

Probation Quarterly



FOREWORD



Jana Špero, Head of the Sector for Probation

Welcome to the first edition of our “Probation Quarterly” newsletter.

This newsletter will inform you about what the Probation Service is and about why our work is important for you and for our citizens. We want to present this document as a new tool for both internal and external communication.

We plan to publish the newsletter once in three months, and we hope that you will find the content useful. The newsletter aims at sharing the latest information on the Sector for Probation through regular articles that will give you insight into who we are and what we do.

This new edition was launched in the framework of the “Support for further development and strengthening of the Probation Service in Croatia” project funded by the European Union. In that sense, the newsletter has collected a significant number of articles pertaining to the activities carried out as part of the aforementioned project. At the same time, we also wanted to present our activities in figures, we wanted to publish a short text on the Probation Office Varaždin, inform you about the bilateral cooperation between Croatia and Norway in the field of probation and to share our partners’ opinions on the work carried out by our service.

I would like to thank all the local and international colleagues involved in the activities included in the first issue of our newsletter. I hope this newsletter will be on your reading list!

This project is financed by the
European Union



CONTENTS

Twinning project: a year later	2
Under probation: Lived experiences	3
New professionals in the Probation Service	4
Probation in numbers (data for 2016)	5
A regional look	6
A talk with Ms Marinka Orlić, Deputy State Attorney of the Republic of Croatia	8
Study visit to Spain	10
Bilateral cooperation with Norway	11
The “Finance Management” Program at the Probation service Zagreb I	12
Experiences of an offender who was conditionally re- leased with electronic monitoring	13
Working in the EM center	14



Twinning project: a year later

In 2015, the Spanish Government was awarded the EU funded Twinning Project “Support to further development and strengthening of the Probation Service in Croatia” (HR/14/IB/JH/01) in coalition with Germany, and I was selected to move to Croatia to work as the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA). Twinning projects are EU instruments for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries. They bring the public sector expertise from EU Member States and beneficiary countries together with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer to peer activities.

Since its inception in 2009, the Croatian Probation System has achieved exceptional results in performing the tasks within its competences. In April 2016 this 15 month project was launched with the aim of contributing to this trajectory through a) the analysis of the Probation legislation and practices in the light of the European Rules and best practices of other member states, b) the training of probation officers to work with specific categories of offenders, such as sex offenders, gender-based violence offenders and violent offenders, c) the support for the implementation of an electronic surveillance pilot project, and d) the increase in public awareness regarding the benefits of alternatives to imprisonment, both from financial and social perspectives.

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia, together with the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions (SGIP) of Spain, the International and Ibero-American Foundation of Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP) and the German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation (IRZ).

As the RTA of the project my duties cover the coordination of Short Term Experts (STE) coming from different Member States -Spain, Germany, Romania and Belgium- and the Croatian Sector for Probation. The project is composed by around 40 weekly missions where the STEs run workshops, deliver training sessions, conduct study visits and provide counseling together with the representatives of different Croatian institutions. Twinning is based on the learning by doing principle and on sharing best practices. International projects are never a one-way learning process, but a reciprocal and interactive professional experience for all the practitioners involved.

All criminal justice systems are different. The objective is not to transfer good practices from one country to another but to comprehensively analyze the needs of the beneficiary country in order to concrete the STEs’ experience into specific and useful actions and recommendations. My goal is to garner the best from each expert and provide the beneficiaries with the best practices that really meet their needs. For this purpose I need to regularly coordinate with the representatives of the Croatian Probation Service, as well as with other stakeholders such as prison staff, judges, state attorneys, police staff, external organizations, academics, among others.

The project will soon come to an end. We achieved important outcomes that will hopefully help the Probation Service in Croatia continue improving offenders’ lives while simultaneously keeping the community safe.

RTA Laura Negredo Lopez



RTA Laura Negredo López (in the middle), Lana Stojšavljević, RTA Assistant (left) and Jan Ruk, RTA Language Assistant (right)

Under probation: lived experiences

The photo exhibition titled “Under probation: Lived experiences” was launched on the 25th of April 2017 at the Music Pavilion of Zrinjevac Park.

