

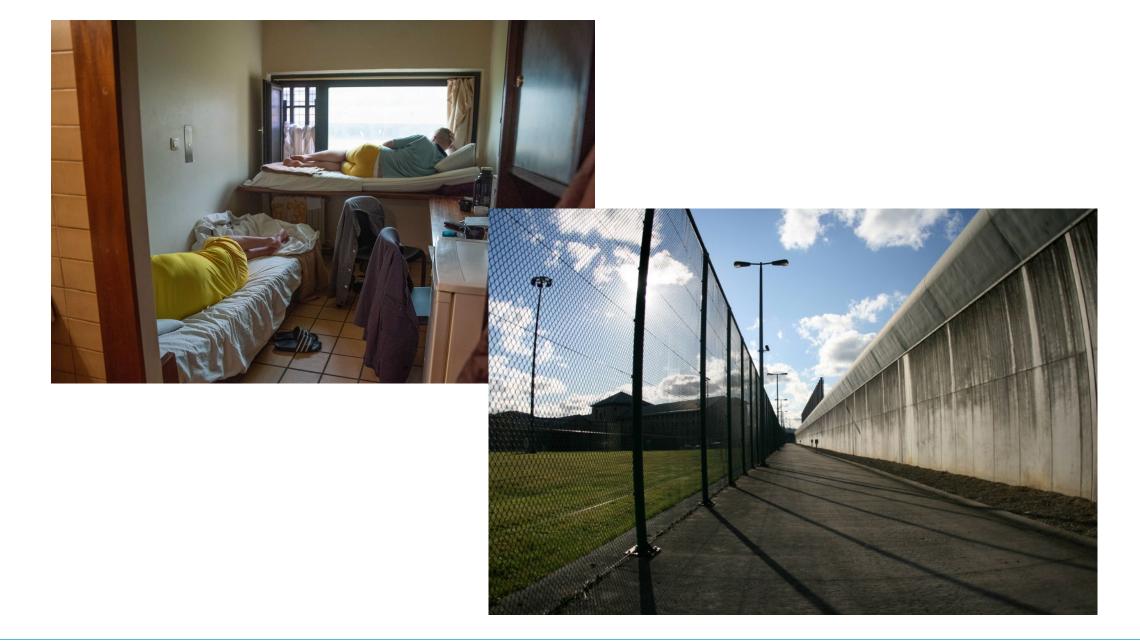
## Prison overcrowding

What's in a name?

Rudy Van De Voorde, Director general Belgian Prison Administration - Brussels 29-09-2022

















a widespread problem

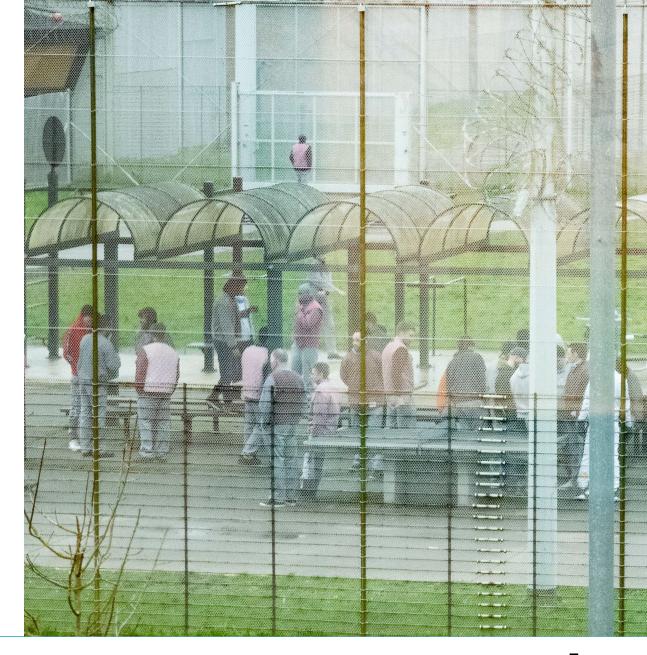
## **Belgian situation:**

- Capacity: 9736

- Population: 11.016

- Overcrowding: 14 %

- ► 60% convicted 35 % on remand
- ≥5% internees mentally ill
- ➤ 96% male 4% female







## European situation:

Data for 31/01/2021	Prison population rates (inmates per 100.000 inhabitants)	Prison density (inmates per 100 detention places)
Belgium	89,7	108,4
Europe (median)	101,8	85,4





