



### **General Information**

- Number of inhabitants: 5.421.937 at the end of 2009.<sup>1</sup>
- Prison population: 9.554.<sup>2</sup>
- Link to Probation Service:
  - [www.justice.gov.sk](http://www.justice.gov.sk) (Slovak Ministry of Justice).
- Links to websites:
  - [www.minv.sk/prevenicia/](http://www.minv.sk/prevenicia/) (Council for Crime Prevention in the Slovak Republic).
- Member of the CEP in: Slovakia is no CEP member yet.

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

- The Probation and Mediation Service was created in 2002. In the same year the new Service executed the first pilot project, which was found on the intention of the Slovak government to change the overall philosophy of penal policy with the emphasis on the introduction of alternative sanctions and diversion. During the project three probation officers started to work at three district courts and tested various forms and methods of probation work.<sup>3</sup>
- The governmental Probation and Mediation Service is part of the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry's consultative organ in probation and mediation matters is the Council for Probation and Mediation (composed of, amongst others, judges, prosecutors, probation and mediation officers and agents of governmental agency bodies). Within the Ministry, the Section of Criminal Law gives conceptual and methodological management and guidance in the performance of probation and mediation.<sup>4</sup> The Probation and Mediation Division (subordinate to the Section of Criminal Law), amongst others:
  - fulfils the tasks relating to the probation and mediation service at district courts;
  - prepares background papers for the education of probation and mediation officers, in cooperation with the Judicial Academy;

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2010). Available online at: <http://portal.statistics.sk/showdoc.do?docid=359>

<sup>2</sup> Numbers are on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2010 (derived from the Corps of Prison and Court Guard in Slovakia).

<sup>3</sup> Kunova, J. (2005) 'Probation and Mediation in the Slovak Republic', *Newsletter of the European Forum for Victim-Mediation and Restorative Justice, Volume 6, Issue 1*. Available online at: [www.euforumrj.org/readingroom/Newsletter/Vol06\\_Issue01.PDF](http://www.euforumrj.org/readingroom/Newsletter/Vol06_Issue01.PDF)

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Justice, *The section of criminal law, scope of competence*. Available online at: [www.justice.gov.sk/a/wfn.aspx?pg=h051&htm=h0/h05/scrl.htm](http://www.justice.gov.sk/a/wfn.aspx?pg=h051&htm=h0/h05/scrl.htm)

- monitors and evaluates the working load of the probation and mediation officers.
- On the local level, probation and mediation officers working at district courts carry out probation and mediation tasks. The courts are the employers of these officers.
- The Probation and Mediation Service can deal with adults as well as juveniles. With regard to juveniles the Service is mainly in charge of supervision tasks (for instance supervision of a juvenile in case of conditional suspension of imprisonment).
- In the area of penal and post-penal care, probation and mediation officers cooperate with various NGO's, like EDUKOS and MAJAK. Furthermore a wide spectrum of state and private organizations are involved in cooperation with probation and mediation officers (organs of police forces, re-socialization institutions, investigators etc.).

### **Tasks**

With regard to probation work, the Probation and Mediation Service is mainly in charge of supervision tasks (conditional suspension of the execution of imprisonment, conditional release of prisoners/parole, community service). Furthermore, the probation and mediation officers can provide the court with a pre-sentence report. Persons who are conditionally released from prison and conditionally sentenced fall under the competence of social curators working at the Offices for Labour, Social Matters and Families. The offices make sure that ex-detainees get a so-called state re-socialization allowance. In addition to probation work, probation and mediation officers are also involved in victim-offender mediation. Pre-trial reports about the possible victim-offender mediation and social status of the accused (which includes, amongst others, information from the social environment of the accused and the victim, the mutual relationships between the persons affected by the criminal act, and information about the causes and consequences of the criminal act) can be delivered by a probation and mediation officer to the prosecutor.

### **Number of staff**

- Total number of probation and mediation officers working at district courts: 79 (1<sup>st</sup> of February 2010).
- Daily average number of offenders/clients dealt with: unknown.

### **New developments**

- In 2006 a report, called 'Probation and Mediation in the Slovak Republic – the Viewpoint of the Probation and Mediation Worker' was presented. The report was meant to characterize all the practical problems with regard to the work of probation and mediation officers. As a result of the report, a conference (also in 2006) was organized, where a professional research group and a delegation of probation and mediation officers, amongst others, discussed:

- the low use of probation and mediation in some districts;
- the methodical management of probation and mediation workers, and
- practical problems (legislation shortcomings, working conditions).
- The report of the conference also stated that the competent sector of the Ministry of Justice has permanently been failing in relation to probation and mediation. Therefore, it might be useful to start thinking more bravely and to reassess the potential separation of the Probation and Mediation Office from the courts and to create an independent structure (which is not yet realized anno 2010) to make the Probation and Mediation Office an adequate component of the restorative judiciary in the Slovak society to achieve the required goals (to solve the practical problems, legislation shortcomings etc).

### Probation during the different stages of the criminal procedure

	Pre-Trial Phase	Trial and Enforcement	Post Release Phase
Mediation/victim support	x		
Supervising/organizing etc. community service			x
Pre - sentence report			x
Supervising etc. sanction of probation			x
Supervising etc. suspended sentence			x
Assistance/support to offenders in home detention			x
Supervising etc. conditional release/parole			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](#).

