

Risk-oriented probation service

In Austria, the implementation of probationary services is carried out by a private organisation, **NEUSTART**.

Since 1957, **NEUSTART** works in the field of social work close to judiciary, of support for offenders (probationary services, post-prison aid (after-care-service)), of help for victims, and of prevention. Since 1995, interests of victims are being increasingly taken care of in form of a separate service, victim-offender mediation. Employing roughly 1,600 full-time and voluntary workers, **NEUSTART** is one of the largest employers in the social sector in Austria. The organisation is represented all over Austria.

High professional standards

NEUSTART strives to fulfil high professional standards, which are being applied consistently within the organisation. For that reason, a handbook on quality was developed. The compliance with these standards is being monitored continuously.

Steering social work

Employees concerned with quality management work continually to keep professional standards 'state of the art' and to implement the latest findings of research into offender support. In probationary services, during the last ten years more than ever, the focus lies on a resource- and risk-oriented support, termed 'steering social work'. **NEUSTART** is following the risk-needs-responsivity model of Andrews & Bonta, one of the most researched ex-offender assistance models regarding efficiency of preventing reoffending. To solidify the status of social works' diagnostic, the organisation decided in 2012 to develop their own valid diagnostics tool, the resource- and risk-inventory (RRI). With the support of this tool, areas relevant to reoffending, either within or surrounding supported people, will be identified. The support's focus in the context of probationary services therefore has to be on the constant dealing with these reoffending risk factors, while at the same time using the resources of the client. It is further necessary to talk through and account for the offence with each client. The goal is to assume responsibility for your own actions and develop pro-social alternatives for future risk-situations.

Voluntary probation service

A distinctive feature throughout Europe is the fact that about a third of probation service clients are supervised by volunteering probation workers. In monthly team meetings, these volunteers are being supported by full-time probation officers in performing their tasks.

Probationary service's efficiency of preventing reoffending

In a study on probationary service's efficiency of preventing reoffending, 1,163 clients, whose supervision ended in 2013, were monitored until 2016. 70.5% of these clients did not have any further convictions in the monitored time period.