



**Probation and restorative justice as
alternatives to detention within the
European Framework**

23-25 May 2023, Bratislava, Slovakia



CEP Conference on Probation and restorative justice as alternatives to detention within the European Framework

23-25 May 2023, Bratislava, Slovakia

This conference is organised in cooperation with:



The conference is held under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Čaputová.



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Preface

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The conference titled „Probation and restorative justice as alternatives to detention within the European Framework 23-25 May 2023“ is organised by the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (MoJ). Moreover, I would like to point out that this is the first conference in our country since 2012, when Slovakia became an active member of CEP.

I believe the conference will have a positive impact on desired empowerment of the probation and restorative justice as an alternative, which I consider as a right journey within the criminal justice field. Let me warmly welcome you in Slovakia, in our beautiful, capital city of Bratislava, which spreads out on both shores of the Danube.

I am proud that Mrs President of the Slovak Republic has held auspices under this international conference. By doing so, she has demonstrated mutual interest in restorative justice as an alternative, which has its justification and we can perceive it as kind of a compass for pursuing positive goals within the framework of criminal justice policy in Slovakia.

Probation and mediation has been implemented into the national legislation as one of the important components of restorative justice. The legal framework for probation and mediation activities represents the Act on Probation and Mediation officers (Act No. 550/2003 Coll.). The law had come into force on 01.01.2004. By developing the various institutes of probation and mediation, mostly its substantive and content activities in the first years of existence, there had not only been a significant help from colleagues of the Czech Probation and Mediation Service (2004), but also from Belgian experts (2007). Thus, Probation and Mediation officers were able to use the gained knowledge in the application practice more professionally and effectively.

I can state that I was at the initial setting up of the individual institutes of probation and mediation in Slovakia (2004) and as you can see I have persisted in this work until today. It is because I believe in what I do, I see the purpose in it, and the added value are also the determined Probation and Mediation officers, without whom this work could not be carried out for the benefit of the public interest, but also in relation to the perpetrators and victims of crime with emphasizing their reintegration into society.

There is a continual process of methodical, coordination and conceptual activities at the national level implemented directly by the MoJ. Until 31 January 2023 this has been done by the previous Department of Probation, Mediation and Prevention of Crime. The new shift on restorative justice and its programs were projected also into the new structure of management. As of 1 February 2023, the new organisation unit has been created at the MoJ – Unit on Restorative Justice and Probation. Parts of this Unit are the different departments specialised in probation and prevention, mediation and restorative programmes, electronic monitoring and technical security which will provide more effective support within the field of methodical and coordination activities.

Currently, the amendment of the Slovak Criminal Code has been approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic and we are waiting for its approval by the National Council of the Slovak Republic. I can say that for the first time ever, the principles of restorative justice and its values were introduced also in the domestic legislative and these shall be used at any stage of the criminal proceedings.

I have been working in the criminal justice system for more than 35 years, and specifically in the field of probation and mediation for 19 years. I have gained considerable experience in prison, consequently I worked significant time as the Probation and Mediation Officer, Head of the Probation and Mediation Unit and nowadays I am commissioned for the management of the Restorative Justice and Probation Unit at the MoJ.

I wish you a pleasant stay and a richful conference experience.

Vladimír Cehlár
General Executive Director
Unit on Restorative Justice and Probation
Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic



Ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to Bratislava and welcome to the conference. It is already the 6th edition of the conference focused on the topic of alternatives to detention taking place biannually.

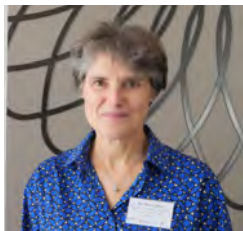
The organisation of regular events is a long-term process. Therefore back in 2021 after the conference in Prague ended we started organizing the next edition and Slovakia was the first country that came to our mind. Over the years, we have seen significant efforts, devotion, motivation and sense of purpose that our Slovakian colleagues put into developing probation, mediation and restorative justice, as well as its step-by-step acceptance by other criminal justice professionals. Probation as a profession is a combination of social work and criminal law, and unlike any other profession in the criminal justice chain probation agencies have had to build up its position. And this process never ends. The Slovak Ministry of Justice have been a member of CEP for more than 10 years, and we are happy that by organizing the conference here we are able to display our support to Slovakian colleagues in their effort to embed and strengthen position of probation, mediation and restorative justice in their criminal justice system. Alternatives to imprisonment create core business for probation agencies and supervising clients is a very demanding job as you provide them with a certain level of control, and at the same time you guide and assist them on their journey to live life without offending. It is without any doubt that restorative justice holds a crucial and irreplaceable position in work of probation agencies.

