

Maria Anagnostaki, criminologist, Phd candidate, Law School , University of Athens

Scientific advisor

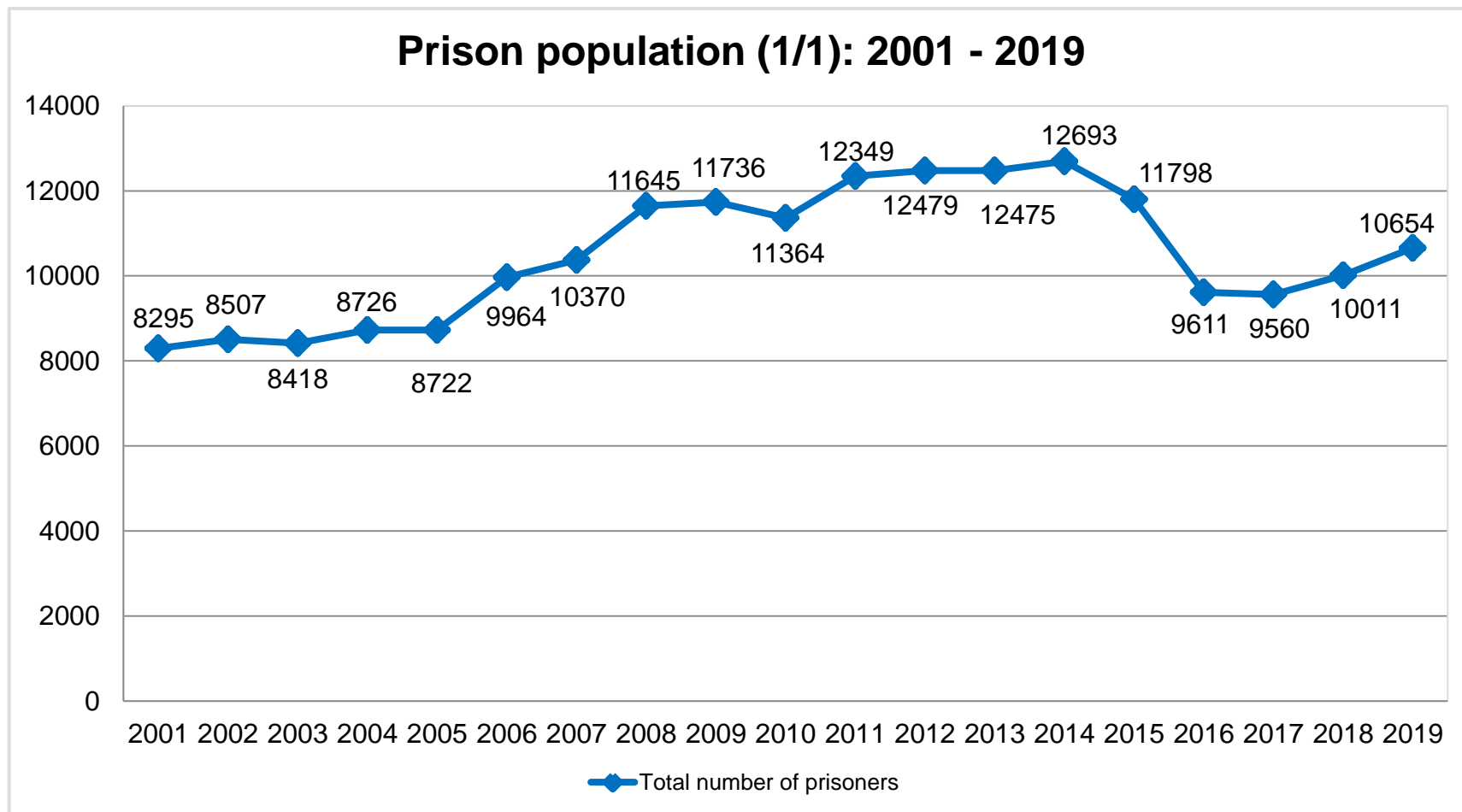
Office of the Secretary General for Crime Policy

Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PENITENTIARY SYSTEM 2018-2020. NAVIGATING THROUGH PRISON REFORM



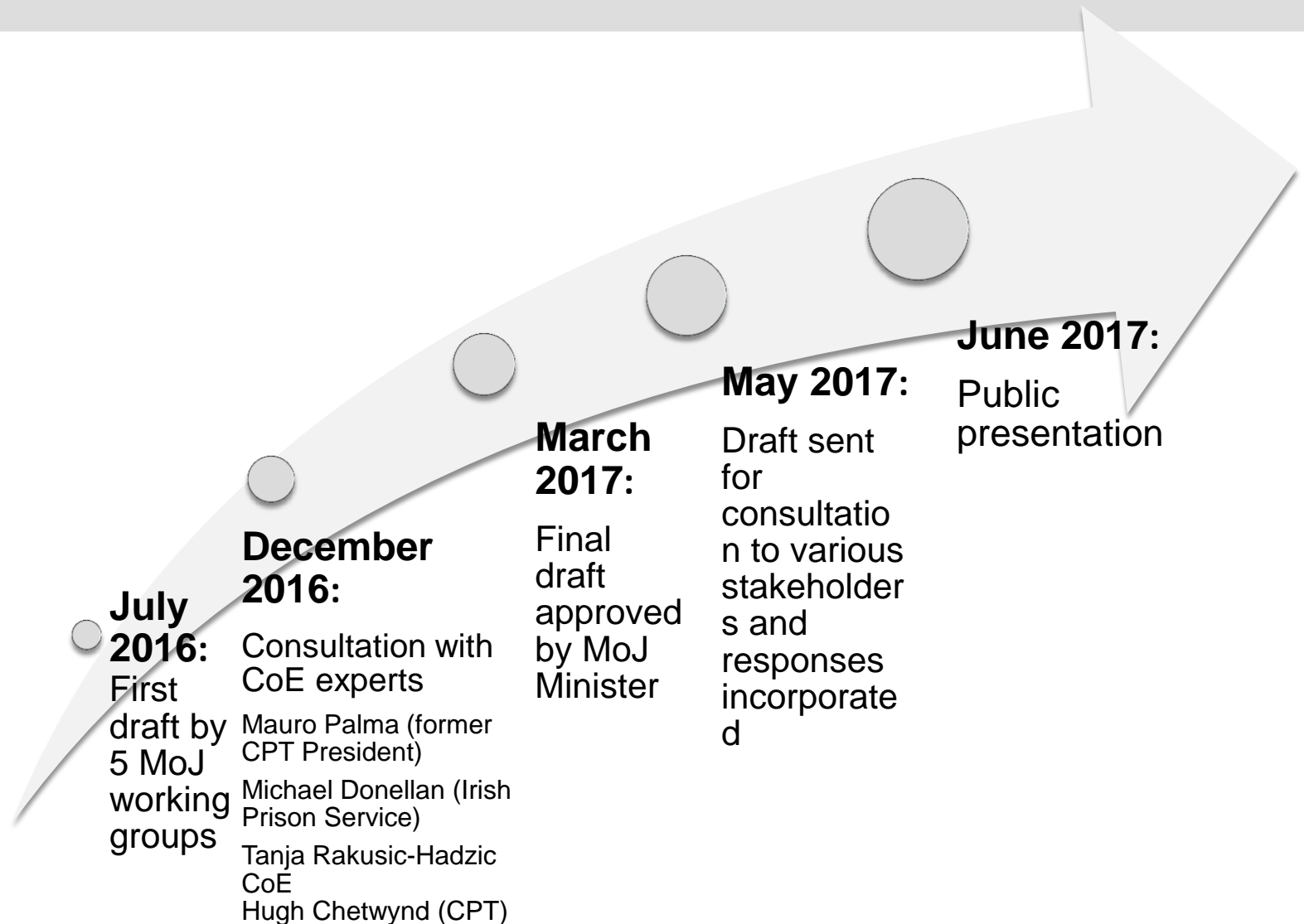
Prison population 2001 - 2019



Our vision

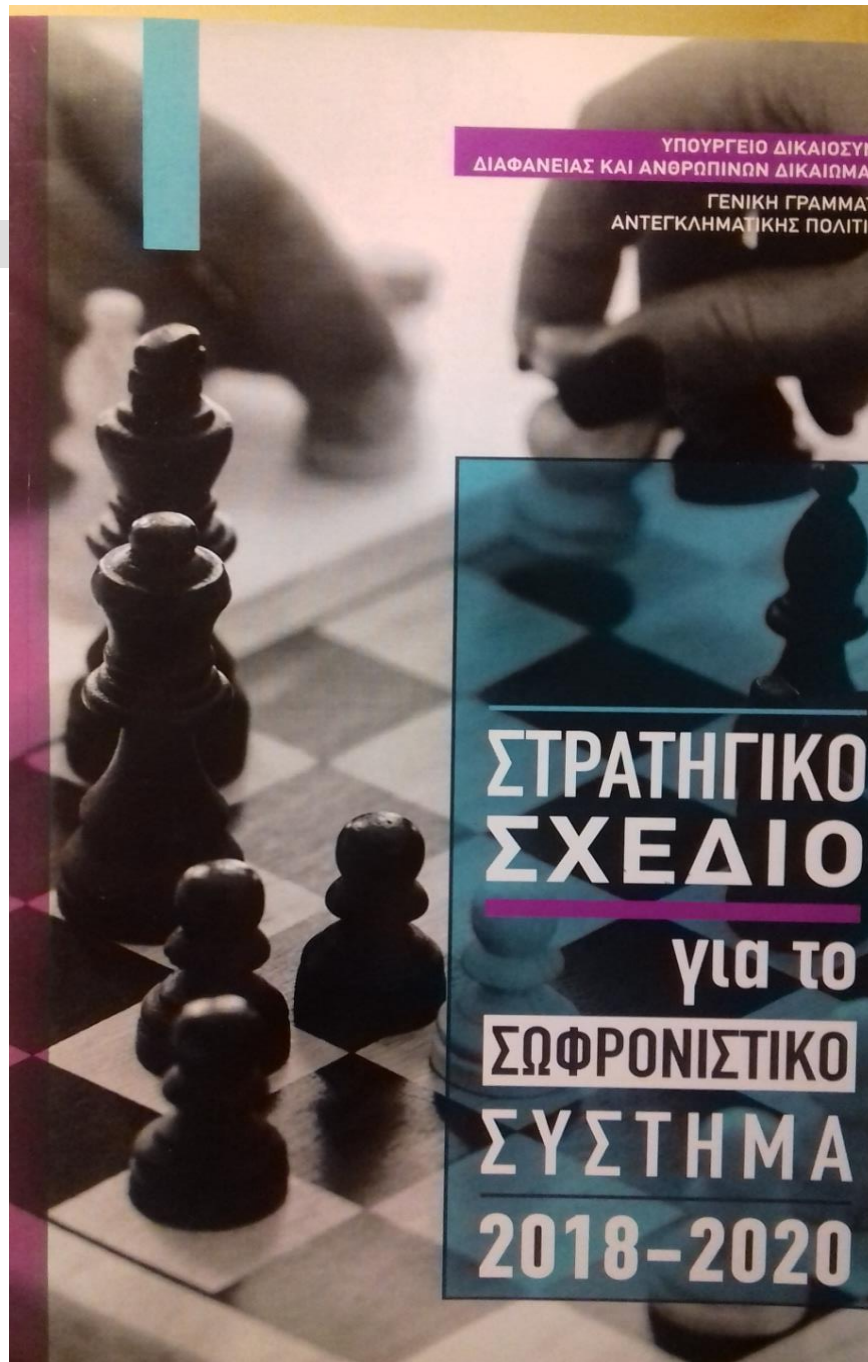
- **To ensure that sentences are served in prison and in the community, safely and reliably, in line with international standards and with respect to individual.**
- **This is a paradigm shift, prioritising reintegration and support after release, and upgrading the role and the working conditions of prison and probation staff.**

Consultation with stakeholders



The Strategic Plan for the Penitentiary System was launched on January 2018.

