

Probation in Slovenia: ‘In the Right Direction’

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Summary: The Slovenian Probation Service was established in 2018 and work is continuing on its infrastructure and systems. This paper provides an overview of the context in which the legislation was prepared and explores from the outset how the new state body was established. The paper describes the reasons for the establishment of the Probation Administration in Slovenia. It provides an overview of the procedures for the recruitment of staff, the sourcing of premises, the development of ICT systems and a range of project activities. The approach to the preparation of guidelines for practice, training procedures, and networking with the wider local community are outlined. The paper concludes with information on the organisational structure, statistics on the number of probation tasks, and based on the momentum of the last few years, some critical reflections on future developments.

Keywords: Probation, probation system, Slovenian Probation Administration, community supervision, criminal code, prison sentence, case management.

An introduction to the system of sanctions in Slovenia

As stated in the Slovenian Criminal Code,¹ the purpose of punishment is:

- (i) To enable the State to safeguard the fundamental values and principles of the legal order;
- (ii) To increase awareness of the harm caused, to individuals and communities, by criminal behaviour; and
- (iii) To impose an appropriate punishment that enables perpetrators to become reintegrated into their communities and wider society, allowing for individual needs and human dignity.

A prison sentence may be imposed for a period of not less than one month and not more than 30 years. Its length is determined in full years and months, unless its term does not exceed a period of six months, in which case it is

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¹ Criminal Code (Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 50/12 — Official Consolidated Text, 6/16 – Fix., 54/15, 38/16, 27/17, 23/20, 91/20, 95/21 in 186/21)

determined in full months. Life imprisonment may be imposed for criminal offences of homicide, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, with the possibility of consideration for conditional release after 25 years.

The Criminal Code (2021) system of criminal sanctions includes:

- Admonitory sanctions
- Prison sentences
- Safety measures.

Within the admonitory sanctions, the court may suspend the sentence when the perpetrator has been punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or by a fine. A suspended sentence may not be imposed when a prison sentence of more than three years is prescribed by law. The court may decide that a perpetrator serving a suspended sentence should be subject to custodial supervision for a specific period of time and with specific conditions. Custodial supervision involves statutory supervision and can include one or more instructions relating to living arrangements, lifestyle and prosocial activities. In applying custodial supervision with conditions, the court will consider the following: perpetrator's age; their psychological characteristics; the motives for which they committed the crime; their personal circumstances; their past behaviour; the circumstances under which the crime was committed; and the perpetrator's behaviour after committing the offence. The specified conditions must not in any way affect the human dignity of the perpetrator nor cause unreasonable hardship. The management of suspended sentences with custodial supervision is the responsibility of Probation administration.

A prison sentence is usually served in prison, but under the Criminal Code it can also be executed in other ways – house imprisonment, weekend prison, and community service. A prison sentence of up to nine months may be served under house arrest if the risk of reoffending is deemed to be low and where there are strong family and social supports. The sentence can also be served in an appropriate public institution in the case of illness, disability or the old age of the convicted person. A prison sentence of up to three years, except when imposed for a sexual offence, may allow the person who meets the conditions provided by the act to continue with work or schooling and to reside at home. However, they must return to prison on work-free days and at weekends. A prison sentence of up to two years, except when imposed for a sexual offence, may be enforced through the performance of community service for a maximum period of two years from the enforcement of the

judgment. The extent of work is defined so that one day in prison equals two hours of community service. Work placements will take account of the person's professional knowledge and skills and their commitments regarding urgent family, educational and vocational obligations. Community service is performed without remuneration. House imprisonment and community service are managed by Probation administration, while weekend prison is the responsibility of the prison service.

How did it begin?

In July 2015, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia accepted a recommendation to establish a probation service as part of the system of enforcement of criminal sanctions. The Ministry of Justice was directed to draw up an Action Plan, by 31 May 2016, to include a proposal for the necessary institutional and normative changes with due regard to financial costs and comparative international developments. A task force, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Prison Administration, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Supreme Court, the Office of the State Prosecutor General, Faculty of Law and Institute for Criminology, was set up to progress that plan.

