

***Press release regarding the signing of the financing contract for the "Correctional" project, financed through the "Justice" program, within the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021***

The Ministry of Justice signed, on August 30, 2019, the financing contract for the "Correctional" project, with a total eligible value of 31,000,000 euro, through the "Justice" program, funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the Romanian correctional system (penitentiary and probation) to contribute to the social reintegration of convicted persons, by facilitating their transition from the penitentiary to the probation system and, finally, in the community, through a close cooperation with local authorities.

It will last for 56 months and will be implemented by the National Administration of Penitentiaries, as a project leader, in partnership with other institutions from Romania (National Probation Directorate, Baia Mare Penitentiary, Târgu Mureş Penitentiary, Botoşani Penitentiary, Vaslui Penitentiary, National School of Prison Agent Training Targu Ocna) and from Norway (Norwegian Correctional Services Academy, Halden Penitentiary, Stavanger Penitentiary, Rogaland Probation Service, Østfold Probation Service).

"Significant investments will be made to improve the penitentiary infrastructure, by creating 1,160 new detention spaces in open and semi-open regime, at 4 penitentiaries (Baia Mare, Botoşani, Târgu Mureş and Vaslui), in order to ensure adequate conditions for detention, in line with the European standards, which will also allow the carrying out of specific educational and psycho-social activities for the reintegration of detainees and persons under the supervision of probation services. In addition, the existing educational infrastructure at the National Training School for Penitentiary Agents from Târgu Ocna will be improved, in order to ensure the necessary material basis for the professional training of the current or future staff in the penitentiary system. The proposed measures are in line with the provisions of the Memorandum adopted by the Romanian Government on January 17, 2018", stated the Minister of Justice, Ana BIRCHALL.

So far, the Ministry of Justice has signed financing contracts for 5 out of 7 predefined projects financed under the "Justice" program, namely: 2 financing contracts with the National Administration of Penitentiaries in the field of correctional services, 2 financing contracts with the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice and, respectively, with the Superior Council of Magistracy in the field of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system and of strengthening the rule of law and 1 financing contract with the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men.

Additional information:

As a Program Operator for the "Justice" program financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the Ministry of Justice will manage, for the period 2018–2024, a financial allocation of 52,941,176 euros, out of which 85% represents the Norwegian grant, and 15% national co-financing to be provided from the Ministry's budget.

The intervention areas financed under the "Justice" program concern: the correctional services - the penitentiary and probation system (3 predefined projects with a total allocation of 37,494,117 euros); the

efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system and the consolidation of the rule of law (3 predefined projects with a total allocation of 10,350,000 euros); and domestic violence and gender-based violence (1 predefined project with a total allocation of 2,500,000 euros).