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**MISSION AND SHORT-TERM POLICIES  
OF THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION  
AND THE PROBATION ASSOCIATION  
OF FINLAND**

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Adopted by the Probation Association on 7 December 1998  
and by the Ministry of Justice on 22 December 1998

# MISSION



## INTRODUCTION

The activities of Prison Administration and the Probation Association<sup>\*)</sup> are based upon valid legislation and concluded international agreements binding on Finland. The activities are also directed by international recommendations. The basic programme complements these documents and defines the goals of Prison Administration and the Probation Association, the values and principles followed in this work and the means of achieving the goals. The basic programme directs the selection of current policies. The individual institutions and units confirm their own operational ideas on the basis of the basic programme and the general policies.

The most important resource of Prison Administration and the Probation Association is qualified and experienced staff, committed to implementing the basic programme. The staff policy of Prison Administration is separately confirmed.



## TASKS

Correctional treatment, probation and after-care form parts of the system of criminal sanctions.

Prison Administration enforces prison sentences and imprisonment for nonpayment of fines imposed by the courts and takes care of pre-trial detention. The Probation Association is responsible for the enforcement of community sanctions and other activities related to sanctions carried out at liberty.

<sup>\*)</sup> *The Probation Association was until April 1999 called the Probation and After-Care Association.*



## GOALS

The goal of Prison Administration and the Probation Association is

- **to contribute to security in society by maintaining a lawful and safe system of enforcement of sanctions**
- **to assist in reducing recidivism and terminating the development of social maladjustment reproducing crime.**

In order to achieve this goal enforcement is carried out so that

- it is safe for society, the convicts and staff
- the chances of the convicts to manage in society and to maintain their health and well-being are promoted
- the capability of the convicts to adopt a way of life without crime is improved.



## VALUES

Prison Administration and the Probation Association commit themselves to the values of **respect for human dignity and justness**, highly esteemed in Finnish society. Work is also guided by a notion of **the potential of the individual for change and growth**. A commitment to these values implies eg.

- safeguarding basic and human rights
- treating convicts<sup>\*)</sup> appropriately, equally and with humanity
- the lawfulness of all activities and compliance with the principles of justice and reasonableness
- carrying out enforcement in a way that supports the individual growth and development of the convict and his efforts to lead a life without crime.

<sup>\*)</sup> *The basic programme also applies to remand prisoners, detainees under the Act on Foreign Citizens, detainees under personal inquiry and other clients of the Probation Association.*



## PRINCIPLES

Enforcement of sentences is based on the principle of normality. Prison Administration and the Probation Association moreover adhere to the following principles:

- **Target-Orientation:**

Prison Administration and the Probation Association are responsible to society for the attainment of the goals set on them. The results, efficiency, effects and economy of their activities are to be regularly and openly assessed. The assessment guides the selection of lines and means of action.

- **Individuality and Responsibility of the Individual:**

Enforcement shall pay attention to the situation and the individual needs of the convict. The measures included in enforcement shall enhance the capability of the individual to take responsibility for his own life and for the consequences of his own acts.

- **Professionalism:**

Prison service, probation and after-care consist of demanding work with people, work requiring a professional approach. Professionalism comprises, among other things, continuous evaluation and development of the work performed, capacity for cooperation and ability to develop one's own capabilities for interaction and to apply both supportive and controlling methods of work. Professionalism also includes the ability to give priority to professional goals even when they seem to contradict one's own personal feelings.

- **Cooperation:**

The staff shall work in constructive interaction and cooperation with each other, with other authorities, the convicts and their relatives, with voluntary organizations, congregations and other interest groups.

- **Sound Administration:**

The operations shall be lawful, transparent and predictable, and decision-making as quick as possible. Decisions are to be substantiated and information on the activities shall be efficiently given. The convicts are to be informed about practical matters relating to the serving of the sentence, about their rights and obligations and about the rules and the consequences of breaking them. A convict is entitled to be heard in matters concerning him.