Twenty pictures were selected out of 125 photos taken by 12 probation officers and 12 probationers during March. The best 20 photos were selected by an independent jury whose members were Mr. Ante Šprlje, the former Minister of Justice of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Ambassador Mr. Eduardo Aznar Campos, Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain to the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Andreas Oliver Krauß, Deputy Chief of Mission of the German Embassy in the Republic of Croatia, Ms. Jana Špero, Head of Probation, Ministry of Justice, and BC Project Leader, Ms. Ivana Paradžiković, television host and editor, Mr. Boris Ščitar, photography editor, and Ms. Lucija Čustić – Luce, singer-songwriter.

As the title of it was “Under probation: Lived experiences” the public was invited to have a short look into the subjectivity of what it means to be under probation supervision from both perspectives: those that “impose” supervision and those who “receive” supervision. The exhibition also represented an opportunity to share key messages about what probation is and what probation does with the public.

As the pictures illustrate, the experiences are quite close to each other. Most of the photos taken by the probationers suggest hope, optimism, roads to something better but also confusion, self-introspection, uncertainties and so on.

Probation officers also captured this apparent contradiction between the ‘joy’ of offering help and guidance but also fighting bureaucracy, poverty and marginality.

In many ways, this exhibition has mirrored what the scientific literature using Photovoice methodologies has argued for a long time: supervision is a very complex experience that can be helpful even when it is painful. Moreover, supervision is perceived mainly as a positive experience by the probationers and this was reflected also in the words of one of the winners of this exhibition (Jasna Marić).

The winning photograph by the probation officer (Vesna Šumiga) is also an intriguing one: the photo captures the poor living conditions in some Roma settlements but also the effort of an offender to improve them while performing community work. At the same time, the picture draws attention to the difficult conditions in which the probation staff have to perform their duties sometimes.

The exhibition represented a great opportunity for many people to work together: probation officers, offenders, city authorities, printing companies, PR people and so on. We are sure these people would not have worked together under different circumstances. Above all, the product of their work was reflected in mass media and in the eyes of many passers-by that took a stroll around the square between the 24 and 29 April 2017. Media coverage during prime time on Nova TV was a great achievement for this event.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all people involved in this activity and to wish you all more positive events that would put probation on the public agenda.

Esther Montero Pérez de Tudela, project leader, Ioan Durnescu, junior project leader





New professionals in the Probation Service

From the beginning of 2017, four new professionals started working in our Probation Service: a probation officer at the Probation Office Osijek along with two probation officers and an administrative assistant at the Probation Office Zagreb I. We warmly welcome them and we believe that they will contribute to the positive working environment in their respective offices and in the whole service with their experience, knowledge and personality. We asked them to briefly introduce themselves and say something about themselves, about their work experience and about what attracted them to probation. Here's how they introduced themselves...



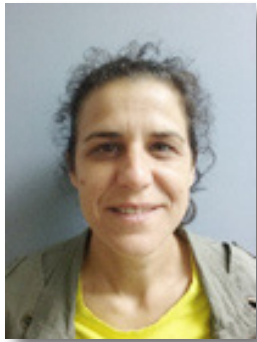
JOSIPA CRNČAN
Psychologist
Probation Office Osijek

"I have over 4 years of professional working experience I mostly obtained by working at the Croatian Employment Bureau. I mostly worked on career guidance and career counseling. I conducted individual and group briefings, workshops and trainings for different target groups, and I often worked on personnel selection. Why was I drawn to Probation? I wanted to get new experiences and grow professionally, and get the opportunity to learn about a completely new area and work in a positive environment. Something about me... I have a lot of patience and I'm a tolerant person which is helpful in my line of work. I'm creative and I like to make new things from old ones, to connect the incompatible. In my free time I sing in the Croatian singing company Lipa, one of the most awarded Croatian choirs, and I love nature and animals."



MARKO MIHALJ
MA in psychology
Probation office Zagreb I

„I got most of my working experience working as a psychologist in the social welfare system and working as a psychology professor in the educational system for a little while. I am currently finishing my psychotherapy studies. I have participated and completed numerous professional trainings in the field of psychology and education. So far, I've published two scientific papers in the field of psychology and social work and I've spoken at expert meetings and international conferences. I'm a member of the Croatian Psychological Chamber and the Croatian Psychological Society. Working at the Probation Office Zagreb I gives me the opportunity to apply my knowledge and skills through a completely new and integrative approach to working with offenders. By combining professional monitoring and treatment work, it is possible to reach positive guidance and relevant changes needed to reintegrate the offender into the society. Doing this kind of work with people is one of the major challenges that has directed me professionally towards probation."



