

# Prisons and Prisoners in Europe in Pandemic Times: An evaluation of the medium-term impact of the COVID-19 on prison populations

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## Key Findings

- This special SPACE I report analyses trends in European prison populations during the first nine months of the year 2020 using four points in time as reference: 1 January, 15 April, 15 June, and 15 September. These dates correspond to the state of prisons and prison populations before the pandemic (1 January), after the first month of the lockdowns (15 April), by the end of the lockdowns (15 June) and by the end of the summer (15 September).
- Trends in the *very short-term* had been analysed in the first report of these series (Aebi & Tiago, 2020), which showed that the spread of the pandemic was accompanied by stable or decreasing prison population trends. The updated figures included in this report corroborate that finding. In particular, when the prison population rates of 47 prison administrations on 15 April are compared to the ones on 1 January 2020, the trends observed are the following:
  - Decrease (more than -4%): Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Northern Ireland (UK), and Scotland (total: 17 prison administrations)
  - Stable (between -4 and 4%): Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Republika Srpska (BIH), Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain (State Administration), Catalonia (Spain), Turkey, and England and Wales (UK) (total: 29 prison administrations)
  - Increase (more than 4%): Sweden
- The lockdowns of the European populations, which had been in place during only one month by mid-April, seem to have contributed to these trends, as the only country that registered an increase of its prison population was Sweden, who did not confine its population.
- The contribution of the lockdowns to the decrease of the prison populations is corroborated by an analysis of the situation by the end of the spring, that is to say by the end of the confinement. On 15 June, among the 43 prison administrations that provided data, the number of those with lower prison population rates than in January had risen to 27, while 14 showed stable trends and only two (Sweden and Greece) had higher rates in June than in January.
- During the summer, and without lockdowns, the downward trend in the prison population was reversed in 12 countries (Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Northern Ireland, and Scotland had higher rates on 15 September than on 15 June) and stabilized in 22, while Bulgaria and Montenegro were the only two prison administrations —among the 36 that provided data— with a lower rate in September than in June.

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- Overall, however, the prison population rates by mid-September were generally lower than at the beginning of the year, corroborating that the year of the pandemic is a very particular one in terms of crime and the social reaction to it. In particular, when the prison population rates of 35 prison administrations (the ones that provided data) on 15 September are compared to the ones on 1 January 2020, the trends observed are the following:
  - Decrease (more than -4%): Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain (State Administration), Spain (Catalonia), England and Wales, and Scotland (20 prison administrations)
  - Stable (between -4 and 4%): Azerbaijan, Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Slovak Republic, Northern Ireland (11 prison administrations)
  - Increase (more than 4%): Andorra, Denmark, Greece, and Sweden (4 prison administrations)
- The pandemic seems to have spread among inmates and prison staff at a slightly slower pace than among the general population. Hence, by 15 September:
  - Latvia reported no infections among inmates nor among staff.
  - Slovenia and Cyprus reported infections only among inmates.
  - Estonia, Finland, Hungary and Northern Ireland reported infection only among staff members.
- At least 3,300 inmates and 5,100 prison staff members were infected with COVID-19 across Europe; but the actual numbers of infections are in fact much higher, as not all the prison administrations provided data on this issue.
- One fact that contributed to the decrease of prison populations and should have had an impact on the number of Coronavirus infections is that 25 prison administrations released inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19. All in all, Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, both administrations of Spain, Turkey, England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland released at least 143,000 inmates between March and September. The real number of inmates released should be higher because five of these administrations did not provide data on releases for the whole period, but only for the first months of it.
  - It must be mentioned that the vast majority of them (114,460 inmates) were released in Turkey, a country that, that had until January the second biggest prison population in Europe and released almost 40% of it.
  - In terms of the percentage of the prison population that was released, the prison administrations of Catalonia (23%), Cyprus (23%), France (17%), Portugal (17%), Slovenia (16%) and Norway (15%) also released a considerable part of it. However, by 15 June, Slovenia had already recalled the inmates liberated during the first month of the lockdown.
- The relationship between the release of inmates and the presence of infections in penal institutions is not straightforward. In particular:
  - Several countries had infections but did not release inmates.
  - Latvia did not release inmates and did not have any infections in penal institutions.
- The release of inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19 has certainly contributed to the decrease of the prison populations in several countries, but does not seem to be the only cause of them. In fact, prison populations decreased also in several countries that did not release inmates for this reason.
- The lockdowns of the European prison populations had an impact on the prison populations. In particular:

- Comparing the prison population rates in mid-April to the ones in January, the only country that registered an increase of more than 4% of its prison population was Sweden, which was also the only country that did not impose a lockdown. Everywhere else, the rates were stable (29 prison administrations) or decreasing (17 prison administrations).
  - By mid-June, Sweden remained as one of the two European exceptions (together with Greece) to the overall European trend. Both countries had a higher rate in June than in January (increase of more than 4%), while 27 countries had lower rates (decrease of more than 4%).
  - The lockdowns ended by the end of Spring, and three months later, by mid-September, the downward trend had been reversed in 12 countries.
- In sum, the general trend observed in Europe is the following: The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic was accompanied by an overall decrease of European prison populations during the period of the lockdowns; that trend was stopped and, in several countries, reversed after the end of the lockdowns.
- The European trend can be explained combining three factors:
  - A decrease in the activities of the criminal justice system: Magistrates were confined as the rest of the population, which led to less sentences imposed by the courts. As the lockdowns ended, the courts started imposing sentences again.
  - The release of inmates as a preventive measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
  - The lockdowns produced a crime drop: A plausible explanation, based on situational-based criminological theories, is that the lockdown reduced opportunities for traditional crimes, which led to less offences and consequently to less arrests and less persons entering in pretrial detention. The rise of cybercrimes did not compensate that decrease. This explanation is supported by the opposite trend observed in Sweden and by the fact that the decrease of prison populations stopped as soon as the lockdowns ended.

## 1. Introduction

During the month of March 2020, most European countries introduced lockdowns of their populations to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such measures can have an impact on the extent of crime and, indirectly, on the size of prison populations. The reason is that, according to situational-based criminological theories, crime is the result of the confluence on time and space of an offender and a suitable target in the absence of capable guardians<sup>1</sup>. If people are spending less time in the streets and more time at home and in the cyberspace, then the following predictions can be made: Personal victimisations in the public sphere (such as the ones resulting from fights, robberies and thefts in the streets) should decrease, while those in the private sphere (resulting from domestic violence offences) and on the Internet (cybercrimes) should increase. Domestic burglaries should also decrease because research has shown that burglars prefer empty houses and also because the closing of the borders reduced the mobility of organized gangs specialized in that offence. Less offences mean less suspects arrested by the police and entering in pre-trial detention, and that should entail a decrease of the total prison population. The latter will further decrease if the courts are not imposing prison sentences because the magistrates are confined and, especially, if the country releases inmates to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 in closed settings like prisons, where social distances can seldom be kept, especially when they are overcrowded.

In order to measure these side-effects of the pandemic on the prison populations in the Council of Europe member states, the Council of Europe and the University of Lausanne launched the *SPACE – COVID-19 project*. This project is part of the initiatives launched by the Council of Europe to follow closely the effects of the pandemic on prisons, inmates and probationers across Europe. Among them, for example, the Council for Penological Co-operation Working Group (PC-CP WG) issued a *COVID-19 Related Statement*, which draws attention to some key texts issued by the Council of Europe as well as to standards and practices that can assist the prison services and probation agencies of the member States in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic while respecting the principles of the rule of law and of human rights (<https://rm.coe.int/pc-cp-wg-covid-19-statement-17-04-2020/16809e2e55>)

On 18 June 2020, we published a first report showing the trend followed by prison populations from 1 January 2020 to 15 April 2020, a period that included roughly the first month of the European lockdowns (Aebi & Tiago, 2020). That report was based on a questionnaire sent to all member states and answered by most of them. Following the same logic, two other questionnaires were sent to the SPACE national correspondents in the following months.

This report summarizes their answers to the three questionnaires and allow us to analyse and compare the situation on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June, and 15 September 2020. These dates correspond to the state of prisons and prison populations before the pandemic (1 January), after the first month of the lockdowns (15 April), by the end of the lockdowns (15 June) and by the end of the summer (15 September). Besides measuring the size of the prison populations and the capacity of penal institutions, the questionnaires also asked whether the prison administration had released inmates as a preventive measure to reduce the spread of the virus and whether it had registered infections among inmates and prison staff, collecting in each case the relevant figures. In this way it is possible to measure the impact of the pandemic in terms of health and to identify changes in the prison population that can be explained by releases related to the COVID-19 pandemic instead of by a side-effect of the lockdowns on crime and the social reaction to it.

The rates and percentages mentioned in the text of this report correspond to the *European average values* and are presented in round numbers unless they are lower than 10. In particular, the rates are calculated on the basis of data weighted by the population of each country (see *Methodology* for further details). The detailed state-level data are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 at the end of the document. All deviations in the dates of reference of the data provided by the countries are indicated in Section 6 (*Notes*). When answering the second and third questionnaires, some prison administrations updated the figures provided in the first one, which explains minor

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<sup>1</sup> These are, in a nutshell, the main concepts of the original routine activities approach (Cohen & Felson, 1979) and its subsequent developments (Felson, 1995).

differences between the data presented in this study and the one included in the previous report (Aebi & Tiago, 2020). The average and median European rates also show slight variations between the two reports because the number of prison administrations included is not the same.

Thirty-five (35) of the 52 prison administrations in the 47 Council of Europe member states answered all the three SPACE I – COVID-19 questionnaires, which corresponds to a participation rate of 67%. Armenia, Austria, two of the three administrations of Bosnia and Herzegovina (State level and Federal level), Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, North Macedonia, Russian Federation, San Marino, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine did not answer to at least one of the three questionnaires. In addition, some prison administrations were unable to provide data on the spread of COVID-19. This means that the number of prison administrations which provided data varies according to the indicator studied and, consequently, that number is indicated in the title of each Figure, Table or Map included in this report. In particular, Table 1 as well as the Figures included in this report are based on the countries that answered the three questionnaires; however, the data for the countries that did not answer all of them are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 (at the end of the report) and we included some comments about them throughout the report.

