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Date: 07/06/2024

**DH-DD(2024)655**

Documents distributed at the request of a Representative shall be under the sole responsibility of the said Representative, without prejudice to the legal or political position of the Committee of Ministers.

Meeting: 1501<sup>st</sup> meeting (June 2024) (DH)

Communication from the authorities (06/06/2024) concerning the case of Strazimiri v. Albania (Application No. 34602/16).

Information made available under Rule 8.2a of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments and of the terms of friendly settlements.

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Les documents distribués à la demande d'un/e Représentant/e le sont sous la seule responsabilité dudit/de ladite Représentant/e, sans préjuger de la position juridique ou politique du Comité des Ministres.

Réunion : 1501<sup>e</sup> réunion (juin 2024) (DH)

Communication des autorités (06/06/2024) relative à l'affaire Strazimiri c. Albanie (requête n° 34602/16) **[anglais uniquement]**.

Informations mises à disposition en vertu de la Règle 8.2a des Règles du Comité des Ministres pour la surveillance de l'exécution des arrêts et des termes des règlements amiables.

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DGI

06 JUIN 2024

SERVICE DE L'EXECUTION  
DES ARRETS DE LA CEDH



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISE  
**STATE ADVOCATURE**  
**OFFICE OF GENERAL STATE ADVOCATE**

No. 51/3 Prot.

Tirana, on 06.6.2024

**Ref:** On the execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case no.34602/16 "Strazimiri v. Albania", judgment of 21.01.2021"

**To:** **Ms. DIMITRINA LILOVSKA**  
**Head of Division**  
**Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECHR**  
**DGI - Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law**

**Council of Europe- Strasbourg**  
**67075 Cedex**  
**France**

Dear Mrs. Lilovska,

In the framework of the cooperation between the Government of Albania with the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, regarding the execution of the ECtHR judgment in the case no. 34602/16 "Strazimiri v. Albania", please find below attached updated information on the individual and general measures implemented by the Albanian Government for the execution of the ECtHR judgment in the application no. 34602/16 "Strazimiri v. Albania".

Yours sincerely,

**ODISE MOÇKA**  
**STATE ADVOCATE GENERAL**



**UPDATED INFORMATION**

“Execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights  
Application no.34602/16 “**Strazimiri v. Albania**”, judgment of 21.01.2021”

**A. INDIVIDUAL MEASURES**

• ***Information on the current material conditions of the detention of the applicant Strazimiri in the Lezhë Special Institution.***

- The applicant Arben Strazimiri, diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia, has been placed in the Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë, Special Section for the treatment of citizens with medical measures.
- The current material conditions of the detention of the applicant are in compliance with the local legal and sub-legal regulatory framework, specifically; clothing, sleeping equipment and lighting in living quarters (Article 29 of the General Prison Regulations), air time for prisoners (Article 30), hygiene services (Article 31), personal and environmental hygiene (Article 32), as well as the provisions in the European Prison Rules, Recommendation 2006 (2).
- The buildings where the persons with compulsory medical measures are placed have been renovated and populated in November 2021. The rooms have full lighting, normal temperature, and ventilation. They also have a toilet and are furnished. Patients are provided with beds and sleeping equipment according to the seasons. 10 employees are employed to clean the premises. Patients have access to hot water showers as needed. Food is cooked in parameters and served three times a day. Patients are allowed to buy food items and other items for personal needs from the Economic Operator contracted by the General Directorate to provide shopping service for patients.
- The applicant Strazimiri is accommodated in building No. 4, floor 2, room No. 8. The living room has dimensions 5 x 4 and a surface area of 20 m<sup>2</sup> and a volume of 60 m<sup>3</sup>. We are aware that this is not in conformity with the minimum standard living space because there are 6 patients and the living space for one patient is 3.3 m<sup>2</sup>.
- The patient stays in the room only at night, while during the day he is free to move, visit common areas, in ventilation, engage in recreational, occupational activities, etc.
- The patient has periodic visits from the family. During this period, it is visited once a month with a duration of not less than one hour/per meeting;
- The ventilation facilities are adequate. Infrastructural improvements have been made. 4 tents have been built which serve for the patients to stay in the shade during the time they spend outside.

