



## **Mapping Exercise: Ukraine Working Group**

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## Mapping Exercise: Ukraine Working Group

As part of the working group coordinating support for Ukraine's prison system, the mapping exercise aims to assess both current and planned projects and initiatives, providing a comprehensive overview of international support. Through the Knowledge Management System (KMS), EuroPris received responses from 14 countries and the Council of Europe (CoE), as presented below: The following countries and organisations have replied to the survey:

1. Estonia Prison and Probation Service
2. HM Prison and Probation Service (UK)
3. Spain General Directorate of Prison Administration
4. Northern Ireland Prison Service
5. Lithuanian Prison Service
6. Hungarian Prison Service
7. Romanian National Administration of Penitentiaries
8. Latvian Prison Administration
9. Swedish Prison and Probation Service
10. Prison Service of the Czech Republic
11. Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia
12. General Directorate of the Corps of Prison and Court Guard (Slovakia)
13. Prison and Probation Service of Finland
14. Belgian Prison Service
15. Council of Europe (CoE)
16. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
17. Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC)

The questions asked aimed to understand the level of involvement and future plans of the Prison Service or Ministry of Justice in supporting Ukraine's prison system and broader criminal justice efforts. The first question asked whether, in the last five years, any intergovernmental activities had been carried out to help Ukraine. The second question focused on whether there were any current efforts to support Ukraine's prison service and, if so, asked for more details. The third question looked at whether there was a plan for supporting Ukraine, especially with prison-related activities, over the next 1-3 years. Finally, for those who answered "no" to the previous questions, the last question asked if they would be interested in working with other European partners on coordinated support efforts.

# Summary of Intergovernmental Support for Ukraine's Prison System and Criminal Justice Initiatives in the last five years

The following section provides a summary of the intergovernmental activities in support of Ukraine's prison system and broader criminal justice initiatives over the last five years. While some countries answered no to whether they had participated in any intergovernmental activities related to supporting Ukraine's prison system or broader criminal justice initiatives, the following mentioned the initiatives they have carried out:

- Spain: The Prison Service has participated in intergovernmental projects by sending experts to engage in specific missions aimed at supporting Ukraine's prison system.
- Lithuania: Cooperation was established between the Lithuanian Prison Service, the Ministry of Justice, and the armed forces of Lithuania and Ukraine. As part of this collaboration, weapons and ammunition were transferred to support shared security efforts.
- Sweden: In June 2023, the Head of the Office for International Affairs and the Head of Contingency Planning of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (SPPS) attended the International Penitentiary Forum in Kyiv, organised by the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The forum focused on challenges facing Ukraine's prison and probation services. SPPS also established contacts with both the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice and the Ukrainian Penitentiary Service.
- Czech Republic: Over the past five years, the Czech Prison Service has supported Ukraine in several ways:
  - 2020: Cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice regarding prison service reforms, facilitated through online meetings and exchanges of good practices.
  - 2022: A letter expressing support in relation to the Russian invasion.
  - 2023: Participation in the International Prison Forum, with discussions on supporting Ukraine's prison system reforms and sharing best practices. A visit from Ukrainian leadership took place, discussing Czech prison methods and potential future cooperation.