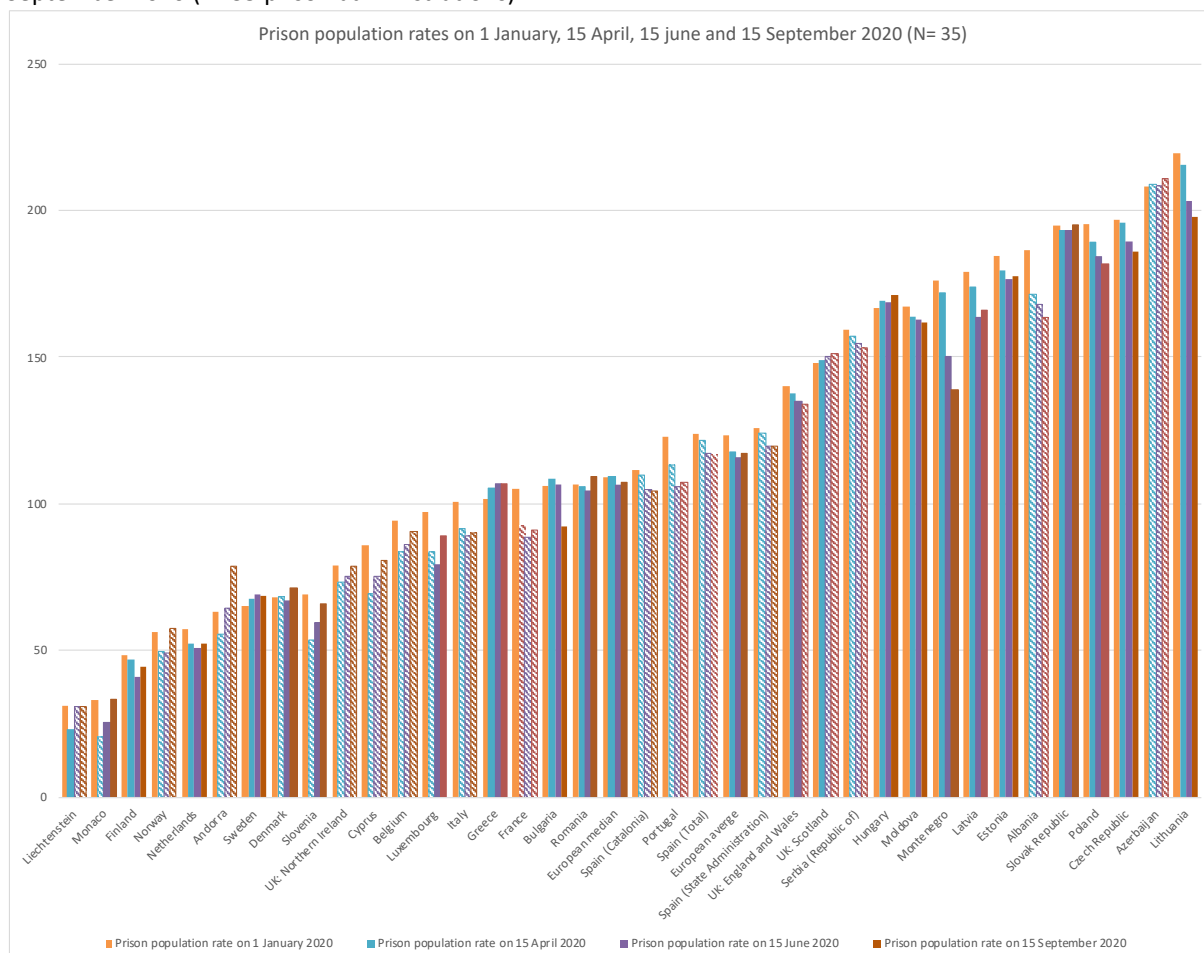
## 2. Prisons and Prisoners

On 1 January 2020, there were 546,589 inmates in the 35 penal institutions of the Council of Europe member states for which data are available on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020. Weighting the figures of each prison administration according to the population of the country or region concerned (see *Methodology* for further details), this corresponds to an average European prison population rate of 121.4 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants. By 15 April 2020, the prison population had slightly decreased to 522,675 inmates (-4.4%) and the European average rate to 116.0 (-4.4%). By 15 June, the prison population had further decreased to 508,891 inmates (-2.6% compared to 15 April and -6.9% compared to 1 January) reducing the prison population rate to 113.8 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants (-1.9% compared to 15 April and -6.3% compared to 1 January). Finally, by 15 September, the total prison population had increased slightly to 512,222 inmates (+ 0.7% compared to 15 June), leading the average European prison population rate to 115.8 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants (+1.3% compared to 15 June).

Hence, from 1 January to 15 September 2020, the prison population decreased by 6.3% in absolute numbers, passing from 546,589 to 512,222 inmates; while the average prison population rate decreased by 4.6%, passing from 121.4 to 115.8 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants. In sum, during the spring of 2020, the lockdowns introduced in practically all countries were accompanied by a significant decrease of the European prison population. However, by the end of the summer, the trend was being reversed. At the same time, and as it will be seen immediately, there are considerable differences across prison administrations.

Figure 1 presents prison population rates on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020. Countries that released inmates as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 are shown with a striped pattern. The Figure allows visualizing how the prison population rate decreased between 1 January and 15 April in the most prison administrations. By September, however, that rate was already higher than in April in 15 prison administrations, and higher than in January in 11 of them.

**Figure 1.** Prison population rates (inmates per 100,000 inhabitants) on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020 (N=35 prison administrations)



**Notes to Figure 1:**

- Prison population rate on 15 June 2020: The rate relates to 12 June in England and Wales, 16 June in Romania, and 30 June in Poland.
- Prison population rate on 15 September 2020: The rate relates to 1 September in Sweden, 18 September in Scotland, and 31 October in Romania.
- Prison administrations are sorted according to their prison population rate on 15 January 2020.
- Prison administrations that released inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19 are presented with a striped pattern.
- Please check Section 6 (Notes) for further details.

Table 1 summarizes the trends shown by the prison population rates of the 35 prison administrations which provided data for the four dates required. The first four columns present the prison population rates on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June and 15 September. The fifth one shows the percentage change from September to June, the sixth one from September to April, and the last one from September to January (that is to say during the whole period under study).

It can be seen that in most countries the rate decreased immediately after the beginning of the pandemic. A major exception to that trend is Sweden, which did not introduce a lockdown and was the country with the highest increase by 15 April. However, in many countries, the rates started increasing again following the end of the lockdown even if, overall, the rates were still lower than in January. Generally speaking, the changes that took place from January to September 2020 have seldom affected the relative position of the prison administrations. In September, the highest prison population rates (*i.e.* more than 200 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants) are found in Azerbaijan, closely followed by Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland and the Slovak Republic (with more than 180 inmates per 100'000 inhabitants) and the lowest rates (*i.e.* less than 80 inmates

per 100,000 inhabitants) are distributed across the Scandinavian countries, Netherlands, Slovenia and Northern Ireland (UK)<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1.** Prison population rates on 31 January, 15 April and 15 September 2020 in 35 prison administrations

Country (N=35)	Prison population rate per 100,000 inhabitants on...				% change September - June	% change September - April	% change September - January
	31.01.2020	15.04.2020	15.06.2020	15.09.2020			
Albania	186.7	171.6	168.0	163.3	-2.8	-4.9	-12.5
Andorra	63.2	55.5	64.5	78.7	22.0	41.9	24.5
Azerbaijan	208.3	208.7	208.6	211.1	1.2	1.2	1.3
Belgium	94.2	83.8	86.3	90.5	4.8	8.0	-3.9
Bulgaria	106.0	108.7	106.6	92.5	-13.2	-14.9	-12.7
Cyprus	85.8	69.4	75.2	80.6	7.2	16.2	-6.0
Czech Republic	196.9	195.7	189.4	186.0	-1.8	-5.0	-5.6
Denmark	67.9	68.1	67.1	71.6	6.7	5.0	5.4
Estonia	184.4	179.5	176.7	177.4	0.4	-1.2	-3.8
Finland	48.3	47.0	41.2	44.6	8.3	-5.2	-7.6
France	105.3	93.0	88.5	91.2	3.1	-1.9	-13.4
Greece	101.7	105.5	106.9	107.0	0.1	1.4	5.2
Hungary	166.9	169.4	168.8	171.0	1.3	0.9	2.5
Italy	100.9	91.3	88.9	89.9	1.2	-1.6	-10.8
Latvia	179.0	174.0	163.3	166.2	1.8	-4.5	-7.1
Liechtenstein	31.0	23.2	31.0	31.0	0.0	33.3	0.0
Lithuania	219.7	215.4	203.1	197.7	-2.7	-8.2	-10.0
Luxembourg	97.1	83.7	79.4	89.0	12.1	6.3	-8.4
Moldova	167.1	163.8	163.0	162.0	-0.7	-1.1	-3.1
Monaco	33.3	20.5	25.6	33.3	30.0	62.5	0.0
Montenegro	175.9	172.1	150.4	138.8	-7.7	-19.3	-21.1
Netherlands	57.3	52.3	51.0	52.3	2.4	0.0	-8.8
Norway	56.4	49.4	49.1	57.4	16.8	16.1	1.8
Poland	195.3	189.3	184.1	182.0	-1.2	-3.9	-6.8
Portugal	122.7	113.4	105.6	107.4	1.7	-5.3	-12.5
Romania	106.5	106.1	104.5	109.4	4.7	3.1	2.7
Serbia (Republic of)	159.4	157.4	154.7	153.0	-1.1	-2.8	-4.0
Slovak Republic	194.7	193.1	193.1	195.3	1.1	1.1	0.3
Slovenia	69.1	53.5	59.6	66.1	10.9	23.5	-4.3
Spain (Total)	123.6	121.9	117.4	117.1	-0.3	-3.9	-5.3
Spain (State Administration)	125.9	124.2	119.8	119.5	-0.2	-3.8	-5.1
Spain (Catalonia)	111.5	109.6	104.8	104.5	-0.3	-4.6	-6.3
Sweden	65.1	67.8	69.0	68.8	-0.2	1.5	5.8
UK: England and Wales	140.1	137.7	134.7	133.8	-0.7	-2.8	-4.4
UK: Northern Ireland	78.9	73.5	75.2	78.6	4.5	6.9	-0.5
UK: Scotland	148.0	133.8	125.6	135.2	7.7	1.1	-8.7
European average	121.4	116.0	113.8	115.8			
European median	106.5	108.7	105.6	107.0			

**Notes to Table 1:** Please see section 6 (Notes) for exceptions to the dates of reference for the prison population rates indicated in the Table.