It is now on its 2nd year of implementation.



The strategic goals

1

**IMPROVEMENT OF DETENTION CONDITIONS –
MODERNIZATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

2

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT – PERSONNEL
TRAINING - ADMINISTRATION**

3

**REDUCING PRISON OVERCROWDING –
ALTERNATIVE MEASURES AND RELIABLE
SERVING THEREOF – PREVENTING AND
COMBATING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

4

PREPARATION OF REINTEGRATION – AFTER CARE

5

**PERSONNEL AND DETAINEES' SAFETY –
TRANSPARENCY - ACCOUNTABILITY**

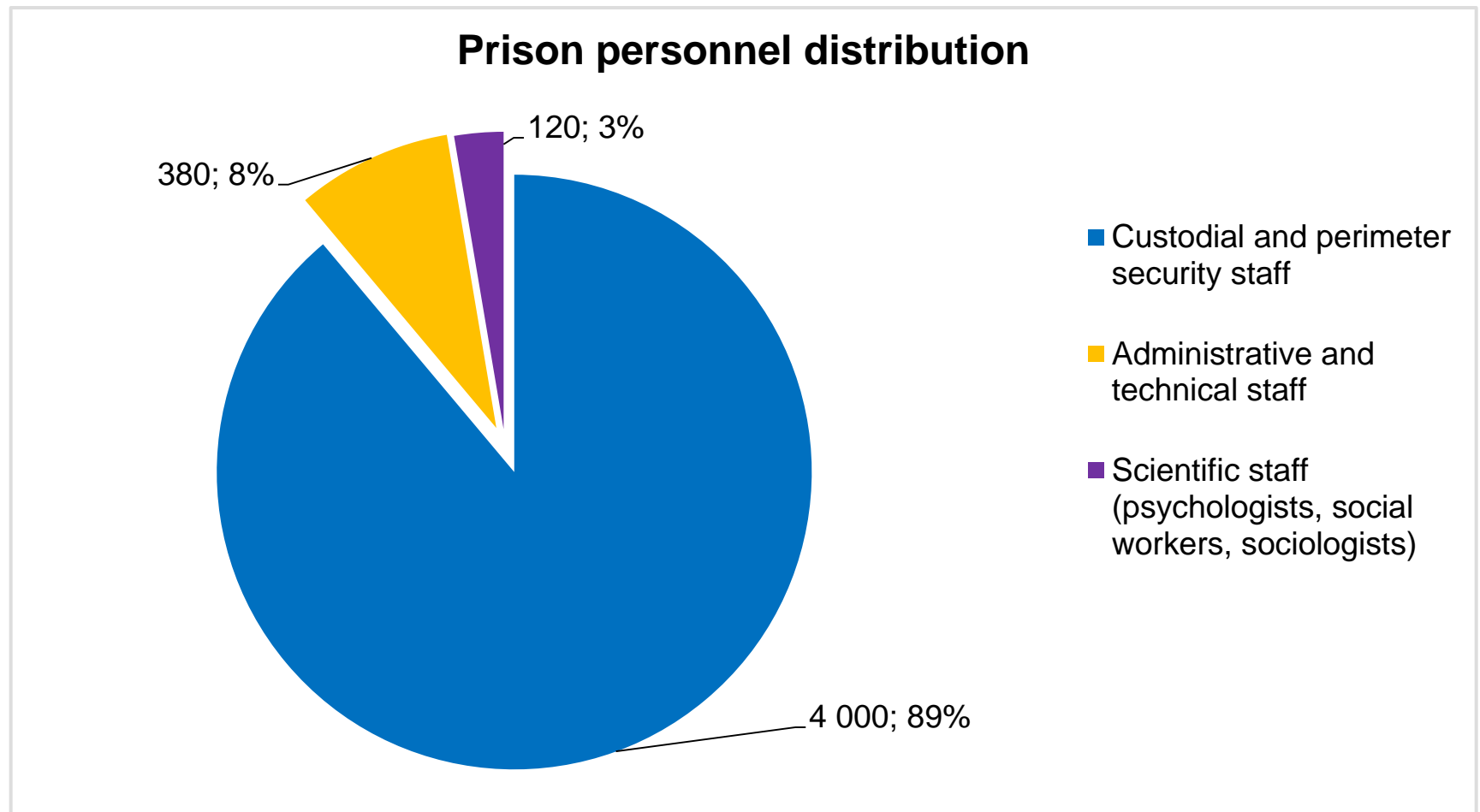
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**HEALTH SERVICES in PRISONS IN COOPERATION
WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