## MEANS

Prison Administration and the Probation Association are aiming at attaining their common goals

- **by supporting and encouraging the convicts in leading a life without crime**
- **by controlling that convicts observe the limits set on them**
- **by influencing society as a whole in order to make work with this orientation possible.**

The attainment of these goals is promoted by the development of the professional skills and the working conditions of the staff, by extensive use of staff skills and by staff participation in developing activities.

# SHORT-TERM POLICIES OF PRISON ADMINISTRATION



## THE GENERAL SETTING FOR ACTIVITY

The prison population has during the last two decades gone down by almost one half. At the same time the criminal background of the prisoners has changed and their problems have clearly become more difficult. Previously persons convicted of property offences constituted the largest group of prisoners. Nowadays the largest group consists of prisoners sentenced for violent offences, and the number of prisoners sentenced for drug offences is growing. This has at the same time led to a situation where there are more long-term prisoners than before.

The structure of the prison population has also become more complex than before. Among the prisoners there are more and more offenders who have consciously chosen a criminal career and who are reluctant to quit it in the short term. However, the bulk of the prison population still consists of persons who have drifted into crime and who are socially maladjusted. The ever more common intoxicant abuse in society is reflected in correctional treatment as well. Many of the inmates have serious drinking or drug problems, in addition to other social problems. Many prisoners are unable to work or to carry on purposeful studies. They need, in order to adjust themselves to society, supportive measures and motivation. The substance of enforcement must be more individually planned than previously.

The increasingly professional nature of crime, mainly related to growing drug offences, has aggravated drug and disciplinary problems in prisons. Legislation nowadays gives the staff more efficient powers to prevent the entry of drugs into prison. Still, the reduction of drug problems in prison also requires measures in order to decrease the demand for drugs.



## POLICIES

**Sentences are enforced by taking care of internal prison order, safeguarding a non-violent and intoxicant-free environment in prison and secure detention. The inmates' chances to manage after release are promoted by improving their ability to work and act. In order to reduce the risk of recidivism Prison Administration shall introduce programmes of activities which affect the factors causing and sustaining criminal behaviour.**

- The attainment of the goals of correctional treatment requires an improvement of the stock of prison buildings. The implementation of the prison stock programme creates the prerequisites for the enforcement of sentences under conditions meeting adopted international recommendations and secures appropriate working conditions for the staff.
- Prison order and staff control are secured by adopting approaches to work making it possible to know individual inmates better and to prevent disturbances in advance. Internal prison order includes humane conditions according to the principle of normality, interaction between staff and inmates, versatile activities and technical security measures complementing them.
- The mutual division of labour between the prisons is to be defined and a system for allocating prisoners on the basis of an estimation of their individual needs and qualifications shall be created. The aim of the estimation is to clarify the individual inmate's conditions of life and the elements supporting and jeopardizing a way of life without crime. At the same time the activities promoting the inmate's capability to get along in society are sorted out. The evaluation also determines the measures required for the safe enforcement of the sentence. When these measures are determined the staff shall pay attention to the maintenance of prison order and to the prevention of escapes and criminal activity. The relocation of individual prisoners is considered in the course of the prison term.

- The staff shall plan the activities of the prison term together with the individual inmate. The idea is to use the whole prison term so that the inmate's ability to take care of himself, to live without committing new offences and to get a job is improved. The inmates are given opportunities to improve their education and professional skills, learn skills of everyday life and capabilities of interaction and problem-solving.
- During the enforcement of prison sentences inmates are required to abstain from intoxicants. In order to maintain intoxicant-free prisons the staff interferes in the use of intoxicants whenever such use is discovered. The staff promotes the inmates' abstinence from intoxicants through surveillance and other means of control, by emphasizing the significance of abstinence in connection with all the activities and by encouraging inmates to take part in special programmes of rehabilitation and activity promoting abstinence.
- The preparation for release starts at an early stage of enforcement. Convicts serving their sentence in closed institutions have the possibility to get to an open institution when the requirements of relocation are present. If a convict does not meet the requirements for transfer to an open institution before release, the preparations for release take place wholly in the closed institution. If a prisoner is placed under supervision on parole, release is prepared together with the Probation Association in order to make the measures during the prison term and during the period of parole support each other.

