



Payments in Prisons Case Study

EuroPris ICT Expert Group



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**PROMOTING
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The European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) is a non-political, non-governmental organisation that was founded at the end of 2011 and is registered in the Netherlands.

Membership is open to public institutions or organisations in the Council of Europe region, which provide prison or correctional services on a legal or statutory basis.

EuroPris brings together prison practitioners with the specific intention of promoting ethical and rights-based imprisonment, exchanging information and providing expert assistance to support this agenda. The organisation exists to improve co-operation among European Prison and Correctional Services, with the aim of improving the lives of prisoners and their families, enhancing public safety and security; reducing reoffending; and advancing professionalism in the corrections' field.

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Croatian Prison Service

Marjan Lukavecki

Situation

The Republic of Croatia is the newest European Union member (since 2013). The Republic of Croatia has 4.3 million citizens. The Prison Administration is responsible for administering the prison sentence in the Republic of Croatia.

The Prison Administration is an organizational unit of the Ministry of Justice. It consists of the head office, 8 penitentiaries, 12 prisons, 2 correctional institutions, centre for the diagnostics and training centre. The total prisoner accommodation capacity is 3,900 places. The penal institutions can be divided according to the security degree: closed, semi-open and open. The work of the Prison Administration's scope has been prescribed by the Law of execution of the prison sentence.

Task

It has been prescribed by the law that the prisoners during the execution of the prison sentence cannot own physical money, but the use of money through the mediation of the penal institution has been provided.

Predicted possibilities of using the money:

- Bringing the money to the execution of the prison sentence. The money is taken away and saved as a deposit.
- The prisoner has the right to receive and send money from and to the members of their family and other persons through the mediation of the penitentiary.
- The prisoner can, during the execution of the prison sentence, work and for his work earn financial compensation.
- The prisoner can, during the execution of the prison sentence, pay for the phone calls and buy groceries in the prison shops with the money.

Following the above, there is a need to use technical solutions which will enable virtual accounts (similar to banks) to receive and pay money in the manner prescribed by the law.

Action

The IPIS accounting software solution has been implemented which consists of the 3 interconnected modules:

- Treasury – money deposits, financial transactions (deposits and withdrawals);
- PC register – transactions in the prison shops in accordance with the prescribed rules;

- Prisoner payroll accounting.

In the Lepoglava penitentiary the pilot module called “Menu” has been installed, which enables the control of preparation and distribution of the meals. IPIS is a client – server system installed separately in each penal institution which are connected to the central server, where the data is consolidated and which can be accessed by the head office.

Result

Each prisoner has been issued a separate account, through which the financial transactions are take place inside the prison. As the means of identification, cards with barcode and prisoner’s personal information are used.

The influx of the money to the prisoner’s account is achieved through:

- payments by the family and other persons which are done to the penal body’s account,
- wherefrom this money is distributed to the prisoner’s account;
- compensation for the prisoner’s work;
- money which the prisoner had on himself when he arrived to the penal institution.

Payment with money in the prison:

- payment of goods in prison shops (the information system has predetermined daily limits, and it is possible to temporarily forbid access to the money);
- payment of phone calls through the separate system for the control and charging of the phone calls.

This software solution enables the Prison system administration to set the daily spending limits or set a prohibition of using the money. Part of the money earned by the prisoner from his work is set aside to a special savings account. This money is given to the prisoner when he leaves the prison.

The “Menu” module enables the control of the preparation and serving of the meals to the prisoners. The menus can depend on the health state, religion and work status of the prisoner. Thanks to this module, the kitchen knows how many of which meals have to be prepared. By the implementation of this solution, significant savings have been made in the diet expenses.

Belgian Prison Service

Patrick Fransen

Situation

The Directorate General of Penitentiary Institutions is embedded within the Ministry of Justice. It holds 35 different prisons, with an operational capacity of 9,097 prisoners and an occupancy level of around 108%. Pre-trial detainees make up for about 32% of the population. 45% of the population is of foreign origin. 4.5% of the entire population are female prisoners.

Task

Within the law that describes the life conditions and rights of an inmate 12.01.2005, a specific part was foreseen for the possession of money:

Art. 46.

- § 1. The inmate has no right to possess cash inside the prisons.
- § 2. The inmate is offered an individual bank account.
- § 3. The prison governor of the individual prisons and the persons in these prisons who work in accountancy services are held responsible for the correct implementation, the control and are held to discretion, regarding the financial situation of an inmate.

Action

To make this possible, a specific IT-program JUSTIX is used, which works on a standalone basis per prison. All these individual 'standalone' financial software programs are linked to the central database Justix. When an inmate is transferred from one prison to another, the state of his/her internal financial bank account is transferred as well.

Cash transactions are never seen as a valid way to put money on the individual account of the inmate. Cash, brought with the inmate on incarceration, is stored and will be handed over on release.

The prisoner has the right to receive and send money from and to the members of their family and other persons through the mediation of the penitentiary system. Anyone can transfer any amount (Postbank) on the individual bank account of an inmate, but only after manipulations within the Justix program.

By this, DG EPI has a trace and a knowledge about all financial transactions, in and out of the prison system.

Result

Prisoners have the possibility to earn money. GRATI is the internal accountancy tool. All earnings are calculated within Grati, and transferred to the individual bank account of the prisoner (Justix). The prisoner can, during the execution of the prison sentence, pay for the phone calls, order groceries at a local supermarket (each prison works with a local supermarket, which provides the prisoner with an extended list of products that can be purchased by a fixed/variable rate), and transfer their money to external bank accounts (like family, but also accounts to pay a periodic compensation to victims of their crimes).