KAROLINA ŠIMUNOVIĆ,
Social worker
Probation office Zagreb I

"I have worked at the Social Welfare Center Zagreb for 16 years. Before that, I worked at the Social Welfare Center Senj and prior to that I worked as a social worker at the Gerontological Center of the Home for the Elderly and Infirm Trnje for a couple of months. I was drawn to Probation because of the positive inputs from colleagues who have worked in the service for a long time, along with the desire to change and learn new content. I'm married and a mother of two kids. Four years ago, I moved from the city to the countryside to avoid the crowd and to grow my own fruit and vegetables."



DUBRAVKA ROGOŽAR,
Administrative assistant
Probation office Zagreb I

"I've worked at the Directorate for European Affairs, International and Judicial Cooperation of the Ministry of Justice for more than 10 years. I wanted to change my job to gain new experience and to change the work dynamics so that I don't do a job that just entails sitting and working on the computer but is more dynamic, includes working with people and learning something new. What should I say about myself? By nature, I am a person who loves to get to know the new environment and then slowly fit in, I love team work and dynamic work, I love learning new things and I'm interested in so many things in life. I like to be aware of the things that are happening around me and pass through life with eyes wide open."

Probation in numbers (data for 2016)

4147	number of received cases
3749	number of completed cases
3535	number of cases on December 31, 2016
539.780	number of community work hours
1137	legal entities providing community work placement
1474	community work cases
1329	reports for enforcement judges, courts, state attorneys, and prison system
806	conditional release cases
381	cases of suspended sentence with protective supervision, security measure / special obligation
90	officers in the Sector for Probation
	the number of cases almost tripled in 2016 compared to 2012
	7% of people on probation were women

Dijana Todosiev, Head of the Department for Coordination and Development of the Probation Service, Central Office



A regional look

The Probation Office Varaždin was opened on January 2, 2012 and has been responsible for the area of the Varaždin and Međimurje Counties, which are among the most populous in the country. The positive side is that those counties are territorilly not large, so we are located fifty kilometers away from our furthest destination.

Apart from the head of the office, the Probation Office Varaždin consists of three probation officers and one administrative assistant. The office is located in the center of a beautiful baroque town, it is quite spacious and fully equipped.



Vesna Šumiga, Tanja Trkulja, Maja Blagus, Ana Marija Vlašić, Tihana Šafran

The largest number of offenders we work with have to perform community work, and we can send them to work to about a hundred currently available legal entities. We are pleased to say that an increasing number of legal entities are now contacting us because they want to cooperate when it comes to community work as they have heard of others' positive experiences. We must also point out that people who have done community work are increasingly employed by these legal entities. However, there are still legal entities which, due to prejudice, do not want to allow the enforcement of community work, and some are especially resistant to offering work to members of the Roma national minority. Around ten percent of the offenders do not finish community work so they have to serve a prison sentence.

Our office is continuously working with a large number of Roma, most of whom live in the area of Međimurje County, where one third of all Roma living in the country resides according to the last population census. So far, we have worked with nearly three hundred Roma, of whom 1/3 did community work. We made reports on conditional release or reports on the termination of the prison sentence for a hundred of them while we had around 50 of them on conditional release. Currently, nearly 40% of all the offenders performing community work under the supervision of our office are from the Roma community.

In order to direct the public attention to the living conditions of a large number of Roma, but also to highlight the distressing situations that the probation officers face on a daily basis which may jeopardize their health and safety, the head of office has taken a photo which an independent jury awarded the best photo by a probation officer as part of the exhibition entitled "Under probation - lived experiences."



