

# Reintegration and community through the Dependent Units (DU)

---

**Impact of Dependent Units in the transition from prisons to community**

**Barcelona, December 2025**

1

# Regulation and definition



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Centre d'Estudis Jurídics  
i Formació Especialitzada**



Cofinancat per  
la Unió Europea

- Dependent Units (DU) are regulated by the **Organic Law 1/1979** , September 26th, **General Penitentiary** and at **Royal Decree 190/1996** , February 9th, which approves the **Prison Regulations**.
- According to **art. 165 of the Prison Regulations**, DU are houses architecturally located **outside jails**, preferably in ordinary housing in the community, **without any external sign of distinction** relating to their dedication.
- The organization and management of DU is carried out by **NGOs**.
- **DUs depends on prisons**, keeping their professionals their duties and tasks according to the speciality of each one, except social educators, being the responsible of the DU who assumes their role.

- **DU responsible keeps in touch and coordinate** with the rest of the multidisciplinary team of open prison. They plan together the inmates personal itinerary, and make the corresponding agreements about the prison situation of the inmates assigned to the unit.
- **The objective** of the DU is to develop a **comprehensive reintegration itinerary** for residents through **educational monitoring actions** that make possible a progressive integration into the community.

# 2

## Procedure and circuit

- **The Directorate General of Penitentiary Affairs (DGAP)** , after the proposal of the treatment teams of the prisons of Catalonia, must **agree about the inmates** to be assigned to the DUs, following the general criteria for the classification in third degree and taking into account the residents profile for each DUs.
- **Treatment Teams** must **detect people** that may be referred to the different units based on the characteristics of the unit and the profiles of the inmates who must be assigned. Therefore, once the profile and its suitability have been assessed, they will submit the **proposal via PUC (Unified Classification Proposal)**.
- **Previously** to accepting the candidate to the DU, the inmates will **visit it** to learn about the characteristics, operation and regulations of the Dependent Unit (in cases of inmates classified in the second and third degree). Their **commitment and acceptance of the rules** of the DU will be requested. In the event that the inmate cannot leave the prison for legal reasons (inmates without classification), will be the responsible of the DU who moves to the prison in order to interview, and inform him/her about the characteristics, operation and dynamics of the Unit.

- Once the responsible of the DU assesses the inmate's profile favorably and the inmate accepts the regulations of the DU, **the proposal arrives via PUC to the Open Regime and Social Services Unit** .
- The proposal must always be **accompanied by two documents**: the acceptance of the DU and the inmate's own admission request, as well as their acceptance of the regulations.

# 3

## Service Provision



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Centre d'Estudis Jurídics  
i Formació Especialitzada**



**Cofinancat per  
la Unió Europea**



# Service coverage

RESOURCES	LOCATION	Open every day 24/7	Weekend opening only in case of contingencies
UD AGORA	Barcelona	X	
UD BARCELONÈS HOME	Barcelona		X
MARESME UD	Vilassar de Mar		X
UD ANTONI GAUDI	Llobregat Meadow		X
UD MARTORELL			X
UD BAIX LLOBREGAT	Lower Llobregat		X
UD SALESES	Manresa (Bages)		X
UD VALLÈS	Western Valleys		X
UD TERRACE			X
UD BARCINO	Barcelona	X	
UD ALT EMPORDÀ	Barcelona		X
UD SEGRIÀ	Lleida	X	
UD ALT URGELL			X
UD CRUILLA	Ebro Lands		X
UD POINT AND CONTINUE	Tarragona		X
UD LES VINEYARDS	The Vendrell		X
UD CAN CONSOL	Vallès Oriental	X	



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Centre d'Estudis Jurídics  
 i Formació Especialitzada**



