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Creation of a specialized system for work with sexual offenders in Latvia – the role and the journey towards it

Imants Jurevicius

Project Manager, Latvian Probation Service;

Vice-President, The Confederation of European Probation (CEP)

Anvars Zavackis

Lead Researcher,
Latvian Prison Administration
& Latvian Probation Service

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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

- To describe the situation, I will use my first academic paper on the topic of sex offence - *Sex offender in the community: case analysis (2009)*
- The case: offender who sexually abused his two daughters, sentenced for prison (8 years), conditionally released from detention after 6 years
- The offender has motivation to cooperate with probation
- **How far can we assist the offender not to reoffend?**



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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

Probation officers had to work with sex offenders, but they didn't get adequate training. In a PO words,

„... I was a complete newcomer when I got the client's file. I had no knowledge, no stability... I made translations (of handbooks used for work with sex offenders in Canada) and in a sense educated myself.”



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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

Sexual relationships and sex offence is tabooed. Head of local probation unit:

„I can't understand how can one manage a case if you don't speak to the offender, if you don't find out what really happened. I've noticed that some colleagues are simply afraid of talking about the offence... Some consider it to be too intimate to interfere in it, although we're dealing with an offence. It's like a taboo. It is like driving a car with a set handbrake.”



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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

**A risk assessment instrument for
recidivism forecasting is available but
useless in work with sex offenders. PO:**

*„...Does the instrument help us understand?
On the whole it doesn't. We would need a
more deep, specific instrument on the
problems of these people, because the present
one doesn't show us the most important
things... He abused his daughters for a long
time. It is like a system for him... He did it
more and more often. Abused one daughter,
then another. It alarmed me. This systematic
sexual abuse in fact reflects his way of
thinking. If it's about thinking, then it's related
to his level of risk.”*



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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

Work with sex offenders means going into many details of their lives and problems. E.g.:

«I really liked the fact that I managed to make him pay attention to his **thinking errors**. He had to consider and reassess these situations.”

„We tried to model **situations** he would have to avoid, so that he stayed away from these irritants.”

„He even showed some kind of **empathy**. He sometimes talked about how his daughters feel now... he wanted some kind of forgiveness.”



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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

Sometimes the probation service became left alone with the problematic sex offender:

„We searched for a psychotherapist. Arranged talks with three of them. I introduced myself and told them, “I am from the probation service and would like to ask for your help.” Then, as I introduced the situation involving sexual violence, everything was over. All three refused to get involved telling they’ve got enough clients already. The initial interest disappeared.”



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Why we needed to develop system for work with sexual offenders in 2009?

**However, the probation service wasn't
always left alone with the offender's
problems:**

„Resources involved made me more confident. Even if I didn't pay enough attention to some aspect of the problem, I could hope that someone else notices it... It gave a sense of security, the fact that someone else sees the client and knows about him.”



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Development of probation work with sex offenders

- 1. Development (2009-2012).** Project “Development of Supervision and Treatment System for Sex Offenders in Latvia” (building the basis for work, core tools and interventions).
- 2. Expansion (2013-2015).** COSA pilot project, community involvement, voluntary work, inter-institutional cooperation.
- 3. Maintenance and networking (today).** Networking, professional community, inter-institutional cooperation.



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Policy transfer

Pre-conditions of success

(Dolowitz & Marsh):

- Policy transfer via inspiration & adaptation (not copy-paste)
- Voluntary
- Enough time for adaptation
- Support from various stakeholders
- Policy transfer **solves problem** & introduces good practice
- Information for policy transfer acquired through studies, analytics, on-site visits & face-to-face discussions with experts



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New Policy Initiatives and their Implementations (2009 – 2011)

RNA & Specialization on Work With Sex-Offenders:

