

Prison and probation personnel training policy in Greece

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The human geography of the correctional system - Prisons

33 prisons – peripheral services of the MoJ

9,500 inmates

4,500 prison staff

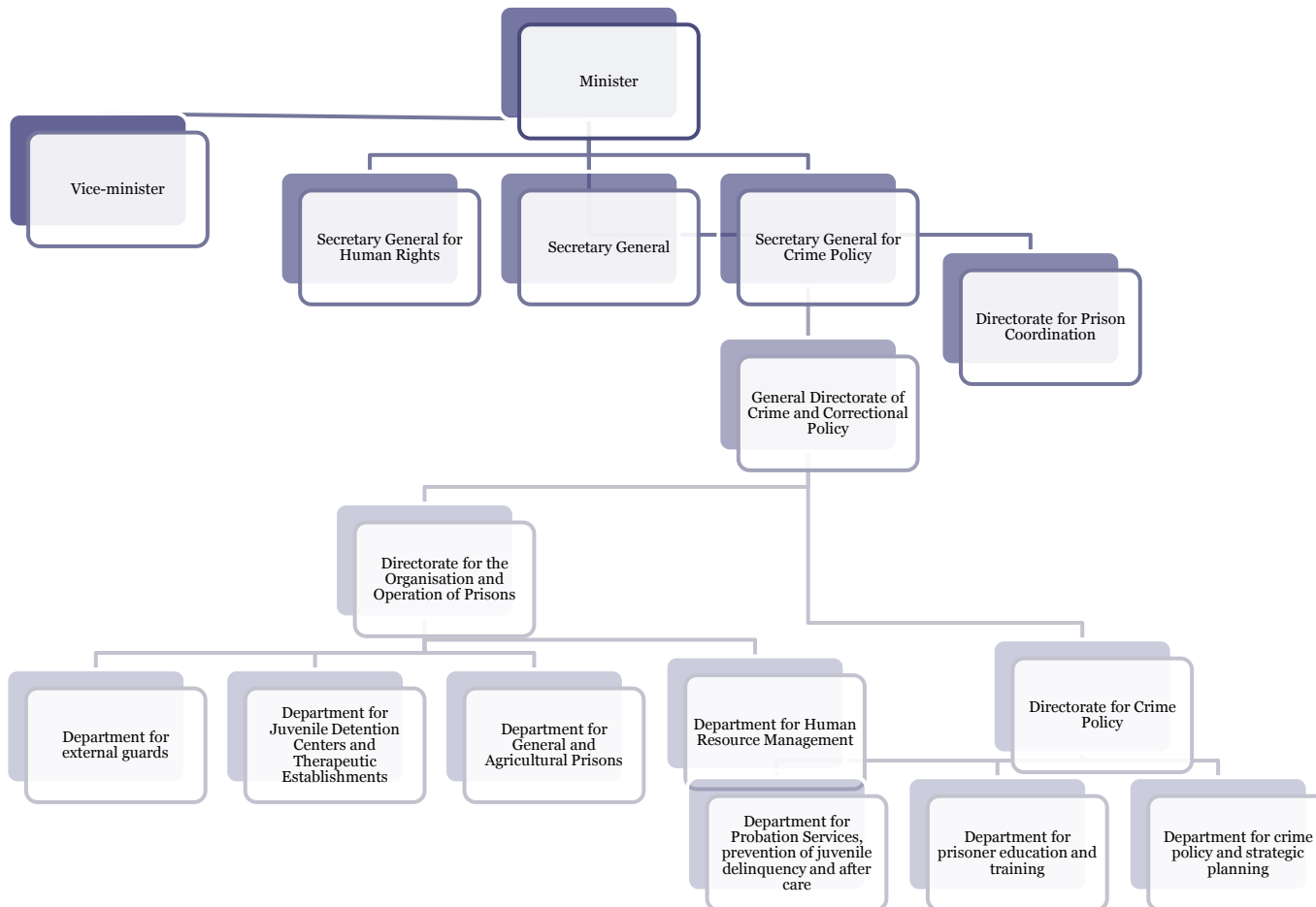
- 4,000 prison guards and external security guards
- 380 administrative & technical staff
- 120 scientific staff
- 33 prison directors/ 34 chief prison guards/ 27 chief external guards (police officers)/ 43 head of administrative - financial departments/ 7 head of social work departments

Probation

- 58 probation services for juveniles and adults (courts of first instance) – peripheral services of the MoJ
- 120 probation officers
- 7 heads of departments
- No administrative staff



Ministry of Justice



- 1 General Directorate
- 2 directorates: one responsible for prisons/ one for probation
- 7 departments
- 1 responsible for personnel, including staff training
- No separate department for training
- In total 33 employees (financial department excluded)

Status and background of prison and probation personnel

Prison staff

- Permanent public servants
- Scientific personnel: psychologists, social workers, sociologists, criminologists
- Administrative personnel: high school – tertiary education
- Prison guards: high school
- External security guards (armed): high school

Probation staff

- Permanent public servants
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Tertiary education degree in sociology, law, social anthropology, social administration, philosophical and social sciences.

Obligatory training provided in law

- Initial training for prison guards and external security guards (after appointment).
- Is obligatory in law but in recent years was provided only for external security guards who are armed (their duties: perimeter security of prisons, transfers to courts/hospitals, guarding hospitalized prisoners).
- 3 months (but was reduced to one month).
- For probation staff it became obligatory in law in 2014, following the merging of juvenile/ adult services.