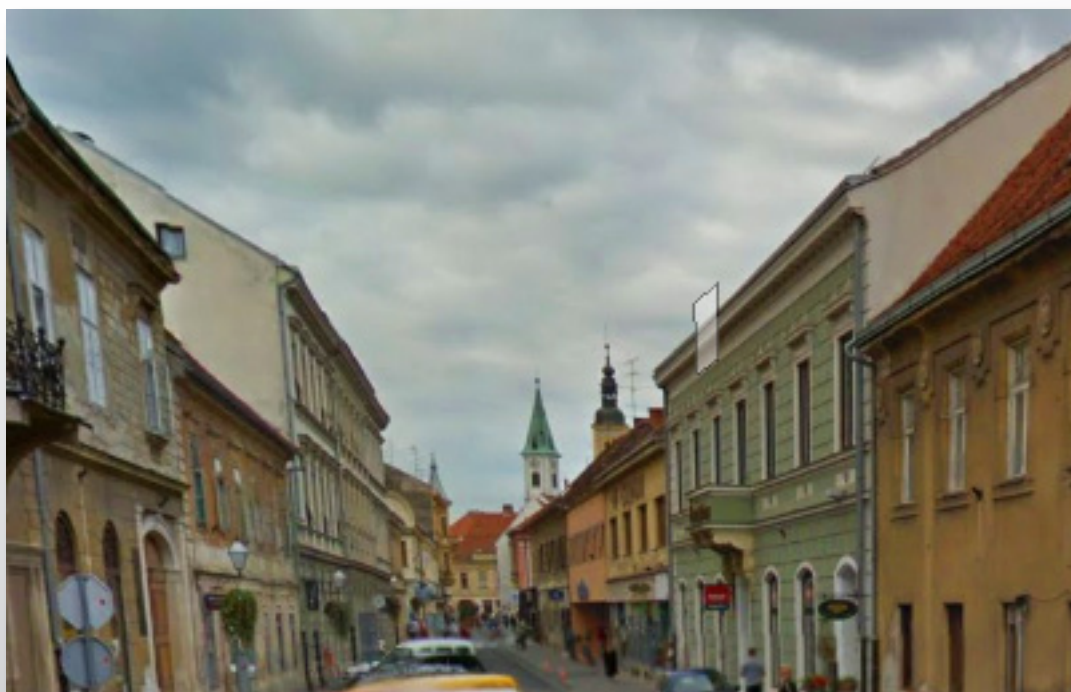
Since 2015, we have been participating in the Pilot Project entitled “Initial Assessment of the Utility of a Probation Officer working in Prison” along with the Probation Office Osijek. Therefore, when preparing reports on conditional release or reports on the termination of the prison sentence, we’re conducting interviews with prisoners serving their sentences in the Varaždin Prison and the Lepoglava Penitentiary.

Fieldwork leads us to various, often negative, experiences from the inability to find the prisoner’s family to close encounters with animals without supervision, animals which are not always friendly towards us. We also meet a lot of seriously ill people, people suffering from infectious diseases, and people who live in very poor conditions. This is, therefore, the least predictable part of our work, also related to possible threats to our health and life.

We have established a good cooperation with the Police Administrations of Varaždin and Međimurje, the Public Health Institutes, the Varaždin General Hospital and the Čakovec County Hospital, the Prison of Varaždin and the Lepoglava Penitentiary. Collaboration with all the abovementioned institutions is commended every year on the anniversary of our office opening, on December 5th, when we invite their representatives to attend the buffet i.e. Open Door Day.

Finally, we can say that the term “probation” is becoming less and less unknown in our area. It’s been a long time since somebody referred to us as prohibition, probiotion or probuction. This is partially due to media coverage, which we have insisted on from the beginning, and good results, which helped establish our service within the criminal justice system. Our local community is acknowledging the work of our office by including the head of our office in the County Council for Prevention, a body established by the Police Administration Varaždin, which brings together representatives of all institutions within their competencies preventing any emergent forms of socially unacceptable behavior and by electing her as the vice-president of the County Team for the Prevention of Family Violence.

Vesna Šumiga, Head of the Probation Office Varaždin



Varaždin



A talk with Ms Marinka Orlić, Deputy State Attorney of the Republic of Croatia



You were a member of the working group in charge of the preparation and implementation of the electronic monitoring pilot project in the Republic of Croatia, as a representative of the State Attorney's Office. Could you briefly explain the preparatory activities that preceded the implementation of the pilot project?

The preparatory work on the aforementioned project started with a study trip to Madrid. Namely, Spain is a country that has long been using electronic monitoring (EM), ever since they started a pilot project of their own in 2000 in an open prison in Madrid where it was applied to ten inmates. Since EM proved to be successful, that same institution began to apply it more progressively in November 2001. Nowadays Spain widely applies EM to investigative home detention, as a way of controlling the restraining orders, as a measure after the release from the penitentiary institution and as a prison sentence modality.

Could you briefly explain how the implementation of this pilot project was approached in the Republic of Croatia?