The problem of prison overcrowding

- The Strategy for the penitentiary system is a great tool for prison reform but not a tool for addressing the problem of prison overcrowding.
- Systemic overcrowding and poor political and administrative leadership to address the problems, has had long term effects on the operation of prisons and the morale of prison staff.

Prison personnel: an example



Assignment of study to identify the causes of overcrowding using the Council of Europe's White Paper and involving the judiciary.

REDUCING PRISON OVERCROWDING IN GREECE

Report of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Action against Crime Department, Criminal Law Co-operation Unit

Prepared on the basis of the discussion at the meeting in Athens, on 12 December 2018, and expert opinions provided

BY

Mauro Palma *President, Italian Independent Authority for the rights of persons deprived of the liberty, National Preventive Mechanism under UN OPCAT*

Sonja Snacken *Professor of Criminology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium*

Vincent Theis *former Governor of Luxembourg Prison, Luxembourg*
Iuliana Carbutaru *Probation Inspector, National Probation Directorate, Ministry of Justice, Romania*

March 2019

Findings and recommendations

(I)

- The analysis of the root causes of Greek prison overcrowding clearly points to the severe penal legislation and sentencing practices, which cannot be explained by the relatively low crime rates.
- Greece has the higher percentage of long and very long sentences in Europe, while its crime rates are lower or equal to the European median.
- To reduce prison overcrowding would require *inter alia* reforms of the penal legislation and practices, for imprisonment to be really used as a last resort, which means less and shorter terms of imprisonment.
- Only a coherent reductionist penal policy can lead to a long-term decrease of the average prison population.

Findings and recommendations

(II)

- Community sanctions and measures must be part of a coherent and effective ‘front door’ and ‘back door’ (electronic monitoring, parole) reductionist policy.
- Front door community sanctions should consist of autonomous sanctions.
- Training of judges and public prosecutors is essential to enhance their knowledge of the effectiveness and familiarity with non-custodial responses to crime.
- The role of the probation service within the cjs need to be enhanced and a comprehensive Action Plan or other policy paper for the development of the Greek Probation Service need to be developed.

Findings and recommendations (III)

- The real situation and distribution of prisoners show that some prisons have occupancy rate of up to 200%
- The standard of 4 sqm per person is to be understood as an absolute minimum, the desirable standard being higher.
- The rationale should be a reasonable evaluation of present and future needs of accommodation.
- A specific agenda for the implementation of concrete measures to relieve overcrowding should be put in place.

Obstacles and opportunities

- Resistance to change
- State bureaucracy, inefficiencies of the public sector, fiscal restrictions
- Difficulties of coordination on legislative level and poor input by research
- Strong political agendas on crime and punishment



24th Council of Europe CDPPS, Cyprus