹⁶:

Year	Students enrolled In Remand School	Students in Correction House	Total numbers of Certificates
2015-16	20	55	84
2016-17	22	33	67
2017-18	20	38	72
2018-19	23	52	68

For children under 16 years old, general education is organized immediately upon their arrival. General education for those who are over 16 is organized at their written request. The teaching is carried out in two shifts. There are 18 teachers and 16 subjects taught. Classes are taught in groups of 3-5 with girls taught separately.

Previously teaching was provided through the cell door or through “self-learning” and “home learning” models which involved limited consultations with a subject teacher.

Although the assessment visit took place during the school holidays, the impact of the classroom on the learning opportunities available to young people is obvious to see.

Staff from the centre told us that learning conditions are close to those that are in ordinary schools, also they are in direct contact with teachers. The school allows young people to continue their pre-arrest learning in the remand prison. The staff also explained that the establishment of the school and the provision of general education are also relevant to the whole penal system, as correctional measures for convicts are an important factor in preventing the re-offending of convicted persons. In their experience, general education and training is one of the factors that helps individuals to make sense of themselves, to realize their abilities, to seek knowledge, to develop competences, which is a value in modern society. The staff emphasised that the healthy, safe learning environment, favourable and modern educational conditions and equipment help to motivate young people to learn. “This is especially important when we are talking about students who usually lack motivation to learn, have self-expression and learning difficulties, and behavioural-emotional problems”.¹⁷

Although the assessment visit took place during the school holidays and the assessment team were unable to observe the school in operation or interview young people, it is obvious that the facility offers significantly better opportunities for the young people to learn.

¹⁶ Staff Presentation 19 August 2019

¹⁷ Staff presentation and discussion at Kaunas 19 August 2019

Prison Hospital

The assessment team visited the Central Prison Hospital at Praviéniskes where a two floor building has been refurbished to accommodate the Psychiatric and Therapeutic sections under LT14-0003. The Norway grants contribution has been part of a wider reform of prison healthcare which saw the hospital moved from Vilnius in 2016.

The ground floor of provides 30 beds for psychiatric patients. The accommodation is very much a prison with prisoners kept in one or two person cells for most of the day. There were nine prisoners at the time of our visit although five had been discharged that morning. All except one were women.

The treatment rooms and offices were of a good standard. We spoke to three doctors who were enthusiastic about the building and the work they were doing. They told us that the new building was parts of wider changes which had resulted in more professional care, more psychiatric input into treatment, younger specialists and “a more modern attitude.”

However, the CPT has observed that “the treatment offered to psychiatric patients was essentially based on pharmacotherapy, and there was also occasional individual therapy. There was no common room, nor were there any organised activities, including group therapy (according to the health-care staff, group therapy was impossible because many patients would refuse to participate, fearing the presence of inmates belonging to other strata of the informal prisoner hierarchy).¹⁸

Upstairs, a therapeutic unit deals with prisoners with internal medical problems such as diabetes. The head of the unit told us that the standard of care provided was equivalent to that in a hospital.

The quality of healthcare has been much improved with the new building stimulating a more professional approach to the treatment if prisoners with mental and physical illnesses. However, it was a missed opportunity not to build rooms for individual and group therapy in the psychiatric wing.

Praviéniskes Number Three

As a result of LT14-0002, the Third Praviéniskes Correctional House-Open Prison Colony Sector became the first institution in Lithuania, where prisoners serve their sentences not in large dormitories, but in cells that have sufficient space to accommodate up to 3-4 people.

Three reconstructed wings provide much better physical conditions in terms of space, cleanliness, light and comfort for 120 prisoners on two floors of a residential block. The quality of the one wing we inspected is good and we were told by staff that there is guarantee on the work although this does not cover damage caused by prisoners.

¹⁸ Report to the Lithuanian Government on the visit to Lithuania carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 20 to 27 April 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/168095212f>

The atmosphere in the wing was totally different from when the Assessment Team Leader visited in 2012. At that time prisoners were unlocked most of the day and wandered around, the corridors and yards largely unsupervised. Now the wing is quiet and orderly.

The assessment team interviewed three staff members who explained that the new arrangements make it easier to know where particular prisoners are and to ensure control. The officers told us that they feel more secure than they did in the past. Prisoners have less time to mix and come up with negative ideas.

The staff also mentioned the concept of dynamic security which they described in terms of as interacting with the prisoners and organising activities with them. They said that not all prisoners and not all staff had found it easy to adjust to a very different approach.

We did not interview prisoners but were told that generally relations were much more positive than before. Prisoners may spend more time locked up than in the past. Those not working spend three hours a day out of their cells and that there are a number of other activities such as sports and lectures from outside organisations.

The more orderly environment has been helped by increased security measures such as mobile phone detection.

The external perimeter security has also been reorganised using new technology so that there are no longer guards stationed in watch towers. The perimeter is under CCTV surveillance with an armed response team available if needed. As a result the number of guards engaged in perimeter security has been reduced from 18 to 8. The ten posts have been redeployed to work in the wing after training on dynamic security.

The newly constructed wings at Pravienskės have enabled a new approach to imprisonment with an emphasis on dynamic security and control. The smaller cells have reduced the negative influence of the prison subculture.

Half-Way Houses (HWH)

Four new “open-type correctional facilities” or halfway houses were created by project LT14-0005. Their aim is to facilitate the integration of prisoners into society and the model is widely used in Norway.

The assessment team visited the HWHs at Pravienskės and Vilnius. The Pravienskės HWH has been established on the ground floor of what was an administration building near one of the prisons. It comprises ten double bedrooms, a kitchen, and lounge area. All but one of the residents were out at work or studying as having a daytime occupation is one of the requirements for admission. Staff at the HWH told us that they can help applicants to find jobs with no shortage of employers willing to offer opportunities. Residents are responsible for travelling to and from work – one owned a car.

Applicants are assessed by a commission consisting of representatives of the local community and prison staff. Prisoners must have served at least one-third of their sentence, followed their individual social rehabilitation plan and be assessed as low risk. They also must have 18 months or less of their sentence to serve and the right to leave the prison unescorted. The staff explained that there had been a problem in the way courts interpreted eligibility for admission but this has now been resolved.

The accommodation is very unlike a prison with mainly young non uniformed staff. Bedroom doors are not locked and while there are clear rules and curfews, residents enjoy considerable freedoms. They pay only for electricity and have to buy and prepare their own food. Families are allowed to visit. Residents can be tested for alcohol when they return from work.

Residents are expected to undertake community work at weekends such as cutting wood for elderly people. Staff told us that since the HWH opened two years ago, the Commission considered 61 requests for transfer to Halfway house and confirmed 44 requests; a total of 41 prisoners have lived there. Only two residents had returned to closed prisons. One had been rude to staff members another had been under the influence of alcohol.

The Vilnius HWH was established in 2016 and accepted its first resident in January 2017. It is located in a former prison for “VIP’s” which was also used as a juvenile detention centre. It has been totally refurbished and has a homely feel. Like at Pravieniskes, residents must take care of their home, do their washing and cooking and maintain the common areas as well as their rooms.

Residents are also expected to participate in social rehabilitation programs, according to the terms of their individual plan. Programmes provided include legal and social education, motivational work, cognitive-behavioural treatment, social skills development, arts therapy and interventions for domestic violence perpetrators and for aggression and auto-aggression management.