- 2024: A visit by the Ukrainian Prison Service leadership to the Czech Republic, including presentations on prison operations, inmate care, and staff training at the Prison Service Academy. The delegation was able to learn about the methods of training new officers and staff as well as the processes of continuing professional education.
- Donation of escort vehicles to Ukraine.
- Recommendations for Ukraine - Red Cross. Expressing support for Ukraine's request to host a side event on its best practices and experiences in implementing the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 in the framework of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and pledging partnership to Ukraine in this event.
- Slovenia: The Slovenian Prison Administration has not participated in activities related to supporting Ukraine's prison system in the past five years. However, Slovenia has been involved in broader criminal justice initiatives, particularly regarding the prosecution of war crimes. This includes supporting Eurojust's work in securing evidence of international crimes and advocating for Ukraine's accession to the Rome Statute.
- Finland: Finland has supported Ukraine's rule of law development through Council of Europe projects. The two countries have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in 2005. In response to the pandemic, the prison services exchanged experiences via videoconferences. Finland is also involved in the ACCESS Ukraine project (2024-2026), which aims to enhance Ukraine's legal capacity in preparation for EU accession.
- United Kingdom: Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the UK Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has provided extensive support. The Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group has been central to supporting Ukraine's war crimes prosecutions, with the UK committing £6.2 million, part of which funds judicial training to help Ukraine manage war crimes and human rights cases. The MoJ has also focused on assisting Ukraine's justice system reform to improve its business environment and attract investment needed for reconstruction. In April 2024, the MoJ-backed 'Unlocking Investment in Ukraine' report, launched by the Bingham Institute, highlighted key issues in Ukraine's justice system and proposed reforms to boost investor confidence. In response, the UK and Ukraine's MoJ have worked on a Memorandum of Cooperation to enhance collaboration on justice issues, including prison management, probation services, and innovations like digitisation and non-custodial sentencing. Additionally, in June 2024, MoJ hosted a 10-day visit for Ukrainian representatives to explore child-friendly justice practices and innovations in the UK justice system, including a visit to Feltham Young Offenders' Institution and discussions on youth justice.

- Estonia: Estonia has been involved in supporting Ukraine’s prison system through cooperation between their prison services, In June, the Deputy Secretary General for Prisons from the Ministry of Justice participated as a speaker at a prison-related forum held in Kyiv. During the event, bilateral meetings were held with representatives of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Justice to discuss cooperation needs and opportunities. Additionally, as a member of the EuroPris board, the Deputy Secretary General extended an invitation to the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine to become an honorary member of EuroPris, enabling their participation in European prison service cooperation.

In collaboration with the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine and with funding from the Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV), a cooperation project titled “Advanced Training for Ukrainian Prison Officers, with a Focus on the Protection of Fundamental Rights and Strengthening Leadership Capacity” was launched on May 1, 2024. The project included multiple training programs and study visits, focusing on introducing the principles of the European Prison Rules, dynamic security, and skills for handling critical incidents. The objective was to contribute to shaping Ukraine’s penal policy by supporting the modernization of its prison system and facilitating the adoption of EU principles and standards.

Key Activities and Outcomes:

- Training and Education at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (September 9–18, 2024): Ten Ukrainian prison officers participated in this training program, which covered principles of dynamic security and managing critical incidents. The participants gained fundamental knowledge and skills to organize prison operations in compliance with the European Prison Rules, emphasizing a humane and ethical approach to interactions with inmates while assessing risk situations to ensure a safe and developmental environment for both inmates and staff.
- Practical Training in Estonian Prisons (September 19–October 2, 2024): Over two weeks, the officers took part in the daily operations of Estonian prisons. They were introduced to all aspects of prison management, focusing on security, supervision, rehabilitation, and communication with inmates. To maximize the impact of the practical experience, Ukrainian officers worked one-on-one with Estonian officers during the practical training.
  - Reciprocal Visits: An Estonian delegation visited Ukraine from May 20–25, 2024, while a Ukrainian delegation visited Estonia from September 26–29, 2024. These visits included seminars that created a platform for broader cooperation and knowledge-sharing between the two countries’ prison systems. Furthermore, in July 2024, Ukraine’s then-Deputy Minister of Justice, Olena Vysotska, visited Estonia and met with Estonia’s Minister of Justice, Liisa-Ly Pakosta. By November, the project's influence had

expanded to include European countries and EuroPris members. Representatives from Lithuania joined Estonian delegation visit at the end of November, which also featured a hybrid conference in Kyiv, engaging EuroPris members in discussions about prison system development and international collaboration.

The Estonian Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs cooperates with Ukraine on other topics as well. For example, in November 2024 Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs Liisa Pakosta and Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov discussed joint progress and future plans for digitalising public services and advancing cybersecurity. The countries are exploring opportunities to jointly export digital governance solutions to third countries, creating new growth opportunities for Estonian and Ukrainian companies. And digital development in Ukraine also contributes to the development of the Ukrainian prison service in the bigger picture.

