



Response

**of the Serbian Government
to the report of the European Committee
for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman
or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)
on its visit to Serbia**

from 21 to 30 March 2023

The Government of Serbia has requested the publication of this response. The CPT's report on the 2023 visit to Serbia is set out in document CPT/Inf (2024) 04.

Strasbourg, 25 January 2024

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Report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or
Degrading Treatment or Punishment on the Occasion of the Ad Hoc Visit to the
Republic of Serbia
carried out from 21 to 30 March 2023**

A. Establishments under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior

13. On 2 November 2022 in Ruma, citizens reported an incident in which two unknown persons attacked tenant J. D. and his mother in the yard of a private house with baseball bats. After the attack and once police officers became aware of that, these two unknown persons left the scene in a passenger vehicle. On the same day, a police patrol identified the attackers, and coercive means were used against them – cuffing means, as they were about to offer active resistance. After conducting a procedure aimed at assessing the justification and regularity of the use of coercive means, the head of the Ruma police station assessed them as being justified and correct. After bringing these persons to the Ruma police station, they were regularly informed of the rights of persons in custody, and a report was made on the breathalyser and drug test. The event was reported to the on-duty deputy of the Basic Public Prosecutor’s office of Ruma, who stated that the actions of the persons in question show characteristics of the criminal offences “Assault on a public official while carrying out an official action” from Article 323, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code (CC) and “Complicity in a slight physical injury” from Article 122, paragraph 2 in connection with Article 33 of the CC and ordered the measure of custody of up to 48 hours, where after a hearing within the statutory term, they would be handed over to the judge for preliminary proceedings of the Basic Court in Ruma. He was brought to the Sremska Mitrovica Penal and Correctional Establishment (KPZ) by the police officers of the Ruma police station.

On 3 November 2022, after the hearing with the on-duty deputy of the Basic Public Prosecutor’s office of Ruma and after the hearing with the judge for preliminary proceedings of the Basic Court in Ruma, the persons were ordered to be detained for up to 30 days. No other legal coercive means were applied to these persons during the actions of the police patrol except for means to cuff them.

According to the available knowledge of the police officers of this Police Administration, the person subsequently submitted a criminal complaint to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Ruma against the police officers of the Ruma PS, and the Internal Control Sector has taken over the work and actions related to the complaint.

16. In accordance with the Professional Development Programme for Police Officers of the Ministry of Interior for 2023 – 01 number 15-236/23-1 – dated 9 May 2023, as part of the mandatory instruction in the area “Theoretical Instruction”, the topic “Commission for the Implementation of Standards of Police Treatment in the Field of Torture Prevention” was held, which was attended by 28,336 police officers during 2023.

Within the framework of additional trainings, which are also implemented through seminars, the aforementioned programme includes also a seminar called "PEACE" - a model for conducting an official interview, which can be organised and implemented independently by separate organisational units, in accordance with their own training needs. The Administration

for Police Training does not have data on seminars that organisational units organise and implement independently.

Also, within the Council of Europe project “Enhancing the human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Serbia - phase 2”, a working group of the Ministry was established with the task of creating a Manual for police officers, with the working title “Interviewing in the pre-investigation procedure”. For the purposes of creating the manual, the project leader hired two professors from the Criminalistics and Police University as experts in this field, while the working group also includes representatives of the Criminal Police Directorate, the Administration for Police Training, as well as representatives of the Commission for the Implementation of Standards of Police Treatment in the Field of Torture Prevention. The final version of the manual has not yet been defined, as consultations are ongoing within the working group about the text of the manual itself.

18. and 19. In addition to the detention units within the On-Duty Service of the Police Administration in Subotica, there is another room for the temporary accommodation of persons and one room for the triage of persons (in which the necessary measures are taken for the person in custody before being placed in the detention unit, in accordance with the applicable regulations. In the mentioned room, a medical examination is performed and, if necessary, the person in custody is provided with the necessary medical assistance and a confidential consultation with his lawyer is enabled).

Persons in custody are allowed to keep all relevant documentation with them during the custody. Police officers do not have access to the doctor’s report and medical diagnosis (which are particularly sensitive data in terms of personal data protection), they only have access to information about the health status of the person in custody that is important for dealing with the person in custody. The doctor who examined the person in custody only gives information to the head of the On-Duty Service about whether the health condition of the person in custody allows him to be detained by the police, or whether he needs medical help in a competent medical institution.

Police officers do not attend medical examinations of persons deprived of their liberty, unless the doctor who performs the examination requests it and an official note is made about it, which is an integral part of the custody record. Before each medical examination, police officers warn the doctor about the behaviour of the person in custody (whether he is under the influence of alcohol, whether he is aggressive, whether he attacked the officers) who then decides whether the police officers should attend the medical examination. Data on visible physical injuries, changes in health status and data on provided medical assistance are entered in the Minutes of Custody.

Police officers of the Police Administration in Subotica participated, together with competent representatives of the Basic and Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Subotica in a seminar on the topic “Methodology of conducting an investigation following a complaint of ill-treatment by police officers”, on 12 May 2023 in the Hotel Prezident in Palić. The seminar tackled all the above-mentioned measures when learning about ill-treatment, for instance, the obligation of the aforementioned subjects to act when they become aware of treatment that includes allegations of torture, inhuman and degrading behaviour, as well as threats of torture in accordance with Article 5 of the Rulebook on the Complaint Procedure in the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, and the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office in Subotica is then informed thereof and the entire case files are handed over to it for further processing. On the same basis, case files are submitted to the Internal Control Sector, and the submitted complaint is reported to the Police

Directorate and the body responsible for conducting supervision in the field of torture prevention.

During the visit of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), as part of the visit to the Sremska Mitrovica Penal Correctional Establishment (KPZ), they also inspected the premises used by the Police Administration of Sremska Mitrovica, which are located within the Investigation Department of the KPZ.

The Police Administration of Sremska Mitrovica is currently using units of the abovementioned establishment because it does not have its own premises that meet the conditions for holding persons in custody under the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC). At the same time, persons from the entire area of this Police Administration are detained in these units. The mentioned units meet the basic requirements, as regards the square footage, accessibility of sanitary facilities, the right to daily rest, physical activity and meals, and the persons are physically separated from other detainees and have no contact with them.