Overall training policy: 2015 - 2017

- Both for prison and probation staff.
- For different level staff (directors/ chief guards/ prison guards – external security guards/ scientific personnel).
- Initial in-house training (School of Correctional Staff).
- Life-long training in cooperation with other bodies:
 - Institute of Training, National School of Public Administration
 - Hellenic Police
 - Technical Assistance (Austrian MoJ)
 - Participation in seminars/ training events (in Greece and abroad)

Probation staff

Institute of Training

- Two three-day training courses for all officers (2016):
 1. The operation and role of the merged probation service.
 2. The reformatory measures for juveniles.

Technical Assistance/ “Neustart”

- Training of trainers for 25 officers around the country
 - 70 hours training by Greek, Austrian, British experts.
 - Manual for all probation officers based on the workings of the Austrian probation organisation.

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TA on the Reform of the Greek Judicial
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ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΩΝ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ
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Practical guide on the
work of the probation
officers for juveniles and
the probation officers for
adults (March 2017)

Prison staff (I): training key personnel

1. **Prison directors:**

- Coordination meetings twice a year on policy and planning, headed by the Secretary General (MoJ)
- 2 day training on prison management by CoE (December 2016)

2. **Chief prison guards:**

- Drug rehabilitation/ drug dependency in prison and correctional policy (October 2016)

3. **Scientific personnel (2 seminars):**

- Training mental health professionals in referring drug users (January - March 2016).

Actions 2 and 3 were planned and organised by prison personnel working at the Therapeutic Center for Drug Addicted Prisoners (MoJ) [the project was funded by the Swiss organisation VEBO].

Prison staff (II): Initial training

- **School of Correctional Staff:** 11-12/2016, 2 cycles of initial training for 40 prison guards and external security guards
- 120 hours (1 month) but participants already working in the system for more than 2 years.
- Planning and curriculum in cooperation with Professor Sophia Vidali (Department of Social Administration and Political Science, Democritus University of Thrace).
- With the participation of the Greek Ombudsman and selected theorists and practitioners.
- With practical training (24 hours) by Hellenic Police.

Prison staff (III): Life-long training

- In cooperation with the Institute of Training, 2 educational courses are planned and relevant educational manuals will be issued.
- 200 prison guards and external security staff will be trained by the end of July 2017:
 1. “Mental health and managing serious incidents”, 5day seminar (sociology of prison, mental health-drugs-suicide prevention, intercultural education, serious incidents, dynamic security and prison intelligence).
 2. “The role of prison staff in the treatment and reintegration of prisoners”, 4day seminar (social re-integration of prisoners, educational programmes in prison, the role of the family and parenthood, social exclusion and stigma, dynamic security).

Plans for the future (2017)

- *Initial training*: continuous operation of the School of Correctional Staff in a permanent facility in women's prison.
- *Life-long training*: 12 new courses for 300 prison guards and external security guards in 5 cities, in cooperation with the Institute of Training (the same 2 courses).
- *Operational training* for 1,800 external security guards by the Hellenic Police (local educational departments).
- *6 training seminars for key staff* on operational issues, in cooperation with the Technical Assistance programme (Austrian MoJ).

Strategic plan for the correctional system

- Drafting a strategic plan for the correctional system for the 1st time is intended inter alia to give a vision and a purpose to all the people working in prisons and probation.
- The three pillars of the new policy are: **Security for staff and prisoners – Humanity – Reintegration.**
- The vision of our Ministry is *“to ensure that sentences are served in prison and in the community, safely and reliably, in line with international standards and with respect for the individual. This is a paradigm shift, prioritising reintegration and support after release, and upgrading the role and improving the working conditions of human resources”*

The content of training under the new strategy

- All educational courses are aligned to the basic principles of the new policy:
 - Respecting basic rights and European standards regarding prison conditions.
 - Bringing reintegration to the fore, as a continuum from the first day of imprisonment to integration upon release.
 - Understanding the reality of the prison (subculture, intercultural issues, mental health, drug dependency, vulnerable groups, foreign prisoners etc).
 - The importance of transparency, legitimacy, monitoring and control by internal and external bodies.
 - Upgrading the role of prison guards and external security guards in the treatment and reintegration of prisoners (dynamic security).

Training and leadership development as a priority

- The human factor (staff) as a critical condition for a policy shift and for effective practice (skills development).
- Introducing meetings and training seminars for key personnel and reinforcing their position.
- Providing clear guidance, vision and strategy to manage the system.
- Responding promptly to incidents of maladministration, corruption etc.
- Bringing together groups with similar tasks that were clearly divided in the past (prison guards and external security guards/ juvenile and adult probation officers).
- Prioritising training of trainers.
- Participation of experienced prison and probation staff as trainers in seminars in order to utilize in-service capacities.

Limitations

A. Staff training

- Low priority until today, lack of training culture.
- Lack of budget.
- Lack of a structure for in-service training (experienced and qualified personnel, premises, permanent operation of the School of Correctional Staff).

Limitations

B. Human resource development

- Lack of culture in the public administration in relation to promotion based on performance criteria, relevant training and evaluation.
- Lack of structures and clear rules regarding especially the promotion of prison guards and external security staff on the basis of relevant qualifications, training and performance.

Considerations for the future

- Re-planning of the initial training (a number of 600 new recruitments of prison staff is under way for 2018) – the Austrian experience.
- Re-examining recruitment qualifications (in combination with initial training).
- Evaluation and examination of initial training.
- Establishing training for the promotion of prison guards and external security guards (it is provided in law but not implemented).
- Issues of mental health regular testing of staff.
- Possible cooperation with University institutions for drafting and evaluating the curricula and for providing specialised courses.