### Summary of CoE projects in Ukraine:

The Council of Europe is heavily involved in Ukraine, particularly in the criminal justice sector, including penitentiary matters, and will continue to be engaged at least until the end of 2026, with ongoing projects under the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine – Resilience, Recovery, and Reconstruction (2023-2026). These efforts will likely extend beyond 2026. Many projects are currently being implemented under this plan: [link](#)

- [DECOPRIS \(Towards More Humane Detention Conditions and Reduced Reoffending in Ukraine\)](#)

This project, running from December 2023 to December 2026, is implemented by the Council of Europe in cooperation with Ukraine's Ministry of Justice and penitentiary authorities. It focuses on building a modern, rehabilitative prison system aligned with Council of Europe standards, particularly in the context of post-war recovery. The project aims to improve detainee conditions, promote dynamic security approaches, and enhance prison staff capacity to implement rehabilitation programs. It also focuses on preparing correctional and healthcare staff to address substance use disorders among detainees and ensuring sustainable drug treatment systems within custodial settings.

- [SPERU \(Support to Prison Reform in Ukraine\)](#)

Co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, this project (2019-2022) aimed to promote human rights in prison management and develop a rehabilitative approach to offenders. The project enhanced the capacity of justice system actors to implement penitentiary reforms in line with Council of Europe standards, facilitated partnerships between the justice system, community services, and civil society, and

developed strategies for healthcare in prisons. It also aimed at improving the resocialization and reintegration of prisoners.

- [SPERU+ \(Further Support to Prison Reform in Ukraine\)](#)  
SPERU+ continued the efforts of the SPERU project, running until December 2023, and aligned with the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine (2023-2026). It focused on supporting Ukraine in building a modern prison and probation system, shifting from punitive to rehabilitative approaches, especially in the context of war and post-war recovery. The project involved revising prison management principles, improving rehabilitation approaches, and addressing shortcomings highlighted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The goal was to create a more humane penitentiary system that facilitates inmates' social reintegration.

### **Summary of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) activities in Ukraine:**

#### **Key Activities and Strategic Milestones (2022–2024)**

- **October 2022**  
UNODC initiates coordination and planning efforts to assess the emergency penitentiary needs in Ukraine due to the armed conflict.
- **December 2022**  
A rapid needs assessment is conducted to evaluate the impact of the conflict on prisons and define immediate support strategies.
- **January – February 2023**  
UNODC delivers emergency support, including hygiene items, medical supplies, and essential goods to affected penitentiary institutions.
- **May 2023**  
Technical consultations take place in Ukraine, with the involvement of national counterparts and international partners to plan structured support.
- **June 2023**  
Capacity-building and infrastructure support efforts begin, targeting improvements in prison conditions and resilience.
- **September 2023**  
Training programmes are launched for prison staff, focusing on emergency response, safety protocols, and detainee rights.
- **October 2023**  
A mid-term review is carried out to assess the effectiveness of interventions and integrate lessons learned into future planning.

## 2024 Milestones

- April 2024  
The PACE.UA Joint Programme Plan is formally launched to support long-term reform and recovery of the penitentiary system in Ukraine.
- May 2024  
The National Action Plan for the implementation of the 2026 Strategy for Reforming the Penitentiary System is officially adopted.
- July 2024  
The International Forum "*Transforming the Penitentiary System: Seeking Solutions to End Torture in Prisons*" is held in Kyiv, fostering international dialogue and knowledge exchange.
- August 2024  
The first Steering Committee of PACE.UA convenes with senior representatives from the Ministry of Justice, UNODC, and the German Government.
- September 2024  
Ukraine participates in the 26th Annual Conference of the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) under the theme "*Enabling Desistance: Beyond Recidivism.*"
- October 2024  
Critical needs related to prison conditions, safety and security, rehabilitation programmes, and the prisoner classification system are identified in three pilot prisons.
- November 2024  
Over 80 prison officers receive targeted training to strengthen their capacities in crisis preparedness, social rehabilitation, and prison management.