The mentioned units however, despite the fact that they are used by the Police Administration of Sremska Mitrovica, are owned by the Penal Correctional Establishment (KPZ), and the same controls the mentioned units to a full extent when it comes to their arrangement and hygiene. Given that the said units are located in the Investigation Department of the said establishment, entry into the establishment itself is strictly limited and it is not possible to organise hygiene and maintenance of these units by persons who are employed or work under contract in this Police Administration. Despite the good constant communication with the representatives of the KPZ, due to the fact that their resources are limited, these units are in the same overall condition as other units in the KPZ, and we certainly cannot be satisfied with them when it comes to their condition and hygiene.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that persons in custody, unlike detained persons, are kept in the said units for a very short time, that is, there is a large influx and outflux of people through the said units, and these persons themselves are not interested in the further condition of the units and the hygiene in them, and even they with their own behaviour contribute to the deterioration of the condition of the room and hygiene.

Note: In March 2023, a tour of the mentioned units was carried out by the commander of Sremska Mitrovica PS and the deputy commander of the Sremska Mitrovica PS, during which the stated condition was noted, and in connection with which contact was made with the deputy director of the KPZ, with a request to take measures to improve the situation.

25. Police officers of the Police Department participated together with competent representatives of the Basic and Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Subotica in a seminar on the topic "Methodology of conducting an investigation following a complaint of ill-treatment by police officers", on 12 May 2023 in the Hotel Prezident in Palić, where all the above-mentioned measures were considered on how to act upon learning of an ill-treatment.

In cases where knowledge is obtained or when the complaint contains allegations of torture, inhuman and degrading behaviour, as well as threats of torture in accordance with Art. 5 of the Rulebook on the Complaint Procedure in the Ministry of Interior, the Basic Public Prosecutor in Subotica is informed thereof, and the entire case file is handed over to it for further processing. On the same basis, case files are submitted to the Internal Control Sector, and the

submitted complaint is reported to the Police Directorate and the body responsible for conducting supervision in the field of torture prevention.

27. Given that the recommendations formulated in paragraph 25 refer to public prosecutor's offices, below, for the sake of clarification, we provide a description of the relationship between public prosecutor's offices and the Internal Control Sector, as stipulated by law.

Pursuant to Article 285 of the Criminal Procedure Code (“Official Gazette of RS”, number 72/2011, 101/2011, 121/2012, 32/2013, 45/2013, 55/2014, 35/2019, 27/2021 – Constitutional Court, 62/2021 – Constitutional Court), the pre-investigation procedure is led by the public prosecutor. The public prosecutor can order the police to take certain actions in order to detect criminal offences and find suspects. The police are obliged to carry out the order of the public prosecutor, as well as to regularly inform him of the actions taken.

Governmental and other authorities, legal entities and natural persons shall report to the competent public prosecutor criminal offenses which are prosecuted *ex officio*, about which they have been notified or learn about them in another way.

Therefore, the law determines which governmental authority is responsible for the implementation of the pre-investigation procedure and investigation, for all criminal offences that are prosecuted *ex officio*.

In addition, on 18 October 2017, the Minister of Interior issued the Instruction on the Methodology for Conducting an Investigation in Cases of Ill-Treatment by the Police, which is also binding for public prosecutors based on an act passed by the Republic Public Prosecutor.

According to the mentioned methodology, the investigation is carried out by the public prosecutor, and exceptionally he can entrust the carrying out of certain evidentiary actions to the Internal Control Sector. The investigation should not be conducted by the public prosecutor who acted or is acting in the case in which the injured party (alleged victim of ill-treatment) appears as a defendant or witness.

Accordingly, if in the course of any criminal proceedings someone makes a “credible accusation” or there are clear indications that the defendant or witness has been ill-treated, a separate criminal case will be formed within which such allegations will be verified, and another public prosecutor will act upon it.

In accordance with chapter 4 of the Methodology, “the public prosecutor can initiate a procedure through the Internal Control Sector in which the accused police officer can be suspended until the end of the investigation. Police officers cannot attend the questioning of witnesses, including the injured party. Exceptionally, if security reasons so dictate, the questioning of witnesses may be attended by police officers who did not participate in the event that is the subject of the investigation.”

From the above, it can be concluded that the recommendations from item 25 of the Report will be implemented, and the recommendation from item 27, which refers to the Internal Control Sector, will also be implemented.

One part of item 27 of the Report that precedes the recommendation states, among other things, that “the Committee takes positive note of the reinforcement of the staff of the SUKP and its actions in seeking to secure evidence promptly during the investigation of cases of ill-treatment

by the police, as well as of the need to maintain a proactive approach in its so-called information-gathering activities".

Therefore, it is an indisputable fact that the Internal Control Sector consistently implements the Methodology for conducting investigations in cases of ill-treatment by the police, as well as that, in accordance with the law, it acts – without exception – following the orders of the competent public prosecutors.

As a conclusion to these comments, we note that in 2023, further trainings were organised for the implementation of the Methodology for Conducting an Investigation in Cases of Ill-Treatment by the Police, in cooperation with the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judicial Academy and the OSCE Mission in Serbia.

In May and June 2023, three trainings were held (Palić, Novi Pazar and Vranje) for police officers of the Internal Control Sector and regional police administrations, as well as for public prosecutors. In October, a training was held in Negotin, while in November trainings are planned in Šabac and Zlatibor.

In addition to the fact that the Internal Control Sector actively participates in the organisation of these trainings, a representative of the Internal Control Sector is also serving as a lecturer.

28. The Methodology for Conducting an Investigation in Cases of Ill-Treatment by the Police envisages the power of the public prosecutor to initiate, through the Internal Control Sector, a procedure in which the accused police officer can be suspended until the end of the investigation.

29. In the custody units of the Police Administration in Subotica, which are located in the headquarters of the Police Administration, on the ground floor of the building of the On-Duty Service of the Police Administration, video surveillance has been installed to monitor and follow the behaviour of persons in custody in custody units, in order to preserve safety and health. Police officers of the On-Duty Service continuously monitor the units through the control screens on the computer in the On-Duty Service. Also, a technical device has been installed in the custody units with which the person in custody can call the police officer on duty.

In addition to constant video surveillance, police officers occasionally visit persons in custody, on which occasion they communicate with them, and the information about the visits, as well as any related notes, is entered in the Minutes of Custody.

In the part related to the introduction of the so-called "Custody Officer", we point out that after the visit of the CPT in March 2023, and with a view to improving the work of police officers in on-duty services whose competence is related to the treatment of persons in custody, we have defined and described the tasks and duties of the job of a police officer responsible for custody and supervision of persons in custody in the "Catalogue of Designations and Descriptions of Jobs of Police Officers in the MOI". It is also planned to organise specialised trainings for police officers in charge of treatment of persons in custody.