Figure 1. Prison population rates (inmates per 100,000 inhabitants) on 31st January 2021 (N=49)

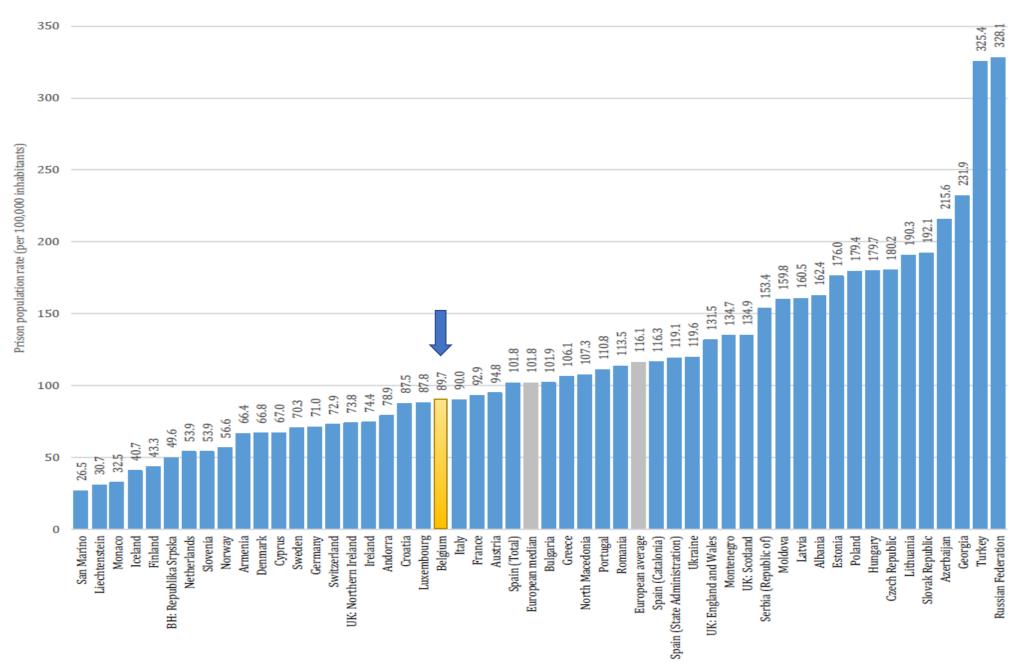


Figure 9. Prison density (number of inmates per 100 detention places) on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (N=49) 111.4 110,5 120 108.3 108.4 105.5 103.5 100.5 110 96.7 96.4 96.3 96.2 94.8 100 90.3 88.3 87.4 87.6 85.4 85.4 85.5 85.7 85.7 85.1 82,5 81.6 78.3 79.2 79.6 80.0 80.5 74.6 74.7 75.6 74.6 68.9 9.99 63.0 36.8 10 Andorra Liechtenstein Turkey Monaco Ukraine Bulgaria Albania Estonia Georgia Finland Norway Poland Iceland Croatia Portugal Serbia Moldova Hungary Sweden France Italy Belgium Cyprus Greece Latvia BiH: Republika Srpska Luxembourg Slovenia Netherlands Slovak Republic Denmark UK: England and Wales Czech Republic San Marino Romania Montenegro Russian Federation UK: Northern Ireland North Macedonia Lithuania Spain: State Administration Spain: Total Spain: Catalonia Germany European average Ireland Switzerland European median Azerbaijan Austria UK: Scotland

## "what's in a name"

Overcrowding is not a neutral concept.

It insinuates that there are too many detainees compared to a capacity that is believed to be sufficient.

On the other hand, there are those who also believe that we should just create more capacity to accommodate all detainees and even increase it to the point where even more people can be detained.

It is also not value-neutral: some see overcrowding as a form of discomfort that detainees owe to themselves. And that they don't have to complain about it.







- The undecided battle between "reductionists" and "expansionists" led to years of immobilism that allowed the phenomenon to persist and steadily increase.
- To this day, policies consist of measures with opposing effects

Capacity-boosting effects	Capacity-decreasing effects
Increasing capacity	Temporary depopulation measures
<ul><li>Strengthening imprisonment within punishment policy</li></ul>	<ul><li>Decriminalising/depenalising offences</li></ul>
Optimising placement policy	Speeding up the detention process









