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**BALKAN
CRIMINOLOGY**

Greek prison policy between the hammer and the anvil

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**University of Sarajevo's Faculty of Criminalistics,
Criminology and Security Studies**

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Outline of the situation ¹

- One of the **lowest crime and prisoner rates** in Europe
- **Methods:**
 - a) Short sentences
 - b) suspension, conversion, and conditional release: ***“cryptoamnesty”***
- What are the methods today?
- **The limits**
 - for suspension, conversion and parole **decrease from time to time**, and **more lenient regulations** for early release because of work
- The **upper level of pre-trial detention** was reduced from 18 to 12 months for felonies

Outline ²

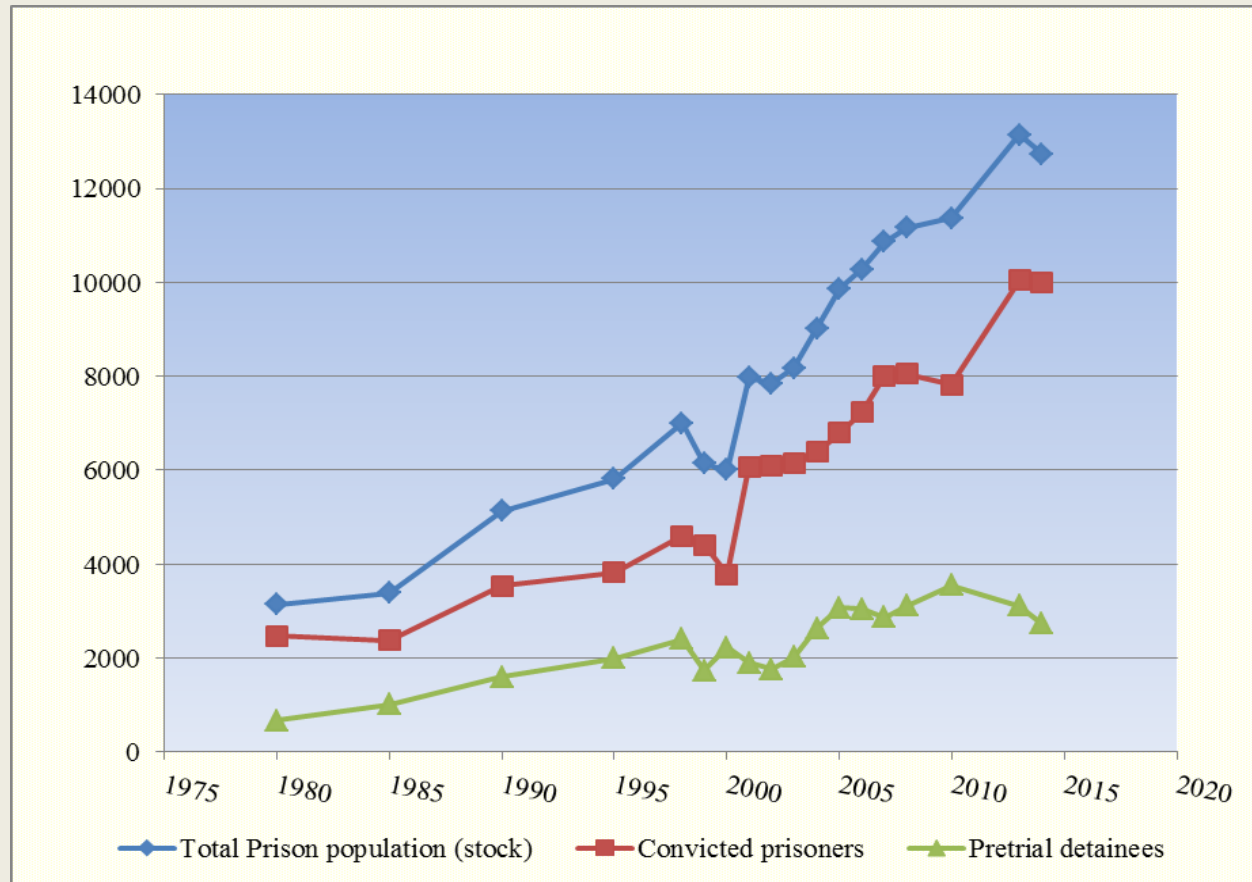
- And some other **alternatives**:
 - Efforts for **expanding** the implementation of **community service**, restoration and **mediation programmes** and **electronic monitoring/home detention**
- **Emergency measures** for early release
- Need for improvements and reforms stop with the issuing of laws or
- **reforms very slow**

“Stock” prison population in time series (1980–2015)

