

The Correctional Unit of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo



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The Correctional Unit (CU) of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has been a steadfast **partner** of the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS) since the inception of the Mission mandate.

Until 2012, the EULEX CU had an **executive mandate**, providing operational support to KCS escort officers in prisoner escort. EULEX CU monitors were also **co-located** with selected correctional facilities until 2020.



Today, through **monitoring, mentoring and advising**, the EULEX CU supports the KCS and the Kosovo Probation Service (KPS) efforts to develop a **professional and gender-responsive senior management team**, and to provide adequate and correctly targeted rehabilitation activities for both female and male prisoners and probationers, including juveniles, in a safe and secure environment.

Being a steadfast partner of the KCS, EULEX CU **monitors, mentors and advises** it on how to best address the specific needs and guarantee the rights of all prisoners and detainees, with a particular focus on specific groups including **women, juveniles, members of non-majority communities**, as well as **persons with mental health issues and/or addictions**.

This is achieved thanks to a regular and **mobile presence by the EULEX correctional experts** in all 11 correctional facilities in Kosovo and through numerous **meetings and interactions** with KCS and KPS staff.



The early days of the EULEX Correctional Unit

From 2008 until 2012, the EULEX CU had an executive mandate and was responsible for several tasks, including transporting and escorting prisoners. Tens of **correctional experts from several EU and third countries** with different areas of expertise were **co-located with some KCS facilities**.



These EULEX experts provided invaluable **on-the-job training**,

effective **mentoring**, and daily expert advising to their Kosovo colleagues in many areas of the KCS, including **prison administration, operations and security management**, as well as **economic management**. This work has created better conditions for KCS to work and ensure **equal treatment for all prisoners** regardless of gender, age, ethnicity and other characteristics, based on the needs and the risk posed by each individual.

Until 2011, the EULEX CU has assisted in developing **the perimeter control at the Dubravë/Dubrava Correctional Centre**. EULEX CU was also responsible for assessing the Correctional Centre's security standards and produced **recommendations to address security weaknesses in the facility**.

From 2008 to 2012, the EULEX CU included an armed **Prisoner Escort Group (PEG)** co-located with the KCS Prisoner Escort Unit (PEU). With the new responsibilities handed over from UNMIK, EULEX was the only actor with access to northern Kosovo in a tense political atmosphere. The PEG was divided in two units, one stationed in the Lipjan/Lipjan Correctional Centre and the other one in the Dubravë/Dubrava Correctional Centre.

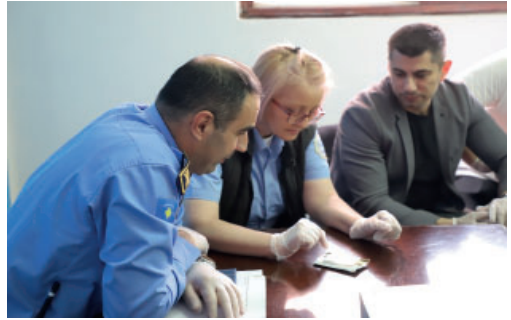
The PEG's primary role was to escort prisoners to North Mitrovica, but also extended to the whole of Kosovo whenever local escort resources were not available. Moreover, PEG experts monitored, mentored and advised on daily basis the KCS PEU conducting its regular prisoner escort tasks. After 2012, EULEX Police took over the escorting responsibilities to northern Kosovo and gradually transferred them to the KCS.

From 2010 to 2018 the EULEX CU was also engaged in the planning and construction of new correctional centres, such as the High Security Prison in Podujevë/Podujevo, ensuring that the new facilities were created to fulfill the needed requirements while at the same time allowing space for activities and rehabilitation of prisoners.

EULEX CU's activities contributed to **the professionalization of the KCS**, which had been gradually taking on increasing responsibilities. Throughout the years, the KCS has evolved into a **service that broadly complies with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the European Prison Rules**.

The role of EULEX's Correctional Unit today

The EULEX CU supports the KCS in developing a **professional and gender-responsive senior management team** and in increasing its capacity to **prevent undue interference and preferential treatment** of prisoners through monitoring, mentoring and advising. The EULEX CU is also advising the KCS and the KPS on the **management of high-profile and radicalized prisoners**, and it facilitates the cooperation between the KPS and KCS with the goal of **improving the rehabilitation and reintegration** of all prisoners, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity and any other characteristics.



Moreover, the EULEX CU is providing guidance and advice to the Kosovo institutions on the **alignment of draft legislation and Standard Operating Procedures** with the best European and international standards.