In the coming two days we will listen to presentations which will discuss the position, development and execution of probation and mediation activities in Slovakia, new approaches to the offenders' rehabilitation from the Czech perspective, effectiveness and usefulness of alternatives in Belgian practice, drug court as a substitute to detention from Norwegian perspective, and we will provide an overview of alternative sanctions in Europe. Lessons learnt including current and future challenges will be shared in an interactive round table session, and the practical workshops will enrich participants' knowledge of communication as a primary professional skill and continuous development of probation services. A World Café session will host a large group dialogue.

We are proud that the President of the Slovak Republic, Ms. Zuzana Caputova, holds auspices under the conference. On behalf of CEP, I would like to thank the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic and colleagues from the new Unit on Restorative Justice and Probation for their cooperation and enthusiasm in organizing this event.

I wish you all to experience a resourceful meeting and share a pleasant moment with your European peers.

Annie Devos
CEP President



Conference Programme

Park Inn by Radisson Danube Bratislava, Slovakia
23-25 May 2023

Chair of the Conference: Ms. Jana Špero, CEP Secretary General

WEDNESDAY 24 MAY

- 08.30-09.00 Registration
- 09.00-09.40 Opening and Welcome
Mr. Peter Sepeši, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Slovak Republic
Ms. Annie Devos, CEP President
Ms. Jana Špero, CEP Secretary General
- 09.40-10.20 Development and limits of the Probation and Mediation Service within the framework of the Slovak Republic
Mr. Vladimír Cehlár, Ministry of Justice, Slovakia
- 10.20-11.00 Alternatives in Belgian practice: usefulness, effectiveness, limits
Ms. Annie Devos, House of Justice, Belgium
- 11.00-11.30 Coffee/tea break
- 11.30-12.15 Workshop sessions
Effective communication as a basic professional skill
Mr. Jānis Zārdiņš, State Probation Service, Latvia
- Probation services as evolving organizations
Mr. Goran Brkic, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, Croatia
- 12.15-12.30 Short break
- 12.30-13.15 Workshop sessions repeated
- 13.15-14.15 Lunch
- 14.15-15.00 Probation and alternatives in Europe – overview
Ms. Iuliana Cărbunaru, Ministry of Justice, Romania

- 15.00-16.00 Lessons learned: current and future challenges -
Roundtable
Mr. Martin Lulei (Slovakia)
Ms. Ingunn Seim (Norway)
Mr. Daniel Wolter (Germany)
Mr. Daniel Danglades (France)
- host: Ms. Iuliana Cărbunaru*
- 16.00-16.30 Closing of the first day with Coffee / Tea Break
- 19.30-22.00 Dinner

THURSDAY 25 MAY

- 09.00-10.30 World Café session
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee/tea break and hotel checkout
- 11.00-11.45 Alter Your Life Path: offenders' rehabilitation from
Czech perspective
*Ms. Andrea Matoušková, Probation and Mediation Service,
Czech Republic*
- 11.45-12.30 Drug Court as a Substitute to Detention
Ms. Ingunn Seim, Norwegian Correctional Service, Norway
- 12.30-13.00 Summary and closing words
Ms. Jana Špero, CEP Secretary General
Mr. Vladimír Cehlár, Ministry of Justice, Slovakia
- 13.00- Lunch and departure

Abstracts

Development and limits of the Probation and Mediation Service within the framework of the Slovak Republic

by Mr. Vladimír Cehlár

In the presented topic, we want to zoom in on the development of the Probation and Mediation Service in Slovakia, the history of which has begun to be written in 2004. Our aim is to point out the limits that had an overall impact on the development and innovation in the field of education, the specialization of the probation and mediation officers and their existence. At the end, we will point out the current legal situation, which can be considered groundbreaking from the point of view/perspective of the creation of systemic measures that make the individual processes of probation activity more effective, as well as the area of restorative justice and mediation in criminal matters.

Alternatives in Belgian practice: usefulness, effectiveness, limits

by Ms. Annie Devos

Since the 1990s, Belgium has widely diversified its sentences by introducing alternatives to pre-trial detention, penal mediation, community service, autonomous sentences, electronic monitoring, etc. The discourse and implementation of alternatives as a solution to prison overcrowding have been widely promoted for several decades.

What have been the effects of this diversification? Have alternatives led to less recourse to prison sentences? Have they had an impact on prison overcrowding? Is it wise to talk about alternative sentences? Are alternative sentences taken seriously enough?

The SPACE I and SPACE II statistics will give us an overview of the penal population rate in the Council of Europe. The singularity of the Belgian example will allow us to question the place of alternatives in the criminal justice administration system and to share experiences and points for improvement.

