

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) for almost 14 years. 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 some of the correctional facilities until 2020. Today, the EULEX CU supports the KCS efforts to develop a **professional senior management team** and to provide **rehabilitation of prisoners** in a safe and secure environment through **monitoring, mentoring and advising**. 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** with KCS staff. Since 2021, EULEX is also supporting the Kosovo Probation Service (KPS).



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 **corrections experts from many 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



Number of EULEX corrections staff over the years		
	International	Local
2008	49	49
2009	65	65
2010	66	66
2011	74	74
2012	62	62
2013	25	25
2014	13	13
2015	7	7
2016	7	7
2017	6	6
2018	5	5
2019	6	6
2020	7	7
2021	8	8
2022	5	5

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 based on the needs of and the risk posed by each individual.

Until 2011, the EULEX CU assisted in developing the perimeter control at **the Dubravë/Dubrava Correctional Centre** through monitoring, mentoring and advising. EULEX 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 Escort Unit. 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/Lipljan 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. After 2012, EULEX Police took over the escorting responsibilities and gradually transferred them to the KCS.

From 2010 to 2018 the EULEX CU was also engaged, through monitoring, mentoring and advising, 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.

Over the years, EULEX’s monitoring, mentoring and advising activities contributed to the **professionalization of the KCS**, which had been gradually taking on increasing responsibilities while EULEX has stepped back.

Throughout the years, the KSC has evolved to become a **service** which 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 senior management team** and in increasing its capacity to **prevent undue interference and preferential treatment** of prisoners through monitoring, mentoring and advising. The CU is also advising the KCS and the KPS on the **management of high-profile and radicalised prisoners** and facilitates the cooperation between the KPS and KCS with the goal of **improving the rehabilitation and reintegration** of prisoners.

Currently, the EULEX CU activities include:

- **Regular field visits** to all 11 correctional facilities to monitor the **daily functions** of the KCS facilities, including treatment of prisoners and detainees
- **Advice** to the KCS management on how to address strategic issues
- Support for 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
- Provision of **training courses** (listed in detail on the next page)
- **Contact with the prisoners** (if required)
- Monitoring of **hospital escorts** of high-profile prisoners
- Support to the KCS in further **operationalising four correctional facilities** built in recent years (High Security Prison, Pristina Detention Centre, Gjilan / Gnjilane Detention Centre, Lipjan/Lipljan Educational-Correctional Centre)
- Support for the **female correctional staff** and the **KCS Women Association**
- Active participation in various **working groups**, which draft sub-legal acts and strategies (e.g., Ministry of Justice Working Group on Prisoners' Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs, Working Group on Drafting of Sub-legal Act on House Rules).

The EULEX CU also monitors the specific needs of **women** and **juveniles**, as well as of **vulnerable groups** such as prisoners with mental health issues, and provides advice to the KCS, through recommendations, training courses and mentoring, on how to best address their specific needs.



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 after the end of EULEX CU's executive mandate.

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 (ongoing)
- the Prisoners' Assessment and Classification Unit (ongoing)

In 2018, EULEX together with several Kosovo non-governmental organisations, local institutions and international organisations, helped the KCS 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 their full potential.

Since 2008, 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.

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**.

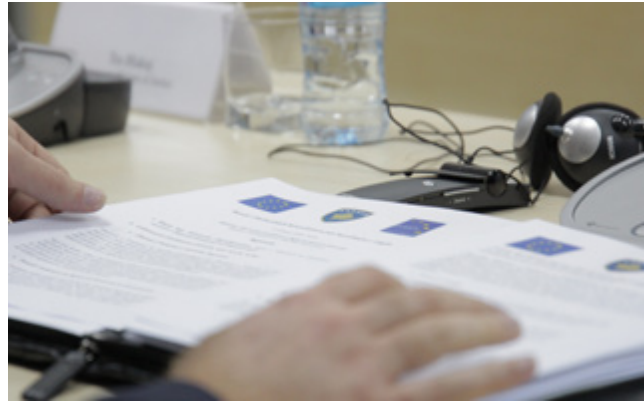
In 2021, EULEX supported the KCS in designing and implementing a Kosovo-wide **media and social media campaign** to inform the public about the work of KCS and help strengthen its reputation.



Training courses and study visits

Over the years, the EULEX CU has organized several **training courses** for over a thousand KCS staff members 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)
- **Safety, health, and rehabilitation of prisoners** (Assessment and Classification of Prisoners; Interview of Prisoners; Sentence Planning; Management of Prisoners with Mental Health Issues and Addictions; Basic Life Support and First Aid training; Early detection of violent extremism and radicalization in prisons).
- **Gender mainstreaming and gender inclusion**



EULEX CU also organized **study visits** to **Finland** (2011, 2013, 2017 and 2019), **Estonia** (2013), the **United Kingdom** (2014) and **Sweden** (2017 and 2019) for KCS staff.

Donations

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

- 57 vehicles
- 50 desktop computers, five laptops and 50 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 (April 2020)
- 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 (July 2021)



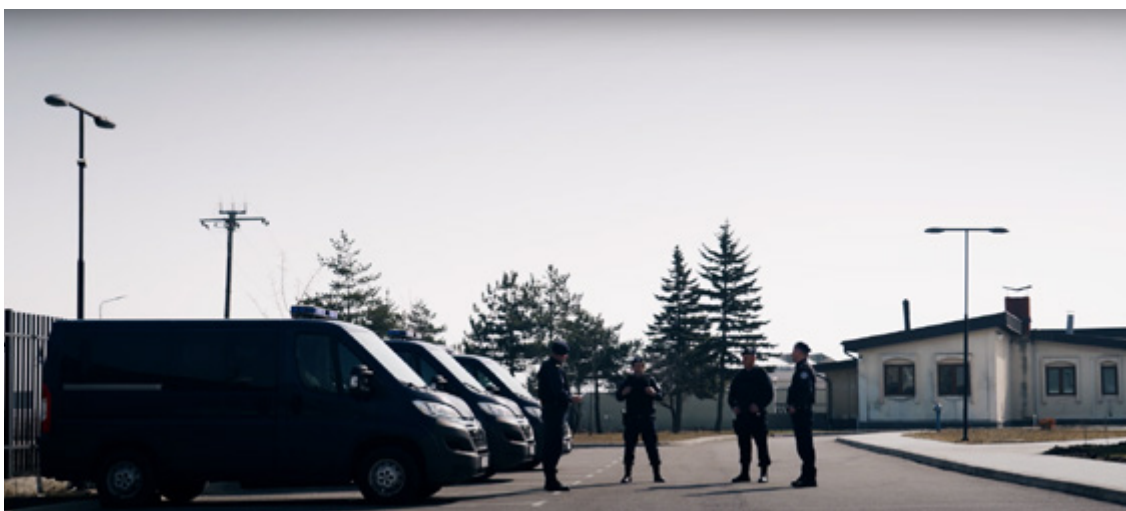
- Computers, UPS, routers, printers, radios, mobile phones, GPS, binoculars, handheld lamps, and desks (September 2021)
- Items needed to build chairs at the Mitrovica Detention Centre, as part of a prisoner re-socialization program (January 2022)
- First-aid kits, training equipment and IT equipment for all detention and correctional Centres in Kosovo to help KCS Basic Life Support instructors independently organize basic life support training activities for their colleagues (August 2022).

Importance of cooperation among the EULEX Correctional Unit, the Kosovo Correctional Service and the Kosovo Probation Service

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

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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