

# CHILDREN WITH PARENTS SERVING PRISON SENTENCES



In Croatia during 2015 the parents of **12.734 CHILDREN** were in prison

Every day **800.000 CHILDREN** in Europe have at least one parent in prison



**34**

**175**

During the **ma#me** project, Roda helped finance travel expenses so children could visit their mothers at the Požega Penitentiary and Prison.

One mother of **eight** had all of her children visit together for the first time ever

**34 children** visited their mothers a total of **175 times** At a total cost of **4965 EUR**

One father took his **3 children** To see their mother an amazing **17 times** of visiting their mother almost every weekend

## EVALUATIONS – WHAT DO PRISONERS’ FAMILIES THINK ABOUT CO-FINANCED VISITS

All the surveyed family members said that the child was happy with the visit and that they wanted to continue visiting their mother. The families feel that the visits are good for the children and most of the children have not expressed any negativity about visiting their mothers in prison.

## Why DON'T CHILDREN VISIT their parents in prison?\*

Jačmenica Puštenjak, D. and Krakar, A. Children in the Shadows: From Marginalisation to Actualisation, 2015

Because they **can't afford** the travel expenses

Because their other parent or other people **don't let** them

Because their **parent doesn't** wants visits in prison

Because of the **awkward** and often **rough security procedures** that come before every visit



### The Child's Right

The child has the right to visit their parent in prison **every week** and on **every holiday** for at least **1 hour**

### The Parent's Right

Prisoners have the right to visits from family members at **least twice per month** and on **holidays** for at least **one hour**

### Benefits:

Based on an assessment of a prisoner's individual prison sentence execution program, the prisoner can gain various benefits which include more frequent and longer visits, ranging from **one per month for two hours** (in closed units) **up to three per month for five hours** (in open prison units)



### Children who grow up in prison with their mothers

The Mother and Child Unit of the Požega Penitentiary and Prison accommodates prisoners who have given birth while serving their prison sentence.

A child can stay with its mother up **until its third birthday**.

While living with its imprisoned mother, officials **ensure that the child attends kindergarten outside the penitentiary or prison**.



## Examples of good practice from other countries

### FINLAND

Legislation allows that a child be accommodated with its mother and with its father. The maximum age for accommodation with a parent is two years old, but this can be extended if it is in the child's best interest. **One open penitentiary has a family unit where parents can live with their young children.**

### DENMARK

Mothers and fathers of children under three years old can be accommodated in special units within the prison facilities. **After their third birthday, children can stay with their mothers in open penitentiaries.**

If both parents are serving a prison sentence **they can serve it together**, in order for children to live with both parents.

### SPAIN

Children can live with their imprisoned mother **until their third birthday**. They live in Mother and Child Pavilions within penal institutions, equipped to meet the needs of children, located away from other prison spaces. Collaboration agreements are regularly signed with private and public institutions to help maintain and improve relationships between children and their imprisoned mothers, but also to improve the child's psycho-social development. **If both parents are in prison, they are allowed to be accommodated together with their children.**



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