## UNODC PACE.UA Programme

In April 2024, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine and with generous support from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, launched the Penitentiary Assistance in Response to the Armed Conflict and Emergency Needs in Ukraine (PACE.UA) programme. This initiative aims to enhance the effectiveness, crisis preparedness and response capacity of the State Penitentiary Service, while ensuring compliance with international and European prison standards.

The programme will run from April 2024 to December 2025 and is implemented in partnership with state counterparts, civil society organisations, and various international and national actors. The official launch of PACE.UA took place on 24 April 2024 during a joint

meeting involving the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, the Department for the Execution of Criminal Punishment, and the Penitentiary Academy of Ukraine.

PACE.UA was developed on the basis of multiple assessments and consultations held in 2023 with government representatives, civil society stakeholders, and subject matter experts. These engagements helped identify key priorities and shaped the foundation of the programme.

The PACE.UA Programme focuses on strengthening operational capacity, improving crisis responsiveness, and ensuring alignment with the Nelson Mandela Rules. A Joint Action Plan was signed to guide the implementation of the programme, setting out two core objectives:

- Aligning the operations of the State Penitentiary Service with international and European standards for the treatment of prisoners; and
- Strengthening the institutional resilience of the State Penitentiary Service to proactively address and swiftly respond to current and future disruptions and emergency needs in prisons.

### **Summary of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) ["Advancing Justice and Accountability in Ukraine: Strengthening and Support of the Prison System"](#) Project**

Within the framework of the Justice and Accountability for Ukraine project, NHC is actively supporting the Ukrainian penitentiary system by:

- Ensuring psychological support for prisoners and prison staff through the expansion of the online platform Samopomich, developed by the Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry (FGIP).
- Developing next steps and raising awareness around resocialisation in Ukrainian prisons to strengthen the penitentiary system.
- Facilitating accountability and promoting a victim-centred approach by implementing and expanding restorative justice systems.
- Enhancing the feasibility of alternative sanctions and increasing public support for probation.
- Assisting in addressing criminality in the post-war context, including the specific needs of veterans and the wider prison population.

# Current Involvement of Jurisdictions in Supporting the Ukrainian Prison Service: Summary of Responses

The second question in this mapping exercise focused on the current involvement of jurisdictions in supporting the Ukrainian prison service. Below is a summary of responses from the participating countries:

- Lithuania: The Director General of the Lithuanian Prison Service recently met with representatives of the Ukrainian Prison Service to discuss potential areas of cooperation. Ongoing consultations between the two institutions are exploring further opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.
- Sweden: Currently, there are no bilateral support initiatives with the Ukrainian Prison Service. However, the SPPS anticipates a request for contribution for a Visiting Expert on penitentiary reform at the EUAM Ukraine Headquarters.
- Czech Republic: Yes, the Prison Service of the Czech Republic is preparing to hand over small and large escort vehicles to the Main Department of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in the Lviv Region, with a total value of 19,414,214.99 CZK (765,871.37 EUR). This donation will help establish an escort service, which the Ukrainian Prison Service lacked at the beginning of the war. This shortage hindered the ability to transport inmates and staff from occupied territories, leading to significant challenges, including the abduction of prisoners by Russian forces. The Czech Republic also regularly supports the Ukrainian Prison Service by exchanging information and best practices.
- Finland: Although not currently involved in direct support, the Prison and Probation Service of Finland has initiated negotiations for a cooperation agreement with the Probation Centre of Ukraine.
- Estonia: The Estonian Prison Service, along with the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, will continue to support and cooperate with the Ukrainian Prison Service. In January, Estonia sent medical supplies and security equipment to Ukraine, and plans to provide further aid, including a bus for transportation. A cooperation project is also being developed between the Estonian Prison Service, the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, and the Penitentiary Academy of Ukraine to contribute to the modernization of the academy in alignment with European Union and Council of Europe standards.