The main task of the group was to analyse the existing situation in the Republic of Slovenia in the field of the implementation of alternative/community criminal sanctions. Members of the task force prepared a questionnaire to collate and analyse data in relation to existing practice, and compiled reports on those critical findings that included proposals for further regulation of the field.² Before the establishment of the state body, probation activities were carried out by a wide range of authorities: social work centres (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) had responsibility for most probation activities, including community service, suspended sentence with custodial supervision and conditional release with supervision. Weekend prison and social work in prison were managed by the Prison Administration. The judiciary was responsible for house arrest, with the police service responsible for the supervision of those cases.

² Action plan to set up a probation service by proposing the necessary institutional and normative changes, 2016: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:mxeZuOr2hs4J:84.39.218.201/MANDAT14/VLADNAGRADIVA.NSF/18a6b9887c33a0bdc12570e50034eb54/1786cec6dd354286c1257f8001f8f54/%24FILE/AKCIJSKI%2520NACRT%2520PS.docx+&cd=1&hl=sl&ct=clnk&gl=si>

An analysis of the practice current at that time showed that community sanctions were rarely applied in Slovenia even though on average between 50 and 55 per cent of those in Slovenian prisons were serving sentences of two years or less. Many of the difficulties with effective sentence management arose from role confusion and the lack of clear communication channels between the relevant bodies. It also emerged that by-laws did not comply with the legal rules, and the issue of adequate staffing within ministries was problematic. In addition to tasks relating to referrals from criminal justice, practitioners in the existing social work centres carried out and prioritised other tasks that were unrelated to community sanctions. No analysis of the enforcement of community sanctions was undertaken at a national level due to difficulties with accessing data.

Within the Inter-Ministerial Task Force a smaller group of experts was established. Its main role was to focus on practice and structures in other established probation services across Europe, to inform proposals on the normative and institutional frameworks that would underpin a new national probation service in Slovenia. In May 2016, further to the proposals from the expert group, the task force agreed an action plan for the establishment of a probation service in the Republic of Slovenia; this was adopted by the Government at the end of July 2016. Key objectives were:

- The integrated development of work in the field of community sanctions
- Standardised practice in the enforcement of community sanctions and measures nationally
- The integration of services and increased engagement with judicial authorities
- Improved staff training and qualifications
- The introduction of specialised areas of work
- In-depth treatment of perpetrators
- Centralised collation and analysis of data
- The transfer of good practices from abroad, with recognition of the service across international probation
- More frequent decisions by prosecutors or judges to implement community sanctions, with the aim of replacing shorter prison sentences with an alternative measure,
- Professional and skilled contributions to reducing reoffending
- A higher level of humanity in dealing with those who offend
- The protection of human rights.³

³ Action plan for the establishment of a probation service with a proposal for the necessary institutional and normative changes, 2016

Following the adoption of the Government's decision, the Probation Service was established within the Ministry of Justice in October 2016.

Legislation

The most important task for the newly established Probation Service was to draft the Act of Probation. The interdisciplinary group (members from the Probation Service, the Prison Administration and the Faculty of Law) prepared a Draft Probation Act and, in the second half of November 2016, forwarded it to interdepartmental co-ordination and professional co-ordination units. To inform the content of the Act, members of the interdisciplinary group visited the probation services of the Republic of Croatia, the Netherlands and Norway. These services provided information on their structure, advantages and disadvantages of systems, development orientations, the alignment of international documents with national legislation, areas in need of development, and the role of international co-operation. The Bill was tabled in a government procedure in February 2017, and in March 2017 the Government adopted the Draft Act of Probation. The National Assembly adopted the Probation Act on 24 May 2017. It entered into force on 17 June 2017 and applied from 1 April 2018, with the exception of provisions relating to the establishment of a constituent body, which occurred in June 2017 when the law was passed.

Following the entry into force of the law, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia issued a Regulation amending and supplementing the Regulation on bodies composed of ministries⁴ and a Regulation on the number of probation units, the area of their operation and the headquarters of the central unit and probation units.⁵

Staffing and office infrastructure

In parallel with standard probation activities, work began in relation to human resources (HR) and the provision of offices, furnishings and equipment. Work also commenced on the 'Effective Justice' project (see below).