- 62 probation officers attended special training (9 days) and were certified to use Static-99R/Stable-2007/Acute-2007 - acquired specialization on work with sex-offenders (trainers: R.J.Wilson, C.Thomson, A.Utinans)
- 3 probation officers attended further training to become trainers on Static-99R/Stable-2007/Acute-2007 and one of them certified as trainer
- Professional support system developed for specialists on work with sex offenders (individual & group supervisions; peer-reviews)
- Knowledge refreshment trainings for specialists introduced
- Trainings for prison officers & probation managers

~180 000 EUR



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New Policy Initiatives and their Implementations (2009 – 2011)

Treatment Programs for Sex-Offenders:

- Cognitive behavioral & groupwork
- Community: Thames Valley Sex Offender Groupwork Programme (TV-SOGP) from United Kingdom
- Prisons: Sex Offender Treatment Programme from Russia
- **18 groupwork facilitators** selected and trained (~25 days) according to UK standards by UK experts (L.Guthrie, C.Baim, E.Hayes, D.Middleton, D.Fisher)
- 7 received further training to become **trainers** on sex-offender treatment
- Prison and probation **premises adapted**, renovated according to needs of program facilitation
- **Quality assurance system** introduced for TV-SOGP (video-monitoring of sessions & feedback)
- Treatment programs adopted for **bi-lingual** use (Latvian & Russian)

~300 000 EUR



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Treatment programs for sex-offenders

«Thames Valley Sex Offender Groupwork Programme» (7-8 months; 260 hours):

1. Core module (Closed Group Work). Duration: 2 weeks (10 days x 6 hours)

2. Victim Empathy module - Closed Group Work. Duration: 8 sessions (6h each), 2x weekly, total 4 weeks.

3. Life Skills module - group work module (from this module sex offenders who take part in Prison programme can join). Duration: 20 sessions (6h each) 2x weekly, total 10 weeks.

4. Better Life in Society Module - group work module. Duration: 22 sessions (6 hour each) x 1 week, total 22 weeks.



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Treatment programs for sex-offenders

Prison Sex Offender Treatment Programme (1,5 + years):

- 1. Preparation for the programme** (intervention to prepare inmates for participation in the programme; encourage and motivate offenders to participate in the programme and to assist them for positive changes).
- 2. Core programme.** Duration: 1,5 years, once (6h) a week.
- 3. Therapeutic community module.** Maintenance of the changes that have been achieved as a result of intervention up to release of imprisonment.



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New Policy Initiatives and their Implementations (2009 – 2011)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) & Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA):

- Recommendations for introduction of MAPPA developed in cooperation with consultants from UK (S.Scott, N.Prunnel)
- 4 MAPPA pilots implemented
- Recommendations for introduction of COSA developed in cooperation with consultants from Canada (R.J.Wilson, A.McWhinnie)
- Informative seminars to our co-operation partners (judges, prosecutors, social workers etc.)

~ 70 000 EUR



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New Policy Initiatives and their Implementations (2013 – 2015)

EU Daphne III project «CIRCLES4EU»:

- «Circles of Support and Accountability» method introduced
- 3 Circles Coordinators and 22 volunteers trained
- 3 Circles organized during the project

Interinstitutional cooperation:

- 23.11.2015 agreement on cooperation in preventing sexual reoffending signed by the probation service, police and prison
- Joint supervision model for overseeing dangerous criminals created and implemented nationally



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Important learnings

- **International experts:** ambitious, well connected & supportive
- **Translation** always will be an issue (~10 % of your budget)
- **RNA tools** – choose carefully
- Keep informed **highest managers** of your organisation about your progress
- Expect **resistance** from probation officers
- **Procurements** of services from abroad: English language, expensive & they don't understand our procurement procedures



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The most important learning

Sex is sex everywhere!

(we are not so different as we think!)



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Where we are now?