Residents do voluntary work to manage the local environment and also help in orphanages. A series of lectures and other cultural and sporting activities have been organised including a football tournament involving the four HWH’s.

The first resident was released on parole on 11 July 2017 since when a further 29 prisoners have been released. Three men have been returned to prison for alcohol use, and two following a decision by the Disciplinary Board. At the time of our visit, 27 men were serving their sentence in the Halfway House.

While LT140005 funded 20 places, the prison service has used its own resources to create an additional 15 places at Vilnius.

Public reaction to HWHs has mostly been positive. There was some initial hostility to proposed locations which had to be changed.

While data about recidivism is not available, the creation of halfway houses has added an important new element to the penal system which makes successful transition from

prison to the community much more likely. The success rate is very high in terms of the numbers who have to be returned to closed prison; the requirement to work or study ensures daily structure in the lives of the prisoners; and desistance theory suggest that the contributions made to the life of the local community should help prisoners to shift their identity from being an offender to being a citizen.

2.1.2 Regimes and services for prisoners

Prison regimes for addicted persons

In 2016 in Pravienskės Second sector, a Rehabilitation Centre for addicted prisoners was opened with 30 places under LT14-0003. A wing previously housing 140 prisoners has been converted into a homely therapeutic community with prisoners in rooms for four to six people.

Prisoners choose to enter the centre where they are kept apart from the rest of the prison and receive a variety of treatment and help with their problems. There are morning circle meetings, education about addiction, therapeutic sessions, and individual consultations.

Residents participate in a twelve step programme as well as art therapy- one of the staff is a skilled artist. Staff told us that there are up to 32 different programmes available for the residents, each of whom has their own individualised programme. Residents stay for up to one year but this can be extended. The unit is run according to the principles of dynamic security.

Upon successful completion of the rehabilitation programme, the inmates have the opportunity to be conditionally released, transferred to the HWH or to continue the sentence but under lighter conditions.

Since the Rehabilitation Centre was established, a total of 96 prisoners have lived there and 42 prisoners have successfully completed a rehabilitation program. Not all are successful. According to the Final Programme Report, during the project period, of the 72 addicted inmates participating in the rehabilitation programmes provided by the Rehabilitation Centre, 15 were returned to the main prison due to violations of the Internal Rules of the Rehabilitation Centre.

We held a focus group with prisoners who said that the unit was much better than the main prison because it was smaller, the staff were better and there was more psychological help available. One prisoner said that “you can get crazy out there” with too many people in one sector. By contrast the Centre is peaceful and not crowded. The main reason that they had chosen to come was in order to get treatment for their drug or alcohol problem.

The prisoners said they would like the opportunity to be employed and have the chance for family visits.

The Centre is an important addition to the prison facilities at Pravieniskes, offering a very different experience for prisoners focusing on their treatment in a setting which maximises the chance of success.

Mother and Baby House

The mother and baby house is located in a wealthy area of the town of Panevezys, five kilometres from Lithuania's one female correction house which holds on average 250 women prisoners. The house can accommodate five mothers and their babies. Pregnant inmates can also be accommodated in the Mother and Child House to let them prepare for birth and motherhood outside prison.

It is a spacious well equipped five-bedroom detached property which the prison service purchased under LT140003. The house contains:

- 5 bedrooms (a separate room for each mother and child);
- 2 kitchens;
- 2 bathrooms;
- several common areas for mothers and children to play, rest, watch TV, etc.;
- garden and children's playground outside.

The house is fitted with modern equipment (e.g. washing machine, microwave, etc.) in order to create an environment as similar as possible to a real home as well as to teach the women how to use modern machines.

There are security and social work staff at the house – though not in uniform- and CCTV cameras covering common areas in the house are monitored in the main prison a few kilometres away. The staff are not permanently allocated to the house- they also work at the main prison- and have been trained in the principles and practice of dynamic security. The security officer does not limit herself to security tasks.

The children can stay with their mothers until the age of three although this can be extended until four. When we visited the house was fully occupied; a further seven mothers and children were accommodated in the main prison. Mothers can apply to a special commission for transfer to the house.

The daily life in the house revolves around the needs of the children with staff and NGOs providing some educational activities such as a weekly ceramics session. Care is taken of children's health. Visitors are not allowed at the house, but the women can make and receive unlimited phone calls and visits, letters and parcels.

The women can go out for up to two hours on authorised routes and can meet family members during this time. We were told by staff that women like to go to the supermarket nearby, buy food and cook for themselves and their children.

One mother we were told was met by her husband in his car outside the house. Longer visits can be organised at the main prison. Staff have the right to follow women when they are outside the centre but in practice do not need to.

The assessment team held a focus group with all of the women residents who told us that compared to being in the main prison was like “black and white”. The most important aspect is the freedom and environment that their children can enjoy. “They can get everything like at home”. The mothers felt that they could really look after their children, buying and cooking food, taking them out to a nearby park or activities outside like the theatre or other educational experiences. “It’s not like prison it’s like home”. One of the residents confirmed that said that despite this they still want to get released.

The women accepted that when they are released, they would probably have to live in worse conditions but felt that it was good for them to see what people could have.

Since the house opened in April 2016, 17 convicted mothers have served their sentences living in the Mother and Child House. None of the mothers has been returned to prison for any disciplinary violations. The aim is for them to be granted conditional release once the child reaches three or exceptionally four years so that the child does not have to be transferred to public welfare services.

Prison staff said that 40% of women in prison are Roma and one of the women in the house was a Roma. The staff told us that they made certain cultural adaptations to ensure that Roma women are integrated in the life of the home.

The house aims to improve resocialisation of sentenced mothers and while it is too early to measure impact there is no doubt that the project provides improved conditions and opportunities for rehabilitation of convicted mothers. The first three years have no major violations of the rules, and no complaints from neighbours. The prison staff told us that there has been a positive impact on other inmates with women raising children inside prison becoming more motivated to take part in resocialisation programme and reduce the risk of reoffending in order to get a permission to raise their children outside. A positive impact is also reported on the community at large with more tolerant public attitudes towards inmates but we have been unable to test this.

2.1.3 Vulnerable Groups in Prisons

The benefits of the programme for women and drug addicted prisoners have been described above.

2.2 Community Based Measures

2.2.1 Impact on Alternatives to Prison

Electronic Monitoring (EM)

In 2016, LT0001 enabled the purchase of 125 bracelets to enable the tracking of offenders with GPS (Global Positioning System) technology in addition to Radio Frequency (RF) curfew monitoring. The KDI who were a partner in the project informed us that “Lithuania had problems with the procurement of technology for electronic monitoring, and this caused big delays in the project”.

Electronic Monitoring Centres have been established in Kaunas and in Vilnius. The EM scheme is run by the prison service and is used to monitor requirements of conditional release from prison and control compliance with the obligations of court orders. As well as the obligation to stay at home at a particular time (curfew), the new system enables the monitoring of prohibitions such as not to visit particular places, not to approach a victim, not to leave the area of residence without the permission of the probation institution.

During the project period (from 26th of July 2016 to 30th April 2018), the assessment team was informed that EM was used for 1254 persons under supervision, of which were 752 conditional released persons from imprisonment. With 125 bracelets, the periods must have been very short if this figure is accurate.

