
Council of Europe: “Prison overcrowding continues to be a problem”. Over a million inmates

Prison overcrowding “continues to be an acute and persistent problem in a significant number of European prison administrations”, according to the Council of Europe's Annual Penal Statistics on Prison Populations 2023, released today. In countries with over 500,000 inhabitants, twelve prison administrations reported having more inmates than places available in January 2023. “Overall, in Europe, the number of prisoners per 100 places available grew by 2% from 31 January 2022 to 31 January 2023 (from 91.7 to 93.5 inmates). Seven prison administrations reported a prison density of more than 105 inmates per 100 places available, indicating severe overcrowding”, the report states: Cyprus (166 inmates per 100 places), Romania (120), France (119), Belgium (115), Hungary (112), Italy (109) and Slovenia (107). Five prison administrations reported a very high prison density: Greece (103), Sweden (102), North Macedonia (101), Croatia (101) and Turkey(100). Other administrations reported a prison density below 100 but were on the edge of overcrowding: Ireland (99), Portugal (98), Finland (97), Denmark (97), England and Wales (UK) (97) and Azerbaijan (96). On 31 January 2023, there were 1,036,680 inmates detained in the 48 prison administrations of Council of Europe member states that provided this information (out of 51).

Valentina Bombelli