Probation and alternatives in Europe – overview

by Ms. Iuliana Cărbunaru

Probation has an uneven level of development across Europe, systems with a history going back 200 years and systems recently established. In the end the ultimate purpose is similar – giving back better citizens to the society and enforcement of the court decisions by having a balance mixture of experience, the energy of a fresh start, the staff skills and the new trends related to technologies. The presentation will be a snapshot of the probation services in Europe explaining the structure, tasks and responsibilities by focusing on similarities and differences in the context of the European standards and guidelines.

Alter Your Life Path: offenders' rehabilitation from Czech perspective

by Ms. Andrea Matoušková

The Probation and Mediation Development Concept 2025 stands for the first long-term strategic document setting the key areas for the further development in probation and mediation activities in the Czech Republic. Agreed by the Czech government in 2017, the document came up with a vision of advancing probation and mediation in criminal matters for the upcoming eight years through the progressive fulfilment of strategic goals. 2023 marks the 6th year of continuous work in progress. The presentation will summarize the goals achieved in offenders' rehabilitation with respect to the strategic objectives of preventing crime, minimizing risk of recidivism, providing solutions to crime-related conflicts, and ensuring victims are taken care of accordingly.

Drug Court as a Substitute to Detention

by Ms. Ingunn Seim

The Norwegian Drug Court model started as a pilot project in the cities of Bergen and Oslo in 2006, as a multi ministry initiative. Drug abusing offenders who commit crimes related to their drug addiction, could be sentenced to an ND-program, as an alternative to imprisonment. The main goals are to prevent new crimes, help the offenders to resocialize and become drug free. Because of the good results, the Norwegian government decided to make the project permanent and nationwide from 2016. That means this alternative is available for all drug abusing offenders all over the country. The implementation of the ND program requires a joint effort and a committed cooperation between different sectors and levels of management. The Court has a special role in supervising the conditions of the program. The components and requirements in the ND-program are tailored to the individuals' needs. Violations of conditions can result in reversing the sentence to a prison sentence. This alternative to imprisonment allows the convict to make up for their behavior, to return to society as law-abiding citizens and contribute to the society. The Drug Court model acknowledges that drug addiction is a severe disorder that can be treated with joint efforts and a great dedication from the convict.

Workshops

Workshop A – Effective communication as a basic professional skill

by Mr. Jānis Zārdiņš

During introduction participants of the workshop will be informed on development stages of the State Probation Service of Latvia, and how stages are related with necessary methods, tools to enhance communication between probation staff and service clients. Next workshop part will be devoted to group work where participants will have to challenge themselves to recognize their own difficult categories of clients. Realizing this, they will look for their professional deficits, gaps to be in position openly and freely communicate with difficult clients. Final task will be to find appropriate resources, methods to be able to improve knowledge, skills to be ready for work with difficult clients.

Workshop B – Probation services as evolving organizations

by Mr. Goran Brkić

Probation services as an important part of the criminal justice system have to be evolving organizations due to constant changes in the fields such as criminal policy, client structures (cybercrime, offenders with mental disorders, child pornography on the internet etc.), general changes in society and of circumstances (pandemic, economic crises and financial uncertainty, war). Probation services have to change and adjust their work, develop new treatment programs, use more technology in their daily work in the communication with clients, as well as many other changes if they want to remain current and effective. In this workshop we will focus on challenges which probation services face today, how to respond to those challenges and in which ways they could change their daily work. We will also have a discussion about future challenges which will have a strong impact on probation and how probation services could react to them. Probation has come a long way successfully responding to numerous challenges in the past, so I am convinced it will be able to appropriately react to and find solutions for them in the future.

Short biographies of speakers

Dr. Vladimír Cehlár



Dr. Vladimír Cehlár has been working with the Slovak Ministry of Justice in the role of General Executive Director for the Restorative Justice and Probation Unit. Before that he worked as the Probation and Mediation Officer for more than 10 years, and later on as Head of the Probation and Mediation Department within the Regional Court of Žilina. His PhD dissertation focused on the topic of „Conflict resolution through mediation, comparison of the civil and criminal mediation process with a focus on restorative justice in the Slovak Republic“. Besides that he completed the Criminal Mediation and Probation Training, Facilitation and Overbuilding Mediation Skills, or Supervision in Mediation trainings. He is the author and co-author of probation programmes in the field of probation which are aimed at determining the risk of recidivism, the evaluation of the risk measure with an indication of the intensity of the probation meeting, the author of the probation plan and the programme in the probation process.

