
Prisons: Council of Europe, detainees down in the Old Continent. Record numbers in Russia and Turkey, 60,000 in Italy. “Cybercriminals difficult to trace”

According to the Annual Penal Statistics for 2020 released by the Council of Europe today, providing data on inmates in 51 prison administrations in Europe (SPACE I), the number of detainees per 100,000 inhabitants continues to fall. On 31 January 2020, there were 1,528,343 inmates in 51 prison administrations (out of 52), which corresponds to a European prison population rate of 103.2 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants (-1.7% compared with 2019). Since 2013, the overall decline has been 20%. According to Marcelo Aebi, Head of the SPACE research team from the University of Lausanne, the reduction may reflect the “decrease of traditional offences” while cybercrimes, which are on the rise, “lead to less convictions because the perpetrators are often based outside the national territory and are difficult to trace and sanction”. The countries with the highest incarceration rates in January 2020 were Turkey (357 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants), Russia (356), Georgia (264), Lithuania (220) Azerbaijan (209), Czech Republic (197), Poland (195), Slovak Republic (193) and Estonia (184). By contrast, the lowest incarceration rates were found in Iceland (45), Finland (50), Netherlands (59) and Norway (59). In absolute terms, Russia is the European country with the largest number of prisoners (519,618). Italy ranks 7th with 60,971 inmates.

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