If we include in the analysis the countries that did not answer the three questionnaires —and whose data are presented in Table 2— it can be seen that, comparing the situation in 15 April to that on 1 January, the prison population rate had remained stable (i.e. between -4 and 4%) in 29 prison administrations, it had decreased in 17 and it had increased only in Sweden<sup>3</sup>. By 15 June, the number of prison administrations with lower prison population rates than in January had risen to 27, while 14 showed stable trends and only two (Sweden and

<sup>2</sup> The rates of countries with less than 100,000 inhabitants are unstable and therefore are not commented here (see *Methodology* for further details).

<sup>3</sup> Data for the comparison of the trends shown by this indicator between 1 January and 15 April 2020 are available for 47 prison administrations.



Greece) had higher rates in June than in January<sup>4</sup>. Finally, by the end of the summer, which implied roughly three months of deconfinement, the prison population rates observed (on 15 September) were higher than the ones observed in June in 12 countries, they had stabilized in 22 (including Sweden) and had increased only in Bulgaria and Montenegro.

Figure 2 analyses the data from a different angle by showing the variation of the prison population rate in the 35 prison administrations that provided data on 1 January and on 15 September 2020. As in the previous Figure, countries that released inmates as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 are shown with a striped pattern. Logically, they show decreasing prison populations, but the same is true for most of the prison administrations, which could be due to the side effects of the pandemic mentioned in the introduction. Six prison administrations registered a decrease of more than 10% of their prison population rates (Montenegro, France, Bulgaria, Albania, Portugal and Italy), and among them, four released inmates as a preventive measure related to the COVID-19 pandemic (France, Albania, Portugal and Italy). On the other hand, Greece, Denmark, Sweden and Andorra registered an increase of more than 5% in their prison population rate. As we can see, Denmark and Andorra released inmates as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 however their prison population rate still increased, which may be due to the number of inmates effectively released, six in Andorra and only one in Denmark.

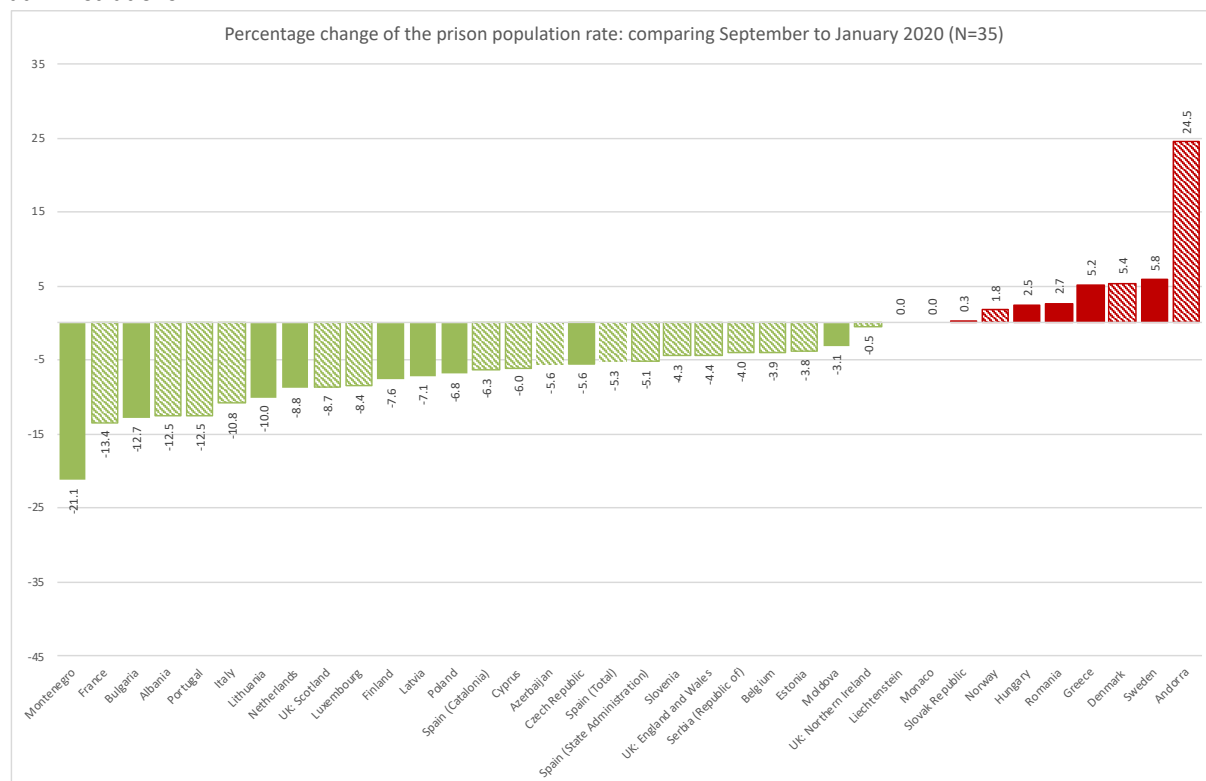
As it was mentioned in the first report on the impact of the pandemic on European prison population rates (Aebi & Tiago, 2020), the fact that Sweden was the only country that did not impose a lockdown on its citizens and that the results indicate a general increase of 5.8% on its prison population corresponds to the predictions of the situational approaches summarized in the introduction.

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<sup>4</sup> Data for the comparison of the trends shown by this indicator between 1 January and 15 April 2020 are available for 43 prison administrations.



**Figure 2.** Percentage change in prison population rates (15 September compared to 1 January 2020) in 35 prison administrations



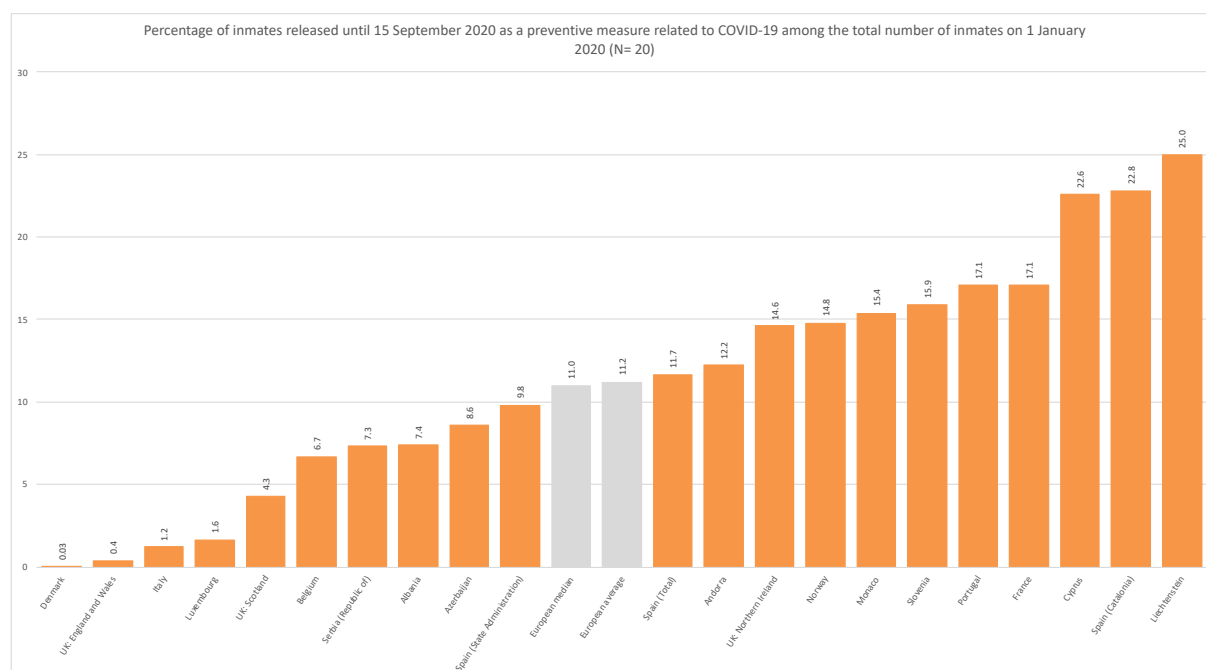
**Note to Figure 2:** See notes to Figure 1.

### 3. The impact of COVID-19 on prison populations

Figure 3 allows a better interpretation of the trends observed in Figures 1 and 2 as it presents the percentage of inmates released as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 in the 20 prison administrations that answered the three questionnaires and reported having adopted such measures. The percentages are estimated in reference to the prison population of the country on 1 January 2020, and the Figure shows major differences across prison administrations. In the Autonomous region of Catalonia (Spain), for example, 23% of the inmates were preventively released, and that percentage reached 17% in France and Portugal, and 16% in Slovenia even if, by the beginning of the summer, the latter recalled back to prison the inmates released. On the other side of the distribution, England and Wales released the equivalent of less than 0.5% of its prison population, while Denmark released only one inmate.

Altogether, these 20 prison administrations released almost 8,000 inmates until 15 April, 6,000 more until 15 June and 6,500 more until 15 September 2020, which corresponds to on an overall number of roughly 20,500 inmates released as a preventive measure against COVID-19.