EM gives the prison and probation service a way of making supervision of convicted persons more effective, an ability in real time to react to violations by immediately contacting the offenders and an ability to reduce the potential risk to the victims

EM equipment will continue to be used for supervision of convicted persons - intense supervision and as an instrument of controlling compliance with the obligations imposed by court.

As of 1st of July 2020 the Lithuanian legal regulation will provide wider opportunities to apply EM system in probation: it is expected that over the next few years number of persons under intense supervision will increase up to 3000.

Inmates who agree with application of electronic monitoring are able to be conditionally released on parole 9 months earlier usual term of application of conditional release, the project has also contributed to reduction of the prison population.

Mediation

To further strengthen community-based alternatives to prison, mediation was introduced as an option for offenders under the supervision of probation officers. Under LT14 0006, between 2014 and 2016, a model and rules for mediation were established with assistance from Mykolas Romeris University. Norwegian partners were also heavily involved.

81 employees of 5 Regional Probation Services were trained as mediators and 2084 people used mediation with 891 successful cases. 652 formal agreement protocols were signed.

The majority of cases involved offenders with whom the probation service was supervising but 111 cases came from other agencies such as the police department, prisons, children’s services courts and schools. During the project, 59% of cases involved compensation for damage caused by the offender; 24% involved domestic violence and 11% apologies for anti- social behaviour. The domestic violence cases are limited to cases where a man and woman are still living together.

The sustainability and growing effectiveness of the project is indicated by the fact that in 2018, 1495 people used mediation in total with a greater percentage of successful outcomes – although a slightly lower percentage of these were in the form of formal agreements.

	Number of People using Mediation	Successful cases	Successful cases as % of people using	Formal agreements	Formal agreements as % of successful cases
During 19 months Project (2 October 2014 to 29 April 2016)	2084	891	43%	652	73%
2018	1495	761	51%	524	69%

The authorities have reported that “Most of the clients of mediation process gave a positive assessment of the mediation process”.¹⁹ One disappointment was that there were not larger numbers of cases from agencies other than the probation service. The authorities recognise that “it is necessary to adopt legal regulation in order to make mediation services available at any stage of the criminal process for the future”.²⁰ However as of 19th of October 2018, the head of the Prison department released an order of mediation application in the correction houses/prison.²¹

Mediation is an important and innovative approach to resolving disputes alongside or as an alternative to criminal prosecution. Norway grants have enabled the establishment of a programme from nothing and laid the basis for expansion in future years.

¹⁹ Final report

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Presentation and discussion on 20 August 2019

2.3 Resources

2.3.1 Professionalization of Staff

According to the Final programme report, 16 new training programmes were created during the project covering a range of topics including motivational interviewing, assessments of prisoners' risks and needs, and the prevention of suicide and self-harm. The final programme report states that "data of post-training surveys showed that Lithuanian prison officers are ready to transfer of a new working methods and gained knowledge is very useful for correctional service system in Lithuania, especially applying dynamic security methodology in the Correction Houses". In total 1520 staff members were involved in training. Prison service told us that more than 70% of participants in the training were satisfied with it.

The training on dynamic security was facilitated by Norwegian Prison Academy KRUS. This was provided to junior staff and senior staff and has now been integrated into the Correctional Officer's Modular Vocational Training Program. According to the Final Programme Report "it is planned to install the dynamic security model in all correctional institutions within a few years".

Moreover, the Training Centre for Prison staff is being restructured in part as a result of the increased need for professional training stimulated by the Norway grants project.

Other activities have increased professional skills. We interviewed a prison director who told us that the most significant experience for him had been job shadowing in which senior staff had spent time observing the work of their Norwegian counterparts with a return visit three months later. The most abiding memory was of staff members in a Norwegian prison playing table tennis with prisoners- something that was not possible in Lithuania but summed up the difference in philosophy.

An impressive range of training courses were provided to large numbers of staff and much of the material has been integrated into the regular training for staff and in the work of a restructured training centre. The extensive training in dynamic security has contributed to an important change in philosophy in the prison sector. While this is operational in a small number of settings so far there are plans to extend it to all prisons.

2.3.2 New Technology

Technology did not figure greatly in the project apart from the use of CCTV in refurbished prison accommodation.

3 FINDINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The infrastructure projects look set to be sustained for the five years after the completion of the project, as required by the grant contract. The refurbished prison hospital building was undertaken after the relocation of the hospital from Vilnius and we were informed that there are plans to modernise the buildings providing health care and social care for prisoners which have not yet been refurbished.

Similarly, the changes that have been made in the infrastructure at Pravieniskes have now become a model for the rest of the system. There is an intention to replace large dormitories with smaller cells throughout the system.

The mother and baby home is owned by the prison service and no problems have been reported from the neighbours although the KDI informed us that neighbour protests led to a change in the original location. It is of course possible that problem incidents could threaten sustainability, but the prison service are aware of this and appear to manage the project very well.

The same can be said of the Halfway Houses; the two we visited are each on prison land. The Vilnius HWH has already been extended with 15 additional places created. The prison service takes the view that this is sufficient.

The role of Halfway Houses has been called into question in 2018 by the Justice minister who suggested that “we should discuss as to whether these institutes are necessary and whether people could spend nights at home but wear an ankle and register with a probation officer (...). And they could go to halfway houses or elsewhere for some training and consultation.”²² It is not clear whether work is being done to take forward these proposals but the possibility of a change of role for HWHs was not mentioned during the assessment visit.

Given the under occupancy of the Kaunas youth prison, there must be a question in the long term about the need and location for such a large establishment. Contemporary thinking on youth justice favours non- custodial arrangements wherever possible and where detention is unavoidable, small local units are preferable to one central institution.

The trainings of applying dynamic security continues and more and more prison staff are involved in applying dynamic security in closed prisons. It is planned to install the dynamic security model in all correctional institutions “within a few years”.²³

In terms of the wider policy context, in 2014, the Lithuanian Government approved a new Prison Modernisation Programme, which provided for the modernisation of detention facilities by 2022. The programme involved the construction of a new remand prison on the outskirts of Vilnius, the completion of Pravieniskes Prison, and the construction of new remand prisons in Siauliai, Klaipeda and Panevezys on the basis of a Public Private Partnership. The estimated cost to state funds was 30m Euros.

²² <https://en.delfi.lt/culture/justmin-mulls-renouncing-halfway-house-demand-for-convicts.d?id=78826077>

²³ Final programme report

In the report of their visit in 2018, the CPT was told that the programme “was not being duly implemented due to the lack of financial resources, and the authorities were in the process of reassessing the Programme so as to adapt it to the resources available. In practice, most of the ongoing refurbishment and reconstruction work in prisons (which generally implied transforming large-capacity dormitories/cells into smaller living units was being carried out with the aid of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.”

As for draft new legislation, there were plans to amend extensively the Code of Execution of Sentences to encourage prisoners to work and develop links with the health-care and social assistance systems in the outside community.²⁰ Further, draft amendments were being prepared (following the recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights) ²¹ to introduce into the Lithuanian law the possibility of early release for life-sentenced prisoners who had served at least 25 years of their sentence; the plan was for the amendments to be considered by the Seimas (Parliament) in the course of 2019.

4 FINDINGS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

4.1 The Role of Donor Project partners

4.1.1 Norwegian Government at project and programme level

More than 20 bilateral activities were implemented, and more than 70 civil servants, prison and probation staff and other employees participated in it.