In this regard, the aforementioned Catalogue, and more precisely, the part with the description of the tasks and duties of police officers in on-duty services includes, among other tasks, the description of tasks related to the treatment of persons in custody for the jobs shift leader, assistant shift leader and police officer:

- the shift leader is – “responsible for the implementation of the custody measure and the exercise of the rights of the persons in custody (safety, health, nutrition, etc.) from the moment the person is brought to the official premises until the custody is terminated”,
- the assistant shift leader – “directly supervises persons in custody and undertakes other measures and actions in order to protect and exercise the rights of persons in custody as prescribed by law”,
- the police officer – “directly supervises persons in custody and undertakes other measures and actions in order to protect and exercise the rights of persons in custody as prescribed by law”.

Regarding the activities aimed at concluding a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health, these activities are implemented within the Council of Europe project “Enhancing the human rights protection for detained and sentenced persons in Serbia”. The Commission for the Implementation of Standards of Police Treatment in the Field of Torture Prevention carried out activities related to the filling out of questionnaires by police officers, headquarters of police administrations and police stations, with data related to the provision of health care services in police custody and data in the field of police cooperation with medical institutions that included 1,064 respondents (police officers) in 101 police stations in the Republic of Serbia.

After that, a meeting of representatives of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health was held on the topic of improving the cooperation of the aforementioned ministries in order to standardise the implementation of medical examinations of persons while in police custody and to draw up an agreement between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health, during which it was agreed that the following activities are to be implemented once the Ministry of Health performs an analysis of the actions of healthcare workers during medical examinations of persons in custody, as well as during the provision of police assistance to healthcare workers.

30. On 11 June 2019, the Rulebook on Police Powers ("Official Gazette of the RS", number 41/2019) was adopted, which entered into force and began to be applied starting from 19 June 2019. Articles 19-39 of the Rulebook on Police Powers regulate the rights and treatment of persons in custody, which has been harmonised with the recommendations of the CPT. All police officers are obliged to act in accordance with the aforementioned rulebook. Failure to act in accordance with it entails the initiation of disciplinary proceedings for a serious breach of official duty as prescribed by the Law on Police.

In Article 29 of the Rulebook on Police Powers, it is prescribed, among other things, that the person in custody must be informed that he has the following rights: that a person of his choice, a diplomatic consular representative of the country of which he is a citizen or a representative of a relevant international organisation, if the person is a refugee or a stateless person, be informed of the time and place of his custody; that a guardian, person or authority, be informed about the custody if it is necessary to provide protection or care for a child or other persons cared for by the person in custody; that he can contact the diplomatic consular representative of his country, i.e. the representative of a corresponding international organisation, without hindrance.

In order to monitor and improve the treatment of persons in custody by police officers, the custody records have been improved, where, as mandatory data, also data on the exercise of the person’s right to inform a family member or other close person must be recorded, as well as the date and time when the close person was notified. The improved version of the records was put into production on 10 August 2022.

When determining the custody measure, the persons in custody are informed of their rights by being handed over a written notification, and in each individual case the person in custody is given the right to inform a close relative or a third party about the custody, about which the person receives a feedback information.

The fact that a close relative or a third party has been notified about the custody is recorded in the Minutes of Custody and in the Custody Decision, and the time when the family member was informed of the person's custody is entered in the Minutes of Custody.

31. Article 29 of the Rulebook on Police Powers stipulates the right of a person in custody to be instructed that he is not obliged to declare anything, and that everything he declares can be used against him as evidence in a legally prescribed procedure; that he has the right to an attorney of his choice, that he has the right to have an unhindered consultation with the attorney, that he has the right to have his attorney attend his hearing; that he has the right to be informed that the defence attorney will be appointed ex officio, if he does not chose any attorney, when this is mandatory by law.

In order to monitor and improve the way police officers treat persons, the custody records have been improved, where, as mandatory data, also the access of the person in custody to the defence attorney is recorded, whether the person wanted to hire an attorney of his own choice or whether the person was assigned a defence attorney ex officio, then also data about the defence attorney is recorded (name and surname), the date and time of contacting the defence attorney, date and time when the defence attorney entered the official premises, date and time when the defence attorney performed a consultation with the person.

The Police Administration in Subotica undertakes measures to ensure that all police stations in its composition enter into the custody records all the data relevant to the access of the person in custody to a defence attorney, whether the person wanted to hire a defence attorney of his own choice, whether he was assigned an ex officio defence attorney, when this is required by law, whether he had an unhindered consultation with the defence attorney, whereby all relevant data on the exercise of this right are recorded: data about the defence attorney, the time he was contacted, the time he was provided access to the person in custody and the time he talked with the person.

At the Police Administration in Subotica, the person in custody is provided instruction about his procedural rights and about his rights during custody. In situations where, upon approval by the competent public prosecutor, custody is ordered for a person who is reasonably suspected of being the perpetrator of a criminal offence which is prosecuted ex officio (in accordance with the provisions of Article 294 of the CPC), considering that it is a matter of mandatory defence, the suspect is provided with an ex officio defence attorney. In those situations, the defence attorney is appointed by decision of the competent public prosecutor, from the list of the competent bar association.

In situations where custody is determined based on Article 190, paragraph 3 of the Law on Misdemeanours, the person in custody is informed of his rights, including the right to a defence attorney of his own choice, the right to conduct an unhindered consultation with the defence attorney and the right to have his defence attorney attend his hearing. Considering that this is an optional defence, the defence attorney is not appointed ex officio.

34. In accordance with Art. 288 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the police may summon citizens to collect information. In the summons, the reason for the summons and the capacity in which the citizen is summoned must be indicated.

When acting according to the provisions of this article, the police cannot interview citizens in the capacity of defendants, that is, question them in the capacity of witnesses or experts, except in the case referred to in Article 289 of the CPC, which stipulates, among other things, that if the police, during the collection of information, assesses that the summoned citizen can be considered a suspect, they are obliged to immediately instruct him about the rights pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1, item 1) and 2) of the CPC and about the right to hire a defence attorney who will attend his hearing, and to instruct him that they will inform the competent public prosecutor thereof without delay.

In the Police Administration in Subotica, a person in custody is taught about his procedural rights and his rights during custody, in his native language or a language he understands. In situations where, upon approval by the competent public prosecutor, custody is ordered for a person who is suspected of being the perpetrator of a criminal offence which is prosecuted *ex officio* (in accordance with the provisions of Article 294 of the CPC), considering that it is a mandatory defence, the suspect is provided with an *ex officio* defence attorney. In those situations, the defence attorney is appointed by decision of the competent public prosecutor, from the list of the competent bar association. In situations where custody is determined based on Article 190, paragraph 3 of the Law on Misdemeanours, the person in custody is informed of his rights, including the right to a defence attorney of his choice, about the right to have an unhindered consultation with the defence attorney and about the right to have his defence attorney attend his hearing.