**Figure 3.** Percentage of inmates released until 15 September 2020 as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 among the total number of inmates on 1 January 2020 in 20 prison administrations



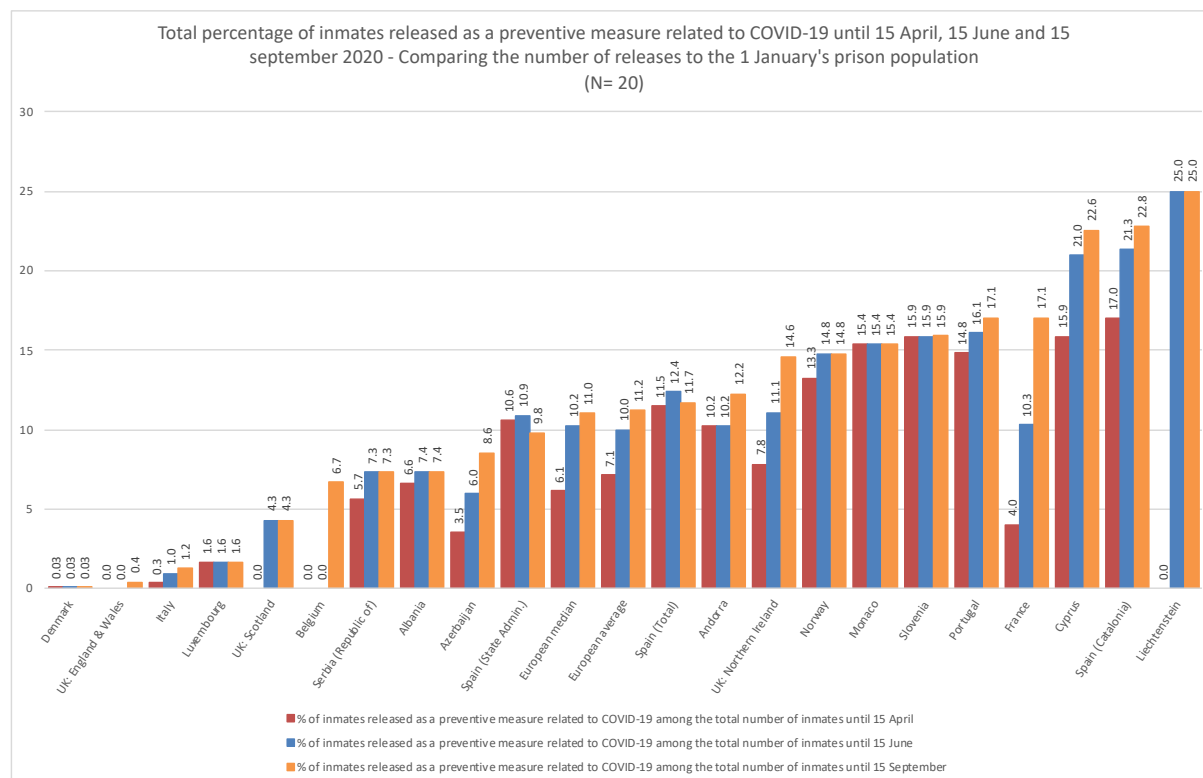
**Note to Figure 3:**

- Spain (Total) and Spain (State Administration): The total number of releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 (which were used to calculate the percentages presented in the Table) reflects the number of inmates that, on these specific dates, were serving their sentence under electronic surveillance as a preventive measure against COVID-19. The system used for the State Administration does not allow to extract data covering a period (i.e. cumulative data), only data on a specific day.

If we include in the analysis the countries that did not answer the three questionnaires —and whose data are presented in Table 4— there are five other prison administrations (Armenia, Austria, Iceland, Ireland, and Turkey) that released inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19. This raises the total number of prison administrations in that situation to 25, but increases drastically the number of inmates released, which reaches 143,803. The reason is that, by 15 June, Turkey had released 114,460 inmates, which correspond to 39.2% of the prison population it had in January. The actual number of inmates released across Europe should be even higher, as some of the prison administrations that did not provide data for September may have continued the releases during the summer.

In that perspective, Figure 4 shows the cumulative percentage of inmates released as a preventive measure against COVID-19 by 15 April, by 15 June and by 15 September. Four prison administrations did not release inmates after April (Denmark, Luxembourg, Monaco and Slovenia), another five after June (Albania, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway and Scotland), while ten other continued to preventively release inmates until September. Data for the State Administration of Spain and for the whole territory of Spain do not allow a straightforward interpretation because they are not cumulative, but refer to the inmates that were outside penal institutions on the date of reference as a preventive measure against COVID-19 (see notes to Figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 4.** Percentage of inmates released until 15 June and until 15 September 2020 as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 among the total number of inmates on 1 January 2020 in 20 prison administrations



**Notes to Figure 4:**

- Prison administrations are sorted according to the percentage of inmates released by 15 September 2020.
- Spain (Total) and Spain (State Administration): The total number of releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 (which were used to calculate the percentages presented in the Table) reflects the number of inmates that, on these specific dates, were serving their sentence under electronic surveillance as a preventive measure against COVID-19. The system used for the State Administration does not allow to extract data covering a period (i.e. cumulative data), only data on a specific day.

Map 1 illustrates the distribution of the COVID-19 infections among inmates and staff members until 15 September 2020, as reported by each prison administration. For each country, the Map specifies whether the cases concerned inmates, staff, or both of them. One can see that the distribution of cases is not directly related to the size of the prison population of the country and it does not follow a geographical distribution. With the spread of the pandemic, the only prison administration reporting no infections until 15 September is Latvia. Slovenia and Cyprus reported cases only among inmates; while Estonia, Finland, Hungary and Northern Ireland reported having cases of infections only among staff members. A comparison of Map 1 and Figure 3 suggests that the decision of releasing inmates as a preventive measure is not directly related to the presence or absence of COVID-19 cases among inmates and staff, a hypothesis that will be explored further in the following paragraphs.

Figure 5 illustrates the spread of infections across time among inmates and staff members. As in the rest of this report, the dates of reference are 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020. Among the administrations that provided data, five had no infections by 15 April (Greece, Latvia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Hungary) and the first three of them remained with no infections by 15 June. Two of the prison administrations that only had cases among inmates by April reported having cases also among staff members by September (Azerbaijan and Slovak Republic), while four others (Czech Republic, Moldova, Portugal and Romania), which in April reported having infections only among staff members, reported infections also among inmates by September.

Cases of infections until 15 April 2020

Cases of infections until 15 June 2020

Cases of infections until 15 September 2020

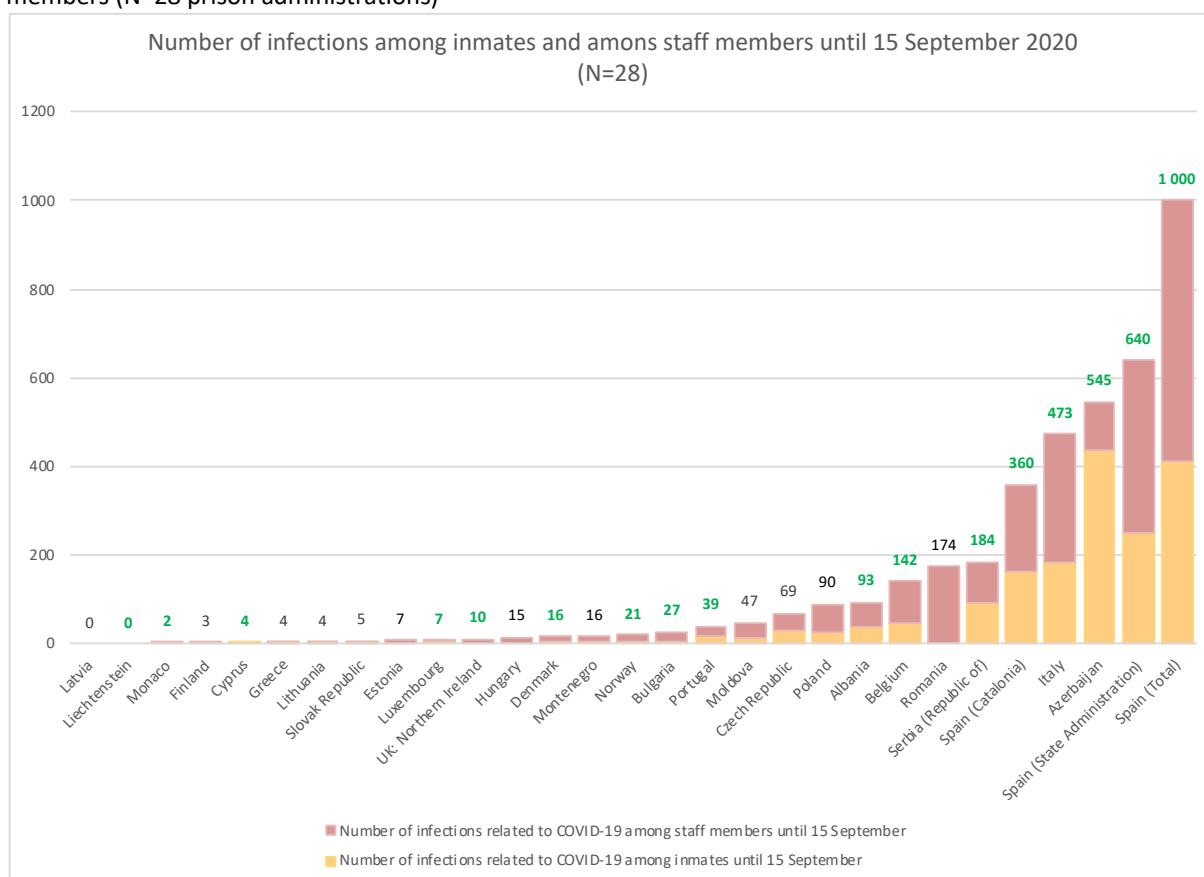
Legend:

- No infection
- Infections only among inmates
- Infections only among staff members
- Infections among inmates and staff members
- Infections not available
- Not a Council of Europe member state



Figure 6 shows the absolute number of infections related to COVID-19 in penal institutions as well as its distribution among inmates and staff members in the 28 prison administrations that provided the necessary data (the actual numbers for each category can be found in Table 4). The total is presented in green when the prison administration released inmates as a preventive measure related to the pandemic and left in black when it did not do so. All the five administrations with the highest number of infections did release inmates. At the same time, four of the ten administrations with the lowest number or with no infections at all also released inmates as a preventive measure. The impact of these releases on the spread of the pandemic is impossible to estimate with the available data. However, the first *SPACE I – COVID-19* report (Aebi & Tiago, 2020) and Table 4 show that the vast majority of these releases took place during the first month of the lockdown, or by the beginning of the summer (which was also the moment chosen by Slovenia to recall back the inmates liberated at the beginning of the lockdown), which corroborates that the decision of released inmates as a preventive measure was not led primarily by the number of infections observed in penal institutions.

**Figure 6.** Number of infections related to COVID-19 detected until 15 September 2020 among inmates and staff members (N=28 prison administrations)



**Note to Figure 6:** Numbers in green mean that the prison administration released inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19.