The partnership with the Norwegian Training Academy KRUS has had a major impact in this programme. The Lithuanian prison staff we met mentioned two particularly influential activities; shadowing visits of the staff from both Lithuanian and Norwegian correctional and probation institutions: and training on dynamic security.

The shadowing visits involved looking close up at how management is conducted and understood in Lithuania and Norway. According to KDI, The Norwegian and Lithuanian partners have remained in contact since the shadowing visits, and Lithuanian participants have also been invited to and participated in management trainings in Norway after this.

As for dynamic security, KRUS provided expert assistance in the development of training for both senior and junior staff. A working group was established with representatives from KRUS and the Lithuanian Prison service to oversee this task.

KRUS were also involved in developing of training programmes for inmates, which focused on prisoners’ motivation for work, improvement of social skills and crisis management.

The development of the four Halfway Houses in Lithuania drew heavily on a partnership with Sandaker HWH in Oslo. Sandaker provided consultations about operating the HWHs, hosting a two-day visit and a four-day internship for representatives from Lithuanian penitentiary staff and also provided training to social workers of newly established halfway houses.

The deputy director of the Lithuanian prison service informed us that the input from Norway had been crucial in ensuring a successful development.

4.1.2 Council of Europe (CoE) at project and programme level

The CoE was not involved in this programme.

Summary Country Assessment

Lithuania has combined innovative infrastructure development in prisons with efforts to introduce a new staff culture based on dynamic security. The HWH and Mother and Baby Home are very promising models. The addition of Mediation to the range of probation methods also holds out promise. This assessment agrees with the assessment conducted for the Lithuanian Ministry of Finance which concluded that “the Programme interventions should be seen as a significant impetus for the modernisation of the country’s penalty enforcement system ”.²⁴

²⁴

COUNTRY REPORT – POLAND

1 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses **Programme PL17- Correctional Services including Non-custodial Sanctions**.

Summary of the Programme

Category	Number of Projects	Donor Partnerships	Other Partnerships	Project Grant
Completed Pre-Defined Projects	7	3	0	12,127,152
Completed other Projects	0	0	0	
Total	7	3	0	12,127,152

The structure of this report follows the structure of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the main report. It concludes with a summary country assessment.

2 FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Prisons

2.1.1 Infrastructure Improvements

The Norway Grants have brought about very limited improvements in the buildings where alleged and convicted offenders are held. This is despite the fact that some of Poland's prisons need renovation and the minimum space requirement for prisoners in Polish law- 3 square metres-is lower than what is deemed acceptable by the Council of Europe.

Under PL17-0001," family corners" have been created in the visits areas in 178 establishments with a variety of toys and play equipment.

The assessment team saw the corner in the visits room at Stuzewiec remand prison where it was being used by a family; and at Grochow prison.

The areas are a useful way of making visits to prisoners a more family friendly experience and therefore helping prisoner to maintain contact with their families.

2.1.2 Regimes and Services

Training of Prisoners

Project PL17-0001 involved organising 1,447 training courses and classes for imprisoned individuals. The project supplemented a number of existing initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills of prisoners particularly the EU Human Capital programme. The Prison system tries to adapt the training it offers to the need of the labour market. Under the project, prisoners with 5 year or less until the end of their sentence (or parole eligibility date) were able to apply. Prisoners given priority were those with poor education, lack of social skills and weak family ties especially with their children.

At Sluzewiec, courses provided for prisoners included gardening and horticulture designed to equip them with knowledge and skills necessary to work in this profession and to gain knowledge of planning and maintaining green areas, and care for horticultural crops; and emergency medical assistance aimed at teaching the skills to provide first aid in life-threatening situations. Both courses were described as “high quality” by the Director.

Courses were also offered on ecological issues and waste management and more general sessions aimed at preparing people to return to the open labour market.

At Grochow, training for prisoners also included environmental issues and the development of Green areas.

No evidence is available about whether prisoners have gone on to find employment in the work they have been trained in. Some have been able to use the skills doing paid or unpaid work within prison.

Developments in this field are part of a wider strategy to increase the numbers of prisoners in paid work. The numbers doubled from 9,000 in 2011 to 17,000 in 2018.

2.1.3 Vulnerable Groups in Prisons

As well as training, some efforts have been made to assist prisoners with addiction and mental health problems. Dog therapy courses have been offered in which prisoners are able to take care of dogs from a local shelter. An evaluation of the project found that contact with and care for animals taught prisoners empathy, reduced tendencies to aggression and built a strong sense of being needed and self-esteem.

2.2 Community Based Measures

2.2.1 Alternatives to Prison

In project PL17-0007, the original aim was to raise awareness of alternatives to prison among judges, but this was modified. A judge working in the Ministry of Justice told us that a series of interagency meetings were held around the country involving judges,

prosecutors, probation staff and other stakeholders. More than 6,000 people took part in 63 training events including more than 500 judges.

The aim of the meetings was to communicate a change in the law and policy relating to the use of imprisonment. In particular, Poland had a tradition of courts imposing large numbers of suspended sentences of imprisonment which meant that probation officers were carrying very large caseloads. Large numbers of these sentences ended up being converted into imprisonment. In 2014, the largest number of people entering prison did so as a result of a revocation of a suspended sentence.

According to an evaluation of the workshops seen by the assessment team, participants were very satisfied, particularly with the opportunity to work with other professional groups and come up with joint solutions to problems.

As a result of changes in the law and of the workshops organised under this project, the numbers of suspended reduced substantially. Slightly more offenders have received immediate imprisonment instead of suspended imprisonment, but even more are now being dealt with by fines or community work.

More than 120,000 offenders now do community work, an expansion in large part due to the project events which saw participation from more than 1,300 representatives from local government. These are the people responsible for organising community work placements.

The nationwide series of events has played an important part in making the criminal justice system more effective and efficient, with recent data showing a return to crime within 5 years after all penalties fell from 25% for those sentenced in 2009 to 23% for those sentenced in 2013.

2.3 Resources

2.3.1 Professionalization of Staff

Projects PL17-0002, PL17-0003, PL17-0004, PL17-0005 and PL17-0006, involved organising 6,492 training courses, classes and post-graduate programmes for Prison Service personnel. We were told that 24,000 staff had benefitted from one or more of the courses. These covered a range of types of training from professional qualifications, soft skills and safety and security.

Topics included stress management, group work, art therapy, shaping social skills and English language course. They also included more technical training on topics such as first aid, the recognition of narcotic and psychotropic substances, addiction prevention paramedical and convoy training for Prison Service intervention groups and convoy groups.

Specific courses dealt with how to manage aggressive prisoners, crisis situations, juvenile prisoners, life sentenced prisoners and how to help prisoners find work on release. Educators and psychologists had the opportunity to learn about addictions, domestic violence and the prevention of violence.

At Grochow prison, we were informed that 20% of the staff had benefited from training support. 34 people took part in 24 different courses and trainings. Others have access to the teaching aids purchased under the project.

The prison service told us that in a survey of more than 2,000 respondents, between over 90% said that the skills they had learned about would be very useful in their everyday work.

The assessment team interviewed two staff members from Grochow Prison who had participated in training courses. The first a psychologist had attended an 18-month part-time course on drug addiction prevention and treatment. This had been provided by an external training provider and he had participated alongside clinicians from other institutions. He told us that he uses in everyday practice what he had learned about diagnostic techniques, motivational interviewing and relapse prevention. A colleague from the prison had attended a similar course on alcohol addiction and had also found it to be highly relevant and practical.

