

Prisons in Europe 2005-2015

Iceland Country Profile

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This country profile on Iceland is taken from the report *Prisons in Europe 2005-2015* ([link](#)), which contains 51 profiles on the prison populations in the Prison Administrations of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe.

Prisons in Europe 2005- 2015 presents data on prison populations across Europe from 2005 to 2015. It is divided in two volumes: Volume 1 presents country profiles based on several indicators concerning prison populations, and Volume 2 includes all the data used for the report. The report has been prepared by the University of Lausanne and co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Each country profile includes a Table with Key Facts about the country, which are presented in the form of several indicators referring to the latest available year and to the evolution during the latest ten years, as well as the relative position of the country (low, medium or high) for each indicator compared to the 28 member States of the European Union (“EU 28”) and the 47 member States of the Council of Europe (“CoE 47”). The classification in “low”, “medium” and “high” is based on the comparative indicators presented in Part 2 of the study. The country profile is divided in four sections and includes 8 Figures. The four sections are the following:

- Key facts
- The country in brief: This section summarizes the trends shown in the key facts from 2005 to 2014/15. It illustrates which indicators have increased, which have decreased and which have remained stable. The indicator is considered as showing a stable trend if the variation is lower than 5%.
- The country in comparative perspective: This section compares each country to the rest of the countries included in the study.

General comments:

This section includes eight Figures, comments to these Figures and some possible explanations of the observed trends. The eight Figures are numbered from 1 to 8 within each country profile and also include, between brackets, their absolute number from 1 to 408.

The Key facts include indicators of stock and flow. The stock indicators refer to the situation on 1st September 2015. The flow indicators refer to the situation during the year 2014. On the basis of the data included in this study, we have calculated for each indicator the average for the 10 to 11 years under study. This average is presented in the fifth column of the country profiles.

Finally, the last column of the country profiles provides a graphic indicator of the trend observed when one compares the last year of the series (2014 and 2015 respectively) to the first one (2005). The arrows included in this column reflect the evolution of the indicator according to the following table:

↔	+/- 4.9%	stable
↑	+5 to +9%	slight increase
↑↑	+10 to +19%	moderate increase
↑↑↑	+20 to +49%	substantial increase
↑↑↑↑	+50% and more	huge increase
↓	-5 to -9%	slight decrease
↓↓	-10 to -19%	moderate decrease
↓↓↓	-20 to -49%	substantial decrease
↓↓↓↓	-50% and more	huge decrease

COUNTRY PROFILE	ICELAND		TRENDS 2005-2015		
Key Facts					
	2014/15	Comparative		Evolution 2005-2014/15	
		CoE 47	EU 28	Average	% Change
Prison population rate (inmates per 100,000 inhabitants) on 01.09.2015	44.4	Low	NAP	45.1	↑↑
Rate of entries into penal institutions in 2014 (inmates per 100,000 inhabitants)	84.7	Low	NAP	105.1	↓↓↓
Rate of releases from penal institutions in 2014 (inmates per 100,000 inhabitants)	90.3	Low	NAP	107.4	↓↓
Average length of imprisonment in 2014 based on the total number of days spent in penal institutions (in months)	6.6	Medium	NAP	5.1	↑↑↑↑
Average length of imprisonment in 2014 based on stock and flow (in months)	6.7	Medium	NAP	5.2	↑↑↑↑
Prison density on 01.09.2015 (inmates per 100 places)	95.4	Medium	NAP	93.8	↑↑
Median age of the prison population on 01.09.2015 (in years)	32.0*	Low	NAP	31.9	↓
Percentage of female inmates (01.09.2015)	4.1	Medium	NAP	5.2	↓↓↓
Percentage of foreign inmates (01.09.2015)	20.5	Medium	NAP	17.3	↑↑↑↑
<i>of which: in pre-trial detention</i>	33.3	Medium	NAP	21.3	↓
Percentage of non-sentenced inmates (01.09.2015)	11.6	Low	NAP	11.6	↓↓↓
Rate of deaths per 10,000 inmates in 2014	0.0	Low	NAP	45.5	↓↓↓↓
Rate of suicides per 10,000 inmates in 2014 (n=0)	0.0	Low	NAP	23.7	↓↓↓↓
<i>of which: % in pre-trial detention (n=0) – Available since 2013</i>	0.0	Low	NAP	---	↓↓↓↓
Ratio of inmates per staff (number of inmates per 1 staff person)	1.3	Low	NAP	1.3	↓
Percentage of custodial staff in the total staff	66.9	Medium	NAP	67.8	↓
Total budget spent by the prison administration (in Euro) – Available since 2011	8 522 631*	NAP	NAP	8 204 402***	↑
Average amount spent per day for the detention of one inmate (in Euro) – Available since 2008	149.0**	High	NAP	130.7****	↑↑↑↑