These mechanisms provide the inmate the possibility to act responsibly with their own financial belongings, and provides the means to support family (with earnings from prison labour). All external movements of money have to be authorised by local prison staff (governor and local accountancy).

An individual account may not go negative. But, in the end, the inmate can use his money to his preferences. He/she is the owner of his/her specific bank account.

One prisoner can never transfer money to the individual account of another prisoner.

Finally, during visiting hours, the visitors of the inmates can purchase goods. Mostly snacks to consume during visitation hours. This works on a token based mechanism, where the visitors can change cash for tokens. With these tokens they can pay for their products.

Staff can make use of vending machines (cash) or can order a meal from the prison kitchen. There are two ways for the payments of these meals, depending on the prison concerned.

In some prisons, payments by credit card are possible. In other prisons, cash money can be changed for tokens, and meals can be paid with tokens.

Swedish Prison and Probation Service

Fredrik Wilhelmsson

Situation

Sweden has about 10 million citizens and is a huge country, 450 thousand square km. The Swedish Prison and Probation Service (SPPS) is an independent authority under the justice department with responsibility for all custodies, prisons and probation within Sweden.

In Sweden there are about 35 pre-trial custodies with five high security units. Sweden have about 45 prisons, high security, medium security and open prisons. Sweden has 34 probation offices. We have electronic monitoring for short time sentences, up to 6 months, back door activities and a pilot with GPS tracking Electronic Monitoring (EM) on short time leaves from prison.

The population is about 1,800 in pre-trial custody, 3,800 in prison, 10,000 on probation and 350 on EM.

Task

In prison the offender cannot own physical money. The offender gets a card, so he can buy things from the kiosk etc. In the Offender Management System (OMS) the staff plans the activities for the offender. The staff also registers that the offender was on work, studies etc. The OMS feeds the system that handles the inmates account.

The offender has several accounts, one that is supposed to be used on short time leaves, one for extra purchases and one which is his disposable money. From that account the offender can buy from the kiosk etc. The offender can only use a certain amount of money per week, maximum 60,00 €.

The card within the prison is not connected to any bank and cannot be used outside the prison.

Money that the offender brings into the prison when he arrives, will be taken and put on his account. Money that family members or any others bring to the prison for the offender will also be put on the offenders account.

When released, the offender gets all his/her money. Some of the pre-trial custodies are money free, but not all of them. When on probation or EM, the SPPS have no control over the offender's money.

Action

For the future Sweden would like to have all institutions free from physical money. Sweden would also like to have a real card that is compatible with the outside, so the offender can withdraw money from an ATM, etc.

Finnish Criminal Sanctions Agency

Pekka Isola

Situation

In Finland the Criminal Sanctions Agency (CSA) is responsible for the implementation of remand imprisonment as well as the enforcement of community sanctions and prison sentences. CSA is situated under the Ministry of Justice. CSA consist of a Central Administration, Enforcement Unit, Training Institute for Prison and Probation Services and 3 Criminal Sanctions Regions with 3 assessment units, 14 community sanctions offices and 26 prisons. The average daily number of prisoners is about 3.100, which is almost the same number as community sanctions clients.

Task

Inmates cannot have their own money in closed prisons in Finland. To buy groceries and other goods from the canteen, for paying bills etc. there is a specific internal accounting system with bookkeeping and reporting. Brought or earned money is registered to the inmate's account from which he/she can use the money while in prison. Inmates had no responsibility for his/her finances at all. The daily maintenance of the system took a lot of working hours and costs.

CSA made a decision to join to a common state-wide procurement with for example the immigration authority to have a prepaid solution system for helping the processes to send money payments to those who do not have or are not allowed to use their own bank account.

Action

After the required procurement procedure there was a delivery and deployment project to build up a new nationwide payment system for closed prisons. Every inmate gets a prepaid card, IBAN-account and instructions when arriving in prison. All kinds of money (cash, earned, sent) are transferred to the inmates account and loaded to an e-wallet. An inmate gets a receipt and a pin-code for his/her card. An inmate can use the prepaid card via payment terminals in canteens or in the units. Because of this the cash system in canteens is renewed simultaneously. If the inmate has the right to leave the prison, he/she can use the card like any normal citizen. The card is accepted everywhere, as the payment terminal is checking the balance on-line before payment (No credit feature). If the inmate is transferred to another prison or to court, the prepaid card is packed along with his/her pass and other documents. Prison staff can tell the balance of an account before using it (self-service inquiry solution is underway). Staff can also re-open the pin-code and transfer all data to a new card if the old card is lost or destroyed by using a management portal. Friends and relatives can make a bank transfer to an inmates IBAN-account. When an inmate is released, staff can make a bank transfer from the prepaid prisoner card to his/her own bank account. After release the ex-inmate can use his/her card for three months in the SEPA-region. CSA pays remaining

salaries and returns unused phone card money. Bank transfers outside CSA will not be accepted after release. There are restrictions in using the card if inmates cannot be clearly identified or when his/her name is on a sanctions list. CSA pays all costs of the prepaid system and cards.

Results

The new payment system has gone very well since its introduction in May 2016. It is a totally new method with lots of new details. Several goals have been reached. The work with the inmate's finance maintenance has reduced and everything is now centralised. For example, it is now possible to get a substitute from another prison. Practices in prisons have been made uniform. No major misuse of the system came to CSA's knowledge. Many kinds of further development will be needed to improve the results even more. From the beginning of next year the inmates will have right to hold prepaid cards in closed prisons.

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