The second staff member was female penitentiary correctional officer who had participated in a five-day training course on group work. She told us that she had learned about the various stage that groups go through and about the importance of pro-social modelling. As a result, she now finds her work alongside a colleague running groups twice a week with 15 to 20 prisoners a lot less stressful. She is now a lot more confident in the work that she does.

Hard data about the impact of training is difficult to obtain. At Stuzewiec, we were told that there has been a fall in the number of complaints by prisoners. The number of violent incidents between prisoners has remained stable but their seriousness has reduced. This was explained by the reduced number of prisoners who are attracted to membership of the prison subculture. This was estimated to be about 10% of prisoners. Prisoners who are involved in the subculture are less likely to obtain early release.

2.3.2 New Technology

The Polish prison service has improved some of its internal IT and communication systems. Under PL17-0005 an HR and payroll system has been created which comprises a database of staff. This enables better management of human resources by recording electronically details of the qualifications and training undertaken by each of the 30,000 staff members working in the system.

Previously, each prison had its own IT system, so the development has improved the ability of the prison system to plan and administer its human resources function.

An electronic document management system has also been introduced which allows for more efficient management of information arriving each day at prisons. The e-Doc system allows for exchange, storage and archiving of electronic documents once they have been scanned into the system.

At Stuzewiec, we were told that more than 200 documents arrive at the prison each day. The electronic document circulation system streamlines the flow of information between individual departments in the prison and, we were informed, saves staff time.

While some additional staff time is required to scan documents, once digitised the circulation and authorisation of forms and documents is much quicker and cost effective than previously.

A variety of equipment has been purchased under PL17-0006 to improve security within prisons and the safety of prisoners. These include protective equipment kits for staff, tactical cameras for staff to wear, inspection cameras, mobile phone detectors, metal detectors, medical bags and defibrillators.

During visits to two prisons, the assessment team asked about the use of this equipment. We were told that mobile phone detectors are in use in the prison all of the time. At Stuzewiec, the defibrillator had been used on two occasions.

The availability of basic security and medical equipment has been increased in the prison system which enables greater safety for prisoners and staff.

3 FINDINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The improved staff training is being sustained in two ways. The first is through the development of the Prison Training school at Kalisz with the help of the KRUS prison academy. The Norway grants have enabled:

- the improvement of equipment available to teach staff from induction course through to advanced learning ;
- the creation of e learning courses on the basics of the prison system and broader knowledge about the various departments ;
- the modernisation of the internal administration of the training school and its database for student management.

In a survey of 2000 students participating in e learning courses, 21% were highly satisfied and 50% satisfied. 14% were less satisfied. This form of training had not been used before for the prison services.

The second way the training is being sustained is through the development of a 5-year undergraduate course for prison staff

This was described to the assessment team as a revolution in training. Considering the Norwegian experience, the Prison Services decided to create a new system of education of prison staff. The College of Criminology and Penitentiary Studies in Warsaw is a vocational school of state services and was founded on the 31st August 2018. Studies will start on the 1st October 2019. University graduates (5 years education) will have adequate preparation to work in specialized institutions of central and local government administration; in social and educational organizations; in international institutions and organizations and in

institutions dealing with supervision of persons having conflict with the law. There was no such institution educating penitentiary services in Poland before.

4 FINDINGS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

4.1 The Role of Donor Project partners

4.1.1 Norwegian Government at project and programme level

The Norwegian Correctional service was a Donor Programme partner and partnerships took place in there of the projects. Prison staff training projects included 18 study visits and two internship visits. The Polish prison service concluded from these visits, perhaps surprisingly that “both penitentiary systems are, in general, similar despite quite a few minor differences”.

The project report gives as tangible results the opportunity to consider possible changes in Poland relating to

- a) juveniles, dangerous and long-term prisoners
- b) dynamic security
- c) needs assessments and
- d) European standards.

Specific innovative ideas have also been discussed as a result of study visits – like suggestion boxes for ideas to improve practice and the need to involve external organisations and the prisoner’s family more in rehabilitation efforts.

The project to strengthen the use of alternatives to prison also involved study visits for 88 participants organised with a Norwegian Probation office. This involved meetings not only with the penitentiary and probation counterparts but members of the Norwegian legal and trail community.

4.1.2 Council of Europe (CoE) at project and programme level

The CoE was not involved in this programme.

Country Assessment

Poland has used the grants in large part to improve the effectiveness of prisons through capacity building. The professionalization of staff training has been given substantial impetus and bilateral help, particularly with KRUS has been well used. The interagency workshops on alternatives to prison appear to have had an impact on sentencing.

COUNTRY REPORT – ROMANIA

1 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses **Programme RO23 Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions**

Summary of the Programme

Category	Number of Projects	Donor Partnerships	Other Partnerships	Project Grant (EUR)
Completed Pre-Defined Projects	6	6	9	7.160,534
Completed other Projects	0	0	0	0
Total	6	6	9	7.160,534

The structure of this report follows the structure of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the main report. It concludes with a summary country assessment

2 FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Prisons and Places of Detention

2.1.1 Infrastructure Improvements

The Norway Grants have brought about important improvements in the buildings where alleged and convicted offenders are held.

Police Detention Centres

The assessment team inspected the changes that have been made at one of Bucharest's 11 pre-trial detention centres under *RO23-0004 Strengthening the capacity of the pre-trial detention system to comply with the relevant international human rights instruments*. These centres are run by the Ministry of Interior and hold arrested persons for a maximum period of 180 days although the MOI informed the team that the average period is 60 days.

Among the changes that have been made are:

- Improvements to ventilation in the cells and the introduction of air conditioning
- New beds, mattresses and other furniture in cells
- Better sanitation facilities including lockable doors to toilets

- Refurbished visits areas allowing for face to face and telephone contact
- Security cameras.

On the day of the visit, there were 54 detainees in the centre. The capacity is 66. Two were women and five minors.

Senior staff from the police confirmed that a total of 51 centres had been renovated across the country. In interviews, we were told that renovations had taken place as planned apart from 2 walking areas which had not been extended.

The Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has visited a number of the centres renovated in large part with Norway grants and found “conditions of detention ... were adequate in terms of state of repair and hygienic conditions for short periods of detention”²⁵ The police told us that in 2019 there had been no complaints in the Bucharest Central Centre about conditions.

One paradox has arisen in that detainees and prisoners prefer to be placed in Centres with inadequate conditions in order to qualify for a reduced sentence. Since 2017, detention or imprisonment in an establishment which fails to meet certain standards can lead to a reduction of confinement of six days per month. It is not exactly clear how often the certification process works and whether a failure to meet standards in one cell means that all of the detainees/prisoners’ benefit. Nor is it clear how often the certification is applied.

The standards are set out in Law 169/2017. In some respects, they exceed Council of Europe standards, requiring a minimum of 4sq metres per detainee (CoE standards are 3.5sq m) and a hard lockable toilet door – (CoE requires only a curtain).

The police told us that certification of adequacy is an annual process conducted by a Commission from the Ministry of interior. (As per the MoI order issued in June 2019, reclassification of detention conditions is allowed to be also done more often if necessary (whenever it is observable a modification of the conditions).The Law 254/2013 sets such basic conditions to which all later certification needs to compare to. This is not a cumulative process and if one of those criteria is not met, reclassification status is automatically changed to not satisfactory. At the time of our assessment visit (July 2019), 60% of police detention facilities were adequate and 40% inadequate.