YEAR	STOCK Total Prison population incl. Pretrial detainees ELSTAT	STOCK Convicted Prisoners at the end of the year ELSTAT	STOCK Pretrial detainees at the end of the year ELSTAT	Per 100,000 resident population Convicted & Pretrial detainees - ELSTAT & WPB	Per 100,000 resident population Pretrial detainees ELSTAT & WPB	Pretrial in % related to total stock
1980	3135	2472	663	33	7	21,1
1985	3383	2372	1011	35	10	29,9
1990	5133	3537	1596	52	16	31,1
1995	5811	3825	1986	55	19	34,2
2000	6003	3786	2217	70	20	36,9
2005	9871	6795	2481	90	22	25,1
2010	11364	7823	3541	102	31	31,2
2013	13147	10043	3104	120	28	23,6
2014*	12728	10002	2726	117	25	21,4
2015*	10726			99		

Source: ICPS/WPB 2014; ELSTAT Prison Statistics, Table E27, G01A, G12 online; Ministry of Justice, March 2014, May 2015, unpublished.

Prisoners convicted and on remand, stock (1980–2014)



Source: ELSTAT, Prison Statistics 1980-1996, Table G1; since 1998, Table G1a available online; Ministry of Justice 2014, unpublished.

Prisons ¹

- 33 public correctional facilities
- nominal *prison capacity* 9,886 prisoners
- *occupancy level* rises to 134% (as of 01.09.2013), corresponding to the median prison population rate in Europe, but of the highest in Greek prison history.

Prisons ²

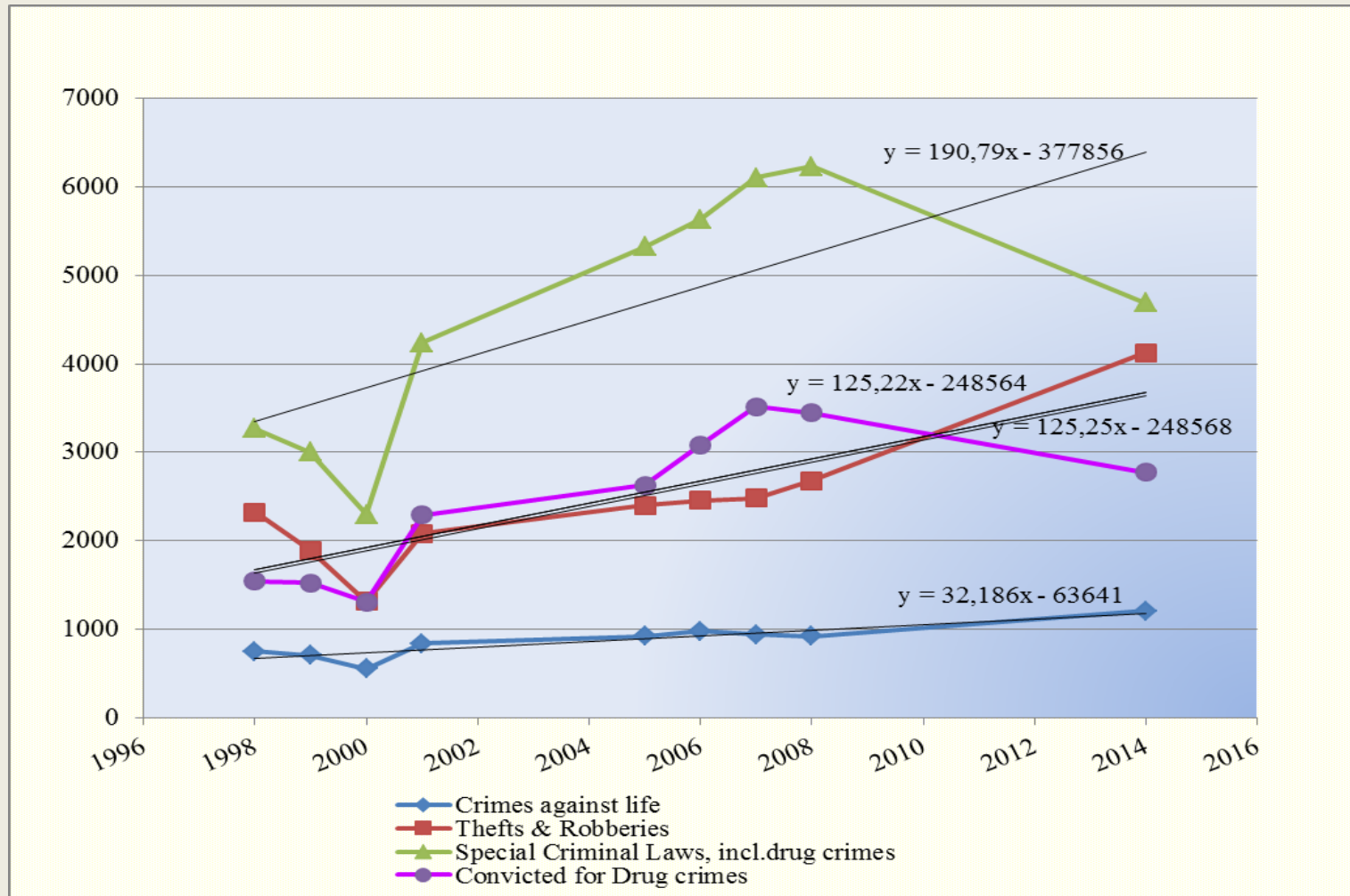
- **3 institutional forms**, *general*, *special* and *therapeutic*.
- ***General institutions*** type A, for people on remand, people declared guilty for debts and those sentenced to short term imprisonment, and type B for the rest. Women in separate institutions or in separate sections of the male institutions.
- ***Special institutions*** for juveniles and the farming “half–way houses” (agrarian/rural prisons)
- ***Therapeutic*** the psychiatric hospital for prisoners, the prison hospital, the alcohol and drug detoxification centre.