39. Article 29 of the Rulebook on Police Powers regulates the rights of a person in custody: a person in custody is informed about his rights orally and by being handed over a written notification in his native language or a language he understands, namely: the right to be informed about the reasons for detention; to right to be instructed that he is not obliged to declare anything, and that everything he declares can be used against him as evidence in a legally prescribed procedure; the right to a defence attorney of his choice, the right to have an unhindered consultation with the defence attorney, the right to have the defence attorney attend his hearing; the right to be informed that the defence attorney will be appointed *ex officio*, if not chosen, when this is mandatory by law; the right to inform the person of his choice, the diplomatic consular representative of the country of which he is a citizen or the representative of the relevant international organisation, if the person is a refugee or a stateless person, about the time and place of custody; the right to inform the guardian, person or authority, without delay about the custody if it is necessary to ensure the protection or care for a child or other persons cared for by the person in custody; the right to contact the diplomatic consular representative of his country, that is, the representative of the corresponding international organisation, without hindrance; the right to be examined by a doctor; the right to nutrition and continuous eight-hour rest; the right to initiate proceedings before the competent police or judicial authorities to examine the legality of custody or compensation of damages.

After reviewing the actions of police officers during the exercise of the police powers “bringing” and “detaining”, at the request of the Police Administration and the Commission for the Implementation of Standards of Police Treatment in the Field of Torture Prevention, the forms “Rights of a person brought” and “Rights of a person in custody”, as stipulated in Article 85 and 87 of the Law on Police and in Articles 19 and 29 of the Rulebook on Police Powers, were translated into the English language and the languages of national minorities in the

Republic of Serbia (Hungarian, Romanian, Romani and Albanian) and the same were uploaded onto the JIS (Unique Information System) of the Serbian MOI on 6 October 2021, where they are available to all police officers.

In addition to the above, the form of the rights of persons in custody itself has, next to the space for the signatures of the person in custody and the police officer, also a space for the language interpreter's signature, as well as the note "If the person in custody refuses to receive the written notification or refuses to sign it or is illiterate, state this in the notification in writing", according to which the police officer is obliged to act in accordance with Art. 29 of the Rulebook on Police Powers.

42. Measures and actions are being considered that will create the required technical possibilities, given that the Police Administration in Subotica does not have units equipped with audio and video equipment for interviewing persons.

44. In Article 30 of the Rulebook on Police Powers, custody is determined by a custody decision. The custody decision in criminal proceedings is adopted in the manner prescribed by the law governing criminal proceedings. The decision on custody in misdemeanour proceedings is adopted by the head of the organisational unit that ordered the taking into custody or by a police officer authorised by him. The head of the organisational unit or an authorised police officer are responsible for the legal application of the aforementioned police power. The police officer who implements the custody measure is responsible for the exercise of rights of the person in custody (safety, health, etc.) from his placement in the detention unit to the termination or cancellation of the custody. Police officers cannot bring service weapons into the detention unit.

Article 32 of the Rulebook on Police Powers stipulates that the time of detention of a person is calculated from the moment of the beginning of the application of the police power of bringing a person, when the conditions for detention in misdemeanour proceedings have been met, that is, from the moment of arrest or responding to a summons, when the conditions for detention in a criminal proceedings have been met.

Article 38 stipulates that the police officer shall draw up a record of the custody of a person, which contains the data prescribed in Article 111 of this Rulebook (personal data of the person in custody, name, surname, address, unique citizen registration number; time of custody; legal basis for custody; information on the method in which a person is instructed about the reasons for custody and his rights; information on the exercised rights of the person in custody; information on notifying family members, other persons and competent authorities about the custody; data about taking the person in custody to the competent authority; data on visible physical injuries, other information about the health condition and medical assistance provided to the person in custody; data on temporarily confiscated items suitable for assault, injury or self-harm; data on the time and reasons for leaving and returning persons to detention units; time of termination of custody: the signature of the person in custody and the police officer conducting the custody. Minutes of custody of a person are signed by the police officer who put the person into custody and by the person in custody. A copy of the report is delivered to the person in custody. If the person in custody refuses to receive a copy of the minutes or refuses to sign them, the police officer will make a note about that in the minutes.

By improving the custody regards, with regard to the introduction of mandatory recording of data on the access of persons in custody to defence attorneys, on exercising the right to inform a family member or other close person, on medical examinations, there were also changes to

the minutes in terms of supplementing its content with the above specified data. Also, the changes refer to the time when the Minutes can be printed (it is possible only after the custody is terminated), as well as to the fact that the minutes are signed by the police officer who released/surrendered the person (name and surname are recorded when the custody is terminated).

Police officers of the Police Administration in Subotica enter all relevant data in the Minutes of Custody, considering all instructions and recommendations received during the visit of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM).

46. Regarding the recommendations for the lighting in the cell in which a person in custody is put up at the Ruma Police Station, where an adequate source of artificial lighting should be provided that enables reading and also a source of natural light, as well as sufficient air flow and ventilation, a letter was submitted to the Department of Logistics for the Police Administration Sremska Mitrovica, so that they can take measures from their own field of competence in order to implement this recommendation and rectify the shortcomings.

A letter was also sent to the Department of Logistics for PU Sremska Mitrovica and the Department for Information and Communication Technologies for PU Sremska Mitrovica, and the video surveillance in the Ruma PS has been repaired and is in operation, and also the recommendation was sent to them to install devices that will allow the person in custody to call the police officer on duty in the Ruma PS.

48. In the 5th chapter of the report (“Conditions of detention”), the Committee noted that there was no ventilation system in the two two-bed detention rooms in the Police Outpost for Duty, Intervention and Security (PI DIO), and that the air could not be refreshed.

After this visit, the Police Administration in Novi Sad organised the installation of a new ventilation system, with air conditioning devices, and in this way rectified the shortcomings noted in the Committee’s Report.

The delegation established that the conditions in seven cells in the building of the Police Administration for the City of Belgrade, the Novi Beograd PS and the Stari grad PS are satisfactory, while shortcomings were observed in the Zemun Police Station. According to reports, in the Zemun PS, two out of five cells had concrete platforms, a semi-partitioned sanitary annex and were between 6 and 11 m² in size, with no access to natural light, and in one cell artificial lighting was not working. In addition, the cells were not equipped with mattresses and blankets, and detainees were forced to rest on the bare concrete for long periods of time.