1. Legislative basis for work with sexual offenders
2. Same numbers
3. SPS functions & sexual offenders
 - Risk and need assessment tools
 - Assessment reports
 - Supervision of sexual offenders
 - Treatment programs
 - Work with community - volunteers
 - Victim-offender mediation
4. Training system for PO
5. Support system for staff
6. STIS, networking and community involvement



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Legislative Basis and Work with Sex Offenders

Criminal Law (1998)

Criminal Procedure Law (2005)

Sentence Enforcement Code (1970)

Prisons Administration Law (2002)

State Probation Service Law (2003)



Sex Offenders in Prisons and Probation

There were 393 sex offenders in prisons on 1st January 2018

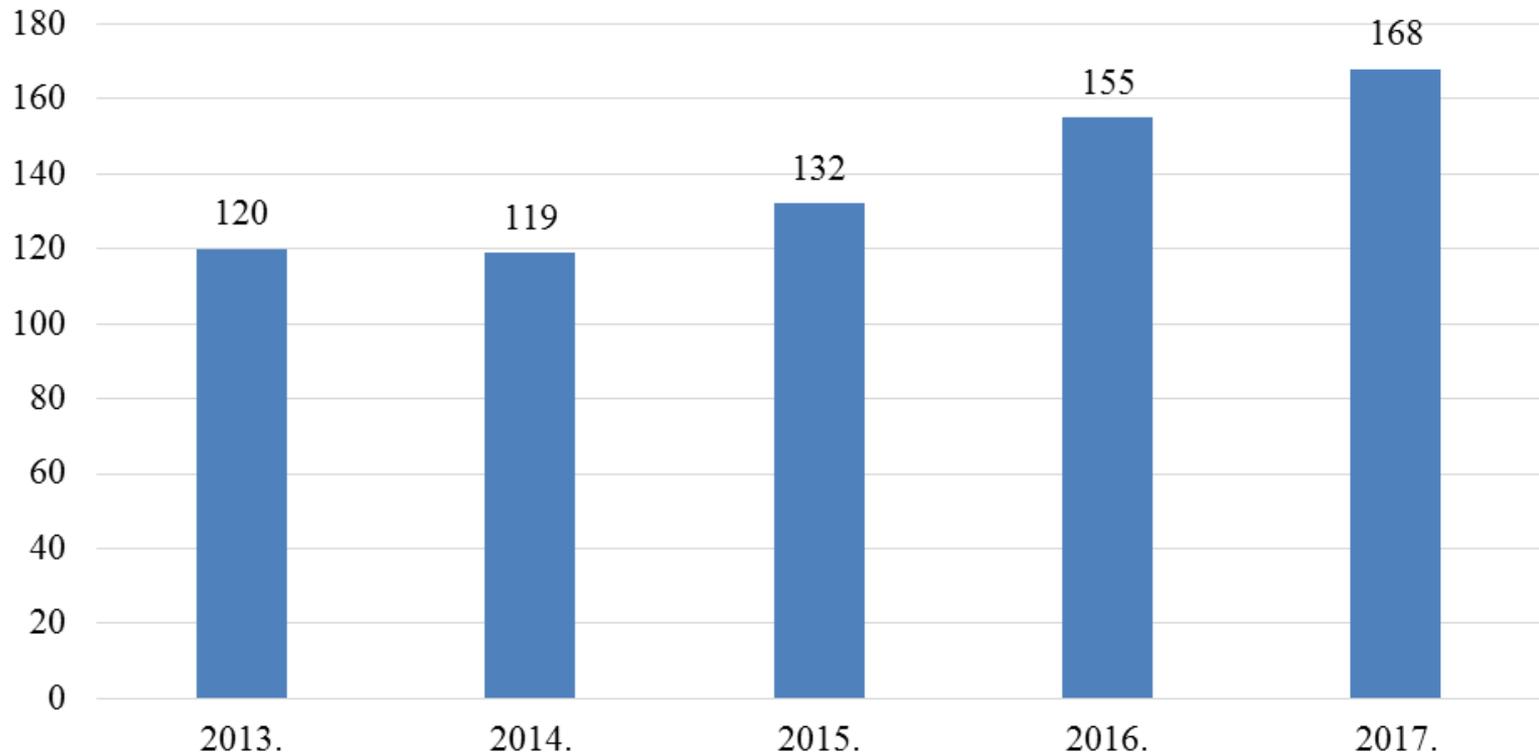
338 sex offenders were under probation supervision in 2017