- ***Information on specific arrangements concerning the applicant aimed at reducing, as much as possible, the negative effects of the carceral environment on his therapeutic treatment in Lezha Special Institution.***

- The individual treatment plan of the applicant Strazimiri in the Lezha Special Institution is carried out by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a psychiatrist, psychologist and social worker continued without interruption.

The individual treatment program consists of an individualized therapeutic intervention to modify the patient's thoughts and behaviors.

Specifically, this process<sup>1</sup> is carried out according to the following steps:

- Case identification, assessment, and analysis
- Designing the Individual Treatment Program

In the framework of these measures, is carried out the gathering of sufficient data on the case to identify factors that stimulate mental health problems (emotionality, socialization, self-esteem, anxiety, aggression, attention, perception, ability to manage conflicts, understanding, impulsivity, content of thought), assessment of the stage of the disease, current clinical data, personal goals and social needs and the establishment of support mechanisms in case of deterioration of mental health.

The collection of information is carried out through standardized clinical interview formats by the psychologist.

Implementation of the Individual Treatment Program, led by the clinical psychologist:

- The individual therapeutic intervention is carried out through the implementation of the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Program (CBT) which consists of focusing on the relationship between: cognition (thoughts), affect (emotions) and behavior (what we do).

This therapeutic program consists of periodic weekly activities:

- Occupational therapy, painting, through which the expression of the patient's thoughts and emotions - which the patient finds difficult to articulate;
- Individual counseling and development of social skills - through which it is intended to promote social interaction with others, correction of behaviors;
- Management of aggressiveness in cases of eventual relapse/crisis. The patient does not show aggression, but the staff has been trained and continues to be trained through the Saint'Egidio project, for the application of aggressiveness management techniques in case it appears, etc.;
- Involvement of the family in the treatment of the case - through ongoing information on the patient's health progress and needs, as well as encouraging

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<sup>1</sup> design and implementation of the individual treatment program

interaction with them for emotional support to the patient.

- Activities for physical education and sports, including psychoeducation.

The applicant Strazimiri has been encouraged several times to participate in sports activities. Care has been taken to maintain a balance between encouraging and respecting the patient's desire to participate in certain activities, so as not to influence the potential emergence of paranoid symptoms.

- Group therapy for rehabilitating adjustment to others.

The citizen is engaged in Life Skills Courses once a week:

- ✓ "Domestic violence"
- ✓ "Employment"
- ✓ "Behavior Correction",
- ✓ "Drug abuse",
- ✓ URA - Restorative Justice<sup>2</sup>, etc.

### **-Situation of the applicant**

The patient is in a stable condition.

He does not present a relapse, but a constant psycho-emotional and functional state appears; there is slight progress in terms of participation in individual psychological and occupational counseling sessions.

Attention is being paid in terms of the development of social skills in the context of the relationship with the psychologist, as an environment that provides higher psychological security for this patient.

The patient's situation appears constant in terms of psycho-emotional and functional balances but continues to be dysfunctional in terms of maintaining the logical flow or coherence in the cognitive and socio-emotional interaction, an element that penalizes his active engagement in the processes rehabilitative in the institution.

The psycho-social file of the citizen with a medical measure equipped with the Individual Treatment Program is reviewed regularly, which summarizes the progress and achievement of the objectives set forth in the program.

In any case, the group therapy and overall follow-up of the individual plan is carried out by the psychologist and the social worker - who regularly document the process and progress, concluding also about modifications in the dynamics of this individual plan depending on the needs.