In this regard, the Committee recommended that the Serbian authorities take measures to rectify the shortcomings in terms of conditions of detention, which specifically refers to the need to equip the cells of the Zemun Police Station with mattresses and blankets, which will be provided to the detainees, as well as to maximally limit the use of cells without natural light.

Accordingly, in the report obtained from the Zemun Police Station, it is stated that all necessary measures and actions will be taken in order to eliminate the observed deficiencies in the detention units of the Zemun Police Station, with a note that the entire building of the Zemun Police Station is expected to be adapted in 2024, when all rooms should be renovated, including rooms for accommodation of brought and detained persons.

All organisational units of the Police Administration for the City of Belgrade are familiar with the Committee's recommendations regarding the provision of adequate conditions in detention units and in the coming period will strive to take all necessary measures to act in accordance with the recommendations that were given.

In the headquarters of the Police Administration in Subotica, two detention rooms were adapted. The mentioned rooms are located on the ground floor of the Police Administration building, that is, within the On-Duty Service, and after adaptation, they now fulfil the stipulated and applicable standards in terms of conditions of detention. The mentioned two rooms are equipped with a sink, a sanitary annex, they have the necessary daylight and each one is intended for the accommodation of 3 persons of the same sex. Adaptation started on 30 April 2018, and the technical takeover was completed on 31 May 2018 by the officials of the Department for Construction and Maintenance of Establishments and Equipment of the Sector for Material and Financial Affairs of the MOI. They have been in use since then.

In addition to the above-mentioned two conditional rooms within the On-Duty Service, there is another room for detention, which meets the minimum conditions for the detention of persons with an accommodation capacity for 4 persons, and which was adapted in 2012 from the Police Administration's own funds, as well as one room for the temporary accommodation of persons and one room for the triage of persons (in which necessary measures are taken for the detained person, before being placed in the detention room, in accordance with the Rulebook on Police Powers). In the mentioned room, a medical examination is performed and, if necessary, the detained person is provided with the necessary medical assistance and a confidential consultation with the lawyer is possible.

On 13 February 2014, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia, in the capacity of the National Mechanism for Torture Prevention, visited the Police Administration in Subotica and the Police Stations within it. According to the report of the Ombudsman, during the visit it was established that the existing detention room has been renovated and adapted to comply with applicable standards.

In the Police Administration in Subotica, the detention rooms are equipped with beds, on which there are mattresses with a special cover, which is extremely suitable for disinfection and cleaning, as well as clean blankets. During accommodation, detained persons also "borrow" pillows with a special cover, which are also well suited for cleaning, and clean sheets and pillowcases, blanket covers, are provided based on a needs assessment, for security reasons.

49. Regarding the provision of food to detained persons, Article 37 of the Rulebook on Police Powers stipulates that a detained person will be provided food, namely three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, dinner) at regular intervals, which includes the right to a special diet for health reasons or religious beliefs. The detained person will be provided with one meal within six hours from the moment of detention, and in case the detention lasts longer than 12 hours, the person will be provided with three meals. Food is provided in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry that regulate food services and accommodation.

Data on the treatment of detained persons by police officers and the exercise of the aforementioned rights are recorded in the custody records.

Food for detained persons is provided from the restaurant of the MOI of the RS, and in those organisational units where there are none, food for detained persons in custody is provided from local catering establishments, with which the PPU has signed contracts for this purpose.

The Police Administration in Subotica provides meals for all detained persons through the Administration for Food and Accommodation - Social Food Restaurant in Subotica, which is located within the PA in Subotica. Persons are provided with one meal within 6 hours of the start of the detention, and the same persons are provided with three meals if the detention will last longer than 12 hours.

Given that the prescribed working hours of the Social Food Restaurant in Subotica are until 3 p.m., and in accordance with the determined budget, in the following period the possibility of providing at least one complete meal will be considered, if the detention lasts longer than 12 hours, in a time interval that corresponds to the working hours of the restaurant.

B. Establishments under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice

We thank the delegation of the Committee for the recommendations to the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions with a view to improving the system of enforcement of criminal sanctions in the Republic of Serbia.

In relation to the Committee's comments and recommendations, we submit the following responses:

18. With the support of the Council of Europe and the OSCE Mission to RS, the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions produced three publications aimed at preventing, investigating and documenting cases of torture in prisons. The first publication is the "Guidelines on actions of employees in the event of allegations of ill-treatment", which regulate the procedures in an establishment in case of reports with allegations of torture, as well as the obligation to initiate proceedings ex officio if there are indications of possible ill-treatment. Establishments for the enforcement of criminal sanctions were ordered to strictly adhere to the above procedures and to automatically notify the prosecution in all cases of possible ill-treatment.

A "Handbook for health care workers in establishments" was also created, which includes protocols, from the first examination after admission to the examination before discharge from the establishment, and it also contains forms for keeping medical and other records in order to standardise procedures in establishments. All injuries are registered, photographed and recorded by the establishment's doctor in three documents: a medical record, a body diagram sheet and a special register.

The injury report must contain the following:

- a) An anamnestic version according to the testimony of the person deprived of liberty about the way the injury occurred with answers to the questions: where and when the injury occurred, who inflicted the injuries, the manner in which the injuries were inflicted,
- b) A precise description of the injury presented objectively and without prejudice; the following is described: type of injury, localisation, size, direction of extension, surface and edges.
- c) The doctor's opinion on the connection between the allegation of the person deprived of liberty and the objective medical findings.

The Handbook is significant because it contains legal and medical standards regarding examinations after the application of coercive measures, i.e., violent treatment in the establishment, with the aim of raising the awareness of doctors about their role in the prevention of ill-treatment in prisons.

The third handbook is related to UN standards and the implementation of the Istanbul Protocol for investigating and documenting cases of torture.

In cooperation with the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade and the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Administration organised trainings for the application of the aforementioned Guidelines and handbooks for the directors of establishments, physicians, heads of treatment and security services, with the aim of ensuring a multidisciplinary approach for the prevention of torture in establishments, documenting injuries and reporting possible cases to the competent prosecutor's office.

48. In the Sremska Mitrovica KPZ, in the two detention rooms indicated in the Report, the dilapidated doors leading to the sanitary facilities, toilets and beds were replaced, and a room painting plan was made for the current year.

50. The Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions continuously implements the measures and activities foreseen by the Strategy for the Development of the System for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions with the Action Plan for the period 2022-2027, with the aim of improving material conditions in prisons and solving overcrowding in establishments for the enforcement of criminal sanctions.

