



General Information

- Number of inhabitants: 4.81 million at the beginning of May 2009.¹
- Prison population rate per 100,000 inhabitants: 70.
- Link to Probation Service:
 - www.kriminalomsorgen.no (The Norwegian Correctional Services).
- Links to websites:
 - www.fengselogfriomsorg.no (Associations of Probation Services workers).
- Member of the CEP in: 1982.

Characteristics of the Probation Service

- The Norwegian Probation Service (around 300 full time jobs) is a governmental organization, which falls under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. Together with the Prison Service, the Service is part of the Correctional Services.
- The Correctional Services are organized on three levels:
 - The Norwegian Correctional Services Central Administration (the KSF);
 - The regional level with six different administrations;
 - The local level with individual prisons and probation offices (there are 18 probation offices and 26 branch offices, making a total of 44 Probation Service units).
- The age of criminal responsibility is 15. The penal law does not distinguish between adult and juvenile offenders. Offenders under the age of 18 are normally treated by child welfare institutions and seldom go to prison.
- The Probation Service makes little use of voluntary workers. Volunteers can for instance supervise persons on unpaid work as a part of a community sentence, when a probation unit and the work place lie far apart.
- The Probation Service in many cases collaborates with educational or vocational organisations, and with municipalities in connection with community sentences. The foundation 'Youth against violence' is for example very active in following up juveniles after their community sentence has ended.

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

- A striking aspect of the Norwegian variant is the high degree of discretion given to the Probation Service in deciding the contents of the sanction. The Probation Service decides for example whether unpaid work will be part of the community sentence or not. The court has in principle nothing to say about this. The community sentence is an independent main form of punishment, along with imprisonment and fines. Yet in addition to the length of the community sentence and the possible conditions, the court decides on the length of a period of subsidiary imprisonment in every individual sentence.

Tasks

The Probation Service is in charge of preparing pre-trial reports (which can also be used as pre-sentence reports) at the request of the police prosecutor or the court. Furthermore, the Service deals with the execution of community sentences, which may include unpaid work, individual conversations, treatment, programmes and mediation. Moreover, probation workers are in charge of the execution of the Impaired Drunk Driving Programmes (this programme is also used with regard to persons, who have been driving under the influence of drugs/medicines), they supervise conditionally released persons from prison/pre-trial detention and look after persons on home detention. Aftercare does not belong to the responsibilities of the Probation Service. Persons who need aftercare are usually referred to social service agencies, by which the Probation Service cooperates with from the start of the community sentence.

Number of staff on 15 June 2007 (Full-time equivalent posts)

Management	34,4
Probation workers	241,5
Administrative and other staff	28,1
Total	304

- Daily average caseload per practitioner per day in 2005: 9 (the total average caseload in 2005 was 1,924).

New developments

- In September 2008 a pilot was started with the use of home detention in combination with electronic monitoring (EM). The Correctional services may transform a sentence of up to four months unconditional imprisonment into EM after an application from the offender. It may also grant applications to change the last four months of a longer prison sentence into EM. The pilot is implemented in six of seventeen correctional regions. Only radio-frequency managed electronic bracelets are used, no GPS-equipment. The offender must be at home within reach of the receiver phone at certain times, and must be active outside during the daytime, at work, at school or in any other way. If necessary, the Correctional services will provide such activities. Being at home during

these hours is considered as a breach. The probation service has the responsibility for this type of sanction, but cooperates closely with the prisons. The project is considered very successful, with a very low breach rate. An evaluation is carried out during the pilot. Plans for a nationwide implementation are being developed.

- In September 2008 a White Paper on correctional policy was published, covering a period of 5 – 10 years.² Central concepts in the White Paper are:
 - Introduction of a reintegration guarantee, where all persons who have undergone a sentence implemented by the Correctional services, will be provided central life conditions like housing, work, education, health services, addiction treatment, debt counseling etc. upon finishing their sentence.
 - Implementation of the principle of normality, implying that no-one will serve their sentence under stricter conditions than necessary for public safety. This means that as many prisoners as possible will serve in open prisons and half-way houses, or in the form of home detention with or without EM.
 - Several propositions are made for changes in legislation and regulations so that more people can be sentenced to a community sentence or participation in the Impaired Driving Program or Drug court.
 - Expanding the use of Restorative Justice in the correctional services.
- Many of the propositions in the White Paper imply an increase in the use of social reports.

Probation during the different stages of the criminal procedure

	Pre-Trial Phase	Trial and Enforcement Phase	Post Release Phase
Supervision/assistance etc. to offenders whose cases were conditionally waived	x		
Mediation/victim support		x	
Supervising/organising etc. community service		x	
Supervising/organising training or learning projects		x	
Supervising etc. drug/alcohol treatment programmes		x	
Supervising etc. electronic		Not yet	

² An English summary can be found at the website of the Norwegian Correctional services: www.kriminalomsorgen.no.

monitoring			
Supervising etc. other community sanctions, namely the community sentence in general		x	
Pre - sentence report	As pre-trial report		
Supervising etc. conditional sentence		x	
Assistance/support to offenders in home detention		x	
Supervising etc. conditional release/parole		x	
Court-controlled drugs programme	x	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](#).