A positive impact has been made on the conditions of detention in police detention centres which benefits several thousand arrested persons per year. But these are not considered to be appropriate facilities for detention. The CPT has said that is “unacceptable for the police authorities to continue to hold detainees for months on end”.²⁶ There is therefore a question about whether Norway grants should have colluded in this bad practice without insisting on wider reform.

²⁵ Report to the Romanian Government on the visit to Romania carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 7 to 19 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/16809390a6>

²⁶ Report to the Romanian Government on the visit to Romania carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 7 to 19 February 2018

Penitentiary Establishments

On the prison side under RO23-0006, Setting up an eco-reintegration mechanism for inmates, new infrastructure has successfully been constructed at Tataru where three buildings have been built as a training facility for prisoners. This does not provide any living accommodation for prisoners but those nearing the end of the sentence travel by boat to the site each day to undertake training or work.

The construction of the three buildings has been successfully completed to a high standard, according to environmentally sound principles and using traditional techniques for walls and roofing. During construction, prisoners were able to learn building skills and since completion, the buildings provide a positive setting for agricultural, craft and other training.

The law does not currently permit the facility to be used as a residential facility although there are bedrooms and beds in one of the buildings. The buildings have been featured on Romanian media and have provided an opportunity for the penitentiary service to show the priority attached to rehabilitation and reintegration and the value of an “ecology” based approach to imprisonment.

The Delta project has created important infrastructure which provides benefits to prisoners, but its scope could be expanded.

Important construction activity has been completed at Bacau youth prison and Gherla. At Bacau, 200 places now meet CPT standards and improvements have been made to the other parts of the prison. A new wing has been constructed at Gherla to accommodate a Therapeutic Community for up to 60 women from all over Romania. Penitentiary officials told us there were 43 on the day of our assessment. In interviews, a prison official described the new wing as “a different world.”

Conditions for 260 women and young people have been improved

2.1.2 Regimes and Services

The Delta eco reintegration project has provided an innovative regime. In a focus group discussion with six prisoners at the Tataru Eco Integration project, all of them welcomed the freedom which they experience while undertaking training or working at the project. The experience was much less stressful than being in the main penitentiary at Chilia. It gave them something to do and an opportunity to be active and outside. The prisoners were able to interact with each other and with staff in a very different way. Indeed prison guards are not normally present, with supervision in the hands of one or two teachers. The prisoners also explained that their positive attitude to participation partly reflected the fact that it contributed to a reduction in the length of their sentence.

The actual curriculum of training at Tataru appeared somewhat limited. We observed prisoners making items of jewellery. In interviews two said they planned to work as builders and a third in welding. Since the three buildings have been completed, there is currently no

opportunities for new building work or training, although a group of prisoners works on maintenance of the existing buildings.

There is agricultural training provided for eleven prisoners. We did not observe this as it does not operate on a Monday, but the greenhouse is very small. A planned training activity in boatbuilding has not started because the prison has been unable to identify a suitable trainer.

The Ivan Patchaikin Foundation, a NGO who was a partner in the project involved informed us that they have facilitated reintegration of several inmates, with at least 3 inmates participating in the trainings having a permanent job in construction at the time of the interview in September 2019. They said that based on project activities and given the low level of education among inmates, the Ministry of Labour changed some regulations related to certification of trainings and accepted a reduced level of education (from 8 grades to 4 grades). They agreed that that small crafts such as bracelet making were not likely to be relevant unless there was an effort to market them to stimulate business.

Useful training is provided at Tataru but there is scope for expanding its range and quality. The Commander is enthusiastic about a new phase of building and the land is available.

2.1.3 Vulnerable Groups in Prisons

A therapeutic community regime has been developed in the new wing at Gherla Women's prison under RO23-0002 and the Bacau reconstruction under RO23-0003 has enabled a more age appropriate regime for you men.

As for Roma, in detention centres, the assessment team was told that they can declare their ethnicity if they wish, but do not receive any special treatment. Leaflets for detainees on their rights in police detention have been printed and distributed to detainees.

According to a representative from the Norwegian correctional service, special treatment for Roma prisoners can place them at risk of reprisals from other prisoners.

2.2 Community Based Measures

2.2.1 Alternatives to Prison

RO23-0005 has contributed a great deal to the development of the probation system. In 2014 the numbers subject to probation supervision exceeded the numbers in prison for the first time (see Chart 1). Staff numbers have increased substantially from 278 probation counsellors in 2013 to 551 in 2019. Probation

The rapid expansion of the probation service has required investment to improve the working conditions of staff. A standardised working place has been introduced for probation offices along with improved working conditions (IT equipment, furniture, alarm systems, air

conditioning, other goods), and a software system SERN (Scale for Evaluation of the Risks and Needs).

42 probation services and NPD headquarter have been endowed 9 local offices and the office of NPD repaired

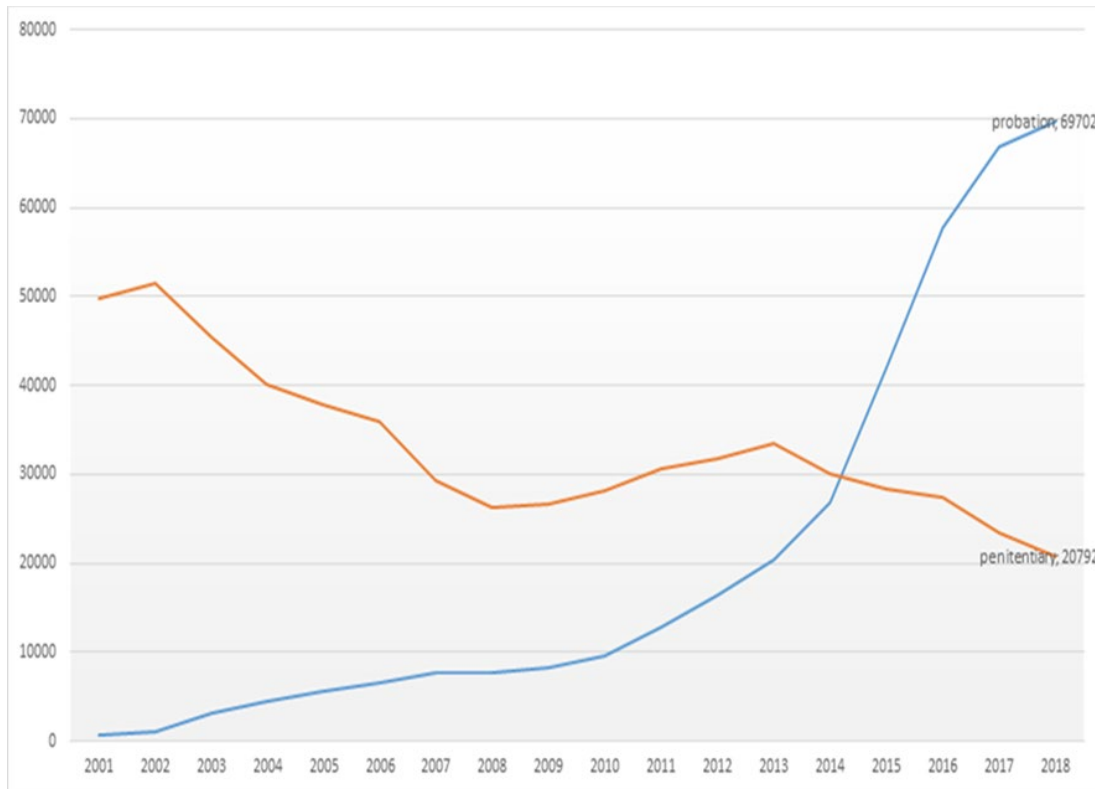


Chart 1 Prison and Probation Populations 2001 to 2018 (provided by Probation Service)

There are about 69,000 people on probation of whom, about 60% are subject to a suspended sentence with supervision and 30% subject to a postponement of penalty. The remainder comprise offenders subject to conditional release, doing community work are subject to juvenile sanctions.