With the reconstruction of the existing accommodation facilities of establishments and the construction of new establishments, the capacity for the accommodation of persons deprived of liberty was expanded to 11,957 places, which significantly reduced their overcrowding and improved the conditions of accommodation of convicted persons. Although in quantitative terms the capacities exceed the current needs in terms of the total number of places, there is still an uneven load, which is reflected in the overcrowding of establishments under closed regime and closed departments. In this sense, in accordance with the Action Plan and list of priorities for the adaptation and construction of new establishments, procedures have been initiated in the Sremska Mitrovica KPZ, the Požarevac-Zabela KPZ, the District Prison in Novi Sad, the District Prison in Subotica and others.

The system of enforcement of alternative sanctions is constantly being improved, so that the enforcement of alternative sanctions at the end of 2022 amounted to 19.3% compared to the total number of enforced criminal sanctions, which are under the responsibility of the Administration. The total number of decisions on rendered alternative sanctions and measures has been continuously increasing since 2015, and in 2020 it exceeded 5,000 for the first time. In the course of 2022, a total of 6,337 court decisions on the enforcement of alternative sanctions and measures were submitted to the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions, which represents a significant increase compared to 2021 (5,423). A uniform determination of the measure house arrest is observed. As of 31 December 2022, 410 persons were under house arrest, which is 15.7% of the total number of detained persons. The

monitoring of decision-making on parole continues (in 2022, the percentage of parolees, compared to the total percentage of persons released from prisons, was 24.3%).

53. A standard of actions of directors of establishments is that actions of employees in all services are controlled by the director of the establishment and the heads of services and that a clearly defined message is sent that the excessive use of coercion will not be tolerated, as well as any form of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. Directors of establishments, as well as heads of services in the establishment, are in direct contact with detained and convicted persons. The Centre for Professional Training and Development of the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions produced the manual “Prevention of Torture and Use of Coercive Measures in Establishments for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions”. This programme of additional training for employees of the Security Service contains conditions and procedures for the correct application of coercive measures and special training for verbal techniques on how to calm down violent and agitated convicts, skills that enable the minimal use of coercive measures, prevention techniques and de-escalation skills.

57. The Strategy for the Development of the System for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions with the Action Plan for the period 2022-2027, foresees objective 4 as a special goal: Improvement of material conditions in establishments for the enforcement of criminal sanctions, which includes the following activities:

- Construction of new establishments within the system of enforcement of criminal sanctions, in accordance with the recommendations of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of the Council of Europe, namely the new prison in Kragujevac – which was completed in the fourth quarter of 2022, in Kruševac, Subotica and Sombor, a new establishment for the accommodation of convicted persons in the Sremska Mitrovica KPZ, the Požarevac-Zabela KPZ, the Penal Correctional Establishment for Women in Požarevac, the detention unit in the District Prison in Novi Sad, facilities for the accommodation of the sick and people with mental disorders in the Požarevac-Zabela KPZ and the Niš KPZ, as well as finding a location and construction of a building for the needs of the Special Prison Hospital in Belgrade;
- The reconstruction of the existing capacities of establishments for the enforcement of criminal sanctions (reconstruction of blocks in the Belgrade District Prison, the Zaječar District Prison and detention departments in other establishments).

The relocation of prisons from city centres (Kruševac, Subotica and Sombor) is planned, given that an assessment has been made that due to the existing architectural solutions, adequate reconstruction of the existing buildings in accordance with international standards cannot be carried out. For the construction of these prisons, the needed financial resources were defined in detail in the accompanying Action Plan.

In relation to the prisons visited, we report that the reconstruction and adaptation of detention block 2.1 in the Belgrade District Prison has begun, with the deadline for completion of the works being April 2024.

Along with the adaptation of block 2.1, rehabilitation of block 2.0, which is located below block 2.1, is being carried out in the form of painting, lighting repairs, replacement of installations and replacement of certain sanitary facilities, replacement of damaged windows and doors. Completion of the rehabilitation of the complete block 2.0 is expected in the middle of November 2023.

Also, the rehabilitation of block 5.1 is planned for next year, when the damaged sanitary facilities will be replaced, walls painted, and other shortcomings rectified.

The procurement of a certain number of new mattresses that will replace damaged, worn, and old mattresses is in progress, with further continuous procurement planned. Also, an apparatus for destroying bedbugs was acquired, which works on the principle of high-temperature water vapour, and which is used to treat detention rooms. At the same time, regular pest control of detention rooms is carried out.

The Subotica district prison conducts annually a public procurement procedure in order to conclude a contract with a licensed company in the field of disinfection and pest control. Also, every year, starting from the month of April, all the rooms for the accommodation of persons deprived of their liberty in the establishment are painted. In 2023, all the rooms in which detainees are accommodated were painted.

Within the framework of available financial resources, the Subotica district prison will renovate the sanitary facilities, install sinks and repair doors on the sanitary annexes, as well as equip them with showers and partition walls in order to increase privacy and accessibility.

In the Sremska Mitrovica KPZ, measures were taken to improve the conditions in the detention rooms: old mattresses were replaced, a procedure was initiated for the renovation of the sanitary area (procurement of tiles, replacement of showers), control of hygiene maintenance was strengthened with the purchase of bed linen and the necessary equipment.

In connection with the construction of the new building of the Detention Unit in the Novi Sad District Prison, we inform you that in the past period, funds were provided for the preparation of the project documentation for a new detention unit of larger capacity, in accordance with European standards. The procedure of land restitution in the area planned for the construction of a new detention unit was completed by the City Assembly of Novi Sad and the General Regulation Plan for the Novi Sad District Prison was adopted, by means of which all preliminary actions regarding the regulation of urban planning conditions have been completed.

With regard to the existing capacities of the Novi Sad District Prison, we point out that all cells are regularly disinfected, pest control treatment for the elimination of bed bugs was carried out, and this was done on several occasions during 2023 (detention facility with a female department 8 times since the beginning of the year, closed department 5 times and semi-open department 4 times since the beginning of 2023), which means that all hygiene and health preventive measures are continuously implemented.

Steps have been taken to provide access to showers for detained persons as often as possible, and measures have also been taken to bring hygiene to a satisfactory level. Worn-out sanitary devices in the toilets have been replaced. Regarding mattresses that are old and dilapidated, new ones were ordered from internal production within the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions.

58. In the Subotica District Prison, a food menu is prepared to meet religious demands for every day of the year. In accordance with the delegation's requests, the menu will be adjusted so that foreign nationals of Islamic religion receive more consistent food at dinner during Ramadan. In the Sremska Mitrovica KPZ, a balanced diet in sufficient quantities and with adequate nutritional value is provided, which is especially taken care of in the case of juveniles.