The first step towards ensuring the basis for the implementation of the project was drafting the Protocol on Electronic Monitoring, which defines the mutual cooperation and joint action of the Ministry of Justice, i.e. the Sector for Probation and the Prison System Directorate, the Ministry of the Interior, Courts and the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia. Working group members collaborated in an intensive and constructive manner thus producing a very clear and detailed document. My two colleagues, the judges, and I were in charge of ensuring the proper inclusion of the provisions from the Criminal Procedure Act and the Execution of Prison Sentence Act into the Protocol, since the project was limited to persons who were ordered investigative home detention and who were conditionally released from serving a prison sentence. In the State Attorney's Office, we initially took the position of proposing investigative home detention exclusively for offenders who committed property crimes under the jurisdiction of the municipal courts, or for property offenses punishable by imprisonment of up to ten years. However, at the beginning of the implementation of the project we were only placing conditionally released offenders under EM and we were missing cases with people under investigative home detention so we decided to expand the catalog of criminal offenses to all offenses under the jurisdiction of the municipal courts punishable by imprisonment of up to five years. This enabled the use of EM for the first case of investigative home detention.

Can you point out some of the benefits of EM for the Republic of Croatia?

There is a wide range of possibilities associated with using EM, but we would be pleased if we could use EM at least in these two cases included the Pilot Project for the time being. This especially applies

to investigative home detention because it has many advantages in comparison with the investigative detention in a penal institution. This entails the possibility of reducing the prison population and making financial savings because the daily costs of detainees under EM are far lower than those of imprisonment. In addition, home detention does not entail separating the offender from his or her family thus reducing the stigmatization and harm related to imprisonment. Implementing EM in the Republic of Croatia would also entail a greater number of conditional release as it provides an offender with a gradual transition from a penal institution to the community with the help of social or probation services, thus facilitating the offender's reintegration into the community.

Based on experience from the Pilot Project, can we conclude that EM might become a permanent integral part of the criminal justice system in our country?

The expected date for the implementation of EM is still to be established but it is necessary to think about creating the prerequisites for the adoption of EM given the permanent reforms, especially within the criminal justice system, for the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* and the achievement of all European standards. Namely, almost all EU countries use EM at various stages of criminal proceedings, as well as using it as an alternative to short-term sentences. EM is also used in neighboring countries which are non-EU member states. In any case, this pilot project has proven that all the actors of the criminal proceedings, from the police, the courts, the state attorneys to the probation service, which carried the "heaviest part of the burden" of this project, have been up to this task and that EM could be implemented quickly with the existence of political will and minor interventions in the criminal and penal legislation.



State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia



Study visit to Spain

In the framework of the Twinning Project “Support to Further Development and Strengthening of the Probation Service in the Republic of Croatia”, members of the working group formed for the implementation of the electronic monitoring pilot project made an official visit to the Kingdom of Spain in the period from November 27 to December 02, 2016. The purpose of this study visit was for the members of the working group, composed of the Deputy State Attorney, the Enforcement/ Investigative judge from the Velika Gorica County Court, the President of the Center for the Enforcement of Sentences of the County Court in Zagreb, a representative of the Ministry of Interior and representatives of the Probation Service and the Prison System, to get acquainted with the organization and implementation of electronic monitoring in Spain.

During the study visit, a series of meetings were held with the representatives of various entities involved in the process of enforcing and implementing the electronic monitoring, from the prison system to judges, state attorneys and police. In addition, members of the working group visited the Electronic Monitoring Center located within a prison where they learned more about its organization and the implementation of electronic monitoring. They also visited the center which, with the help of GPS equipment for electronic surveillance, monitors the restraining orders for the perpetrator of gender-based violence.

All the members of the working group rated the study visit as extremely well organized, interesting and useful for the future implementation of the electronic monitoring pilot project in the Republic of Croatia and for its possible permanent implementation in the Croatian criminal justice system.

Goran Brkić, Head of the Department for Strategic Planning, Development and Analytics, Central Office



Croatian delegation visiting a prison in Spain



Bilateral cooperation with Norway

Bilateral cooperation between the Sector for Probation and Probation Service Agder from Norway was realized within the framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The scope of this cooperation entailed organizing study visits to Norway and Croatia as well organizing education for Croatian probation officers.



Norwegian delegation in Zagreb

In September 2016, seven representatives of the Sector for Probation visited the Agder Probation Service with the aim of getting acquainted with how probation tasks are carried out in Norway. A very interesting program was prepared for the representatives of the Republic of Croatia: a presentation on the program for the prevention of driving while intoxicated; a presentation on the ways of using electronic surveillance; invitation to participate in a weekly meeting between officers in charge of fieldwork; invitation to participate in the work of a treatment group for offenders; a visit to the prison in Kristiansand; a visit to the Solholmen Halfway House; presentation on the manner and importance of writing a report before making a decision on a sentence; a presentation on working with minors; getting acquainted with the "Wayback" organization that works with the probation service on offenders' re-socialization and reintegration into the community; a visit to the prison in Arendal and participating in fieldwork consisting of putting offenders under electronic surveillance. During their stay in Kristiansand, the entire Croatian delegation attended the "Strafferettskonferansen and Agder" conference, where the relevant representatives of probation, prisons, courts, state attorney's offices and non-governmental organizations were gathered and where the head of the Sector for Probation presented the work of Probation Service in Croatia.

In April 2017, nine representatives of the probation and prison system of the Agder region came to visit the Sector for Probation in Croatia. At this point a training was organized for probation officers of all the local offices in Croatia. The training was focused on conducting group training with offenders who were driving while intoxicated. We prepared an extensive study visit programme for our colleagues from Norway: we presented the work of the Probation Service in Croatia; we organized a visit to the Electronic Monitoring Center set up for the pilot project; the EU Project "Supporting Further Development and Strengthening of the Probation Service in Croatia" was presented and we also visited the Probation Office Zagreb I, the Probation Office Zadar, Probation Office Rijeka, the Probation Office Pula and the Prison in Zagreb, the Prison in Zadar and the Prison in Lepoglava.

During this bilateral project, we came to the conclusion that there are many similarities between the two services and thus many opportunities for further cooperation between Croatia and Norway. All the people involved in the exchange of experiences expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation, while the openness, spontaneity and positive attitude of all the participants of the cooperation made the business meetings feel very friendly. Given the usefulness of this experience and the interest shown by both sides, a future project cooperation is currently being prepared.

Jana Špero, Head of the Sector for Probation



The “Finance Management” Program at the Probation office Zagreb I



Working in a probation office, you often end up talking to offenders about money. About the value of money, about money necessary for survival, money as a motive for committing a criminal offense, money as a means of satisfying addictions or other needs, money as a cause of family or other problems. Offenders often feel that society should enable them to work, to provide them with the bare minimum necessary to survive and take care of them. Many of them have various debts which they don't know how to pay off or they ignore, hoping these will somehow be resolved. They underestimate their own capabilities in the context of financial management and think they cannot influence their own financial situation. When assessing the treatment and criminogenic needs, we find that the offenders have complex difficulties in managing finances.

I've been thinking about how to approach these kinds of problems for a long time; how could probation help?! I am a social pedagogue by profession, I have never studied economics, what do I know about finances? One of the offenders once told me that managing your finances is a skill which you either have or you don't. I did not agree with that. I did not have this “skill”, but I learned it. I kept a record of my expenses, I summed up, calculated, planned, predicted, and invented some saving models. I then used various established sources to support my own experience and that's how I created the “Finance Management” Program.

The purpose of the program is to raise awareness on the importance of financial management and improve the related skills. In terms of content, the group work carried out with the offenders consists of analyzing current personal financial situations and existing financial management skills, re-examining personal attitudes that justify their inadequate financial management, adopting new financial management skills, cost planning, debt planning and debiting, saving and providing additional revenue, and continually working on recognizing the benefits of responsible financial behavior.

The program is being implemented as a Pilot project. The first group of offenders completed the program which lasted from November 2016 to February 2017. The planned contents were divided into 6 thematic workshops held every 14 days. Another group of participants has started the program in March 2017.

As the program author and manager I am extremely pleased with the implementation of the program. I am positively surprised by the offenders' reaction and motivation for participating in the program. The therapeutic benefits of working in a group have also come to the fore in comparison to individual work.

Given that we legally lack the mechanisms for including people on probation in a program based on our own estimation, these participants have been included on the principle of voluntariness and on the basis of the assessed criminogenic and therapeutic needs. I have to say that there would be no program without the support and the “invisible” work of my colleagues and the head of the Probation Office Zagreb I. My colleagues, the probation officers, have done a great deal of work through motivational interviews, highlighting and explaining the benefits of participating in such a program to the offenders. The head of the Probation Office Zagreb I supported my initiative and regularly stayed in the afternoon, after working hours, when the program was being carried out. The Central Office also showed they trusted us by giving us the green light in “piloting” the program, by monitoring and supporting its implementation.