## 4. Prison density and overcrowding on 1 January and 15 April 2020

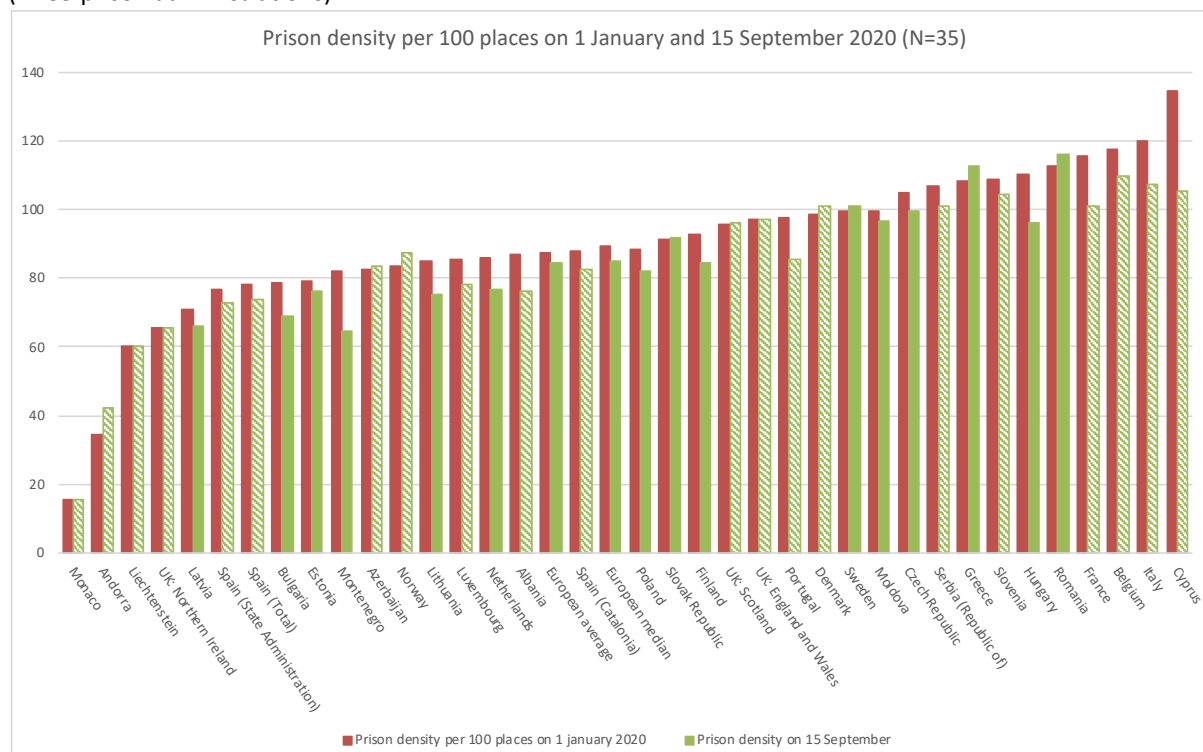
**Disclaimer:** Data on prison capacity is provided by the countries and therefore corresponds to their own estimation of it. By definition, there is overcrowding when there are more inmates than the number of places available in penal institutions. In order to define the number of places available (i.e. the capacity of the penal institutions), countries are asked to use the concept of *design capacity*, which refers to the number of inmates that a penal institution was intended to house when it was constructed or renewed. However, many countries use the concept of *operational capacity*, which refers to the number of inmates that a penal institution can actually house while remaining functional. As a consequence, the rates concerning prison capacity and overcrowding do not allow reliable cross-national comparisons.

Figure 7 shows the prison density on 1 January and 15 September 2020 in the 35 prison administrations covered in detail in this report. Prison density is expressed as the number of inmates per 100 detention places, which means that a number higher than 100 implies overcrowding. As usual, bars with a striped pattern correspond to the prison administrations that released inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19.

It can be seen in Figure 7 that prison density decreased in a majority of prison administrations, giving support to the hypothesis of the effect of the pandemic on prison populations either through the preventive releases of inmates (in more than half of the countries) or, indirectly, through a decrease of crime and, consequently, of entries into prison. Few of the countries that did not register overcrowding on 1 January and on 15 September showed in September a higher prison density than in January, and only in Andorra had that density increased by more than 5%. On 1 January 2020, ten prison administrations had more inmates than available places in their penal institutions. In the following months, six of them (Slovenia, France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia and Cyprus) released inmates to reduce the spread of COVID-19; but their prison density, although lower than in January, was still over 100 by 15 September. The Czech Republic and Hungary did not release inmates, but reduced their prison density to less than 100 inmates per 100 places during the same period. Greece and Romania did not release inmates either but, contrary to the previous countries, they both increased their level of overcrowding. By 15 September, however, there were again ten countries with overcrowded penal institutions because Denmark and Sweden joined that group. Denmark released only one inmate in relation to the pandemic, but (as seen in Table 1) registered during the summer an increase of its prison population that led to overcrowding. Sweden, on the contrary, reached overcrowding during the first months of the pandemic<sup>5</sup>. In that perspective, it must be reminded that Sweden is the only country that did not introduce a lockdown of its population

<sup>5</sup> In fact, the actual Swedish prison density is slightly higher than in Figure 7 because its prison capacity includes the places reserved for persons deprived of freedom for other reasons than suspicion of crime (for example, inmates taken in custody awaiting deportation) but these persons are not included in the total number of inmates (see the *Notes* on Section 6 for further details).

**Figure 7.** Prison density (number of inmates per 100 detention places) on 1 January and 15 September 2020 (N=35 prison administrations)



**Notes to Figure 7:** Prison administrations are sorted according to their prison density on 1 January 2020. Those that released inmates as a preventive measure against COVID-19 are presented with a striped pattern.

## 6. Notes

### 6.1. General notes

- Unless stated otherwise, the general population of each country was retrieved from Eurostat and corresponds to the population of the country on 1 January 2020.
- In the following section, the notes without a date of reference (1 January, 15 April, 15 June or 15 September) refer to the whole period under study (1 January to 15 September)

### 6.2. Notes by Country

#### ARMENIA

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates is 10 April instead of 15 April 2020;
  - All 36 preventive releases related to COVID-19 concern pre-trial detainees.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:**
  - Overall, 429 inmates were released from penitentiary institutions during the State of Emergency (From 16 March to 1 July, 2020);
  - There have not been deaths due to the Coronavirus among inmates in Armenia. All COVID-19 infected inmates have fully recovered;
  - Among the 33 staff members positively tested for COVID-19, 19 were fully recovered by 15 June.

#### AUSTRIA

- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** Among the total number of inmates on 1 January 2020 (9 060), 8 464 are held in prison institutions.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** Among the total number of inmates on (8 897), 8 348 are held in prison institutions.



- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** There were 725 inmates preventively released from 15 March 2020 to 15 June 2020.

#### AZERBAIJAN

- The total population of the country includes the population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

#### BELGIUM

- Juvenile offenders are not included in the total number of inmates.
- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates is December 2019 instead of 1 January 2020 and was retrieved from <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/belgium>.

#### BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

- The total population of the Republika Srpska (BiH) is a mid-year estimate for 2018 (based on the natural changes of population and migration) retrieved from <http://www2.rzs.rs.ba>.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:**
  - On 11 March 2020, in order to prevent and prevent the emergence and spread of COVID-19 in the penal institutions of the Republika Srpska (BiH), the Minister of Justice of the Republika Srpska issued the following Order:
    1. With a view to preventing the occurrence and the spread of the virus in prisons in the Republika Srpska, in the period from 11 to 31 March 2020, suspend the use of facilities outside the penitentiary for prisoners serving a prison sentence, the employment of prisoners outside the penitentiary, visits by family members and other persons, and visits by prisoners to cultural and sporting events organized outside the penitentiary.
    2. The directors of correctional facilities and their assistants shall immediately hold meetings with prison councils at which all the dangers of the occurrence and consequences of virus coronas should be pointed out, to explain the necessity of passing this Order within the framework of all measures taken by the Government of Republika Srpska in preventive action and prevention of the occurrence and spread of virus coronas in Republika Srpska.
    3. Explain to prisoners who will be deprived of their facilities outside the correctional facility within the specified period of time that they will be able to use those benefits upon revocation of this Order.
    4. Raise the security level of the penitentiary institution to a level that will enable regular execution of all tasks and tasks and undisturbed execution of imprisonment and educational measures of sending to a correctional facility.
    5. Organize lectures for all prisoners on the occurrence of the virus corona and measures for preventing its spread in cooperation with local health institutions.
    6. Disinfect all premises and premises of correctional facilities.
    7. Establish a room for possible accommodation of infected prisoners within the inpatient health service.
    8. Provide all necessary disinfectants and means for maintaining the personal and collective hygiene of prisoners.
    9. Hold meetings with all employees of correctional facilities on the occurrence and spread of virus coronas and alert employees to their actions in cases of viral symptoms.
  - On 30 March 2020, the Minister of Justice extended to a further time the duration of the previously issued Order.

#### BULGARIA

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interior treated a pre-trial detainee diagnosed with COVID-19. He/she was detained in the Regional Police Station - Central Directorate of the Ministry of Interior and was placed in the Medical Institute before entering into custody. On 28 April 2020 his/her *pre-trial detention* status was transformed in a *home arrest* measure.

#### CYPRUS

- **Situation on 15 April:** One COVID-19 diagnosed inmate was a newly admitted inmate on 7 April 2020 who was brought to prison from the police detention centre. He was immediately placed in a quarantine place until the next day when he tested positive to the COVID-19 test. He was immediately transferred to the hospital for further action. This inmate had no contacts with other inmates. Since March 2020, all newly admitted inmates are tested for COVID-19 before their admission in detention. Since 10 April 2020, admissions of inmates from police detention centres are not accepted unless she/he is tested negative for COVID-19.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:**
  - The total number of inmates on 15 June 2020 corresponds to the sum of 614 inmates from the prison institution and 54 inmates from the police;
  - The total capacity on 15 June corresponds to the sum of 547 places in prison institution and 124 places in police stations;
  - Infections among inmates reflect the sum of one case in prison institutions and two cases in police stations.
- **Situation on 15 September 2020:**
  - The total number of inmates on 15 September 2020 corresponds to the sum of 654 inmates from the prison institution and 62 inmates from the police;
  - The total capacity on 15 September corresponds to the sum of 547 places in prison institution and 133 places in police stations.