59. With regard to the current number of persons in detention departments of establishments, the structure of the remand prisoners viewed in the context of the existing architectural solutions of these buildings, the organisation of a different regime of activities in establishments is not entirely possible. The process of establishing a greater number of activities and work engagement of remand prisoners in the Pančevo KPZ has been started, considering that this establishment was built according to plan with structured facilities in which it is possible to organise all the necessary contents. It is planned that with the completion of the reconstruction in the Belgrade District Prison, the construction of a new detention department in the Novi Sad District Prison, a new prison in Subotica, as well as the implementation of the plan foreseen in the Strategy to move the main detention establishments from city centres, conditions will be created for the implementation of the new concept of regime and activities in detention units with as many out-of-cell activities as possible. In the current conditions, the expansion of activities will be carried out in the direction of increasing statutory stays outdoors and providing parlours within the current prison capacities. With this capacity, a smaller number of detained persons may be employed with the consent of the competent court.

60. For juvenile offenders in the Belgrade District Prison, there is an activity plan that includes a multidisciplinary approach (psychologist, educator, doctor, member of the security service), which aims to provide adaptation support and cooperation with institutions such as the centre for social work, courts, health institutions, schools.

The Treatment Service of the Novi Sad District Prison, along with other services, has been actively participating in the implementation of recommendations in recent months, which refer to the implementation of purposeful activities for juvenile offenders.

The employees of the Treatment Service make efforts to involve themselves more intensively in the treatment of juvenile detainees through conversations and counselling. Most often, it involves psychological counselling, but also conversations with a social worker, special pedagogue, family therapist and various profiles of the pedagogical profession, with the aim to stabilise, empower and provide psychological counselling through therapeutic methods to juveniles.

Juvenile detainees are enabled to continue their education by providing quality conditions for mastering the material and passing final exams.

61. Establishments for the enforcement of criminal sanctions will start a programme of adaptive support and psychological assistance for women in custody. For the purpose of psychological and emotional support, treatment and health care officers of psychological and psychotherapeutic orientation are available to the remand prisoners every day, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 240 of the Law on the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions.

62. In the Subotica District Prison, a doctor with a specialty in emergency medicine and a doctor with a specialty in psychiatry were hired as consultants. In the proposal for a new systematisation of jobs in the Administration, an additional doctor position was requested.

In the Belgrade District Prison, in addition to the existing number of employees in the Health Care Service, it is certain that one nurse will be permanently employed, and it is planned to announce a competition for the hiring of a general practitioner.

63. In the Subotica District Prison, the financial plan provides funds for the purchase of defibrillators. Nurses are trained in providing first aid and are employed at the establishment in two shifts in the time interval from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., while on weekends they are ready for emergency situations that require medical care. The Subotica district prison does not have a registered dental office, so it provides the relevant services to persons deprived of their liberty by taking them outside the establishment to the competent state polyclinic.

64. Voluntary confidential counselling and testing for HIV, HCV, HBV has been in practice in the Novi Sad District Prison for more than ten years. It represents a certain form of prophylaxis and demonstrates extraordinary results through early detection, which is of extreme importance for any kind of diagnostics and treatment. The effect is also immeasurable in the case of communicable diseases, where every piece of information can be extremely important, especially in collective accommodation. The Administration will take measures to allocate more financial resources for systematic screenings and voluntary testing for blood-borne infectious diseases.

Also, establishments will perform screening for sexual abuse or other forms of gender-based violence against female detainees before they are admitted to the establishment.

68. The Proposal for Amendments to the Job Systematisation in the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions is completed and foresees a significant increase in the number of staff in the security service, by 145 positions, as well as a more operational organisational structure of the service itself, which will contribute to a drastic reduction in overtime engagement of employees. Also, this year, 15 trainee commanders in the Security Service in the Belgrade District Prison and 3 commanders in the Novi Sad District Prison were hired in the establishments visited by the Committee. The competition for the hiring of 16 commanders in the Novi Sad District Prison, 3 commanders in the Subotica District Prison and 12 commanders in the Sremska Mitrovica KPZ is underway.

69 to 73. We would like to inform you that the change of the regime for remand prisoners will be considered as part of the ongoing process of drafting amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code.

74. In the Belgrade District Prison, two cells on block 2.1 that were used to accommodate persons under enhanced supervision will be renovated, given that work is currently underway on the reconstruction of block 2.1, which involves the complete renovation of the block, that is, all the rooms on the relevant block. Completion of all works is scheduled for April 2024.

The Subotica District Prison points out in relation to the claims about the “padded room” – that it is room number 59 which is now used during the application of the coercive measure of separation, the room is covered by video surveillance and is equipped with a bed with a mattress, a bench and a commode.

Treatment and health care officers are available to persons deprived of their liberty to whom a special measure of placement under enhanced supervision is applied, in order to establish direct interaction during the execution of the measure and assessment of the psychological-emotional state and provide support. A new treatment programme “Application of motivational interviews” has been developed and training for employees from all establishments will be organised by the end of the year.

75. Members of the Security Service have received detailed instructions on how to search remand prisoners in order to minimise the discomfort of persons. They will not be required to remove all their clothes at the same time, that is, they will be allowed to remove their clothes above the waist and put them on again before removing further clothing.

Cuffing of juvenile persons when escorted outside the establishment will be an exception, in accordance with an individual assessment based on the risk of each individual case.

77. The Subotica District Prison welcomes the recommendation of the Committee, that the judge for the enforcement of criminal sanctions at the High Court in Subotica regularly visits the establishment and performs his statutory duties and states that a mechanism of visits by the competent judge for the enforcement of criminal sanctions has been established, and that it was conducted on 20 October 2023.

83. The control of the behaviour of employees in all services by the director of the establishment and by heads of services and a clearly defined message that the excessive use of coercion, as well as any form of illegal treatment and mistreatment of juvenile offenders will not be tolerated, is a standard of the Administration and was clearly conveyed at trainings for directors of establishments and heads of treatment and security services. The director issued an order to increase the intensity of contact between heads of services and treatment officers in the establishment and juveniles in the intensive care unit and to increase the number of employees who will work in this unit.