In October 2017, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities issued a list of civil servants who had given their consent to transfer from social work centres to the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Probation (hereinafter UPRO). The civil service relocation

⁴ *Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia*, No. 35/15, 62/15, 84/16, 41/17, 53/17, 52/18, 84/18, 10/19, 64/19, 64/21, 90/21, 101/21 in 117/21)

⁵ *Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia*, No. 41/17

agreements, which included the transfer of financial resources, were signed in December 2017, leading to the transfer of 12 staff. An agreement was also reached with the Director General of the Prison Administration to transfer to UPRO five civil servants who were selected on the basis of interview. Altogether, that meant 17 staff – five assuming managerial functions with some practitioner duties, and twelve Probation Officers.

From April until August 2018, administrative co-ordinators were recruited for all probation units, and procedures were also put in place for the recruitment of civil servants to the central unit.

The provision of appropriate office spaces was expedited from mid-January to the end of March 2018, by the Ministry of Public Administration with responsibility for premises. As UPRO was a newly created body, it was necessary to transfer certain funding from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Public Administration. In addition to the five probation units, it was accepted that additional smaller sub-offices would be needed for those units covering territorially larger areas, to ensure adequate service to people in areas with less access to public funds.

Premises were secured in five locations (Maribor, Celje, Ljubljana, Koper and Novo mesto) with specific arrangements. Given the confidential relationship between the counsellor and the person involved in probation supervision and/or their family, it is important that each professional has their own office with all the necessary technical supports and a designated place to conduct interviews. These standards were met in all locations except the Celje probation unit. With the increase in the number of employees within the system, it has become apparent that certain locations need changes, either in terms of providing more offices (probation units Ljubljana, Maribor and Celje) or in terms of providing new workspaces, because existing ones have proved unsuitable through practice (the Koper probation unit). It is also clear that the expansion of some units (in Ljubljana and Maribor) will be necessary, and intensive efforts have been made in progressing the comprehensive renovation of the facility to which the central unit moved in 2019 (due to the Ministry of Justice's support services, it was planned that the central unit would be located in the immediate vicinity of the Ministry of Justice).

IT and office equipment

Several meetings with the Ministry of Public Administration were held, where the requirements for equipment and IT (information technology) support for all probation units were presented by UPRO, including the identification of all

necessary IT packages. The units received computer equipment at the end of March 2018, but there were several problems in all locations that needed to be addressed in real time, and the system started to be fully operational only in May 2018. Mobile phones bridged the gap until fixed telephony was installed in August 2018.

Various public contracts were issued (for the purchase of furniture and equipment for probation units and the central unit, working-time registrars, provision of postal and mobile services, followed by the purchase of company vehicles for all units). In accordance with government regulations, all staff members have been issued with a service identity card.

‘Effective Justice’ project

‘Effective Justice’ is a European project that commenced under the auspices of the Ministry for Justice in 2016 and will end in 2023. It is co-financed by the European Union (EU) through the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Republic of Slovenia. UPRO participates in the project with the key objective of establishing the conditions for the launch and effective operation of a system of probation in Slovenia. At the time of implementation of the project, dedicated funds were set aside for wage costs (and reimbursement of work-related costs) of ten employees by the end of the project, purchase of hardware and software computer equipment, purchase of server and disk equipment, other computer services, for mission expenses, information and communication, analysis and study, assessments, research, for education and training and for certain indirect costs related to the functioning of the authority within the project. After considering a number of options, it was decided that the Ministry of Justice should consider amending ‘Effective Justice’ so that UPRO became an independent beneficiary in July 2018 and it subsequently agreed to draft a change of activity, extending the funding period until the end of 2023. The funds were used for the recruitment of ten civil servants, participation in international conferences in the field of probation, professional visits to foreign probation services, extensive training of probation staff, the purchase of tablets, printers for consultants and other computer equipment, and the production of promotional material.

Delivering interventions

1. Data management

In addition to employment, the development of an organisational information system (ProbIS) and the development of a dedicated risk-and-needs assessment tool (MOT) are crucial deliverables in the context of European funding.

To prepare for the introduction of ProbIS and to achieve the objective of uniform practice in all units, UPRO has developed a manual system for case tracking and management. It includes: standard details of all referrals; personal plans for probation tasks (enforcement of security supervision, enforcement of community service, house arrest); court reports, information from the prosecutor's office, committees for parole release, template for tripartite agreement between the person, probation unit and relevant service provider; a scheme to record ongoing contact with the probationer, and a questionnaire relating to criminogenic need/risk (as a guidance resource until the development of the organisational Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) tool). For the purpose of monitoring, reporting, evaluation, research and statistical analyses, a daily data collection table was implemented once the state body was established.

