



General Information

- Number of inhabitants: 1.34 million at beginning of 2009.¹
- Prison population rate per 100,000 inhabitants: 273.
- Link to Probation Service:
 - www.just.ee (Estonian Ministry of Justice)
- Links to websites: -
- Member of the CEP in: 1995.

Characteristics of the Probation Service

- In May 1998, the Probation Service started to work all over Estonia.
- The probation system falls under the competence of the Ministry of Justice. Until the 1st of June of 2008, the Probation Division of the Courts department of the Ministry of Justice was responsible for the activities of probation.
- Because the probation system was united with prisons as at 1st of June of 2008, the Probation Division at ministerial level has been integrated (as at 1st of January 2008) in the structure of the Prisons Department of The Ministry of Justice. The Division of Social Rehabilitation is currently responsible for coordination of Probation system and Social Welfare of prisoners.
- The Estonian imprisonment rate is one of the highest ones among European countries, the main challenge for the probation organisation is to promote the wider use of probation through the better use of alternatives and parole.
- Internal organization:
 - four regional probation departments work at three regional prisons (Tallinn, Tartu and Viru);
 - probation departments also have voluntary probation workers (about 20 all over Estonia);
 - the departments are divided into smaller services and reception points throughout Estonia.
- The age of criminal responsibility is 14. Probation deals with adults and juveniles according to the applied sentence.

Tasks

The probation system is responsible for implementing all community sanctions and measures that involves pre-sentence reports, community service (also at pre-trial stage), probation order (supervision of conduct), probation order as a

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

measure for juveniles, parole order and electronic monitoring (combined with parole order). The basis of the activities is the court's decision, which sets the framework of the probation officers work. Risk-assessment is a cornerstone of probation, the same methodology is also used in prisons; the focus is on the management of risks with aim to prevent criminal behaviour of offenders. Probation officers daily work has two major parts: supervision and assistance.

Number of staff ²

- Probation officers (including senior officers):	185
- Management:	25 ³
- Secretary:	14
Total:	224

- Daily number of offenders/clients dealt with: 8,460⁴.

New developments

- On the first of June 2008 the probation departments have become part of the regional prisons (this change follows the idea of better implementation of punishments).
- The role of the Probation Service has increased in the criminal justice system. The working methodology has been developed:
 - the risk-assessment system is used for assessment of offender's risks of re-offending and dangerousness; and used as input for individual sentence plan;
 - the palette of alternative sanctions and their use has been widening. For instance, in 2007 together with changes in the parole system the electronic monitoring was introduced, which resulted in wider use of probation after imprisonment. The discussions about widening the use of electronic monitoring to various groups of offenders takes place as well.
- The Ministry of Justice is exploring the possibilities to strengthen the system of dealing with ex-prisoners, by providing more services and involving more partners. The background is that the number of released offenders is increasing as well as the number of high risk offenders (drug addicts, sexual offenders). The probation system will play a key role in this development from the side of criminal justice agencies.
- Development and enforcement of the systematic scientific evaluation system regarding sanctions (incl. CSMs) and rehabilitation programmes used by probation and prison officials.

² at 19 October 2009, source: <http://www.vangla.ee/41291>.

³ 4 Regional Managers (managers), 21 Heads of sub-regional bureaus (partly dealing with actual cases).

⁴ at 31 December 2008.

Probation during the different stages of the criminal procedure

	Pre-Trial Phase	Trial and Enforcement Phase	Post Release Phase
Supervising / organizing etc. community service	x	x	
Supervision of conduct as a sanction applicable for minors		x	
Pre - sentence report	x	x	
Supervision of conduct (Supervising sanction of probation)		x	
Supervising conditional release (parole)			x
Electronic monitoring (combined with parole)			x
Advisory report with respect to conditional release		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](#).