The Centre for Professional Training and Development of the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions has developed a manual “Prevention of Torture and Use of Coercive Measures in Establishments for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions”. This programme of additional training for employees of the security service includes conditions and procedures for the correct application of coercive measures and special training for verbal techniques on how to calm down violent and agitated convicts, skills that enable the minimal use of coercive measures, prevention techniques and de-escalation skills. In addition to this

training, the Administration has, in accordance with the provisions of the new Rulebook laying down Professional Development, Training, Exams and Programmes, as well as the Method of Taking the Professional Traineeship Exam and the Professional Exam in the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions and the Content and Record Keeping for Professional Exams and Professional Training (“Official Gazette of the RS”, number 56/2023 of 10/07/2023) ordered that a special training be organised for members of the security service in the establishment, which is based on a multidisciplinary approach towards juveniles in the context of exercising their rights provided by law and inclusion in specialised treatment and education programmes in accordance with their needs.

Also, the director of the establishment and the head of the security service organised a training for employees in the establishment itself, with a special emphasis on the application of coercive measures and dealing with juveniles. Heads regularly visit the closed department (intensive care unit) and get to know the needs and possible problems of juveniles in direct contact.

Regarding video and technical surveillance and material resources, the financial plan for the next year has planned financial resources for the purpose of improving CCTV.

The Educational Correctional Institution will inform the prosecutor’s office of any possible violations, in this regard it was stated that in the previous 3 years, five civil servants were found to have committed irregularities in the application of coercive measures and were disciplined, and criminal proceedings were initiated against one civil servant, which is still ongoing.

84. The Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions continued with the training of heads of services in establishments on the topic “Actions of employees in establishments for the enforcement of criminal sanctions in case of allegations of abuse and inter-prisoner violence (causes and preventive measures)” where individual cases were analysed, with a special emphasis on implementing preventive measures and a multidisciplinary approach in accordance with dynamic security techniques. All indications of possible inter-juvenile abuse are considered within the multidisciplinary team and adequate measures are taken.

In order to ensure a purposeful regime of activities in the Educational Correctional Institution (VPD), primary and secondary school classes are held daily, also within the closed department (intensive care unit). The juveniles also have preparatory classes for secondary school taught by the staff of the school in the establishment, and primary school lessons are taught by teachers from the Kruševac Primary School. Depending on the orientation of the juveniles, the establishment cooperates with secondary education institutions (Chemical Technological School, First Technical School, Economic Trade School, Polytechnic School from Kruševac, etc.). On average, 4 to 5 juveniles from the intensive care unit enrol in high school, as well as 5 to 14 juveniles in elementary school. For students of the eighth grade, preparatory classes are conducted in the school and within the intensive care unit for taking the final exam, which is held in June, after which the students gain a certificate of completed primary education.

85. The management of the VPD will completely put the stand-alone intensive care unit out of use and the juveniles will be moved to the housing pavilion within the grounds of the establishment, which meet the prescribed standards. In cooperation with the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions, the management of the VPD secured funds from the budget for 2024 for the development of a project for a new building for the housing of 30 juveniles for the needs of the stand-alone intensive care unit with all accompanying contents, in accordance with European standards.

87. Starting from November 2022, an arts and literary section started working once a week in the intensive care unit. 5 juveniles joined the arts section. 6 juveniles joined the literary section. Sports and recreational activities are conducted inside the pavilion and outside on the sports field. As for sports activities, juveniles are currently able to play group sports: football, basketball, volleyball, and they can also use the gym. As for sports activities inside the pavilion, table tennis and a chess section are available to juvenile offenders.

The interest of minors in chess increased after the Chess for Freedom competition, in which the juvenile offenders of the VPD Correctional Institution won first place in the international competition for persons deprived of their liberty in 2022, and second place in 2023. Two juveniles from the intensive care unit were on that team.

Specialised programmes intended for perpetrators of violent crimes and a General Cognitive-Behavioural Programme are implemented through group work, in which everyone from this Unit was involved over the past year and a half. Regarding educational workshops, the following were held: general cognitive-behavioural Programme; prevention of drug addiction; communication skills, resisting negative peer pressure; anger control; sexually transmitted diseases and contraception; housing, clothing and eating culture; preparation for the post-penal period (job search, obtaining personal documents and information about individuals and institutions that can help them in this process); prevention of alcoholism. The treatment officers participated in the development of the Specialised Programmes implemented by the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions in cooperation with the Council of Europe, they incorporated parts of these educational workshops into the aforementioned specialised programmes. During May 2022, the training for the Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Programme started, which is implemented by a civil society organisation, and which includes the juveniles of this unit individually and in groups. Regarding the filling of the multidisciplinary team with educators, psychologists and social workers, the Kruševac VPD will reorganise the work of the Treatment Service and will fill the multidisciplinary team within the stand-alone intensive care unit.

88. As for defibrillators and ECG machines, the primary care department of the Kruševac VPD health service, in cooperation with the Special Prison Hospital, will acquire and use an ECG machine and a mobile defibrillator. Medical staff, nurses and doctors, are trained to provide first aid in emergency situations, but in such cases an ambulance was always called, and until their arrival, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and accompanying ampoule therapy were applied.

89. The Kruševac VPD will conduct counselling on the importance of vaccination against HBV in cooperation with the Institute for Public Health.

92. In addition to the introduction of training for employees listed in item 83, in May 2022 the Kruševac VPD started implementing a programme for self-harm and suicide prevention in cooperation with the Center for Human Rights Niš and the non-governmental organisation "Help". The first level includes training with all educators, then a team is formed for the advanced group, from which mentors are trained who continue the training with other employees. This programme includes ten workshops, in which all employees who are in daily contact with juveniles are trained and who in this way become familiar with the assessment of the risk of suicide through established symptoms. We especially emphasise that all the Kruševac VPD employees, who are in contact and work with the juvenile offenders, are participants in this programme.

97. We would like to inform you that five cells of the closed department (intensive care unit) are no longer in use, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, and that the ordered disciplinary measures will be carried out in part A0.

99. The training of employees of the security service is planned based on the plan and programme of the Training Centre in the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions, and additional training will be organised for members of the security service when it comes to the application of coercive measures and the treatment of juvenile offenders in accordance with Article 43 of the new Rulebook laying down Professional Development, Training, Exams and Programmes, as well as the Method of Taking the Professional Traineeship Exam and the Professional Exam in the Administration for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions and the Content and Record Keeping for Professional Exams and Professional Training ("Official Gazette of the RS", number 56 /2023 dated 10 July 2023).

All reports on the use of coercion, with documentation, will be forwarded to the competent judge and prosecutor.

During the transfer of juveniles, high-risk offenders will be taken into account, in terms of security, and based on the risk assessment for each juvenile separately, a decision will be made on the application of restraint measures, which will be kept to a minimum.

The Kruševac VPD administration and management took seriously and responsibly all the recommendations from the Report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment into consideration, and the given recommendations will be acted upon in the future and all possible irregularities will be corrected.