On the face of it, chart 1 shows that probation has contributed to the fall in the prison population. However, much of the probation caseload- over 40% - comprises traffic offenders. More than 80% are first time offenders. It has been suggested to us by a national Probation expert that much of probation work is with low level offenders who would not necessarily be facing imprisonment. This is known as net widening. There is a case for a strategic review of the role of the probation service to ensure its potential is being fully deployed.

Three new programmes have been developed for offenders subject to probation. These can either be required by the court as part of a sentence or undertaken at the request of the convicted person (probationer). They are My Choice, Civic Education and Roma mentoring.

“My Choice” is an alternative to prison intervention programme for alcohol/drug consumers adapted from a Norwegian model. The intervention comprises 12 group or individual sessions and an optional group meeting with the family or stakeholders. Themes explored in the programme include high risk situations, relapse, emergency plans, anxiety, depression and consumption, anger and consumption, decision making, group pressure and psychological traps. Probation staff were trained for implementing the My Choice programme, and practical guidelines were written to inform its use. It was piloted and materials disseminated.

In 2017, 38 beneficiaries started the programme of whom 36 completed. In 2018, 142 started the programme and 132 completed. A 92% completion rate is very high for this kind of programme.

The assessment team surveyed probation staff who had been trained to run the programme. In a sample of 20 staff, 17 rated the training as very useful and 15 agreed that they had used what they had learned a lot in their day to day work. Among the comments made in the survey were:

“I believe that the information presented during this training would be useful to all the colleagues from the probation service even if they don’t apply the program.”

“I often use aspects from motivational interviewing during the supervision meetings, especially for making the person aware about the problem.”

“The My choice program is not applied in our probation service due to lack of adequate space – the problem is known by the NPD.”

“A shorter version of the program {should be developed}, due to the fact that the distance between the probation headquarters and the home address of the beneficiaries is quite large, they don’t have the money necessary for making the trip and they are hampered by their work schedule to attend such large number of sessions.”

“It could be improved by having more practical activities (sessions, role playing, debates)”

“The training was well organized, there were many theoretical aspects discussed but it would have been very useful to discuss about practical difficulties in applying the program.”

“My choice program is a complex program and long-term (A-version has 12 sessions and B-version has 7 sessions) and implies involvement, explanations and tenacity from both the counsellor and the beneficiary, for successfully finalize it.”

“The duration of the training – it should be longer having in view the complexity of the program. “

Probation has also developed a Civic Education Programme for minors sentenced to non-custodial educational measures. 58 probation counsellors have been trained to run the programme. A total of 395 minors have participated in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Civic Education is a modular programme. The initial module involves two sessions focusing on establishing a relationship with the minor, on presenting the purpose, the objectives of the program. There are subsequent modules on moral reasoning, legal education and problem solving. The young person then participates in a community project module where they identify problems in their community, establish and draft a community project, put it into practice, and evaluate.

The programme can be run directly by the probation service or by a community-based organisation under the supervision of probation. 38 probation officers have been trained with a further getting on the job training. The programme has been applied to 55 young people in 2016- the pilot year. In 2017 180 completed the programme out of 187 starters; in 2018, 178 completed out of 183 starters. Again, this is a very high rate of completion.

The assessment team surveyed probation staff who had attended training. 12 participants rated it very useful, 9 quite useful with 12 agreeing they had used what they had learned a lot and 9 a little.

Among the comments made were:

“Before attending the training session, I have piloted the framework for the civic education in Cluj Probation Service and I had some misunderstandings. By going through each training session and attending each activity with my colleagues from the training most of these misunderstandings have been clarified and I left the training session with more confidence that I will be able to apply the program and also I will be able to guide other colleagues for implementation.”

“After these trainings I understand better that by changing my perceptions regarding juveniles, from the approach “little offenders” – which involves assessing all the time the risk and protective factors –, towards a different approach focused on development stages and building the relationships between the juvenile and the community. By doing this I can build better professional relationships.”

“It was an effective training session because I could immediately put into practice what I learned.”

“The program needs to be adapted to the level of understanding of each participant and this fact is sometimes difficult because some of the ideas are difficult to be understood by people with a significant low level of education such as those to whom this educative measure is imposed”.

“The training session was very useful because the concepts we`ve learned can be also used in relation with other categories of persons and not only the juveniles subject to Civic Education Program.”

In the Roma mentoring project, 20 Roma people were trained to act as mentors or advisers to young Roma offenders under probation supervision. Mentoring activities initially included the development of vocational skills or artistic activities with the young people, but have expanded to include help with housing problems, obtaining official documents, drafting CV's and writing letters to employers.

Assessment, monitoring and outcome measurement systems for offender rehabilitation and reintegration have also been established with the funds.

The Probation service has strengthened the range of programmes it can provide thereby increasing the range of options which can be used instead of imprisonment or detention. But there is a question about how much of its focus is on alternatives to prison.

2.3 Resources

2.3.1 Professionalization of Staff

Under RO23-0004, a large proportion of police personnel working in detention centres received training on the rights of detainees and dealing with Roma persons- almost 1,000 out of the 1,300. The modules have been incorporated into training for new staff.

RO23-0001 has entailed the development of a human resources strategy for the penitentiary service which hitherto lacked one. According to interviews with senior staff, the strategy enabled the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) to respond effectively to a crisis in 2016 when 2,000 staff- about a quarter- took advantage of revised pension eligibility arrangements and retired.

The NAP were required to hire about 4,000 new staff. The Norway grants included the development of eight new curricula for agents and officers and the development of a tool for assessing training needs of staff. 2,000 staff have been trained in these curricula.

The improved infrastructure at Bacau has been accompanied by the development of a relapse prevention tool for use with young offenders; and the therapeutic approach at Gherla has involved the creation of a number of instruments for assisting women with psychological problems.

A Roma NGO was invited to contribute to a human rights curriculum and the Norwegian Corrections Academy (KRUS) was heavily involved in the development of the training courses.

Grants have been used to develop specific management tools for the institutional management of probation services including the development of standards for staff and partner agencies and the development and roll out of a case management system. Probation manual elaborated, printed and disseminated to probation staff and stakeholders.

The impact of capacity development and training has been positive in general. Some staff answers in the training questionnaires show demand for more applied trainings rather than general/ theoretical ones.

2.3.2 Role of New Technology

The tools developed for assessment and treatment of juveniles and women as part of RO23-0003 and RO23-0002 have been digitised and placed on an IT platform. Video-conferencing will be introduced in September 2019 as a way of speeding up court processes.