Convicted **prisoners** (stock) in % according to their **serving sentence** in time series (1980-2014)

	Prisoners in % according to serving sentence (stock)			
Year	1-12months	1-5 years	5-20 years	Life
1980	16,5	48,1	28,9	6,5
1990	10,3	47,2	36,8	5,7
1996	7,7	24,3	51,8	16,2
2003	11,0	17,6	62,0	9,5
2006	14,5	19,4	57,1	9,0
2011	16,8	11,5	62,0	9,7
2014	2,3	7,4	80,0	10,3

Source: ELSTAT, Prison Statistics 1980, 1990, 1996 Table: G1; Ministry of Justice 2003-2012; 2014, unpublished.

Prisoners convicted & on remand according to crime

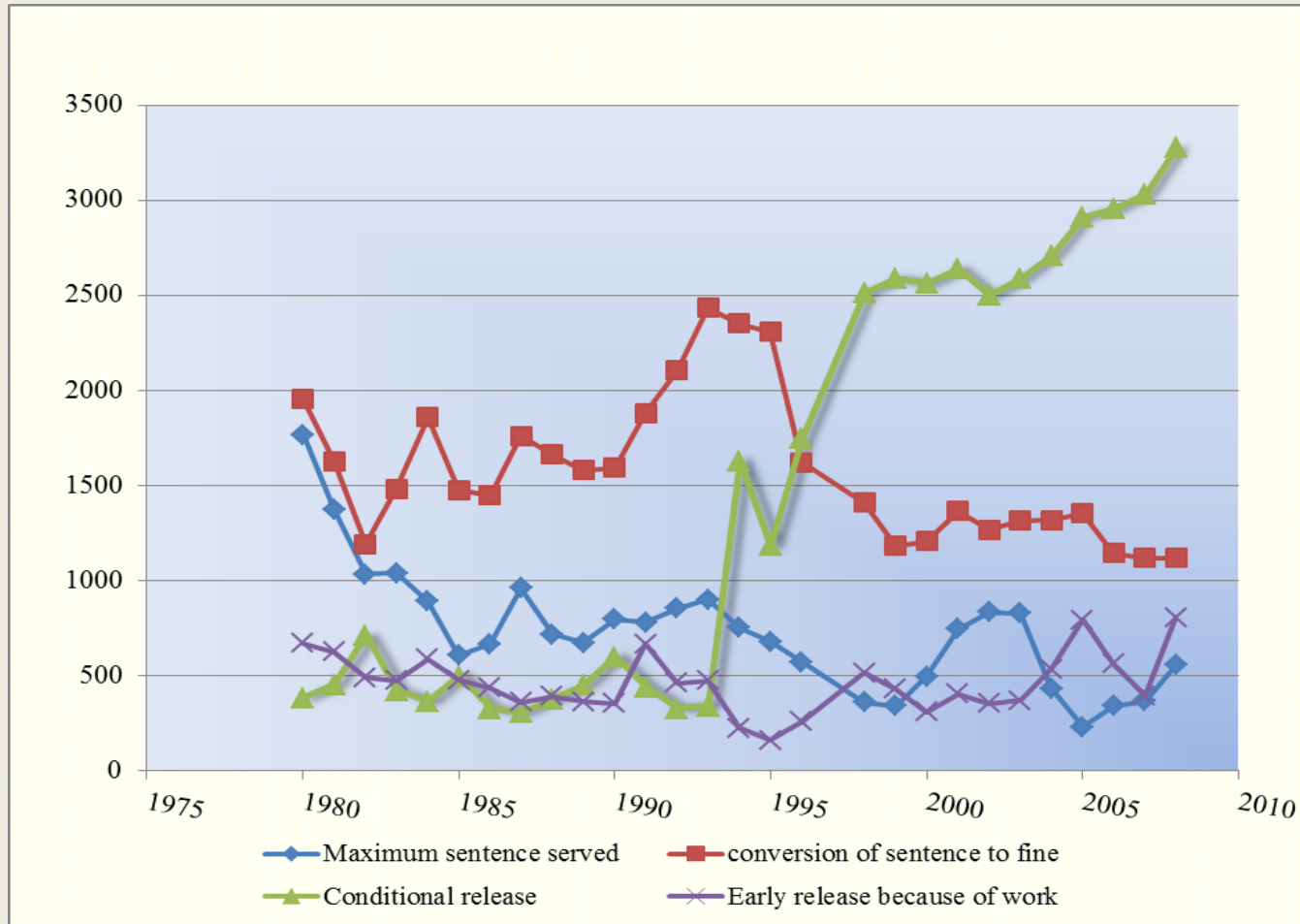


Source: *ELSTAT*, Criminal Justice Statistics 1980–1995, Table B4; 2000–2009, Table B4 available online.

Releases in time series (1980-2008)

	In % to Total releases of the same year					
Year	% Max. served	% Conversion to fine	% Conditional release	% Early release because of work	% Other reasons ¹	% of releases in relation to Total number of prisoners during the year
1980	31,0	34,3	6,7	12,7	16,2	69,6
1985	16,0	38,9	13,1	12,6	19,3	71,9
1990	19,8	39,7	14,9	8,8	16,7	58,0
1995	12,5	42,5	21,7	3,0	20,2	68,6
2000	8,8	21,3	45,1	5,5	19,3	59,6
2005	3,7	21,7	46,7	12,7	15,1	47,7
2006	5,8	19,5	50,3	9,6	14,8	44,6
2007	6,2	18,8	50,9	6,7	16,4	42,7
2008	7,9	15,9	46,6	11,5	17,3	46,6

Releases (1980-2008)



Source: *ELSTAT*, Prison Statistics 1980–1996, Table II; 1998–2008, Table E24 available online.

Challenges ¹

Health care

- Medical personnel

Contemporary situation:

financial cuts, tremendous staff shortages

- Health situation of prisoners

National Health System

Challenges ²

Prison violence

- CPT: “inter-prisoner violence appeared to be on the rise”
- **the lack of staff in prisons impede the efforts to maintain effective control, as stronger groups of prisoners exercise their powers unchecked over other inmates**

Challenges³

Prison guards

- 1990: **3 prisoners for every prison guard**