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** There were 11 infected staff members since the start of pandemic. Seven recovered as of 28 April 2020.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** data concerning the number of infections cover the period until 25 July 2020 (instead of 15 June 2020).

#### DENMARK

- **Situation on 15 April:**
  - The number of releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 covers the period until 20 April 2020 (instead of 15 April 2020);
  - The number of infected staff members includes all infected members of staff in the prisons and probation service, including regional administrations but not staff members in central administration.

#### ESTONIA

- **Situation on 1 January 2020:**
  - In addition to the total number of inmates on 1 January, there are 27 pre-trial detainees in police custody;
  - In addition to the total capacity of prison institutions on 1 January, there are 237 places in open prisons.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:**
  - In addition to the total number of inmates, there are 4 sentenced prisoners and 69 pre-trial detainees in police custody;
  - In addition to the total capacity of prison institutions, there are 237 places in open prisons.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** In addition to the total number of inmates, there are 77 pre-trial detainees in police custody.

#### FINLAND

- **Situation on 15 June 2020:**
  - As for preventive measures, the flux of people in prisons was reduced by minimizing visiting hours and transfers between prisons. Group sizes and activities in prisons were restricted;
  - The prison population was reduced by means of a swift legislative change that postponed the enforcement of newly given prison sentences.

#### FRANCE

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates is 1 April 2020 instead of 15 April 2020.

#### GEORGIA

- The total population of the country includes the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

#### ITALY

- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 31 December 2019 instead of 1 January 2020.

#### LATVIA

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates is 3 April 2020 instead of 15 April 2020.
- **Situation on 15 September 2020:** Data concerning infections detected among inmates and staff members covers the period until 14 September 2020 instead of 15 September 2020.

#### LITHUANIA

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates is 1 April 2020 instead of 15 April 2020.

#### MOLDOVA

- The total population of the country includes the population of Transnistria and is a mid-year estimation projection made by the United Nations (<https://population.un.org/wup/DataQuery/>).

#### MONACO

- The total population of the country is a mid-year estimation projection made by the United Nations (<https://population.un.org/wup/DataQuery/>).

#### MONTENEGRO

- As a preventive measure related to COVID-19, on 26 March 2020 the Government of Montenegro made the Decision to grant use of the facilities of Hotel Marienplatz in Podgorica for the implementation of a quarantine measure for the execution of detention orders for persons who do not respect self-isolation decisions and orders for the prevention of coronavirus. The accommodation capacity of this facility is 15 beds;
- On 7 April 2020, the Government of Montenegro made the Decision to grant use of the facilities of the "Internat Police Academy" for the implementation of a quarantine measure for the execution of detention orders for persons who do not respect self-isolation decisions and orders for the prevention of coronavirus. The accommodation capacity of this facility is 145 beds.

#### NETHERLANDS

- Data relates to the adult prison system only.
- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 31 December 2019 instead of 1 January 2020.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The total number of inmates includes 157 people who at that moment were at home under electronic monitoring (electronic bracelet). These people normally reside in a regime with the lowest level of security. In this regime they are on leave during the weekend and are outside working during the week. Only the nights (from Sunday until Thursday night) they stay in prison. However, currently they stay at home continuously under electronic monitoring. It is an alternative way of executing their sentence. In this way, less people are moving inwards and outwards of the prisons. Consequently, the chance that the COVID-19 spreads is reduced.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates is 16 June 2020 instead of 15 June 2020.

#### NORWAY

- **Situation on 15 September:**
  - The releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 include temporary releases, early releases and interruption of sentences. In addition, there are detainees who were transferred to back-door electronic monitoring (not include in the total number of releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19);
  - There have been no more preventive releases related to the COVID-19 pandemic since 29 April 2020.

#### POLAND

- **Situation on 15 April:**
  - Inmates tested positive for COVID-19 were already infected when they were admitted into the penal institution (they were not infected inside prisons);
  - In Poland, a person failing to comply with the quarantine introduced as a consequence of the epidemiological threat faces a fine of up to PLN 5 000 and up to one year in prison. However, the penalty may be more severe if the prosecutor assesses that the person has put the health or life of others at risk by his/her behaviour. In that case, the prosecutor can require a sentence of up to 8 years in prison. Consequently, the persons who are infected in prison are those who did not respect the rules of the quarantine and are therefore kept in pre-trial detention.
- **Situation on 15 June:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 30 June 2020 instead of 15 June 2020;
  - The number of infected inmates and staff members are for the period from the beginning of the pandemic to 27 July;
  - In the number of infected inmates are included 14 pre-trial detainees who were detained as a result of not respecting quarantine rules.

#### PORTUGAL

- **Situation on 15 June:**
  - Between 11 April and 15 June 2020, 1 314 inmates were released following an amnesty (article 2 of the 10 April 9/2020 law), 14 were granted pardon (article 3 of the 10 April 9/2020 law), and 703 were granted a 45 days prison leave (article 3 of the 10 April 9/2020 law);
  - Most of these releases (in the order mentioned above: 1 186 out of 1 314, 14 out of 14, and 647 out of 703) took place between 11 and 29 April 2020.
- **Situation on 15 September:** From the beginning of March until 21 July, there were 6 detainees tested positive for COVID-19, and five of them were already recovered by 15 September. All these cases concern newly admitted inmates who were tested positive when admitted in the penal institution. So far there are no cases coming directly from the penal system.

#### ROMANIA

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates is 14 April 2020 instead of 15 April 2020;
  - The number of preventive releases cover the period until 14 April 2020 instead of 15 April 2020.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of prison institutions is 16 June 2020 instead of 15 June 2020.
- **Situation on 15 September 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of prison institutions is 31 October 2020 instead of 15 September 2020.

#### RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- **Situation on 15 June:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 1 July 2020 instead of 15 June 2020.

#### SERBIA (REPUBLIC OF)

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:**
  - Data concerning the number of inmates and staff infected with COVID-10 refer to the period until 4 May, instead of 15 April. Until 4 May, 13 employees and 84 convicted prisoners were tested positive for COVID-19 at the Penal Correctional Facilities in Požarevac – Zabela;
  - Total capacity: Three pavilions are under construction in two prisons and will host a total of 648 persons. The completion of the works and the moving in of persons deprived of freedom is planned for the end of 2020;
  - The number of persons deprived of their liberty was reduced by 626 persons from 15 March to 15 April 2020 by applying the institute of conditional release, early release, abolition of custody, as well as restrictive referral of new persons to imprisonment.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:**
  - Data concerning the infections covers the period until 14 July 2020 instead of 15 June 2020.
- **Situation on 15 September 2020:**
  - Data concerning the infections covers the period until 12 October 2020 instead of 15 September 2020.

#### SLOVAK REPUBLIC

- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** By May 2020, the only inmate infected with COVID-19 was already recovered.

#### SLOVENIA

- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** The Coronavirus epidemic officially ended in Slovenia at the end of May. As a consequence, all the 230 inmates that had been released as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 were recalled back to prison until 15 June.

#### SPAIN

Note: In order to avoid double counting, the total calculated for the whole territory of Spain is not included in the computation of the average and median European values (which include the figures for Catalonia and the Spanish State Administration).

The total number of releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 reflects the number of inmates that on these dates were serving their sentence under electronic surveillance due to COVID-19. The system does not allow to extract data covering a period, only data on a specific day.

#### STATE ADMINISTRATION

- Data were calculated taking into account the data received for the Autonomous region of Catalonia and for the whole territory of Spain.

#### CATALONIA

- The total population was retrieved from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/regions/catalonia-population/>.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Justice of Catalonia granted 1 380 inmates the possibility of staying at home or in the house of a relative during the confinement. A minimum follow-up is done twice a week. In many cases, this monitoring increases and may even take place daily, depending on the risk of the inmate. Tracking is conducted by phone, video conferencing or even geolocation. 45 conditional releases have also been granted.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates, the total capacity of penal institutions and the number of infections relate to 17 June 2020 instead of 15 June 2020;
  - The reference date for the number of infected staff members covers the period until 4 July 2020 instead of 15 June 2020.

#### SWEDEN

- Variations in the total capacity of penal institutions are explained by the fact that in Sweden this concept relates to the *operational capacity*. In that perspective, the capacity can be increased in the short term by placing two inmates in a room usually used for one, while planning for a long-term increase of the capacity by initiating new prison buildings;
- Inmates in remand prisons who are detained for other reasons than suspicion of crime (for example, inmates taken in custody awaiting deportation) are excluded. It is, however, not possible to exclude the places foreseen for these inmates from the item "Total capacity of penal institutions". Therefore, the places foreseen for these inmates are included in the total capacity.
- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 1 October 2019 instead of 1 January 2020. On that date, the total capacity of penal institutions was 6 769 places.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates is 1 May 2020 instead of 15 April 2020;
  - The Swedish Prison and Probation Service has 127 confirmed COVID-19 cases among inmates, and 115 of them have fully recovered.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:** All 129 inmates infected until this date have fully recovered.
- **Situation on 15 September 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 1 September 2020 instead of 15 September 2020;
  - All 164 inmates infected until this date have fully recovered.

#### SWITZERLAND

- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 31 January 2020 instead of 1 January 2020.

#### TURKEY

- **Situation on 1 January 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 2 January 2020 instead of 1 January 2020.

#### UK: ENGLAND & WALES

- The total population is a mid-year estimation projection retrieved from <https://www.ukpopulation.org>.
- **Situation on 1 January 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates is 31 December 2019 instead of 1 January 2020, and is available at *Offender Management Statistics Quarterly July to September 2019*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>.
  - The total capacity relates to the Useable Operational Capacity as at 3 January 2020 instead of 1 January 2020, and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2020>.
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 17 April 2020 instead of 15 April 2020, and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2020>.
- **Situation on 15 June 2020:**
  - The reference date for the total number of inmates and the total capacity of penal institutions is 12 June 2020 instead of 15 June 2020, and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2020>;
  - The number of infections related to COVID-19 covers the period until 19 June 2020 instead of 15 June 2020. Data are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-covid-19-statistics>;
  - Data concerning infections related to COVID-19 include children in youth custody.
- **Situation on 15 September 2020:** The number of infections related to COVID-19 covers the period until the end of the month of June 2020 (instead of 15 June 2020). Data are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-covid-19-statistics-september-2020>.