- o UK: The Ministry of Justice continues to work with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine to support initiatives for Ukraine's prison services, with a particular focus on digitisation. In April 2024, Serhii Orlov, Chief Digital Transformation Officer and Deputy Minister of Justice of Ukraine, requested the sharing of the latest digital tools and programmes used in UK prisons. In June 2024, the UK's Digital Prisons team, in consultation with Ukrainian officials, developed a presentation on the UK's new set of linked prison management systems, designed to enhance services for staff, prisoners, and visitors. Ukraine has requested further in-depth discussion on best practices related to external visits, rehabilitation support, and recidivism prevention.

# Prison Services' or Ministries of Justice' Strategies to Support Ukraine: Planned Initiatives for the Next 1-3 Years: Summary of Responses

The third question in the mapping exercise explored whether the participating countries' Prison Services or Ministries of Justice currently strategies have to support Ukraine, particularly with prison initiatives planned for the next 1-3 years. Below are the responses:

- Lithuania: The Lithuanian Prison Service, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, is in the process of developing a strategy to enhance cooperation and provide broader support to the Ukrainian Prison Service. This strategy aims to strengthen their partnership and address key areas of need.
- Sweden: Sweden's strategy for recovery and reform cooperation with Ukraine, covering the period from 2023 to 2027, is Sweden's largest-ever bilateral development assistance strategy, with a total value of approximately EUR 522 million (SEK 6 billion). The strategy is currently being operationalised and focuses on five main areas: human rights, democracy, rule of law and gender equality; security and stabilisation; recovery, including critical infrastructure, essential social services, and rehabilitation; the green transition and sustainable development; and inclusive economic development, entrepreneurship, and trade. Although prison and probation activities are not specifically mentioned, they would fall under the broader rule of law support.
- Czech Republic: The Prison Service of the Czech Republic is preparing a new strategic document (penitentiary concept) on the future development of the prison system, which will include international cooperation and support. As the document is still in the drafting phase, specific details on prison initiatives cannot be provided yet. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Prison Service of the Czech Republic and the Prison Service of Ukraine is being prepared.
- Estonia: The Estonian Ministry of Justice will continue to cooperate with Ukraine on national topics, further supporting cooperation with the Ukrainian Prison Service and the Penitentiary Academy of Ukraine. This collaboration will include initiatives aimed at strengthening Ukraine's penitentiary system.
- UK: The UK Ministry of Justice's MoC with Ukraine will continue to guide cooperation, focusing on supporting initiatives within the reform and recovery of Ukraine's justice system. The UK's understanding of Ukraine's prison initiatives, as well as the specific areas in which Ukraine seeks assistance, will evolve as support progresses over the coming years.

# Interest in Collaborative Opportunities for Coordinated Support Efforts with European Partners

A total of 9 countries expressed interest in collaborative opportunities for coordinated support efforts with other European partners, including Estonia, the UK, Spain, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and Finland. Meanwhile, five countries from the KMS declined such collaboration—Northern Ireland, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Belgium—due to a lack of staff, resources, or other reasons.

## Preliminary conclusions

The mapping exercise has highlighted relevant themes and findings regarding European support for Ukraine's prison system.

### Common Themes

- **Training and Knowledge Sharing:** Countries such as Estonia, the UK, and the Czech Republic have focused on training Ukrainian prison staff and sharing best practices to enhance the capacity of the penitentiary system.
- **Reform and Modernisation:** A key priority across multiple nations, including Estonia, Finland, and the Czech Republic, has been aligning Ukraine's prison system with European standards, particularly as part of ongoing reform efforts.
- **Broader Criminal Justice Support:** Countries, like Slovenia and the UK, have extended their support beyond the prison system to include assistance in war crimes investigations and judicial reforms, further contributing to Ukraine's legal recovery.

### Next Steps

EuroPris will create a dedicated section on its website for the working group, showcasing the data collected and including a contact section for individuals interested in engaging with the working group. Where available, quantitative data from the responses gathered (e.g., number of staff trained, funds allocated) will be incorporated. The inclusion of measurable figures will help strengthen the analysis and provide a clearer picture of the scale and impact of the support provided.

Additionally, a visit to Ukraine is foreseen as part of the initiative.