- The applicant was followed and continues to be followed with periodic consultations by psychiatrists. Therapy has continued, according to the recommendations of the psychiatrist, which

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<sup>2</sup>In cooperation with ShKBSh - PFA

is administered by the institution's nurses. The plan of periodic visits according to the needs of the patient consists of:

- ✓ The specialist doctor (psychiatrist) performs a scheduled visit, as well as whenever the need arises depending on the acute symptoms;
- ✓ Visits are described in the chart along with recommendations for further treatment.

Medication therapy is determined by the psychiatrist, which is described and documented in his clinical record and then distributed by the nurse, according to the psychiatrist's recommendation and the time frames (two or three times a day) recommended.

Also, depending on the clinical signs for problems other than those of mental health, a pathologist is consulted.

This citizen is diagnosed with Dg: Paranoid Schizophrenia and is treated with medications (Haloperidol Solution, Olanzapine, Trihexyphenidyl) according to the recommendations of psychiatrists. Therapy continued, according to the recommendations of the psychiatrist, which is administered by the institution's nurses.

## ***B. GENERAL MEASURES***

- ***Information on specific measures to address the carceral effects of the Lezha Special Institution and measures to ensure adequate therapeutic treatment and conditions of detention and to guarantee the lawfulness of detention based on court order of “compulsory treatment.”***

The Albanian authorities are strongly engaged on further improving the conditions and treatment of psychiatric forensic patients as stated in the domestic regulatory framework and international standards in this field.

In this regard Ministry of Health and Social Protection has undertaken the commitment to adapt the facility of Inpatient Mental Health Services in Shkodra into Special Medical Institution for forensic psychiatric women patients (with a projected capacity around 35 beds) and transfer of women patients accommodated in Tirana Prison Hospital Center in the new institution in Shkodra.

An inter-sectorial working group has been established for assessing the need for infrastructure and furniture interventions need in Shkodra to be transformed into Special Medical Institution for women and for developing the regulatory frame for the way of establishment and functioning of this typology of institution, as well as secure perimeter and multidisciplinary human resources needed for the delivery of human and therapeutical services.

This working group also will plan the transfer of the mental health inpatient services for civil patients into a psychiatric ward in Shkodra Regional Hospital, by ensuring the integration of

mental health service into general health care. This transfer is expected to be completed within 2024.

As regards the *creation of a permanent specialised forensic psychiatric facility*, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection is working through experts of this working group for the identification of an accommodation structure suitable for a decent treatment of 420 forensic psychiatric men patients, preferably within near Tirana, with the aim of having greater access to different professionals who should be recruited for the provision of services in this institution.

Drafting of the feasibility study for the new location, considering CPT recommendations, aiming at increasing the maturity level of this project for international funding support.

Other inter-sectorial working groups have been established as well, as for the:

- development of the protocol for the use of injection drugs for the safe and effective management of violent behavior in persons with mental health disorders;
- development of Individual treatment plan forms for persons with mental health disorders in inpatient specialized mental health services;
- review of the activities of the joint action plan, annex of the cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of justice under the light of CPT recommendations , general measures for the execution of the Strazimiri judgment and the latest developments in this field.

This working group, cochaired by both deputy Ministers of Health and Justice will be engaged also in monitoring the implementation of the reviewed joint action plan.

Meanwhile, within the project of HF III "Strengthening the protection of human rights for convicted persons in Albania" of the Council of Europe we have planned to develop the methodology and instruments for risk categorization of the psychiatric forensic patients and training of implementing staff.

The design of a training curricula in the field of forensic psychiatry and implementation of the in-job trainings, and design of the referral system of patient leaving institution and to be treated in the community level will be part of the future interventions as well.