- 1996: **3.1 to 1**
- 2000: **4.7 to 1**
- 2008: **4.8 to 1**
- March 2014: **6.3 to 1** (1,955)
- May-June 2015: **4.9 to 1** (2,170)

10,726 prisoners; 1,822 perimeter security guards

Challenges ⁴

Prison violence

- In 2009 prison establishments of **type C** were introduced

- for **high risk offenders**:

prisoners serving life sentences or long sentences over 10 years and are considered to be especially **dangerous for the smooth life in prison.**

- In July 2009, the first C-unit started operating in a closed prison and in August 2014, a whole facility.
- In April 2015 the new government abolished the relevant laws and this type of prisons.

Conclusions ¹

- Greek governments have tried to control the changing prison situation (overcrowding, etc.), with **successive changes in legislation** that
- have proven **ineffective in the long run**
- leading to **strong criticism** by judges and prosecutors

Conclusions ²

- They continue to insist on them
- They **avoid the support of modern prison management and technological innovations**
- **Role of experts and criminologists** isolated and limited, with few exceptions:
 - **“moral panic”, “discrimination” “social exclusion”** rhetoric
 - with the media playing a significant role

Open Issues

- **Humane treatment: Good practice**

The overall efforts of the whole prison staff to overcome shortages and face adequately the rapidly changing situation with good will and understanding.

- The **strengths can be turned to weaknesses**

“Cui plus licet quam par est, plus vult quam licet” (Publilius Syrus)

A person allowed more than is right, wants more than is allowed.

- Loose and humanitarian prison management must be associated with **training, professionalism, accountability and ensuring self-esteem of personnel** in order to support prisoners.

Hvala vam

Thank you