

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

**SPEECH**

**Mr Dražen BOŠNJAKOVIĆ, Minister of Justice**  
**CROATIA**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The treatment of prisoners is an important indicator of the level of protection of human rights in every State. Therefore, Croatia has been continuously improving its prison system in order to be aligned with all international standards. Our legislation follows the standards of the European prison rules and other relevant recommendations of the Committee of Ministers.

Today I would like to raise three main points;

- the usage of the probation system as means to deal with overcrowded prison conditions,
- the importance of training of the prison staff, and
- the significance of international cooperation.

As regards the probation system, Croatia has passed legislation and adopted a five year strategy for the establishment of the probation system which will be completely harmonised with the recommendations of the Council of Europe regarding the alternative sanctions. We firmly believe that the professional operation of the probation system will result with an increase of community service sanctions. The successful community service sanctions will at the end of the day contribute to the credibility of the penal system as a whole.

An important aspect of the alternative sanctions which should not be overlooked is the fact that they enable a more successful reintegration of criminal offenders into the community. This issue is of great importance when dealing with juvenile offenders who often need to have a special treatment. This can be achieved only by a special approach to the execution of a prison sentence.

For each prisoner, after the diagnostics is performed an individual program of sentence execution is created and its implementation is systematically monitored.

Keeping in mind the basic purpose of the execution of a prison sentence, our primary goal is to make prisoners fit for life outside of prison, making them capable to respect the law and positive rules of the society.

This brings me to the second point I wish to raise today - the training of the prison staff. This is an important aspect of the proper rehabilitation of prisoners. We are aware of the fact that continuous efforts are necessary in the area of professional development of prison staff. This should include trainings in the area of efficient implementation of the Convention on protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as of the European prison rules.

My third and final point relates to the importance of the international cooperation. Croatian experience shows that the international cooperation in the area of execution of sanctions is

necessary for better service of justice. This is especially true for sentenced persons having multiple nationalities who escaped abroad in order to avoid serving the sentence.

We strongly feel that nobody who was rightfully sentenced to a prison should avoid the justice. Therefore, we made possible for foreign nationals sentenced in Croatia to continue serving the prison sentence in their home countries according to the Convention on transfer of Sentenced persons and its additional Protocol. And vice versa, it is possible to transfer to Croatia the execution of a prison sentence imposed to Croatian Citizen by foreign Courts.

In conclusion, allow me to stress out once more our dedication to the objectives of the proposed Resolution. Having in mind that the improvement of the prison system is one of the imperatives of the modernisation of justice in whole, we must not spare efforts directed towards development of instruments for achieving this important goal.

Thank you for your attention!