

**30th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of justice**  
**"prisons in today's Europe"**  
Istanbul, 24 – 26 November 2010

**SPEECH**

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**Deputy Minister of Justice, ARMENIA**

Dear Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to join the other speakers and on behalf of the Minister of Justice of Armenia extend our deep gratitude to the Council of Europe and to the Ministry of Justice of Turkey for high level organisation of this event.

The topic of prisons is, of course, directly connected with the previous one – that of transparent and effective implementation of justice, since having such and not having a modern and efficient system of sanctions and, particularly, of prisons will mean that justice is not that effective.

Penitentiary system reforms were further boosted in Armenia still upon the accession to the Council of Europe. In 2001, the Government of Armenia approved the penitentiary system reforms strategy which identified specific targets. Today as well, those are of relevance. A vivid example is the Government approved strategy of the infrastructural reforms of the penitentiary system which aims at building, in the upcoming years, new penitentiary establishments meeting the international standards.

Of course, Armenia is not an exception, and we also have the problem of prison overcrowding. Yet, to solve it, we do not only focus on increasing the number of prisons. We believe that there is a need to introduce and apply other measures alternative to imprisonment. Currently, a new Criminal Procedure Code is in the process of elaboration, which touches upon the issue of detention. It is planned to introduce a mechanism which will consider, by default, the system of choosing an alternative precautionary measure when discussing the issue of detention. With this, we want to directly decrease the number of preliminary detained persons.

The issue is also important in terms of enforcement, as considerable attention needs to be paid to the training of judges, for both the frequency of imposing detention as a precautionary measure and the average terms for the imposed measure depend on the activities of the judges.

However, attaching high importance to the topics of this event, I kindly call upon everyone to avoid diverging from those topics and to refrain from using events of such format for making political statements or remarks, since declaring the zones, which serve the purpose of ensuring the country's security, as occupied territories should be discussed at an appropriate format, adhering to the international principles of refraining from the use of force and of national self-determination.

Once again, I would like to extend our gratitude to the Ministry of Justice of Turkey, in the person of Mr Sadullah ERGIN, for such warm reception.

Thank you for attention.