3 FINDINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The refurbishment of the police detention centres has undoubtedly brought about highly needed short-term improvements. The senior representative from the MoI told us that there was now a need for further and deeper reforms, with re-organisation of the facilities. Some of the detention centres are incapable of refurbishment because they are located in basements. There is therefore a proposal for the 11 existing centres serving Bucharest to be replaced by one 500 place facility. Grant funds from the Norway scheme would help the government to commit to this project.

Should this come to fruition, the investment in the refurbishment carried out in detention centres that close could be seen as wasted. Experience suggests that it will be some time before a large new facility is constructed although we were informed that a site has been identified.

In similar vein we were informed that discussions are underway about a new phase of infrastructure development which might see Bacau prison eventually replaced.

The investments at Craiova and Tichilesti Detention Centres have involved the establishment of self-care centres – pre-release units for young people with three months of their sentence remaining. These developments are consistent with the new Correctional Programme which aims to build on the lessons of the grants by improving the “through the gate” reintegration support for people leaving prison.

Proposed Self-Care Centres may comprise either half way houses from which prisoners will leave during the day to work- or parts of the prison where prisoners will enjoy greater freedoms and responsibilities for example preparing their own meals. Both of these are good ideas if the prisoners are carefully selected and supported during this process and build on the philosophy behind the Delta and Gherla projects and the experience at Craiova and Tichilesti.

The sustainability plan for the Eco Houses in the DELTA project was to use them for hosting awareness events aimed at improving public opinion about inmates and ex-inmates and for further training them in eco-construction and crafts by the trainers trained in the project.

There is scope to make more use of the facilities by turning them into residential facilities and/or extending the work done there. The Ivan Patzaichin Association, one of the NGO partners in the project informed us that some potential future activities are under consideration including the expansion of eco-farming and green housing on the 100 hectares of unused land; traditional house construction training and use of the qualified inmates outside the premises to help local people – often poor and elderly - to repair their houses; manufacturing by inmates of small traditional cooking objects as there is an

increased demand in the area for such items due to the increasing eco- trends and touristic boom.

The NAP has trained 50 employees with leading positions in the penitentiary system on the implementation of the human ecology concept, in order to contribute to the dissemination of this concept to other prisons across the country.

The tools developed for relapse prevention for young people have been introduced across relevant parts of the prison estate as have the protocols for improving work with women developed by the Romanian and Norwegian partners with the involvement of the University of Cluj are used at the level of other penitentiary units where women are held in custody.

Probation are also planning to further develop their programmes, including the mentoring programme with further actions aiming at signing a collaboration agreement with the National Agency for Roma population.

As for training, we were informed that the curricula developed in the project are being used for initial and continuing training of staff; and the Human Resources Strategy developed in the project is being used for the recruitment of new staff and for the human resources management in the penitentiary system.

The renovation and endowment of the Arad Training Centre will increase the training capacity of the NAP.

In terms of replication and wider effects of projects there has been a revision to the regulations governing the treatment of detainees. Detainees in the detention centres are for example permitted to order purchases online from outside shops every two weeks. The rights and responsibilities of detainees are broadly aligned with those which apply in the penitentiary system Information about the rights of detainees is distributed in photocopied form. The information is also attached to the inside of each cell door.

Training materials produced with project funds to train existing staff working in police detention has been incorporated into the mandatory training given to new staff - CPT police officers.

10 CCTV cameras funded by Norway Grants have been integrated with the national funded system.

As for policy and attitude change, on detention there has been no substantive change to the law in respect of how long detainees can be held in police detention facilities. This is despite the fact that the CoE has repeatedly recommended that persons on remand should not be held in police detention facilities. "It is, in the Committee's view, unacceptable for the police authorities to continue to hold detainees for months on end".²⁷

On prisons and probation, the 2014 law has reduced the maximum sentence for certain offences, introduced a day fine system designed to match financial penalties to an offender'

²⁷ Report to the Romanian Government on the visit to Romania carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 7 to 19 February 2018 page 24

disposable income and reformed the law in respect of juveniles. The scope for probation involvement in the justice system has been increased but this may have been at the expense of fines rather than prisons.

The probation service has used funds to increase awareness of the benefits of alternatives to detention and promote their work. The prison service has also used projects such as Delta to raise awareness.

Internally, the projects have enabled a more evidence based approach although data about the impact of prison and probation on rates of re-offending are not yet available

Within government, the prison and probation service have obtained approval for the occupational standards and career guides.

4 FINDINGS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

4.1 The Role of Donor Project partners

4.1.1 Norwegian Government at project and programme level

The Norwegian correctional service has played an important part in the work by contributing to the development of

- the building and new regime at Gherla and the associated protocols and instruments. The Romanian authorities reported that partners from Bredtveit Prisons helped set up the Therapeutic Community there; but the KDI told us that “Bredtveit prison does not have any competence in this area, and it was therefore decided to focus the bilateral partnership on environmental work/working with people”.²⁸
- the building and new regime at Bacau Young Offender Prison
- the integrated tool for the evaluation of the relapse risk of young prisoners and the modular type special programme for their assistance. This was through the experts appointed by Bjørgvin Prison
- the Delta project where a close partnership was formed with Bastoy Prison
- the training curriculum for the prison staff working with minors and youngsters deprived of liberty (KRUS)
- the Human Resources Strategy and the special training instruments for the prison staff and in the training delivery component
- work with the probation service on organizational management and the improvement of its working tools, capacity and practice.

A handbook on the international transfer of prisoners was produced with bilateral funds in 2014. The numbers of Romanian citizens transferred from Norwegian prisons transferred from Norway to Romania has increased steadily from 1 in 2011 to 13 in 2017. The

²⁸ Response from KDI to questionnaire

Norwegian government assume that the cooperation between Norway and Romania has had an impact on this change.

The Probation service informed us that the project ended, this was not the end but “the ‘beginning of a beautiful friendship’, so to speak”. Collaboration has continued in the new cycle of grants 2014-2021. According to probation, the bilateral projects have served not only strengthen the collaboration between not only the two countries, but between probation and prisons systems.

For the probation service the main advantages of the Norway Grants were that it was a pre-defined project agreed between the Governments, not subject to competition The funds were non-refundable with a small national contribution. The value of the grant was larger than any other grant received before by the Probation service. The length of the grant period and bilateral requirements were seen as strengths.

The Probation service found some of the procedures and rules tight compared with other grants, such as the Swiss – Romanian Cooperation Programme where a budget change can be made by e-mail approval. The reporting of expenditures is also very detailed and time consuming.

4.1.2 Council of Europe (CoE) at project and programme level

The Council of Europe was an important partner in the police project, providing advice on the overall project and technical specifications for the refurbished detention centres. CoE also developed a training curriculum on the protection of human rights and antidiscrimination that were used during 36 training courses. CoE experts also delivered training of trainers’ sessions to the police staff in the area of human rights and produced best practice guides and leaflets on the human rights issues and on ways of preventing discrimination against Roma and other vulnerable groups/ minorities.

CoE was also involved in the Roma monitoring committee.

Summary Country Assessment

Romania has adopted a balanced approach to raise standards in detention centres, innovate in prison settings and invest in the capacity of an expanding probation service. There are some promising efforts to address Roma exclusion, particularly through the probation service. But there are questions about whether the expansion of probation in general is at the expense of imprisonment or is widening the net of penal supervision unnecessarily.