
Council of Europe: Russia is the country with the largest number of detainees (478,000). Overcrowded prisons in several countries

Russia and Turkey had the largest numbers of detainees in 2021. Overall, the prison population decreased during the pandemic, but prisons are still overcrowded. This is according to the latest Council of Europe's annual penal statistics, whose data was compiled by the University of Lausanne. As of 31 January 2021, the countries with the largest numbers of detainees were Russia (478,714), Turkey (272,115), the UK (87,035), Poland (67,894), France (62,673), Germany (59,045), Spain (55,110), Italy (53,329), and Ukraine (49,520). According to the figures, "between January 2020 and January 2021", prison rates fell significantly in 30 out of the 48 penal administrations examined. The incarceration rate fell the most in Cyprus (-28.3%), Montenegro (-24.4%), Slovenia (-22.1%), Lithuania (-13.4%), Finland (-13.2%), Georgia (-12.1%), France (-11.7%), Armenia (-11.5%), Italy (-11.1%), and the UK. The report shows that in January 2021, six administrations "reported prison density of more than 105 inmates per 100 places" - an indicator of "serious overcrowding". Romania (119 inmates per 100 places), Greece (111), Cyprus (111), Belgium (108), Turkey (108), and Italy (106). The prison density was also above 100 persons per 100 available places in France (104), Sweden (101), and Hungary (101), while the highest percentages of foreign prisoners were found in Luxembourg (73.1%), Switzerland (70.8%), Greece (59.9%), Austria (50.2%), Belgium (44.2%), and Italy (32.4%). On average, "foreign nationals made up 15.3% of the prison population in Europe" in 2021.

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