



The number of individuals serving an alternative form of sentence increases by 38 per cent in 2007

The prison population reaches 9,395 detainees, this figure showing a 4.74% increase over 2006.

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The number of adults and minors who have served custodial sentences or been subject to mediation processes in 2007 was 31,108. This figure, which includes sentences and detention measures in closed and open institutions, is 10.73% higher than the corresponding figure for 2006. The increase is largely attributable to the increase over the last year in the number of individuals serving alternative forms of sentence (MPA), which now accounts for 38.13%.

New types of offence have made a substantial contribution to this increase in MPA. The clearest example is that currently nearly half (40.85%) of the cases in which these sentences are imposed are related to traffic safety offences. In 2003 these only accounted for 2 out of 10 sentences.

Referring to this question the Councillor for Justice has pointed out that **"now, those sentenced to less than two years in prison for this type of offence serve the sentence, in an attempt to ensure that they do not commit further offences and are made aware of the seriousness of their behaviour"**.

The number of individuals serving alternative forms of sentence for causing bodily harm has also grown and is now almost double the corresponding figure for four years ago. In 2003 they represented 16.58% of those sentenced to MPA and in 2007 they accounted for 32.59%.

In 2007 a total of 8,292 sentences were served or in the process of being served, compared with 5,994 in the previous year. Community service now accounts for 44.5% of alternative forms of sentence.

The Department of Justice has made an effort to respond to this increase in requests for sentences to be carried out: 2,298 more cases have been dealt with and waiting lists have been reduced from 35.3% in 2006 to 33.53% in 2007.



Prisons

The prison population continues to grow. According to Department of Justice figures, 2007 shows a 4.74% increase over 2006, meaning that there were 425 more detainees than in the previous year. Despite this tendency for numbers to grow, the Councillor for Justice has declared levels of occupancy in penitentiary centres have improved and will continue to do so. **"Never before has it been possible to say that, in a single year, we have opened a prison centre, Brians 2, and a centre for minors, Can Llupià, that we have two other new centres at an advanced stage of construction and one more for which the project still has to be allocated"**, said Montserrat Tura.

In the last six months the proportion of prison inmates to the total population has fallen and now stands at 130 to every 100,000. The reasons for this reduction may lie in the increase in the total population and the stabilisation of the prison population in the last six months. Catalonia still has one of the highest percentages of detainees, compared with other countries around us, although the figure is lower than that for the rest of Spain, where it is 152 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Over the last year there has been a notable increase in the number of detainees held on remand, who now account for 23% of total inmates. The distribution by gender has undergone a slight change, in that the percentage of women has risen from 6.8% of all detainees to 7.4%. By nationality, foreigners account for half of those entering penal institutions (54%) and make up 40.2% of the total prison population. 16% of them are from European Union countries.

The number of inmates in closed regimes is stable at around 2% of the total, while the number classified as third degree has fallen from 27% to 24.6% of all inmates. This figure is offset by the increase in the number of inmates on probation, from 698 in 2006 to 800 at the end of 2007. It is further reduced by the number of those classified as being in an intermediate stage leading to the third degree (according to Article 100.2 in the Penal Code), which has risen from 254 to 404 detainees. There has also been a slight increase in the number of inmates on parole (ordinary or extraordinary) in preparation for life outside prison.

Occupation and training

It is now possible to say that all detainees, adults and young offenders, in Catalan penal centres, and minors under the supervision of the juvenile justice service are participating in a programme for training and reentry into society.

In the case of adults and young offenders, the productive work managed by the Centre of Initiatives for Social Reintegration in the internal and external workshops belonging to penal centres has experienced further growth, with an increase in the availability of jobs. The average number of detainees engaged in productive work rose from 1,994 in 2006 to 2,332 in 2007, an increase of 16.95%.



The number of enrolments in prison schools has also grown. It was 3,421 in 2006 and rose to 3,839 at the end of 2007. The increase was 12.22%, a figure which, as in the case of productive work, is well above the increase in the prison population.

Specialised programmes are available to all inmates who meet the relevant conditions. In the last quarter of 2007, 280 detainees were taking part in the programme for the Control of Sexual Aggression, 255 in the Violent Crime programme and 392 in the Domestic Violence programme.

This year breaches of parole have been fewer than in 2006. 155 cases were recorded - affecting 3.7% of detainees released on parole - of whom 45.8% have been returned to prison. Breaches occurring during programmed outings numbered 6 (0.6%) of whom half have returned.

Young offenders

The number of young offenders has continued to grow, the figure for this year being 3.95% higher than that for 2006. Nevertheless, the number detained in centres has stabilised.

Of all the programmes and measures completed or being carried out in 2007, 53% corresponded to open regimes and 9% to detention in centres, a measure which is being applied progressively less often. On the other hand, the use of mediation has increased, as has its effectiveness. 38% of the measures implemented over the last year involved alternative programmes (as against 34% in 2006). The number of mediation processes whose outcome was positive rose to 85.66% (from 82.96% in 2006).

In the case of detainees who are minors, the number of breaches has fallen from 84 in 2006 to 63 in 2007. Of these 84.13% were brought back.

The enrolment of 100% of all minors detained (267) in educational centres should be noted. Throughout 2007 the Department of Justice has made an effort to extend occupational professional training, leading to an increase in detained minors who have undertaken activities in this area, from 71.08% in 2006 to 96.05% in 2007.