

CZ - Justice

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT 2022: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After two years of pandemic, which significantly hampered smooth implementation of the Programme and the individual projects, the year 2022 meant a big step towards fulfilment of the main Programme objective, the improved correctional system in the Czech Republic. Even the new challenge posed by the Russian aggression and war in Ukraine has not considerably threatened successful implementation so far.

Loosening of pandemic restrictions enabled full launch of extensive common training within the pre-defined project *“Common Education System – strengthening cooperation in the criminal justice and social system”*. Almost 1 000 participants coming from various organizations across the justice sector were trained by the end of the year.

The Prison Service and the NGOs working with prisoners launched motivation and resocialisation programmes as well as special treatment programmes for drug addicts in prisons all across the Czech Republic. Involvement in these programmes will help the prisoners to better reintegrate to society after release and to tackle everyday challenges connected with work, housing, settlement of debts, contact with family and so on.

The pre-defined project *“Back to Life”* representing an innovative approach to use of alternative sentencing in our country marked a huge step in the end of 2022 when the first Probation house in the Czech Republic was opened. The Probation can at one time house up to 16 conditionally released clients. Previously established Programme centres continued their operation and by the end of 2022 had more than 750 clients. Programme centres focus on provision of standardized reintegration programmes to conditionally released or alternatively sentenced persons.

The bilateral cooperation remains at the above-standard level as was expressed by involved stakeholders at various occasions during the year 2022. 6 out of 8 projects are implemented in cooperation with Norwegian partners and also the funds from Bilateral Ambitions are frequently used for further strengthening of mutual relations. Council of Europe is also taking part as IPO in Cooperation Committee meetings and via other transversal cooperation with all beneficiary countries.

The overall risk of not absorbing most financing and achieving most targets was lowered to medium low in line with the positive development of Programme implementation in 2022.