

# **Building probation in Latvia**

## **(State Probation Service)**

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# Some facts about Latvia

- Regained independence from Soviet Union in 1991 – 50 years under Soviet regime
- EU member from 2004
- Population 2,025 milj.
- Territory 64 559 km<sup>2</sup>
- In transition from retribution to social inclusion



## Prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants:

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| •1992 year – 314 | 2010 year – 314 |
| •1995 year – 374 | 2014 year - 264 |
| •1998 year – 410 |                 |
| •2001 year – 373 |                 |
| •2004 year – 353 |                 |
| •2007 year - 287 |                 |

Source:

[www.prisonstudies.org](http://www.prisonstudies.org)

# Some facts about probation

- The State Probation Service (SPS) is a public organization under supervision of the Ministry of Justice
- Founded in year 2003
- The SPS has a centralized structure. General policy and standards are made by the headquarters (HQ)
- Probation officers are civil servants
- Any person above the age of criminal responsibility (14 years) can become client of SPS
- Number of staff in 2014: 380 (HQ=54)
- Number of clients: ~20 000 per year (16 604 in 2013)

# Some facts about probation

Community work service in 1999 (municipalities) – 1st real alternative

## **Functions:**

2004 – Aftercare + Assessment reports (pre-sentence and parole)

2005 – Community work service (centralized approach) + Offender-victim mediation + Treatment programmes + RNA tool

2006 – Community supervision (suspended sentence, release on parole, conditional release from criminal liability) (*from police*)

2009 (economical crisis):

- shutting down aftercare

- assessment reports + mediation limited (*came back in 2013*)

# Some facts about probation

## Functions:

2011 – Additional punishment «probation supervision» (*from police*)

2013 – Community supervision combined with community work service (*criminal justice reform*)

## Our resources goes to:

1. >50% community supervision
2. ~20 % community work service
3. ~12 % treatment programmes
4. ~12 % assessment reports
5. <6% other functions

# Some facts about probation

We have national probation service because of the **European Council** and our wish to access EU

**Development of our probation services influenced by:**

- **Canada**
- Norway
- United Kingdom
- Estonia
- Ireland
- Netherlands

# Some our challenges during last 10 years

## What is «probation»?

- No word in Latvian with such meaning
- No academic knowledge
- People generally don't understand/read English, computer literacy low

## Academic environment didn't reacted on creation of Probation Service

## Lack of critical thinking for developers of probation

- Be aware from developed countries trying to transfer their policies to your country (they have their own interests)
- Look for caring relationships

# Some our challenges during last 10 years

**Very little public awareness**

**Stigmatisation of probation officers**

- ‘Offenders’ lovers’ (*because of aftercare, support*)
- ‘Impotents’ (no guns, uniforms, 85% females)

**Lack of trust from partners (police, prison, prosecution, court, social services)**

**Low population density+many functions = universal probation officers**

- Need to know many legal acts, work methodologies, follow up their changes
- Need to have many skills, competencies



# Some our challenges during last 10 years

## Implementation of Risk + Needs + Responsiveness model

- 1st step: Implementation of RNA tools
- 2nd step: Difficulties to find right balance between **control** and **support**
- 3rd step: Identity crisis: probation officers = police officers + social workers + psychologists + teachers
- 4th step: probation officers = agents for change

## High level of staff turnover (12-34% per year)

- Rise of salaries in other institutions
- We became more demanding to staff – complexity of professional responsibilities increased

# **Some our challenges during last 10 years**

**Increasing gap between headquarters and local offices**

**Local offices increasingly demanded prescriptive policies – fears from responsibility, consequences**

- Examples of supervision plans, assessment reports, etc.
- Very detailed methodologies
- Case management decisions done by HQ

**Policies developed on a basis of profesional judgement**

**Sexual offenders – need other approach**

# Some our challenges during last 10 years

## Implementation of treatment programmes

- Everybody should benefit from them (bad targeting)
- Only psychologists are competent enough to facilitate them
- Solution of offending problem in itself
- Weak understanding and adaptation of programme material, and fears to improve it because of [possible] copyrights issues

## Staff 'burnout'

- Increased demands + lack of trainings
- Constant reforms and updates in legislation, internal methodologies
- Traumatic events (*mostly secondary traumas*)
- Identity crisis

# Some our challenges during last 10 years

**Too much paper work (*bureaucracy*)**

**Cooperation difficulties with non-governmental centers for social rehabilitation**

- We were too bureaucratic and punitive (their perspective)
- They were incompetent (our perspective)

**Almost non-existent multi-agency cooperation**

- Your client = your problem

# Solutions

**Well developed legislation**

**Local Consultative Councils + national Council chaired by Probation – to solve cooperation issues with other institutions, partners**

**Extensive in-service training**

**Joint trainings with prison officers**

**Specialization on work with sexual offenders + treatment programmes (community + prisons)**

# Solutions

## Cooperation with universities

- Master degree programme «Social Work (specialization in criminal justice)» (University of Latvia)
- Annual list of researches students are advised to chose (topics we are interested in)

## In-service library

## System of peer-reviews

## Individual psychological supervisions for probation officers

# Solutions

## **Integration of case management within HQ**

- officers at HQ also have caseloads (link between 'clouds' to practice)
- case management experience is [almost] obligatory in recruiting staff for HQ

## **Case inspections include discussions with case manager**

## **Developed IT infrastructure**

- Case management system – digital caseloads
- Access to various national databases
- Intranet

# Solutions

## **Network of trainers**

- Sexual offenders (assessment + treatment)
- Motivational interviewing
- Peer-reviewers

## **Labour union of probation officers**

## **Division of Trainings and Researches**

## **Volunteers**

- Victim-offender mediation
- Community supervision of sexual offenders (COSA)

## **Development of mental health services supported**



# Research on recidivism

**Research sample included 1 767 offenders (community supervision and community work service vs. imprisonment)**

**Follow-up after end of probation period – 32 months**

## **Results (recidivism):**

- Conditionally sentenced (suspended sentence) – 15%
- Released on parole – 25%
- Community work service – 17%
- After full term of imprisonment (*no probation*) – 51%

~90% of re-offending occurred during first 300 days after end of probation period

In 2013 only ~3% of community supervision clients re-offended during probation period

# Coming soon

## Less dangerous offenders → The most dangerous ones

- Introduction of new additional punishment
- Probation officers take over some functions of court

## Review and upgrade of tools

- Risk and needs assessment
- Treatment programmes (*Management of Emotions, Substance Abuse Management, Respectful Relationships*)
- Accreditation system of treatment programmes

# Coming soon

**Introduction of electronic monitoring (*back-doors model*)**

**More of *Good Lives* and *Desistance* within supervision**

**More volunteers**

**Formal multi-agency cooperation arrangements (MAPPA)**

**Cross-border cooperation within EU**

**Joint development projects with prisons**

**Differentiation of probation case managers**

# Coming soon

**Special interventions for young offenders in community**

**In-service e-learning system**

**More in-service trainings and trainers available**

**Access of mental health services to probation clients**

**Consolidation of legislation**

**Active international cooperation**

# Contacts

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