To carry out legitimate and professional enforcement tasks, UPRO collects, processes and manages a database of persons. To protect personal data as well as legal restrictions on the processing of personal data, arrangements have been put in place with a range of stakeholders – Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of the Interior. It is intended that similar agreements will be reached with the remaining state institutions – Employment Service of Slovenia, Ministry of Education, Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia, etc. All these data sources will subsequently be included in ProbIS, which will significantly facilitate the work of probationary staff working with persons involved in probation.

2. Guidelines for practice

There have been many developments in the field of practice. The transmission of documentation to UPRO, in relation to cases previously managed in the social work centres, began in the last week of March 2018 and was completed in full in April. This included a list of community-based organisations providing a range of community-service placements. Revised agreements have been completed on the regulation of mutual rights and obligations relating to the execution of community service. In the first phase of this process, 700 signed

agreements have been submitted and the list is updated according to the needs of the probation units.

A priority from the outset was to develop a guidance manual for employees to inform the execution of probationary tasks. In preparing these guidelines, national and international research was undertaken on the range of tasks required for effective probation practice and on the relevant organisational and legal documentation required to underpin that practice. Based on that research, UPRO published its Guidelines, divided into specific content sets, for full implementation in April 2018, with the aim of achieving uniform practice in all probation units. UPRO recognised the need for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Guidelines and the importance of learning from the first phase of their application. Based on that learning and experience from practice, the Guidelines were amended and upgraded in 2020.

3. Staff training

The training and development of staff continues to be a priority for UPRO as the foundations of professional work are still under construction. In working to a model of best practice, Slovenia is learning from longer-established and more advanced probation services across Europe.

The action plan to set up the new service identified the need to expand knowledge and skills for working with those under supervision. It should be acknowledged that employees from the social work centres were already professionally trained to do this work. UPRO's programme for education and training activities began as the new probation units were being put in place, to ensure a unified approach to practice from the beginning. The programme included training modules on:

- The role of probation supervision
- Use of the documentary system (undertaken in co-operation with the competent ministries)
- Financial management
- Legislation
- Working with alcohol misuse
- Reorientation training for staff originally employed in the social work centres
- Preparation of personal/case management plans carried out by Croatian experts.

A further phase of training in 2018 and 2019 was undertaken with staff of the Probation Service in Ireland and focused on motivational interviewing, the preparation of reports for the judiciary, and working with addiction.

4. External communications

Since the beginning of the process, activities related to the establishment of probation have been represented both in the media and in the professional and academic world. In the media, this has happened through interviews and press conferences organised by the Ministry of Justice. These included the presentation of the Action Plan and a presentation on the draft probation legislation at the official opening of probation units. There have also been a range of professional and academic consultations and conferences, both at home and abroad.

In view of the fact that UPRO was a new institution working within the judicial system, presentations were initially made to representatives of the Supreme Court and the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, with the aim of recognising its role and its importance within judicial proceedings. This was followed by a series of meetings with judges (covering eleven district courts in Slovenia) and District Prosecutors.

Promotional materials have also played a key role in increasing awareness amongst stakeholders. An information leaflet, *Probation*, was prepared for the wider community, highlighting the key components of the Probation Service. In conjunction with the Government communication office, UPRO designed and adopted the logo, 'In the Right Direction'. Additional promotional materials included a leaflet designed specifically for service-users, which provides key information and contact details. After the handout was produced, a demonstration promotional leaflet was produced by UPRO, which provides key information on probation, and contact details.