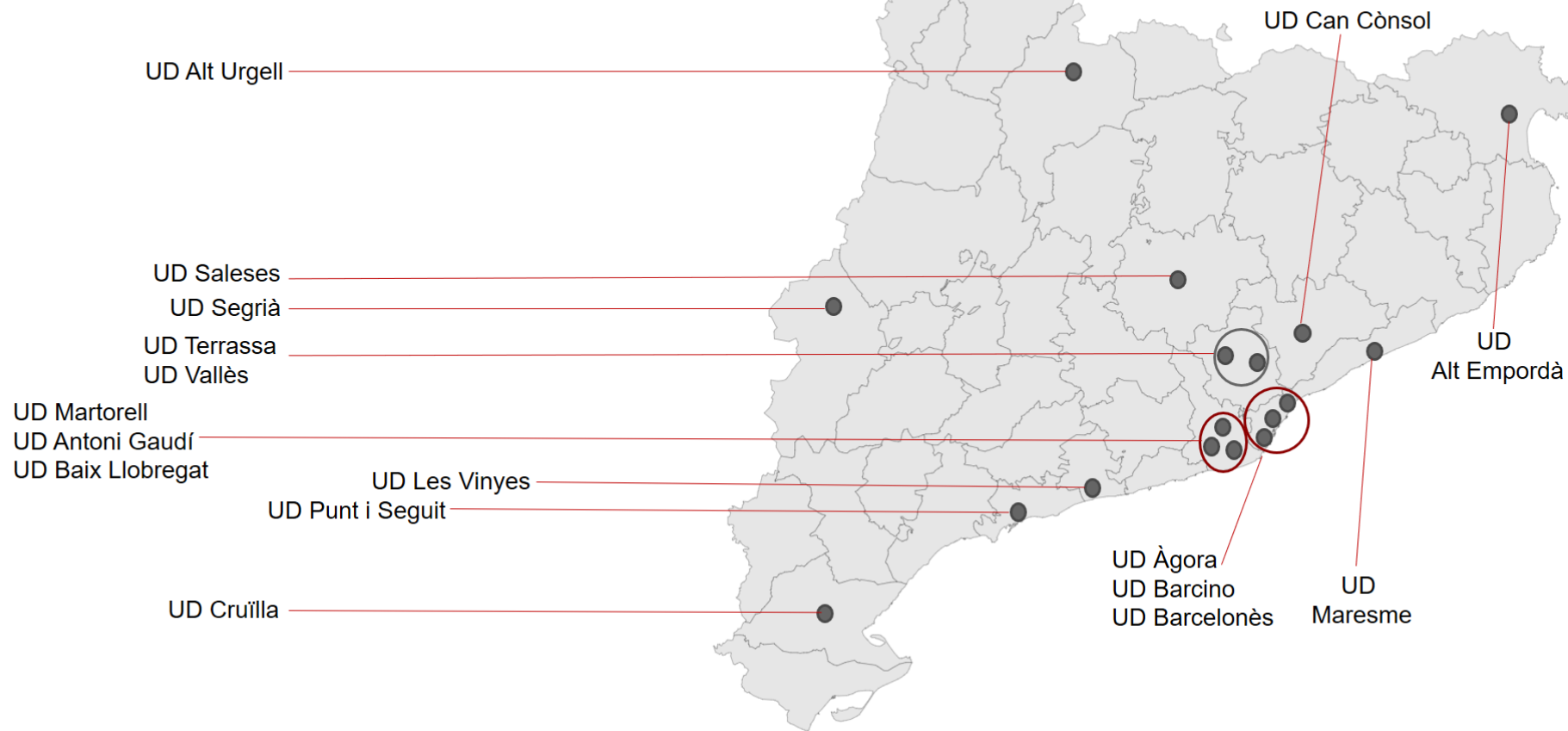
**Cofinançat per  
 la Unió Europea**

- 4 out of the 17 DUs provide service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The remaining 13 units are open overnight from sunday night to thursday night, leaving on friday morning for the weekend, in the same way as in an open prison.
- It should be noted that all these 13 units must have 24 days a year availables to open on weekends, in case of a contingency, and that an inmate must remain there on friday and saturday nights.
- The daily entry and exit of the unit is regulated in the same way as in open prisons, and is adjusted depending on the level of SAM (evaluation and motivation system), and the personal needs of each one, maintaining the established minimum of 8 hours of presence in the unit.

# 4

## Location of Dependent Units

# Les Unitats Dependents al territori



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Centre d'Estudis Jurídics  
i Formació Especialitzada**



**Cofinançat per  
la Unió Europea**



5

People served during the 26 years  
Dependent Units operation

In the 26 years that the DUs have been operating, they have provided services to:

- 4141 people in article 165 RP – residential modality
- 1206 people in article 86.4 RP – monitoring modality

# 6

## Empirical evidence of the positive impact of Dependent Units

- The CEJFE produced an own research in 2018 about the “ *Rate of recidivism during conditional release and desistance at 3<sup>rd</sup> degree in Catalonia* ”, which already support the positive impact of the Dependent Units.
- UD inmates were compared with a control group, formed of third-degree people with similar profiles to the first group.
- 125 UD inmates were compared, showing differences between the two groups in terms of desistance.
- People who had been users of UD remained desistants, and 87.2% didn't return to the penal system, while in the control group the percentage of non-return was 76%.
- It was assessed that the differences were statistically significant, and that therefore the UD were already proving to be more effective in keeping convicted persons out of the penal execution system.
- The study already shows that leaving prison progressively, finishing the prison sentence in open regime, is the best guarantee to remain desistant from criminal conduct.



**Thank you very much!**



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Centre d'Estudis Jurídics  
i Formació Especialitzada**



**Cofinancat per  
la Unió Europea**