Ms. Annie Devos



Ms. Annie Devos has acquired a large experience throughout her career in the field of prison and probation. She has consecutively been Prison Governor (1988-1991), Technical Expert on Prison Policy for the Minister of Justice (1991-1995), Seconded Head of the Department for Policy and General Affairs (1995-1997) and Head of the Department in charge of the individual inmates' file (1997-1999) at the Ministry of Justice. Afterwards, Annie has run the Belgian probation department - called "Houses of Justice" - since its creation in 1999. At the time, the services depended on the judicial organisation and were then transferred to the services of the Ministry of Justice until late 2014. In 2015, the services were divided between the 3 linguistic communities due to the 6th State reform.

Annie has been appointed as Director-General for the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, which comprises the head office, the 13 local houses of Justice, the Centre for Electronic Monitoring and the Centre for Assistance to People concerned by any Radicalism or Extremism leading to Violence (CAPREV) and subsidises partner services in charge of offenders' and victims' support.

Annie Devos has been the Vice-President of the Council for Penological Cooperation (PC-CP) of the Council of Europe since January 2022, and the President of the Confederation of European Probation since October 2022.

Drd. Iuliana Cărbunaru



Drd. Iuliana Elena Cărbunaru is currently a Probation Inspector in the National Probation Directorate within the Romanian Ministry of Justice ensuring the development and implementation of the international projects and promoting the probation system at the international level. Starting with 2017 she is a Board member of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) and in 2022 she was elected as the CEP Vice-President. As an employee of the Probation Service for the past 22 years Ms. Cărbunaru

has served as Probation Counsellor, Probation Inspector and Director of the Probation Service. She holds a B.A in Social Work, a M.A in Community Justice Administration and she is currently doing her PhD at Bucharest University on penal policy transfers in Europe.

Dr. Andrea Matoušková



Dr. Andrea Matoušková has been the Director-General of the Czech Probation and Mediation Service since 2016. After graduating from Charles University in Prague, majoring in Social Work, she started working as one of the first Probation Officers in the Czech Republic. From 1995, she participated in the introduction of probation and mediation into Czech practice and, later, in the preparation for the establishment of the Probation and Mediation Service. She has worked for the Probation and Mediation Service since it was founded in 2001, first as a Methodologist

and later as Head of the Department for Conceptual, Analytical and Methodical Activities.

In the academic field, she is the author of various publications, a researcher and a university lecturer, taking an active part in projects dealing with the development of probation and mediation across Europe.

Ms. Ingunn Seim



Ms. Ingunn Seim is an educated jurist with the degree in law from the University of Bergen, Norway. She worked as a Public Prosecutor for 2 years, and thereafter had different jobs within the Norwegian Correctional Service – first as Probation Officer and later as Legal Advisor. Since 2006 she has been leading the Norwegian model of Drug Treatment Courts (DTC) as a project in Bergen and running the DTC-centre. The project was a pilot for 10 years in the cities of Bergen and Oslo. The DTC-team in Bergen consists

of 6 team-members from different agencies (The Correctional Service, The Health Service, The Educational Service and the local government). She also worked closely with the DTC-judges in the District Court. In 2016 the Norwegian government decided to make the Norwegian DTC-model permanent and nationwide. For 1 ½ years Ingunn worked for the Directorate of Correctional Service, being responsible for implementing the DTC in the Norwegian system. In November 2020 she started

her current position as Assistant Director of the Correctional Service Region West – responsible for all the prisons and probation services.

Mr. Jānis Zārdiņš



Mr. Jānis Zārdiņš completed his Master degree in Education and First level higher education in Law. He has currently been working at the State Probation Service of Latvia, Cesis Unit, since 2004. His main duties are management of the Cesis Structure Unit including management and supervision of probation employees, supervision and quality control of client cases. Janis is responsible for providing guidance and training of existing and new staff, evaluation of statistics and planning for future development of office. Besides that, Janis has been working as the trainer on Multi Agency

Cooperation in work with dangerous offenders as well as the trainer (nationally) on topic of work with radicalized probation clients.

Mr. Goran Brkić



Mr. Goran Brkić has been working as Head of the Sector for Probation which is part of the Directorate for Prison System and Probation at the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia. Goran has been with the Probation Service since 2008, first as an Adviser, then Senior Adviser and from 2010 to 2017 as the Head of Department for Strategic Planning, Development and Analytics. His work entailed the development of projects, procurement of funds for projects and project

implementation, leading the team of experts and client service. He is a graduate of the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law with a degree in Social Work. Currently he has been enrolled in the postgraduate program at the Department for Research Methodology in Social Work and Social Politics at the University of Zagreb. He was a member of the team conducting activities for the establishment of the professional Croatian Probation Service and has been involved in all activities of EU-funded projects regarding probation. He has participated and spoken at numerous conferences and seminars while of his main professional interest lies with electronic monitoring, technologies used in probation services and the professional development of probation professionals.