UPRO is involved in different activities of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP), and collaborates with stakeholders from abroad, particularly in relation to the education and training of staff. Through professional visits and ongoing co-operation and liaison, strong links have been created with the probation services in Croatia, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway and the Netherlands. At a conference of Slovenian judges, a member of the Irish judiciary and a staff member from the Irish Probation Service gave a presentation on the function, role and implementation of community sanctions. Irish and Croatian probation staff travelled to Slovenia to provide training courses to Slovenian Probation Officers on RNR, the preparation of

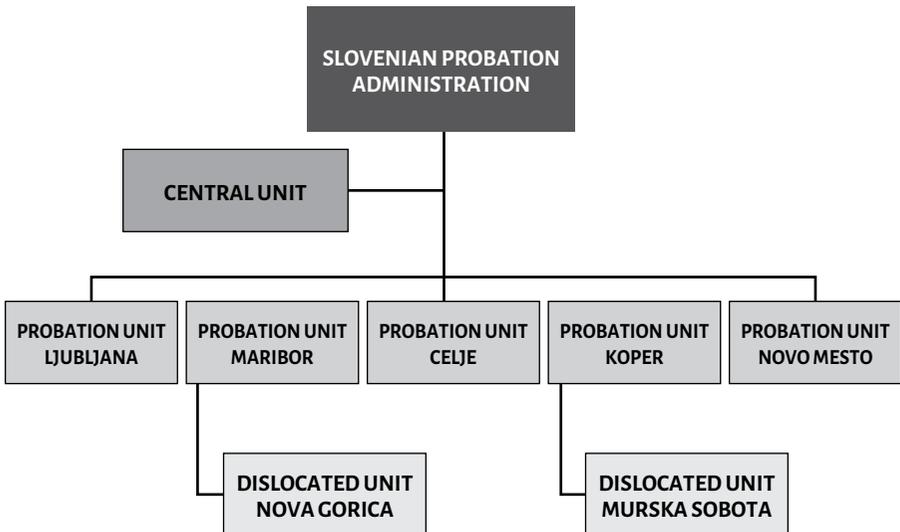
reports for judges, the use of motivational interviewing, and effective case management.

Current organisational structure and execution of probation tasks

The mission of UPRO is to enforce criminal sanctions in the community. Professional treatment of probationers under the Criminal Code will assist in identifying the factors contributing to criminal behaviour; resolving personal distress and difficulties; addressing poor living circumstances; and establishing acceptable forms of behaviour. Professional treatment may also include monitoring of the behaviour of persons in different living environments, in order to identify and eliminate those forms of behaviour that hinder successful integration into society. In addition to the above, UPRO organises, conducts and supervises the execution of community service under the Minor Offences Act.⁶

UPRO consists of a central unit and five probation units – Ljubljana, Maribor with its subsidiary office Murska Sobota, Celje, Koper with its subsidiary office in Nova Gorica, and Novo mesto (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Organisational structure of Slovenian Probation Administration (UPRO)



⁶ Probation Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 27/17)

The Central Unit carries out the following functions:

- Co-ordination and guidance of the work of probation units
- Development and financing of programmes for persons involved in probation
- Co-operation with other competent authorities and services
- Supervision of the work implemented by the probation units
- Provision of education/training of probationary staff
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of measures and programmes
- International co-operation
- Projects in the area of offender management
- Keeping and managing records in accordance with the Probation Act
- Development of a network of sanction providers and the keeping of a list of sanction providers.⁷

All support activities in the areas of general administration, finance and personnel matters are provided by the Ministry of Justice.

The powers of the probation units relate to the execution of probationary tasks laid down in the Probation Act. From the social work centres, the following tasks have been transferred to UPRO:

- Organisation and monitoring of community service within the settlement procedure
- Elimination or settlement of damage in the process of deferred prosecution
- Organisation and monitoring of community service within the deferred prosecution procedure
- Enforcement of a suspended sentence with custodial supervision
- Enforcement of a release on parole with custodial supervision
- Organisation and monitoring of community service as an alternative custodial sentence
- Organisation and monitoring of community service as an alternative to a financial penalty
- Organisation and monitoring of community service as an alternative to a fine for minor offences
- Establishment and maintenance of a network of community organisations for the completion of community-service work.

⁷ Probation Act (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, No. 27/17)

In addition to all the above tasks, the new state body is also responsible for:

- The preparation of reports for the Public Prosecutor regarding the decision to refer a criminal complaint or a motion of indictment in the settlement procedure, and the preparation of the agreement
- The preparation of reports for the Public Prosecutor regarding the decision to defer prosecution
- The preparation of reports for the court to inform decision-making on judicial sanctions
- Co-operation with prisons in the planning of release on parole with custodial supervision
- Implementation and supervision of the execution of the sentence of house imprisonment (previously carried out by the court with the police).

