

**INVESTIGATING SOCIAL REINTEGRATION AND REHABILITATION FOR
INMATES IN ROMANIA**

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research paper is to investigate the social reintegration and rehabilitation for inmates in Romania based on a broad approach that includes legal regulations, info communication skills and literacy process. In Romania most prisons are overcrowded and inmates are serving time in improper conditions. However, prison conditions in Romania are in most cases almost inhuman so the chances of rehabilitating detainees are significantly decreasing. In countless cases convicted inmates expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the violation of the most elementary human rights. Inhuman and abusive conditions in most penitentiary led to legal action and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) involving cases in Romania. The judicial system in Romania has reached a significant development in the recent past but there are still many hibes that affect social reintegration for inmates. The high rate of recidivism among former prisoners highlights a dramatic alternative. Moreover, the fight against high and medium-level corruption in Romania has been very effective in recent years. A legislative reform that improves the penitentiary system must be implemented as a primary measure of efficiency.

Keywords: social reintegration, social rehabilitation, judicial system, prison, inmate, human rights

I. INTRODUCTION

This research article discusses issues concerning social reintegration and rehabilitation of inmates in Romania taking into account many factors of influence. The stigma of prisoner status has major implications regarding the possibility of being employed in Romania. Even if Romania is now a member of the European Union, its rather recent past left deep traces in the consciousness of the people. In other words, Romania is a former communist country in Eastern Europe and human behaviours are still full of reticence and prejudice regarding the prisoner status.

The social reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-detainees in Romania is a social issue that needs to be treated with great seriousness. The complex approach of the social phenomenon involves

economic and financial consequences that can not be ignored. An extra argument for social reintegrating and rehabilitating prisoners into the community follows the unfavorable consequences on their families, especially children whose incipient personality is very influential. The reintegration of inmates should include developing opportunities for integration into the labor market by romanian governance and local authorities. It is essential that former detainees to be involved in various rehabilitation programs and to be supported by authorities to find a new job. Official statistics on the rehabilitation of detainees are not very encouraging given the fact that a considerable percentage is reincarcerated within 3 years of release from prison. A former detainee socially reintegrated is unlikely to become a potential offender precisely because of the new connection with the community.

Social exclusion is a common phenomenon in terms of inmates in Romania. However, a distinction should be made regarding the social and financial-economic status of the detainee. In recent years, many public figures with important public functions, considerable wealth and significant social position have become incarcerated because of their criminal offenses but an important role has been played by the significant progress of the anti-corruption fight. The chances of reintegration in this case are much higher than in the case of a poor detainee without any support or income.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of a literature review is to highlight the importance of disseminating certain aspects. According to the official website of the National Institute of Justice - Agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, an arguable definition of recidivism involves : "criminal acts that resulted in rearrest, reconviction or return to prison with or without a new sentence during a three-year period following the prisoner's release."

In the literature, many authors have approached the issue of social reintegration and rehabilitation of inmates. In addition, social rehabilitation in prison is the beginning of a moral and civic encouraging recovery.

Moran (2012) investigated the issue of prisoner reintegration and argued that "scholarship of prisoner reintegration post-release has identified the stigmatization of ex-inmates as a challenge to their successful re-entry...". Furthermore, the high rate of recidivism among former prisoners in Romania is considerable and cannot be ignored considering the stringent need for social reintegration.

Chamberlen (2015) highlighted complex issues regarding women's experiences of self-injury in prison and established that "the pains of imprisonment are still very much inscribed on and expressed through the prisoner's body". Nevertheless, Binswanger, I. A., Nowels, C., Corsi, K. F., Glanz, J., Long, J., Booth, R. E., Steiner, J. F. (2012) suggested that "Former inmates are at high risk for death from drug overdose, especially in the immediate post-release period".

Martinez (2009) investigated challenges and successes encountered by ex-offenders in order to reintegrate into society and argued that "finding employment was the main challenge faced by ex-offenders". Pogrebin, Dodge and Katsampes (2001) analyzed the complex implications of the detention period considering the "disruption of social ties associated with jail time" and also revealed the importance of providing alternatives in less serious criminal offenses such as : "community work and educational programs, day fines, victim restitution, citations".