Ms. Jana Špero



Ms. Jana Špero is CEP Secretary General from September 2022. Prior to it, she was the Director General for Prison and Probation in Croatia and board member/vice president of CEP. She is a Master of Law and Master-Specialist in criminal investigation. As an International Consultant of the Council of Europe, she was involved in different activities regarding the development of probation services: workshops, round tables and projects. She is a regular speaker/lecturer at seminars and workshops regarding probation.



Bratislava

Located on the **River Danube**, Bratislava is easily accessible. It is a great place to hang out. The city is safe, friendly, hassle-free and there is always something worth doing; whether you are here for one afternoon, a week or a year.

Unique location

Bratislava has always been a flourishing and prosperous town, which has made the most of its strategic position on the Danube and at the intersections of important European trade routes. In the Mediaeval period and later in the 18th century, it was a significant economic centre and later, a cultural and political centre of Central Europe. It was thanks to its location that in the 16th century, Bratislava became the capital and coronation town of the Hungarian Kingdom and the place, where its crown jewels were kept. For one thing, it was remote from the invading Turks, yet close to imperial Vienna, from where the whole of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was governed for almost the following 500 years. Vienna and Bratislava were closely connected economically, culturally and politically for a long time. In the 18th century, the Castle was rebuilt and served as a summer residence for Queen Maria Theresa who visited the town frequently. There is a beautiful view of Bratislava from the Castle hill. Those interested in visiting historical monuments can take advantage of the offer of historical train circuits to the Castle and back, connected with interpretation. Boarding to the historical train is at the hotel.

History

Cultural buffs will not be disappointed. The city walls and the wonderful **St. Michael's Gate** remind visitors that town fortifications were essential in the 1300s. The architecture ranges from Gothic to Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-classic and Empire. **The coronation route of Hungarian Kings** is marked out in



Source: <https://www.visitbratislava.com/about/come/>

plaques with gilded crowns hammered into the cobblestones. Anyone who likes the history of Bratislava can also visit **the unique jewellery store with the coronation jewels** which are stored in the tower of **St. Martin's Cathedral**, located 80 metres from the hotel, available from 9.00 am to 11.30 am or 1.00 pm to 6.00 pm. Another interesting exhibition near the hotel is the **rococo House of the Good Shepherd** where you will find a permanent **Exhibition of Clocks from the 16th century**.

Visitors seeking the inside story only need to take the tour through the **Old Town Hall**, where the **City Museum** with unique collections capturing the history of the city of Bratislava is located. From the top of the Bell Tower, you can enjoy a beautiful view of the Old Town. Available from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm.

You can admire the view of Bratislava from the UFA on the SNP bridge located in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. There is also a restaurant. **Beautiful view of the city** you can also find from the **Michalská Tower**, which is part of the remains of the original city fortifications, dating from the 13th century. In the past, the city was entered through three gates, of which only the **Michalská Gate** has been preserved. Michalská Gate is located near Michalská Veža, including also **The Weapons Museum**. Ascent to the tower is possible from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Near the hotel, there is **Hlavné námestie** with some cafés, restaurants and excellent ice creams. The square is dominated by the **Slovak National Theatre**. Do not miss the opportunity to visit Bratislava's most beautiful classicist building - **The Primate's Palace** with a Hall of Mirrors and **Exhibition of Tapestries**. In 1805, the Peace of Prešpork was signed there between the Austrian and French troops.

Thank you for attending and participating in the conference.
Your feedback is important to us, and we kindly ask you to take a
few minutes to complete the EU survey.

To access the survey, you can scan the QR code below.



CEP is the Confederation of European Probation. It aims to promote the social inclusion of offenders through community sanctions and measures such as probation, community service, mediation and conciliation. CEP is committed to enhance the profile of probation and to improve professionalism in this field, on a national and a European level.

Confederation of European Probation
P.O. Box 8215 - NL-3503 RE UTRECHT - The Netherlands
Telephone: +31 30 2324900
www.cep-probation.org
secr@cep-probation.org



Confederation of European
Probation

UPCOMING EVENTS

Workshop on Juveniles and Young Adult Offenders

21 June 2023 - Barcelona, Spain

CJPE Summer course on Mental health issues in criminal justice

4-7 July 2023 - Barcelona, Spain

Webinar on Radicalisation

14 June 2023 - online

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