The fundamental task of the Probation Officer relates to assistance, protection and supervision, with the aim of reducing the risk of reoffending, and reintegrating people back into the wider community. The work is challenging as many service-users have unstable lifestyles, mental health issues, and may have histories of violence. Working with people requires a specific approach, knowledge and skills, as carrying out probationary tasks is very demanding. In addition to daily administrative tasks, each Probation Officer must interview the probationer (obtaining through conversation all relevant life information) and prepare a personal plan with clear objectives that reflect the conditions identified as part of the sanction. As part of this work, the Probation Officer will engage with a number of public bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who will assist in the provision of a range of supports, including education and training, that are compatible with the abilities and family obligations of the person. In their work, the Probation Officers will regularly establish contacts with the courts, with the family, with social work centres and with other national authorities. In advance of prison releases involving custodial supervision, the Probation Officer attends multidisciplinary team meetings for the purpose of preparing a pre-release plan in collaboration with prison staff.

The Probation Act and the Rules on the Execution of Probationary Tasks direct that contact between the Probation Officer and the probationer must occur at least twice a month during the first four months. Contact may be more frequent if the Probation Officer considers this necessary when drawing

up a personal plan. In addition to face-to-face contact, the probationer is also monitored and supervised by telephone and electronic contacts that include regular reports from the community-based organisations to the Probation Officer on the individual's progress. In the case of house arrest, the Probation Officer, in addition to the aforementioned tasks, must carry out regular unannounced supervisory visits to the address where the probationer is serving house arrest (on average, the supervision is carried out two to three times a week, any day of the week, and outside working hours). Supervision is always carried out by two Probation Officers to ensure their own safety.

On 15 May 2022, sixty-two people are employed by UPRO (of whom there are two trainees, nine project employees on temporary contracts and fifty-one on permanent contracts), with employees divided into three groups:

- Central Unit staff (responsible for the overall functioning and development of the state body)
- Probation staff – unit managers and Probation Officers (heads of unit are in charge of managing and organising work on units, as well as to a certain extent executing probation tasks; Probation Officers provide supervision on a full-time basis)
- Probation staff – co-ordinators in probation units (provide all administrative support to probation staff and participate in the delivery of some probation tasks with service-users).

At the beginning of April 2018, UPRO took over 488 cases from the social work centres. The number of probation assignments received (new and active cases) increased over the years of operation of UPRO, and by 15 May 2022 it had received 8,356 cases (Table 1). Of these, 6,121 cases were closed by 15 May 2022, and 2,235 cases remained active (Table 2).

Table 1: *Overview of executing probation duties from 1 April 2018 to 15 May 2022*

		Probation unit Ljubljana	Probation unit Maribor	Probation unit Celje	Probation unit Koper	Probation unit Novo mesto	Σ
Reports	Courts	180	96	55	21	48	400
	Prosecutor	2	1	12	5	4	24
	Commission for parole release	0	0	1	0	0	1
House arrest		10	20	3	10	2	45
Suspended sentence with custodial supervision		264	94	76	70	59	563
Parole release with custodial supervision		73	52	34	24	16	199
Community service	Criminal offences	749	827	349	162	170	2,257
	Misdemeanours	1,425	918	785	550	646	4,324
	Criminal procedure	107	93	63	70	8	341
Co-operation with prisons		80	42	31	29	13	195
Settlement or compensation of damage		3	0	1	3	0	7
	Σ	2,893	2,143	1,410	944	966	8,356

Table 2: Active probation duties on 15 May 2022

		Probation unit Ljubljana	Probation unit Maribor	Probation unit Celje	Probation unit Koper	Probation unit Novo mesto	Σ
Reports	Courts	4	0	0	5	1	10
	Prosecutor	2	1	0	1	0	4
	Commission for parole release	0	0	0	0	0	0
House arrest		1	4	0	2	0	7
Suspended sentence with custodial supervision		125	37	20	24	19	225
Parole release with custodial supervision		25	10	6	7	2	50
Community service	Criminal offences	357	267	112	63	53	852
	Misdemeanours	350	149	163	108	245	1,016
	Criminal procedure	24	7	10	16	0	57
Co-operation with prisons		9	2	1	1	1	14
Settlement or compensation of damage		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Σ	897	477	312	228	321	2,235