#### UK: NORTHERN IRELAND

- The total population is a mid-year estimation projection retrieved from <https://www.ukpopulation.org>;
- Individual temporary releases are not considered in the total number of inmates.

#### UK: SCOTLAND

- The total population is a mid-year estimation projection retrieved from <https://www.ukpopulation.org>.

- 
- **Situation on 15 April 2020:** The rapid reduction in the prison population can be attributed to a drop-off in court business due to COVID-19.
  - **Situation on 15 June 2020:** There was a single confirmed case of COVID 19 among prisoners by 15 June, and that prisoner had been transferred to hospital; 14 members of staff were symptomatic, while a further 409 were self-isolating.
  - **Situation on 15 September 2020:**
    - The reference date for the total number of inmates is 18 September 2020 instead of 15 September 2020;
    - SPS take a headcount each day of staff unavailable due to COVID infection. The headcount unavailable due to infections amongst prison staff averaged at 8.5 for the period 16 June to 15 September 2020. The June average for this defined period was 15, in July it was 7.8, 5 in August and 10.6 in September. These figures include data for those with personal symptoms and residual symptoms.
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## 7. References

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## 8. Methodology

This document presents, for several indicators, the European *average* and *median* values. The median is the value that divides the data in two equal groups so that 50% of the countries are above the median and 50% are below it. The median is usually preferred to the *arithmetic mean* (commonly referred to as the *average*) because the latter is extremely sensitive to very high or very low values (technically known as *outliers*), which entail unreliable indicators and instable time series. Outliers are quite common in the sample of countries included in the SPACE report because some member States, like Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco or San Marino, have a very low population and, as a consequence, a change in only one person can have a big impact on its percentages, rates, and trends. Moreover, sentenced prisoners from Liechtenstein and San Marino usually serve their sentences in Austria and Italy respectively, which means that the real prison population of the country is underestimated in the figures presented here. As a consequence, we do not take into account countries with less than 100,000 inhabitants in the comments to the Figures. The median can also be unstable when calculated on a small sample, as the one used in most of the Figures and Tables of this report (N=35). With 35 observations, the median will correspond to the country placed in the 18<sup>th</sup> position of the distribution.

The European average and median values are weighted according to the population and the number of inmates in each country. This means that they are estimated on the basis of the percentages and rates per 100,000 inhabitants of each country and not on the absolute numbers for the whole continent. Using the latter would produce different values, which could hide the diversity observed across countries.

While the Tables and Figures include decimals, in the comments all values equal or superior to 10 are in principle presented in round numbers (i.e. without decimals), while those inferior to 10 are presented with one decimal.

In order to avoid duplication of data, the total for the whole territory of Spain (which corresponds to the addition of the data for the National Administration and the Catalan Administration) is not included in the computation of the average and median European values.

Whenever Bosnia and Herzegovina is represented in maps, data refer only to the Republika Srpska, which is the only prison administration of the country for which data concerning the prison population rate are available.

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**Table 2.** Number of inmates and prison population rates on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020

Country	Total population	Total number of inmates on 01.01.2020	Total number of inmates on 15.04.2020	Total number of inmates on 15.06.2020	Total number of inmates on 15.09.2020	Prison population rate on 01.01.2020	Prison population rate on 15.04.2020	Prison population rate on 15.06.2020	Prison population rate on 15.09.2020
Albania	2 845 955	5 312	4 885	4 781	4 648	186.7	171.6	168.0	163.3
Andorra	77 543	49	43	50	61	63.2	55.5	64.5	78.7
Armenia	2 959 694	2 221	2 197	2 145		75.0	74.2	72.5	
Austria	8 901 064	9 060	8 897	8 548		101.8	100.0	96.0	
Azerbaijan	10 067 108	20 972	21 008	20 995	21 253	208.3	208.7	208.6	211.1
Belgium	11 549 888	10 883	9 683	9 972	10 455	94.2	83.8	86.3	90.5
BiH: Rep. Srpska	1 147 902	743	763	728		64.7	66.5	63.4	
Bulgaria	6 951 482	7 366	7 553	7 407	6 427	106.0	108.7	106.6	92.5
Croatia	4 058 165	3 533	3 413	3 309		87.1	84.1	81.5	
Cyprus	888 005	762	616	668	716	85.8	69.4	75.2	80.6
Czech Republic	10 693 939	21 056	20 930	20 259	19 887	196.9	195.7	189.4	186.0
Denmark	5 822 763	3 955	3 968	3 905	4 167	67.9	68.1	67.1	71.6
Estonia	1 328 976	2 450	2 385	2 348	2 357	184.4	179.5	176.7	177.4
Finland	5 525 292	2 667	2 597	2 274	2 463	48.3	47.0	41.2	44.6
France	67 098 824	70 651	62 387	59 359	61 174	105.3	93.0	88.5	91.2
Georgia	3 716 858	9 745	9 471	9 266		262.2	254.8	249.3	
Germany	83 166 711		NA	59 487				71.5	
Greece	10 709 739	10 891	11 296	11 448	11 457	101.7	105.5	106.9	107.0
Hungary	9 769 526	16 308	16 551	16 493	16 708	166.9	169.4	168.8	171.0
Iceland	364 134	160	120	106		43.9	33.0	29.1	
Ireland	4 963 839	3 950	3 847			79.6	77.5		
Italy	60 244 639	60 769	55 030	53 530	54 176	100.9	91.3	88.9	89.9
Latvia	1 907 675	3 414	3 319	3 116	3 171	179.0	174.0	163.3	166.2
Liechtenstein	38 748	12	9	12	12	31.0	23.2	31.0	31.0
Lithuania	2 794 090	6 138	6 018	5 676	5 523	219.7	215.4	203.1	197.7
Luxembourg	626 108	608	524	497	557	97.1	83.7	79.4	89.0
Malta	514 564	754	754			146.5	146.5		
Moldova	4 018 000	6 716	6 583	6 551	6 508	167.1	163.8	163.0	162.0
Monaco	39 000	13	8	10	13	33.3	20.5	25.6	33.3
Montenegro	621 873	1 094	1 070	935	863	175.9	172.1	150.4	138.8
Netherlands	17 407 585	9 981	9 097	8 886	9 098	57.3	52.3	51.0	52.3
North Macedonia	2 076 255	2 203	2 175			106.1	104.8		
Norway	5 367 580	3 026	2 653	2 637	3 080	56.4	49.4	49.1	57.4
Poland	37 958 138	74 130	71 836	69 894	69 065	195.3	189.3	184.1	182.0
Portugal	10 295 909	12 634	11 677	10 877	11 060	122.7	113.4	105.6	107.4
Romania	19 317 984	20 578	20 492	20 178	21 128	106.5	106.1	104.5	109.4
Russian Fed.	143 787 000	523 928	517 028	499 406		364.4	359.6	347.3	
San Marino	34 735	2				5.8			
Serbia	6 926 705	11 044	10 900	10 717	10 598	159.4	157.4	154.7	153.0
Slovak Republic	5 457 873	10 625	10 540	10 537	10 657	194.7	193.1	193.1	195.3
Slovenia	2 095 861	1 449	1 122	1 250	1 386	69.1	53.5	59.6	66.1
Spain (Total)	47 329 981	58 520	57 680	55 574	55 433	123.6	121.9	117.4	117.1
Spain (State Admin.)	39 807 385	50 129	49 436	47 687	47 569	125.9	124.2	119.8	119.5
Spain (Catalonia)	7 522 596	8 391	8 244	7 887	7 864	111.5	109.6	104.8	104.5
Sweden	10 327 589	6 719	7 000	7 123	7 106	65.1	67.8	69.0	68.8
Switzerland	8 606 033	6 906	NA	NA		80.2			
Turkey	83 154 997	291 959	292 893	183 873		351.1	352.2	221.1	
Ukraine	41 732 779								
UK: England & Wales	59 160 490	82 868	81 454	79 713	79 185	140.1	137.7	134.7	133.8
UK: Northern Ireland	1 908 250	1 506	1 402	1 435	1 499	78.9	73.5	75.2	78.6
UK: Scotland	5 500 000	8 142	7 359	6 907	7 437	148.0	133.8	125.6	135.2

**Notes to Table 2:**

- The total number of inmates includes pre-trial detainees.
- The prison population rate corresponds to the number of inmates per 100,000 inhabitants.
- Please see section 6 (Notes) for exceptions to the dates of reference for the total number of inmates and the prison population rates indicated in the Table.