Vesna Zelić Ferenčić, Probation Officer, Zagreb I

Experiences of an offender who was conditionally released with electronic monitoring

Electronic monitoring definitely has its advantages compared to prison; not only can we have contact with the world outside, we can even make some money from home, work online, the whole family can function differently. I think that, had I gotten this opportunity before, my family situation would probably be different now. Of course there are some restrictions, I am aware of the criminal offense I have committed and which I admit having done and I do not run away from it.

I'm not really sure I'd consider electronic monitoring an additional sentence, it is more of a mitigating circumstance. I perceive electronic monitoring more as a reward. My habits are definitely changing. Before, I'd spend 2 or 3 days outside of my house but now I'm at home. And yes, for the first 2 or 3 weeks I was constantly out in the sun, I really missed the sun. And I have a feeling that I am kind of calmer. As for the tag, you don't feel that you have it around your leg, it really doesn't bother you.

The fact that the probation officer visited me certainly also helped. What turned out to be the most helpful were the conversations because they were very pleasant and I felt I could talk to somebody about my problems. I also played a small role of a psychiatrist (laughs).

This form of supervision has definitely fulfilled my expectations and I would certainly recommend it.



Electronic monitoring device



Working in the EM center

Working in the EM center was a professional challenge for me, because it was about direct participation in further building of the probation practice, working on tasks that are just being piloted. The cooperation between the probation service and other stakeholders of the Pilot Project was clearly defined from the very start: from prisons that motivated prisoners who were preparing to be conditionally released, to enforcement judges who ordered conditional release with electronic monitoring and supervised the enforcement, attorneys and investigating judges who were involved in deciding on the investigative home detention, and the police which directly participated in the detention, escort and security of offenders during the investigative home detention. As for probation officers working in the EM center, they were highly motivated, they shared their concerns about the day-to-day functioning of the center and the execution of supervisory duties, they had innumerable talks and reached agreements on dealing with procedures, solving dilemmas, taking care of documents, deadlines, sharing information by e-mail, orally and by leaving numerous notes on the board that we have in the office... Between shifts, we had the opportunity to have coffee and talk about the pilot, as well as other probation-related topics. Overall, the atmosphere was really collaborative and everybody showed enthusiasm over finally applying electronic monitoring. Probation officers showed real teamwork without which, I believe, this pilot would not have been successfully implemented.

Željka

We are finishing the EM pilot project and I am pleased to have participated in something that is being implemented in the Republic of Croatia for the first time. It represented a change in comparison to everyday office work, although it was sometimes difficult to coordinate the shifts with the responsibilities in the office. I hope that electronic monitoring will continue to be carried out in the Republic of Croatia and that it will entail a better connection with all the services. I would also like to thank the Dugo Selo Police Station for a good cooperation in enforcing the investigative home detention.

Danijela

This was a new and interesting experience. It was a bit more difficult to get used to working in shifts, especially the night shift, and even more so at the end of the pilot. My colleagues were very professional and so were the other stakeholders (police, judges). The offenders wanted to cooperate and their explanations regarding the alarms were sometimes humorous (one offender pointed out that the alarm triggered by his tag might be due to the fact that he was in the bathtub and in order to confirm this he was "making bubbles" in the water so that I could hear it in the EM center).

We also needed an audible alarm, which was installed later, especially with offenders who have been ordered investigative home detention with electronic surveillance, which perhaps represents the most justified usage of tags in the pilot. During the program, we "lost" the offenders on two occasions in such a way that it was impossible to monitor them and we couldn't even see where they were. These technical problems were solved with the help of our colleagues from Mostar during the course of one day. It could be a problem if this happens in the late hours of the night. The collaboration with the police should be defined in detail (who does what). We've had to be creative in certain moments and our colleagues have been really cooperative but if this will be a new probation task then it should be regulated by the Protocol. When the offender is conditionally released with EM, a probation officer is put in charge of his/her case. However, if this officer does not work in the EM center, he or she has no knowledge of what is going on with the offender during the conditional release, unless he or she is notified by a colleague from the EM center (not all the probation officers have access to the PIS, so official records are written on the computer at the EM center, where they remain).

Snježana





*Give us some feedback and ideas for the fall edition of Probation Quarterly.
Emails to be sent to: probacija@pravosudje.hr*

*Transition facility of the European Union for the Republic of Croatia
"Support to further development and strengthening of the Probation Service in Croatia"*

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Twinning partners and they do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