The average workload of a Probation Officer in May 2022 was 50.4 cases. Numbers have been increasing since the inception of the Probation Service; at the end of 2018, it was 78.1 cases, but it increased markedly in 2019 to 94.9 cases, before declining in the last quarter of 2019 and 2020, mainly due to an increase in the number of Probation Officers in that time (by the end of 2020, the workload was 43.3 cases). In the period 2021/22, there is a

real-time upward trend in workloads, partly because of staff turnover and increasing number of tasks. It is expected that, under existing circumstances, current trends will be maintained in 2022.

In its work, UPRO links closely with various organisations to support the implementation of all community sanctions, including community service. Where a person is carrying out community service, the organisations may be any legal person in the Republic of Slovenia carrying out humanitarian or municipal activities, nature-protection activities or other activities in the public interest that are not carried out solely for profit. The agreement on the execution of the community service is signed by the person, the organisation and the probation unit.

Agreements in relation to the execution of community work were concluded with the following: NGOs (25.9%), local self-government (23.7%), educational organisations (20.6%), social protection organisations (14.0%). Fewer agreements were concluded with humanitarian organisations (3.8%), municipal enterprises (3.6%), health institutions (2.9%), the religious community (2.4%), social enterprises (1.2%), employment centres (1.0%), and enterprises operating as a limited liability company (0.9%).

Organisations that enable the execution of probation tasks play an important role in the enforcement of community sanctions, by contributing to the achievement of the objectives set out in the personal plan of probationers, thus reintegrating them into society and resocialisation. Since the beginning, UPRO has been working to strengthen and develop already-established forms of co-operation and to expand the network of organisations. In addition to a number of NGOs, other public services and institutions are involved in the execution of probationary tasks, namely health centres, psychiatric hospitals, social work centres, regional units of the Employment Service and others, in particular in the work relating to the enforcement of instructions in the context of custodial supervision.

And what about the future?

A key priority for UPRO is to develop its own information system (ProBIS) and a standardised tool for assessing risk-and-need factors (MOT). Probis will replace the existing manual system, contributing to the automation and standardisation of the work process, and will enable the electronic exchange of data with other data sources. MOT will operate in conjunction with organisational guidelines and assist with the prioritisation of criminogenic

needs and the related targeting of resources. It is expected that both projects will be complete by the second half of 2023.

In addition to the above, the aim is also to develop treatment programmes for those subject to supervision. Under the current regime, persons are included in programmes implemented by external providers (e.g. NGOs, psychiatric hospitals, various counsellors, etc.). For the purposes of developing a programme of work with sex offenders, seven Probation Officers have taken specialist training to work with sex offenders in the Netherlands and have already used the knowledge gained in their work. A programme of Social Skills Training Workshops is under way with staff. Working (expert) groups have also been set up within UPRO, which are gradually specialising in specific areas of treatment of probationers (alcoholism, domestic violence, psychological treatment, etc.). The work of these groups will be crucial in the future development of programmes.

Within UPRO, there are internal groups (for working with sex offenders, for psychological treatment and for the execution of house imprisonment). The groups report on the management of these aspects of the work and guide changes, system development and uniform practice.

The practice has shown that there is a shortage in specific areas of appropriate community organisations to support access to education, training, etc. so there is a commitment to further expansion of this network of support organisations. As it is a young service, the desire for probation staff to be highly skilled will require continued attention to education and professional training. However, not only professional competence but also an appropriate workload is important for the probation staff to carry out their work to a professional standard. In the future, it is aimed to achieve a reasonable workload, which means around 20–30 cases per staff member. In 2023, project employments will expire but UPRO hopes and expects to maintain the number of civil servants it has today (at least 63), with the expectation that the Government of the Republic of Slovenia will continue to recognise the importance of the Probation Service (as it was in 2019) and approve employments within the state authority.

From the outset, international co-operation was of paramount importance, so UPRO will continue to strengthen international relations and liaison with colleagues from abroad.

The UPRO slogan is 'In the right direction' and we believe that both the probationers and the development of the state body will go in this direction.