**Table 3.** Key indicators on prison capacity on 1 January, 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020

Country	Capacity of penal institutions 01.01.2020	Capacity of penal institutions 15.04.2020	Capacity of penal institutions 15.06.2020	Capacity of penal institutions 15.09.2020	Prison density on 01.01.2020	Prison density on 15.04.2020	Prison density on 15.06.2020	Prison density on 15.09.2020
Albania	6 106	6 106	6 160	6 106	87.0	80.0	77.6	76.1
Andorra	142	142	142	144	34.5	30.3	35.2	42.4
Armenia	5 346	5 346	5 346		41.5	41.1	40.1	
Austria	8 883	8 883	8 880		102.0	100.2	96.3	
Azerbaijan	25 400	25 501	25 501	25 501	82.6	82.4	82.3	83.3
Belgium	9 279	9 354	9 546	9 546	117.3	103.5	104.5	109.5
BiH: Rep Srpska	1 498	1 498	1 498		49.6	50.9	48.6	
Bulgaria	9 341	9 341	9 341	9 341	78.9	80.9	79.3	68.8
Croatia	3 919	3 919	3 919		90.2	87.1	84.4	
Cyprus	566	566	671	680	134.6	108.8	99.6	105.3
Czech Republic	20 096	19 968	19 966	19 946	104.8	104.8	101.5	99.7
Denmark	4 011	4 011	4 071	4 119	98.6	98.9	95.9	101.2
Estonia	3 097	3 097	3 097	3 097	79.1	77.0	75.8	76.1
Finland	2 878	2 889	2 905	2 919	92.7	89.9	78.3	84.4
France	61 080	61 098	61 098	60 618	115.7	102.1	97.2	100.9
Georgia	12 185	12 185	13 107		80.0	77.7	70.7	
Germany	73 218		73 214				81.3	
Greece	10 055	10 055	10 175	10 175	108.3	112.3	112.5	112.6
Hungary	14 829	14 829	14 829	17 402	110.0	111.6	111.2	96.0
Iceland	176	176	175		90.9	68.2	60.6	
Ireland	4 285	4 285			92.2	89.8		
Italy	50 688	50 688	50 496	50 574	119.9	108.6	106.0	107.1
Latvia	4 822	4 822	4 822	4 822	70.8	68.8	64.6	65.8
Liechtenstein	20	20	20	20	60.0	45.0	60.0	60.0
Lithuania	7 236	7 236	7 326	7 326	84.8	83.2	77.5	75.4
Luxembourg	711	711	711	711	85.5	73.7	69.9	78.3
Malta	878	878			85.9	85.9		
Moldova	6 735	6 735	6 735	6 735	99.7	97.7	97.3	96.6
Monaco	84	84	84	84	15.5	9.5	11.9	15.5
Montenegro	1 333	1 333	1 333	1 333	82.1	80.3	70.1	64.7
Netherlands	11 632	11 632	11 842	11 850	85.8	78.2	75.0	76.8
North Macedonia	3 022	3 022			72.9	72.0		
Norway	3 633	3 633	3 263	3 519	83.3	73.0	80.8	87.5
Poland	84 021	84 021	84 309	84 392	88.2	85.5	82.9	81.8
Portugal	12 934	12 934	12 923	12 923	97.7	90.3	84.2	85.6
Romania	18 235	18 235	18 248	18 248	112.8	112.4	110.6	115.8
Russian Fed.	753 509	753 509	736 476		69.5	68.6	67.8	
San Marino	12	12			16.7	0.0		
Serbia	10 323	10 323	10 523	10 523	107.0	105.6	101.8	100.7
Slovak Republic	11 625	11 625	11 625	11 625	91.4	90.7	90.6	91.7
Slovenia	1 330	1 330	1 330	1 330	108.9	84.4	94.0	104.2
Spain (Total)	75 074	75 074	75 074	75 074	77.9	76.8	74.0	73.8
Spain (State Admin.)	65 514	65 514	65 514	65 514	76.5	75.5	72.8	72.6
Spain (Catalonia)	9 560	9 560	9 560	9 560	87.8	86.2	82.5	82.3
Sweden	6 769	6 888	6 980	7 027	99.3	101.6	102.0	101.1
Switzerland	7 390	7 390	NA		93.5	NA	NA	
Turkey	233 194	233 194	236 755		125.2	125.6	77.7	
Ukraine								
UK: England & Wales	85 188	85 546	81 790	81 511	97.3	95.2	97.5	97.1
UK: Northern Ireland	2 294	2 294	2 294	2 294	65.6	61.1	62.6	65.3
UK: Scotland	8 499	8 499	7 671	7 725	95.8	86.6	90.0	96.3

**Notes to Table 3:**

- Please see section 6 (Notes) for exceptions to the dates of reference for the capacity of prison population rates and prison densities indicated in the Table.
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**Table 4: Inmates released as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 and infections detected among inmates and staff on 15 April, 15 June and 15 September 2020**

Country	Number of inmates preventively released until 15.04.2020	Number of inmates preventively released until 15.06.2020	Number of inmates preventively released until 15.09.2020	% of inmates preventively released until 15.04.2020 (among the total number of inmates on 01.01.2020)	% of inmates preventively released until 15.06.2020 (among the total number of inmates on 01.01.2020)	% of inmates preventively released until 15.09.2020 (among the total number of inmates on 01.01.2020)	Number of infections among inmates until 15.04.2020	Number of infections among inmates until 15.06.2020	Number of infections among inmates until 15.09.2020	Number of infections among staff members until 15.04.2020	Number of infections among staff members until 15.06.2020	Number of infections among staff members until 15.09.2020
Albania	351	392	392	6.6	7.4	7.4	NA	21	38	NA	17	55
Andorra	5	5	6	10.2	10.2	12.2	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Armenia	36	429		1.6	19.3		0	2		0	33	
Austria	NA	725			8.0		0	2		0	7	
Azerbaijan	740	1 253	1 796	3.5	6.0	8.6	12	124	438	0	23	107
Belgium	NA	NA	729	NA	NA	6.7	12	24	48	51	71	94
BiH: Rep. Srpska	0	0		0.0	0.0		0	0		0	0	
Bulgaria	0	NA	NA	0.0	NA	NA	0	1	6	0	7	21
Croatia	0	0		0.0	0.0		0	0		0	1	
Cyprus	121	160	172	15.9	21.0	22.6	0	3	4	0	0	0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	2	30	11	13	39
Denmark	1	1	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	1	3	4	9	13
Estonia	0	NAP	NAP	0.0	***	***	0	0	0	3	3	7
Finland	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2	3	3
France	2 839	7 270	12 056	4.0	10.3	17.1	NA	NA	NA	0	NA	NA
Georgia	0	0		0.0	0.0		0	0		0	0	
Germany	NA	NA		NA	NA		0	NA		0	NA	
Greece	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Hungary	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	3	15
Iceland	23	25		14.4	15.6		0	0		0	0	
Ireland	476			12.1	0.0							
Italy	210	587	759	0.3	1.0	1.2	112	179	184	212	263	289
Latvia	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liechtenstein	0	3	3	0.0	25.0	25.0	0	0	0	NA	1	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	1	0	3	3
Luxembourg	10	10	10	1.6	1.6	1.6	1	1	5	0	0	2
Malta	0			0.0								
Moldova	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	15	5	22	32
Monaco	2	2	2	15.4	15.4	15.4	0	0	0	0	1	2
Montenegro	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	5	0	0	11
Netherlands	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	15	17	NA	NA	NA
North Macedonia	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0		0	0	
Norway	401	447	447	13.3	14.8	14.8	6	6	6	10	11	15
Poland	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	17	25	7	29	65

Country	Number of inmates preventively released until 15.04.2020	Number of inmates preventively released until 15.06.2020	Number of inmates preventively released until 15.09.2020	% of inmates preventively released until 15.04.2020 (among the total number of inmates on 01.01.2020)	% of inmates preventively released until 15.06.2020 (among the total number of inmates on 01.01.2020)	% of inmates preventively released until 15.09.2020 (among the total number of inmates on 01.01.2020)	Number of infections among inmates until 15.04.2020	Number of infections among inmates until 15.06.2020	Number of infections among inmates until 15.09.2020	Number of infections among staff members until 15.04.2020	Number of infections among staff members until 15.06.2020	Number of infections among staff members until 15.09.2020
Portugal	1 874	2 031	2 155	14.8	16.1	17.1	0	1	18	NA	5	21
Romania	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	35	174
Russian Federation	NAP	NAP		***	***		0	669		0	1744	
San Marino	0			0.0			0	0		0	0	
Serbia	626	809	809	5.7	7.3	7.3	84	84	91	13	16	93
Slovak Republic	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	1	1	0	0	4
Slovenia	230	230	230	15.9	15.9	15.9	NA	2	NA	0	0	0
Spain (Total)	6 739	7 237	6 821	11.5	12.4	11.7	62	176	412	259	439	588
Spain (State Admin.)	5 314	5 446	4 908	10.6	10.9	9.8	35	85	249	212	278	391
Spain (Catalonia)	1 425	1 791	1 913	17.0	21.3	22.8	27	91	163	47	161	197
Sweden	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	129	164	0	NA	NA
Switzerland	NA	NA		NA	NA		0	NA		0	NA	
Turkey	102 944	114 460		35.3	39.2	0.0	0	72		0	212	
Ukraine												
UK: England & Wales	NA	NA	316	NA	NA	0.4	390	520	630	553	887	NA
UK: Northern Ireland	118	167	220	7.8	11.1	14.6	0	0	0	0	7	10
UK: Scotland	0	348	348	0.0	4.3	4.3	NA	1	1	NA	14	NA

**Notes to Table 4:**

- Please see section 6 (Notes) for exceptions to the dates of reference of the data presented in the Table.
- Slovenia: Figures are presented in orange because all the 230 inmates released at the beginning of the pandemic were recalled back to prison by 15 June.
- Spain (Total) and Spain (State Administration): The total number of releases as a preventive measure related to COVID-19 reflects the number of inmates that, on these specific dates, were serving their sentence under electronic surveillance as a preventive measure against COVID-19. The system used for the State Administration does not allow to extract data covering a period (i.e. cumulative data), only data on a specific day.
- Taking Portugal (column 1) as an example, Table 4 can be read as follows: By 15 April, the country had released 1 874 inmates as preventive measure against COVID-19 (column 2). By 15 June, the number of released prisoners had risen to 2031 (column 3). The latter is the cumulative number of inmates released, which means that includes all inmates released since the beginning of the pandemic; in that perspective the number of inmates released from 16 April to 15 June corresponds to the difference between the number shown in column 3 and that shown column 2 (2 031-1 874= 157 inmates). By 15 September, the number inmates released was 2 155 (column 4). Once more this is a cumulative number that includes all inmates released since the pandemic and, by combining it with the numbers shown in the previous columns it is possible to estimate the inmates released in each period. When doing such calculations, it is necessary to check the Notes presented in Section 6 for exceptions to the dates of reference. In addition, as stated in the previous note to this Table, the numbers provided by Spain do not follow this logic. In column 5, the number of inmates released until 15 April, and presented in column 1, has been transformed in the percentage (14.8%) that it represents from the total number of inmates Portugal had on 1 January 2020 (taken from the third column of Table 2). The following two columns (6 and 7) show the same percentage but in respect to the inmates released by 15 June and 15 September. These are cumulative percentages, which means that, by 15 June and by 15 September, the percentage of inmates released had risen to 16.1% and 17.1% respectively. Following a similar logic, columns 8, 9 and 10 show the number of infections among inmates by the three dates of reference. It can be seen, that there were no inmates affected by COVID-19 by 15 April (column 8), but there was one after that, in such a way that the cumulative number of infections by 15 June (shown in column 9) was also 1. By 15 September, that number had risen to 18 (column 10), which implies that there had been 17 infections in the previous three months (18-1=17). The number of infections among staff members are presented in the following three columns. It can be seen that data were not available by 15 April (column 11), but by 15 June there had been 5 staff members affected by COVID-19 (column 12) and, by 15 September there had been 21 (column 13). Once more, this is a cumulative number, which means that in Portugal there had been 21 staff members infected by COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic.