

## Overview of prison service in 2017

### Number of prisoners and probationers

The number of prisoners in prisons and houses of detention decreased by 134 in 2017 (In 2016 it had increased by 47). At the beginning of the year, the total number of prisoners was 2,841, at the end of the year it was 2,707; the number of convicted persons decreased by 163, while the number of those arrested increased by 29.

The number of probationers convicted of crimes is also decreasing. There were 4,240 probationers at the start of the year and 4,392 (+152) of them at the end of the year; however, that number included 229 persons who had been convicted of a misdemeanour and were doing community service. Organisation of community service related to misdemeanours had previously been the task of the Police and Border Guard Board; this task was handed over to the probation supervision departments on 1 January 2017.

As of the turn of the year, 129 probationers had been assigned electronic surveillance (that number was 106 at the previous turn of the year). In 2017, 321 probationers were placed under electronic surveillance (276 probationers in 2016).

### Engagement of prisoners and probationers

In 2017, 832 convicted offenders successfully completed the social programme (681 in 2016); 1,085 probationers (925 in 2016) and 49 persons held in custody (42 in 2016) completed the social programme successfully as well. Not unlike in previous years, the most popular social programme was the "Lifestyle Exercise" (818 graduates compared to 675 in 2016), followed by the "Right Moment" (287 graduates, 267 in 2016) and the "Traffic Safety Programme" (246 graduates, 214 in 2016).

The number of prisoners who completed an Estonian language proficiency course decreased from 306 to 276 within a year. The number of prisoners studying at a general education school decreased by 3 people: at the start of the 2017/18 academic year, there were 131 prisoners studying at the basic school level (117 prisoners the year before) and 62 prisoners at the upper secondary school level (79 prisoners the year before). Two inmates participated in higher education (in 2016, there were none). The number of inmates acquiring vocational education has increased: 158 prisoners began studies this year (113 did so last year). During the year, 1,732 prisoners participated in support activities (cleaning, kitchen work, food distribution, garbage follow-up) (1,618 prisoners took part in 2016). AS Eesti Vanglatööstus employed 219 prisoners (in 2016, that number was 248 with prisoners from the Harku Prison's production base, which has now been closed) and 372 open prisoners were employed in other companies (362 prisoners the year before).

### Crimes and criminal procedures in prisons

In 2017, the prison service initiated 285 criminal procedures, which exceeds those in 2016 by 66 procedures. In 2017, one internal audit was conducted in relation to a fatality, to check whether it could have been caused by the negligence of the prison staff. Another criminal procedure was initiated in relation to an attempted murder, during which a prisoner, who is serving a life sentence, attacked a prison guard with a blade that had been removed from the razor. The prison official was injured in the face and neck region and received first aid at the prison. In 2017, one criminal case was initiated due to a suspected rape, which was later terminated because the suspicion of a crime could not be verified.

There were no escape attempts from the territory of a prison or during transportation of a prisoner outside of a prison in 2017.

### Deaths

During the year, five prisoners died while imprisoned or at a hospital (6 prisoners died the year before). Of these, 4 prisoners died as a result of severe illness or health disorders.

There was one suicide, just as the year before.

### **Surveillance activities**

In 2017, prisons and prisons' departments received 9 permits for surveillance activities (in 2016 that number was 26). The permits were granted for secret interception or viewing of messages or other information transmitted through the public electronic communications network, covert inspection of a postal item and covert surveillance of a person, thing or area.

Additionally, on the basis of 34 permits issued by the Public Prosecutor's Office (71 in 2016), information was collected about the fact, duration, mode and form of transmission of messages transmitted through the electronic communications network, as well as concerning the identity and location of the sender and receiver.

### **Employees**

As of 31 December 2017, 1,212 people worked at the prison service (in prisons and at the department of prisons at the Ministry of Justice), and 696 of those employees worked as prison officers. A year ago, 1,229 people worked in the prison service, 692 of them worked as prison officers.

As of 31 December 2017, 152 officials worked in the probation services, which are not located on prison territories, of the Tallinn, Tartu and Viru prisons (164 officials during the previous year). During the year, two small offices were closed: Maardu (reception will take place in Tallinn office) and Alatskivi (reception in Tartu). In total, there are 30 probation service offices in Estonia, which are part of the Tallinn, Tartu and Viru prisons: Tallinn (in two locations), Loksas, Keila, Pärnu, Kilingi-Nõmme, Lihula, Kuressaare, Haapsalu, Kärdla, Paide, Rapla, Märjamaa, Tartu, Elva, Võru, Valga, Tõrva, Otepää, Põlva, Rõpina, Jõgeva, Põltsamaa, Viljandi, Karksi-Nuia, Rakvere, Kiviõli, Jõhvi, Sillamäe and Narva.

**Source URL:** <https://www.vangla.ee/en/news-and-numbers/overview-prison-service-2017>