*In relation to the specific situation of Lezha Special Institution:*

- The Directorate of Social Affairs of this Institution, in implementation of the recommendations of the CPT, has continued to strengthen the social service at the Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë,
- The portfolio of therapeutic instruments and psycho-educational programs has been updated/enriched;

Thus, the "Life Skills - School " has been opened near this institution - 8 therapeutic modules based on cognitive behavioral therapy. Specifically, citizens with medical conditions have participated in the following modules:

- ✓ “Domestic violence”
  - ✓ Sex Offenders
  - ✓ Employment
  - ✓ “Correcting offender’s behavior”
  - ✓ “Stress - this silent factor” (Part I)
  - ✓ “Stress – this silent factor” (Part II)
  - ✓ “Post-Traumatic Stress Management”
  - ✓ “URA – Restorative Justice”<sup>3</sup>
- The training curriculum for the Integration Policy Sector has been completed. The staff of the social sector has been trained regarding the procedure of preparation and drafting of the pre-release programme<sup>4</sup>;
  - The procedural documents related to the implementation of the reintegration process have been approved;
  - 3 modules designed for the staff welfare component have been drafted and approved. Meetings were held with multidisciplinary staff related to this component, with the aim of psychoeducation, in order to address the "emotional exhaustion" of the staff;
  - In cooperation with CoE on June 11-14, 2024, the staff of the Directorate of Social Affairs will be trained in two therapeutic approaches:
    - ✓ Trauma Informed Therapy
    - ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - The Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë / Directorate of Social Affairs in cooperation with experts from the Saint'Egidio organization will implement/strengthen occupational therapy in this institution, through the construction/opening of a greenhouse, with the aim of involving citizens with medical measures.
  - Funding for the construction of a second, larger greenhouse has just been approved. This initiative will make it possible for all interested citizens to be involved in such therapy.
  - With the aim of the success of these measures (individual program and as a whole psycho-social care for this category) in the work programs continuous training of the staff is foreseen and carried out in order to guarantee an efficient service and realistic intervention.

In this context, the Department of Social Affairs in the DPB during the period March-April 2024 has conducted the following trainings:

- ✓ "On the prevention of recidivism and the social reintegration of offenders",
- ✓ "Methodology in function of planning the punishment of prisoners, based on instruments drawn up by experts of the Council of Europe",

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<sup>3</sup> Implemented by ShKBSH - PFA

<sup>4</sup> April 2024



- ✓ as well as implemented and trained the social sector staff for the implementation of the "Psychologist's Protocol".

- In the framework of the strengthening of bibliotherapy, a Cooperation Agreement was signed between the DPB and the Center for Motivation and Development, which consists in enriching and revitalizing the libraries of IEPPs and encouraging prisoners to read, including citizens with medical conditions;
- The General Directorate of Prisons is in the phase of concluding a Cooperation Agreement between DPB and the "Vatra" Center. The latter has extensive, multi-year experience in addressing domestic violence, supporting victims of violence, etc.
- Regarding education and professional training in the penitentiary system, including the Special Medical Institution of Lezha, the review of the Cooperation Agreement with the Ministry of Education and Sports as well as that of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, responsible for professional training, has just been completed.

The renewal of these agreements will make it possible to provide vocational education and training in IECD, taking into account the addressing of the findings and difficulties encountered in the provision of services during these years, as well as the elaboration of ways to provide more comprehensive vocational education and training.

- In the framework of the cooperation with the British Embassy in Tirana, as far as the rehabilitation component is concerned, it has been assessed and work is underway to open different workshops in 3 IECD-s, according to the identified needs. With the implementation of this initiative, with the support of British experts, dedicated to the field, we will replicate the same experience in the Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë, too. At the same time, the staff is being strengthened through meetings and study visits in this context. Through this support, the implementation of therapeutic communities will be realized in the Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë, and not only. It will be aimed to work with the component of domestic violence, drug abuse, etc.