Currently, the EULEX CU activities include:

- **Regular and mobile presence of EULEX correctional experts in all the correctional facilities and probation offices in Kosovo** to monitor their **daily functions**, including treatment of prisoners.
- **Contacts with convicted prisoners and detainees to monitor their detention conditions** and assess the **guarantee of their human rights** by the correctional authorities.
- **Advice** to the KCS and KPS management on how to address strategic issues and support in preparing, amending and implementing their strategic development plans.
- Support the establishment of a **sentence planning system** for prisoners based on an **individual risk and needs assessment**.
- Monitoring of the implementation of **sentence plans** for convicted prisoners.
- Monitoring the **recruitment of prison staff** to increase transparency and to reduce the risk of political interference.
- Monitoring of **KCS hospitalization security measures** of high-profile prisoners.
- Support to the KCS in further **operationalizing four correctional facilities** built in recent years (High Security Prison, Pristina Detention Centre, Gjilan / Gnjilane Detention Centre, and Lipjan/Lipljan Educational-Correctional Centre).
- Support to **women correctional staff** and to the **Association of Women in KCS**.
- Support to the KCS in developing their **curriculum of basic training and in-service training** capacities.
- Support in developing the **conditional release process to ensure it meets**

international standards, including through the issuance of the public report “The Application of Conditional Release in Kosovo: Findings and Recommendations.”

- Active participation in various **working groups, which draft sub-legal acts and strategies**.
- Provision of **training courses**.



Main achievements

Numerous corrections experts from **EU countries mentored and advised the local staff of the KCS** in many areas of their daily work. This contributed to the professionalization of the KCS, which assumed full responsibility of all tasks following the end of EULEX CU’s executive mandate in 2012.

Since 2008, the CU has assisted the KCS in developing:

- the Prisoners’ Escort Unit (2008-2012)
- the KCS Economic Unit (ongoing)
- the KCS Intelligence Unit (ongoing)
- the Internal Inspectorate of the Ministry of Justice
- the Prisoners’ Assessment and Classification Unit (ongoing)
- the K9 Unit (ongoing)
- the Intervention team (ongoing)
- the Peer Support Councilors
- the European Resuscitation Council certification as Basic Life Support (BLS) instructors for 35 Kosovo Correctional Service’s officers.



In 2018, EULEX, together with several Kosovo non-governmental organizations, local institutions and international organizations, helped the KSC launch the “**Association of Women in the Kosovo Correctional Service**”, whose aim is to advance the position of women within KCS, and to help female employees develop their careers and achieve full potential.

Over the years, the EULEX CU has also assisted the KCS in shifting the focus from mainly security-related aspects to facilitating the **rehabilitation** of prisoners and their successful return to their communities, as well as on the **prevention of re-offending**.

EULEX supported the KCS and the KPS in designing and implementing Kosovo-wide awareness-raising campaigns to inform the public about their work and help strengthen their reputation.

Training courses and study visits

Since its inception, the EULEX CU has supported training sessions, workshops and working groups for over 2600 participants in:

- **Developing managerial capacities**
(Strategic Planning; Public Finance Management, Accounting and Controls; Auditing; File Management System,)
- **Increasing security**
(Crisis Incident Negotiations; Training in Intelligence and Analysis; Prison Security and Safety Risk Assessments; Dynamic Security; Self Defense)
- **Safety, health, and rehabilitation of prisoners**
(Assessment and Classification of Prisoners; Interviewing of Prisoners; Sentence Planning; Management of Prisoners with Mental Health Issues and Addictions; Management of prisoners with special needs; Basic Life Support; Early detection of violent extremism and radicalization in prisons; Identification of risk factors linked to self-harm and suicide, introducing the case officer method; Anti-substance abuse).
- **Gender mainstreaming, gender inclusion and gender-sensitive prison management.**



EULEX CU also organized a number of **study visits** to **Finland, Estonia, the United Kingdom** and **Sweden** for KCS staff.

Donations

Since 2008, EULEX CU has supported the KCS through several **donations**, including:

- Vehicles.
- Desktop computers, laptops and mobile phones to help increase phone and virtual access for prisoners, and to facilitate virtual meetings of the correctional service staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- New bakery equipment at the Lipjan/Lipljan Correctional Centre for Women. The purpose of this joint EULEX-UNMIK donation was to facilitate the rehabilitation of prisoners and to equip them with skills that could help them get employed after their release.
- Items needed to build chairs at the Mitrovica Detention Centre, as part of a prisoner re-socialization program.
- First-aid kits, seven sets of training equipment - including training defibrillators and resuscitation dolls to help KCS Basic Life Support instructors independently organize basic life support training activities for their colleagues.
- IT and ICT items, office furniture items and other equipment.



Importance of cooperation between the Kosovo Correctional Service and the Kosovo Probation Service

To achieve a socially effective penitentiary system which complies with the European Prison Rules and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, close cooperation between the KCS and KPS is essential.

Our common goal is to strengthen both the correctional and probation services to be in full compliance with international human rights standards and the Council of Europe's approach to more humane and socially effective penal sanctions. The Mission supports the development of cooperation between the KCS and KPS in harmonizing the assessment practices to ensure institutional continuance when an offender transits from one organization to other.

In addition, EULEX assists both institutions on the ground in applying European prison and probation service best practices aimed at the best possible reintegration and resocialization of all prisoners.





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