



### **General Information**

- Number of inhabitants: 2.26 million at July 2009<sup>1</sup>
- Prison population rate per 100,000 inhabitants: 319.
- Link to Probation Service:
  - [www.probacija.lv/page.php?id=174](http://www.probacija.lv/page.php?id=174) (Website State Probation Service Latvia).
- Links to websites:
  - [www.tm.gov.lv/lv/](http://www.tm.gov.lv/lv/) (Website Ministry of Justice).
- Member of the CEP in: 2004.

### **Characteristics of the Probation Service**

- The State Probation Service (SPS) is a public organization, which is part of the Ministry of Justice.
- The SPS has a centralized structure. General policy and standards are made by the headquarters in Riga. Local offices (28) take part in the drafting of legal regulations.
- The SPS exists of professional probation officers (civil servants). Volunteers are also involved in probation work, e.g. leading the offender-victim mediation process. However, because the volunteer system is still rather young, it still has to be developed. Voluntary mediators are supported and coordinated by probation officers.
- The Service deals with adults as well as juveniles. All persons above the age of criminal responsibility (14 years) can become client of the Service.

### **Tasks**

The SPS is in charge of the enforcement of community sanctions, like community service, supervision of persons with suspended sentence and persons released on parole (conditionally), and victim-offender mediation. Furthermore, a judge or a public prosecutor can request the SPS to make a pre-sentence report. The SPS is also able to provide the Prison Administration with these reports (on their request in case they want to release a person from prison conditionally). The reports include a characterization of the offender and an evaluation of his or her social circumstances, as well as an opinion of the Probation Service regarding the

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<sup>1</sup> International Centre for Prison Studies (2009), *Prison Brief for Latvia*. London: King's College. Available online at: [www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/icps/worldbrief/](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/icps/worldbrief/)

person. Moreover, the Service organizes community work for minors, who committed criminal offence (aged 11-18 years). This type of community work can not be regarded as a criminal sanction. As a result of the economic recession, aftercare has been abolished and several other probation tasks are reduced for the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2009 until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2012. Amendments of the law determine that:

- Mediation support is only available within the pre-trial phase;
- Supervision is cancelled for persons who are conditionally released from criminal liability by the public prosecutor;
- Pre-sentence reports can be requested by the judge or a public prosecutor only if it concerns juvenile offenders or in case of sexual offences.

### **Number of staff** (January 2010)

Headquarters:	48
Local Offices:	326
<b>Total:</b>	<b>374</b>

- Daily average number of offenders/clients dealt with: 9,300.
- Number of volunteers: 53 trained persons, of which 19 are already certified.<sup>2</sup>

### **New developments**

Main future developments and new initiatives in the operation of the SPS cover the following areas:

- The groundwork for the implementation of the EU Framework Decision on the Transfer of Probation Sanctions;
- The implementation of the public policy concept paper on the criminal punishment. The concept paper was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2009. The possibility of wider use of community work service is discussed, according to the concept paper;
- The broadening of voluntary work in the SPS, involving voluntary probation workers also in other functions of the Service;
- The development of the training process and contents: implementation and evaluation of the new professional training programme;
- The development of the sex-offender supervision system, including the implementation of risk and need assessment tool, the sex-offender treatment programme and multi-agency cooperation for effective sex-offender supervision in community;
- The further implementation of the 'Conferencing' mediation method.

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<sup>2</sup> Training was held in January 2010 and the rest of trainees are in the process of getting their certifications.

## Probation during the different stages of the criminal procedure

	Pre-Trial Phase	Trial and Enforcement Phase	Post Release Phase
Preparing a Social Enquiry report	+/-		
Supervision/assistance etc. to offenders whose cases were conditionally waived	x	+/-	+/-
Mediation/victim support	x	x	
Supervising/organizing etc. community service		x	
Supervising etc. drug/alcohol treatment programs		x	x
Supervising etc. other community sanctions, namely community work service	x	x	
Pre - sentence report		x	
Supervising etc. suspended sentence		x	
Assistance/ support to prisoners in prison		x	
Supervising etc. conditional release/parole		x	
Report before conditional release from prison		x	

This summary is based on the country chapter in the book *Probation in Europe*, the most comprehensive survey of probation systems and services in Europe today. If you wish to order it, please click [here](#).