III. INMATES IN ROMANIA BETWEEN A TABOO SUBJECT AND A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

This particular research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the social reintegration and rehabilitation for inmates in Romania based on multiple implications and perspectives. The probability that former prisoners relapse and commit other criminal activities is significant in Romania. The judicial system in Romania is characterized by particular challenges facing ex-inmates such as the abuse of narcotic substances and other addiction disorders which can lead to dramatic consequences. After the release, ex-inmates are vulnerable and there is a high risk of recurrence. Moreover, the reluctance of ordinary people to a former detainee is not easy to endure in the current Romanian society. An open society should be able to self-regulate internally so that correctional institutions also include a solid social reintegration component. Presumably, this would be an effective method of combating the many prejudices and the defensive attitude of a significant part of society regarding ex-inmates. Moreover, the criminal justice field has numerous deficiencies especially in terms of inhuman conditions, overcrowding and abusive behaviors in most penitentiary which led to various legal actions and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) involving cases in Romania.

According to the official website of the Ministry of Justice in Romania, since joining the European Union on January 1, 2007, Romania still had to achieve progress in reforming the judiciary system, in combating corruption and organized crime. However, an impressive evolution of the anti-corruption struggle has been achieved in recent years. The anti-corruption efforts are highly appreciated by the strategic partners of Romania such as United States of America and European Union. Corruption is a very disturbing issue for Romania which is a major impediment to improving international collaboration. Furthermore, The National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) has achieved very important progress in combating high and medium-level corruption. For the judiciary system in Romania it is very important to develop optimal mechanisms on providing anti-corruption solutions.

The threat of corruption will not allow Romania to advance internationally, to reach higher levels of development because the risks are too significant to be assumed by a potential foreign investor. According to the official Activity Report of the DNA for the year 2016, there were indicted 1,270 defendants for high and medium level corruption and DNA ordered seizure measures of over 667 million euro. On the other hand, according to the official Activity Report of the DNA for the year 2015, there were indicted over 1,250 defendants, ie 1258 defendants out of that 83 legal persons for high and medium level corruption crimes and DNA ordered seizure measures of almost half a billion euros, ie 493,46 million euro. Official statistics indicate an increase in basic indicators of high and medium level corruption in Romania.

Detainees in Romania, regardless of their social position prior to detention, face overcrowding in prisons and precarious conditions despite the fact that Romania is a member of the European Union. These aspects lead to altering the character of the inmate as a human being in particular so social reintegration becomes even more difficult. Nevertheless, social reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-inmates into the community is the most effective manner to reduce recidivism. The environmental implications of social reintegration and rehabilitation for inmates in Romania include important decision makers considering the discriminatory treatment. The common perception that an offender will always be an offender is far from being purely theoretical bias.

The criminal justice system in Romania is perfectible, not perfect, not even enough matured or experienced, given the avalanche of systematic legislative changes. However, slowly, but surely, it is cleansed out from the relics of the communist period. A detainee who has been accepted again into society is more unlikely to relapse. In the reverse direction, the high rates of recidivism among ex-inmates is still a current issue of great interest, but with shallow solutions and concrete alternatives. Recidivism is a problem of today's societies, can not be ignored or assimilated but it can be considerably reduced by effective strategies on social reintegration of inmates.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The justice system is a turning point for Romania in terms of using effective strategies to combat corruption and organized crime. The judiciary has progressed significantly, with the obvious independence and impartiality in decision-making process. In fact, a healthy judicial system is fundamental to the progress of a Eastern European country such as Romania. However, an important unfulfillment of the justice system in Romania is high rate of recidivism among ex-inmates.

The intrinsic approach of the phenomenon suggests the opportunity to implement certain crime prevention strategies among released prisoners. Specific objectives regarding social reintegration of inmates should include preventing relapses. The prisoner status can be improved through social reintegration programs in which authorities play a fundamental role. A former detainee who has the status of new employee is more unlikely to relapse on short term. Moreover, social reintegration and re-entry into the labour market of inmates are more beneficial than social assistance. On the other hand, the community needs to be educated in the idea that the social reintegration of the detainee is much less expensive and the chances of relapse are minimized.

The main objective of a society is to maintain balance. The social reintegration of inmates released from detention is a difficult process which is based on the identification of optimal and long-term viable solutions. The optimal functioning of the social structure it also contains a dimension on social reintegration and rehabilitation for inmates by solving existing conflicts as well as combating discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes or socio-cultural intolerance habits.

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