- ***Information on the measures to address the overcrowding of the Lezha Institution***

- The buildings for the accommodation of citizens with medical conditions have 58 residential rooms and their total area is 1160 m<sup>2</sup>. The capacity is for 300 beds and 446 patients are accommodated.
- The General Directorate of Prisons / Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë, within the framework of finding short-term alternative solutions to address overcrowding, has put into operation three other facilities, specifically:
  - ✓ In end of April 2024, 6 new residential rooms have been opened, where 24 citizens with medical measures have been accommodated;
  - ✓ Rooms of the Special Care Sector - premises where pre-detainees were previously accommodated, and who were recently relocated to IECD (Institution for the Execution of Criminal Decisions) Reç. From this transfer, 25 patients of Lezha Special Institution with medical measures are expected to be accommodated in these Rooms of the Special

Care Sector;

- ✓ Within a few days, three more rooms, where three quadriplegic convicts are housed, are expected to be released. In these rooms, measures are being taken to accommodate 12 citizens.

- We note that the increase in the number of patients with medical measures is about 60 per year, while the number of patients leaving the service is very low and as a result the number of citizens with medical measures is constantly increasing.
- Concrete efforts are being made with the support of Council of Europe experts and in cooperation with Ministry of Health and Social Protection for the reassessment of patients based on HCR-20 (risk assessment instrument), for the possibility of their transfer to outpatient treatment. This measure will also aim to affect the level of overcrowding, as the possibility of applying to the respective Courts will be elaborated, with the aim of re-evaluating the citizens with the measure.

**The Albanian authorities are fully aware that the accommodation of citizens with medical measures in suitable conditions according to standards can only be accomplished with the construction of the Forensic Psychiatry Hospital.**

- *Information on measures to reduce, as much as possible, the negative effects of the carceral environment of Lezha Special Institution, in the areas identified by the CPT for providing adequate therapeutic treatment to forensic patients.*

*In implementation of the recommendations of the CPT, the following measures have been taken:*

- The structure and organigram of health and other services staff has been completed; Specifically:
  - ✓ The health sector employs 10 doctors, among whom 3 are full-time psychiatrists.
  - ✓ Social sector – 11 employees, among whom 5 are clinical psychologists and 6 are social workers.
  - ✓ In relation to the CPT recommendation for the recruitment of occupational therapists, through Saint'Egidio it is planned as an activity to train a certain number of existing staff related to occupational therapy.
- With the support of the Sant'Egidio Foundation<sup>5</sup> three components are being addressed:
  - Re-evaluation of all patients with medical measures
  - Staff training related to all work processes in function of mental health,
  - Staff training related to occupational therapy;
  - Post-release patient support for reintegration and housing for citizens without family support.

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<sup>5</sup>The project will last three years.

- With the support of the organization ShKBSH - Prison Fellowship Albania, near the Special Institution of Lezha, the ventilation and rest facilities of this institution have been improved, creating dedicated spaces for the development of recreational, sports and therapeutic activities;
- The protocol for the treatment of citizens with medical measures has been drafted by the working group at the Ministry of Health.
- We have continued cooperation with MSHCS for the improvement of the health conditions and treatment of patients.
- A treatment protocol for citizens with mental health problems in specialized institutions with beds has been drawn up by the working group of the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- The internal regulation of the Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë is being drafted.
- In response to Albanian authorities' request, in the framework of the execution of the judgment of the ECtHR regarding "Strazimiri v. Albania", a comparative study on forensic psychiatry has been completed, which focuses on policies for forensic patients, as well as best models on ambulatory care in the community. This study was developed within the Horizontal Facility project "Empowerment of human rights for prisoners in Albania".
- Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë, in cooperation with other religious organizations, has provided equipment for patient beds, including sheets, covers, etc.
- Also, we have equipped the bedrooms of the patients with tables and benches proportional to the number of patients accommodated in the living rooms and with closed cupboards, where the patients can deposit their personal belongings.
- Through the investment in the ventilation area, it has become possible to increase the time that patients accommodated in the temporary institution can spend outside in the ventilation premises.
- The Special Medical Institution IECD Lezhë in cooperation with the Catholic Church is expected to enrich the rest/recreational facilities with the following equipment:
  - ✓ Billardino, ping-pong table, TV, soccer balls, chess table, dominoes, and other board games;
  - ✓ Prison Fellowship Albania has donated washing machines for the laundry room, projector, TV, etc. to the institution.