# SHORT-TERM POLICIES OF THE PROBATION ASSOCIATION



## THE GENERAL SETTING FOR ACTIVITY

The application of community sanctions, mainly community service, has in recent years rapidly expanded in Finland. This has contributed to the reduction of the prison population which elsewhere in Europe generally has increased. Community sanctions are in comparison with sanctions carried out in institutions financially more favourable and by nature tend to prevent social maladjustment. A working system of community sanctions holds down the growth of inequality and thus promotes security in society.

Community sanctions are enforced in the sphere of normal everyday life and are carried out through cooperation networks. In addition to the concerned authorities, ordinary citizens take part in enforcement as contact persons at the places of service. The Probation Association shall in its activities take into account the often conflicting viewpoints and expectations of citizens, interest groups, decision-makers and offenders. It is particularly important to act so that community sanctions remain credible penalties.

Unemployment, housing shortage and cuts in local public services make it more difficult for the clients of the Probation Association to get along in society. The substance of community sanctions shall be developed in a way making it possible to reduce the social maladjustment of offenders and to improve their capability to manage in society without resorting to crime.

The development of the professional skills of the staff and their capacity to cope with work, a working organization and continuous follow-up and evaluation of the activities constitute the preconditions for making community sanctions both convincing and effective.



## POLICIES

### **The Credibility of the Enforcement of Community Sanctions**

Community sanctions shall be enforced so that

- **they are convincing penalties from the point of view of both citizens, authorities, interest groups and convicts**
- **the legal protection and the uniform treatment of convicts is safeguarded**
- **the sanctions are enforced without delay and according to law**
- **the sanctions include sufficiently intensive supervision.**

The Probation Association shall actively and systematically inform of issues relating to community sanctions. Regular and target-oriented cooperation is to be carried out with prosecutors, courts, places of service and other interest groups.

### **The Effectiveness of Community Sanctions**

Community sanctions shall be enforced so that

- **their substance and the way of enforcing them support the convict when he serves his sentence in freedom**
- **they promote the convict's links with society**
- **they reduce the convict's risk of committing new offences.**

The support to intoxicant abusers serving sentences in the community is to be secured by directing them to the relevant public services for abusers. Programmes clarifying the interconnections between crime, intoxicant abuse and other problems, and improving the convicts' capability to function in society are to be planned and introduced in cooperation with experts. When the programmes are planned the possibilities to continue programmes already started in prison shall be taken into account and secured.

Sufficient and appropriate work for the convicts shall be guaranteed by maintaining a sufficiently varied network of places of service and by supporting these regularly.

The effectiveness of parolee supervision shall be improved by developing work so that it becomes more systematic and promotes the social capacities of the person under surveillance and by intensifying the contacts between the supervisor and the supervised. It is possible to proceed in this direction by using project work, pilot programmes and already existing supporting units. The attainment of this goal requires considerable additional resources. Development work is carried out together with prisons and other interest groups.

The experiment with juvenile punishments is investigating the possibility to break the vicious circle of juvenile delinquency by means of a substantially versatile enforcement model based on operative networks. The experiment is being systematically followed up, examined and evaluated. The content and new approaches of the experiment with juvenile punishments is to be used in the supervision of conditionally sentenced persons.

## **Developing the Preconditions for Work**

In order to secure and improve the quality of community sanctions and develop their content it is necessary

- to prepare a staff policy determining the guidelines for the development of the professional skills, the incentives to work and the well-being of the staff
- to organize work so that it supports continuous development, to secure sufficient resources for the enforcement of community sanctions and to safeguard the equal position of community enforcement and institutional enforcement
- to develop the production of knowledge and quality systems, to create a system of estimating the effectiveness of activity and to stimulate research on community sanctions.

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