	Category «A»		Category «B»		Total	
Suspended Custodial Sentence	68		109		177	
Probation Supervision	Community Service	43	Community Service	41	Community Service	84
	Deprivation of Liberty	42	Deprivation of Liberty	4	Deprivation of Liberty	46
	Fine	1	Fine	9	Fine	10
Parole	14		4		18	
Total	168		170		338	



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Category «A» Sex Offenders under Probation Supervision





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Tools and qualified staff in prison and probation

- Latvian Probation Service electronic database «PLUS» and database «Prison Information system»
- Risk and need assessment tools – Static-99R, Stable-2007, Acute-2007
- 75 probation officers are trained to work with sexual offenders
- Cognitive behavioral, group work sexual offender treatment programmes:
 - Sex Offender Treatment Programme (Prison programme)
 - Thames Valley Sex Offender Group work Programme (Community programme)
- 19 probation officers and 8 prison officers are trained to facilitate sexual offender treatment programmes
- Training of prison staff for the use of Static-99R in prisons was started



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Work with sexual offenders in practice

Pre-trial stage

Pre-sentence reports (Pre-sentence reports are based on risk and need assessment, part of presentence report is recommendation for courts regarding to length of sentence and content)

Sentence enforcement stage

In prisons:

- Individual and group interventions in prisons (sentence planning, qualified staff (social workers and psychologists), group work programme)
- Report regarding to sexual offenders who apply for parole (based on risk and needs assessment);
- STIS (inter-institutional cooperation meetings for the monitoring of dangerous offenders) meeting for sexual offenders who will be/are released from prisons



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Work with sexual offenders in practice

In probation:

- Risk and needs assessment (within first few weeks, if the sex offender is/will be under supervision; for sentence planning, to impose conditions/obligations, intensity, goals and tasks criminogenic needs);
- Structured individual sessions and group work sessions in probation:
 - sentence planning
 - work with criminogenic needs, based on risk level (face to face; allocation to group work treatment; dynamics and changes within supervision time)
 - STIS and cooperation with other partners



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Training system for probation officers specialized for work with sex offenders

Training for PO (64 hours):

- **Module 1** (5 days; 32 hours): Introduction to sex offender management (theory, methods and techniques for work with sex offenders, motivation for change and therapeutic interviewing, good life model, thinking errors, emotional management, general and sexual self-regulation, e.tc.);
- **Module 2** (3 days; 18 hours): Scoring the Ttatic-99R, Stable-2007, Acute-2007;
- **Module 3** (1 day; 5 hours): Supervision of sex offender in community;
- **Module 4** (1 day; 7 hours): Pre-sentece and social reports for sexual offenders.



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Training system for probation officers specialized for work with sex offenders

Learning by doing under the guidance of an experienced probation officer-mentor

Certification and recertification of PO:

1. Certification: exam in three parts (risk assessment, sexual offender supervision, preparation of assessment reports)
2. Re-certification: participation in knowledge and skills maintenance trainings and conferences, case analysis with a consultant and participation in peer review meetings



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Support system for staff

Professional individual supervisions

Peer-reviews

«Difficult cases» are solved collectively (internal & external consultants)

Annual conferences for SO-specialists (networking)



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Priorities of today

- Study on predictive validity of Static-99R and the predictive and incremental validity of STABLE-2007
- Introduction of Static-99R into prison system
- System to support professional resilience of sex-offender specialists:
 - Professional development
 - Individual supervisions
 - Maintenance of professional community and horizontal communication
- Interinstitutional cooperation (Latvian MAPP)
- Circles of support and accountability (COSA)



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Thank you for your attention!

Imants Jurevičius

E-mail: imants.jurevicius@vpd.gov.lv

Anvars Zavackis

E-mail: anvars.zavackis@vpd.gov.lv