

Group Sessions III: Special needs Programs  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



CEP-EuroPris workshop on  
„Mental health in prisons and probation”  
6-7 December 2017  
Dublin, Ireland

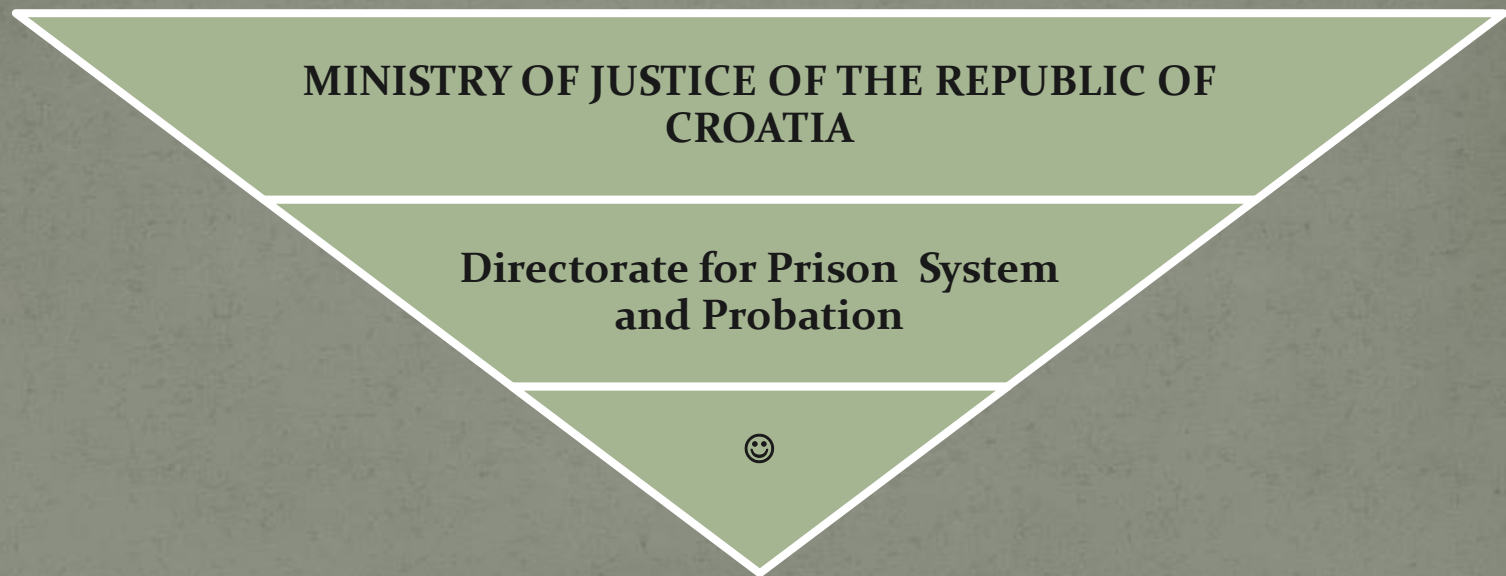
Jana Špero, assistant minister of justice

# CROATIA



# competence- news

2017: Croatian Probation Service and Croatian Prison Service merged – one administrative organization under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia



# SECTOR FOR PROBATION



**CENTRAL PROBATION  
OFFICE:  
4 departments**

**12 PROBATION OFFICES**



# PRISON SERVICE



**CENTRAL OFFICE:**  
**4 Sectors (security, treatment, legal, financial&work related)**  
**1 Service (supervision)**

**14 prisons**  
**6 penitentiary**  
**1 prison hospital**  
**2 Educational institution**  
**Diagnostic center**  
**Education center**

# Statistics:

**PRISON**

**3200 persons**

**PROBATION**

**3600 cases**

# Probation officers

## Prison treatment officers

- civil servants with basic education in the field of social pedagogy, psychology, social work (or law in the probation)
- In addition to basic education, they have additional training
- Mental health: probation officers do not carry out treatment, they coordinate treatment during the supervision; prison officers carry out group/individual programs in cooperation with psychiatrists



# Mental health of offenders

## 1. ADDICTION

- a) Drug abuse
- b) Alcohol abuse
- c) Gambling

## 2. MENTAL DISORDERS

- Different diagnosis including POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER





# Protection of offenders with mental disturbances

- In Croatia, there is a special Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Incapacities
- Protection of a persons with mental disturbances in Croatia arises from Constitution and Laws that are harmonized with the European Convention on Human Rights and other international sources

# PTSD

- Consequence of the HOMELAN WAR IN '90-s: persons suffering from PTSD
- Some of the persons suffering from PTSD committed crimes
- we are talking about persons who were exposed directly to war combat, soldiers who experienced the first symptoms during the war or immediately after the war
- To some, symptoms worsening with time and leading them to conflicts with law and order, rejection of social code of conduct and intolerance
- **IMPORTANT: NOT ALL PERSONS WITH PTSD COMMIT CRIMES!**



- PTSD individuals enter the system as offenders, suspected of various criminal acts, with predominant criminal acts of:
  - violence,
  - violent behavior in the family
  - threats,
  - robbery,
  - murders,
  - as well as offences provoked by alcohol and drug abuse which manifest themselves as thefts or even burglary.

- PTSD is often accompanied with physical disorders such as
  - depression
  - anxiety
  - alcohol abuse
  - medication abuse
  - narcotics abuse

# PROBATION SERVICE AND PTSD



# The role of probation service WHEN WORKING WITH OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWS DURING THE SUPERVISION
- MOTIVATION TO GET HELP IN SPECIALISED INSTITUTIONS
- COOPERATION WITH SPECIALISED INSTITUTIONS – HEALTH SERVICES AND NGO'S
- SUPERVISION OF TREATMENT ORDERD BY COMPETENT BODY

- Probation officers strive to encourage the offenders to seek professional and competent help provided by the society.
- We interact with:
  1. health care institutions
  2. hospitals
  3. relevant medical staff
  4. social welfare institutions
  5. detention system authorities

# PTSD

## Post traumatic stress disorder

- probation officers, being aware of the complexity and specific characteristics of the subject, interact with other participants in the system by direct exchange of experience in each case separately and individually, constantly endeavour to improve their knowledge and skills required for work with offenders suffering from PTSD





# PRISON SERVICE AND PTSD



**Within the Prison Service in the Republic of Croatia special program for prisoners suffering from PTSD is developed**

**Work in prisons is organized in small groups or on the individual bases, depending on the number of prisoners with PTSD**

# GROUP WORK

- 5-12 PERSONS
- SELF-HELP discussions
- Goal: short term (how to serve a sentence) and long term (preparing for life after prison)
- Work methods: voluntarily in group; PTSD diagnosed;
- Therapeutic team- treatment officials, working with offenders every day but regarding PTSD ones during the week for 1 hour in special room
- Cooperation with NGO's and family of the prisoner
- After prison sentence- PTSD support groups in community



**THANK YOU**  
for your  
**ATTENTION!**