* Data refers to 2014

** Data refers to 2013

*** Average calculated from 2011 to 2014

**** Average calculated from 2008 to 2013

Iceland in brief

- Comparing 2014/15 to 2005, the following indicators show a *decrease*: rate of entries into penal institutions (-23%), rate of releases from penal institutions (-18%), median age of the population (-5%), percentage of female inmates (-30%), percentage of pre-trial detainees among foreign inmates (-7%), percentage of non-sentenced inmates (-23%), rate of deaths per 10,000 inmates (there were no deaths in 2014), percentage of suicides (there were no suicides in 2014), ratio of inmates per staff (-8%), and percentage of custodial staff in the total staff (-9%).
- Comparing 2014/15 to 2005, the following indicators show an *increase*: prison population rate (+10%), average length of detention based on the total number of days spent in penal institutions (+53%), average length of detention based on stock and flow (-51%), prison density (+10%), percentage of foreign inmates (+75%), total budget spent by the prison administration (+8%), and average amount spent per day for the detention of one inmate (+394%).
- Comparing 2014/15 to 2005, none of indicators remain *stable*.

Iceland in comparative perspective

- Compared to other European countries, in 2014/15 Iceland presents:
 - **Low:** Prison population rate, rate of entries into penal institutions, rate of releases from penal institutions, median age of the prison population, percentage of non-sentenced inmates, rate of deaths per 10,000 inmates, rate of suicides per 10,000 inmates, ratio of inmates per staff.
 - **Medium:** Average length of imprisonment based on stock and flow, average length of detention based on the total number of days spent in penal institutions, prison density, percentage of female inmates, percentage of foreign inmates, percentage of pre-trial detainees among foreign inmates, percentage of custodial staff in the total staff.
 - **High:** Average amount spent per day for the detention of one inmate.

General comments

Figure 1 (153)

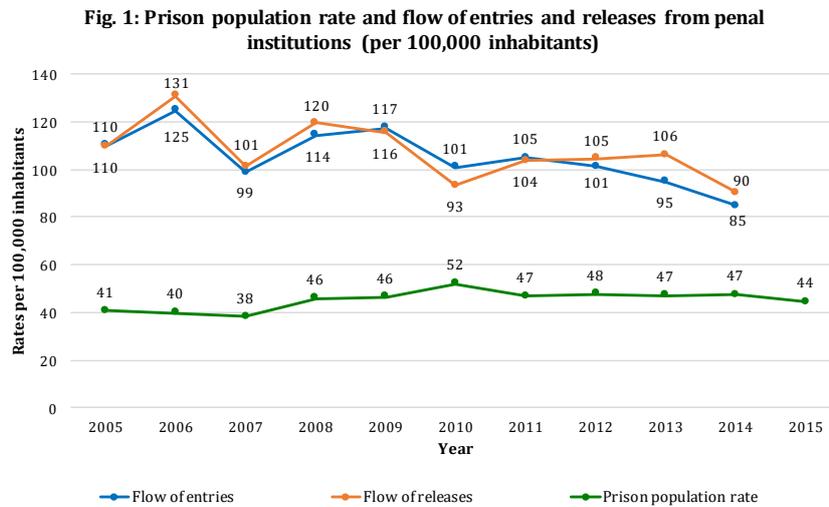


Figure 1 shows that, from 2005 to 2015, the prison population rate of Iceland (stock) increased by 10%. In 2005, the country had 41 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants, while in 2015 it had 44.

From 2005 to 2014, the rate of entries (flow of entries) decreased by 23%. In 2005, there were 110 entries into penal institutions per 100,000 inhabitants, while in 2014 there were 85

During the same period, the rate of releases (flow of releases) decreased by 18%. In 2005, there were 110 releases from penal institutions per 100,000 inhabitants, while in 2014 there were 90.

The flow of entries and the flow of releases show similar rates and trends.

Figure 2 (154)

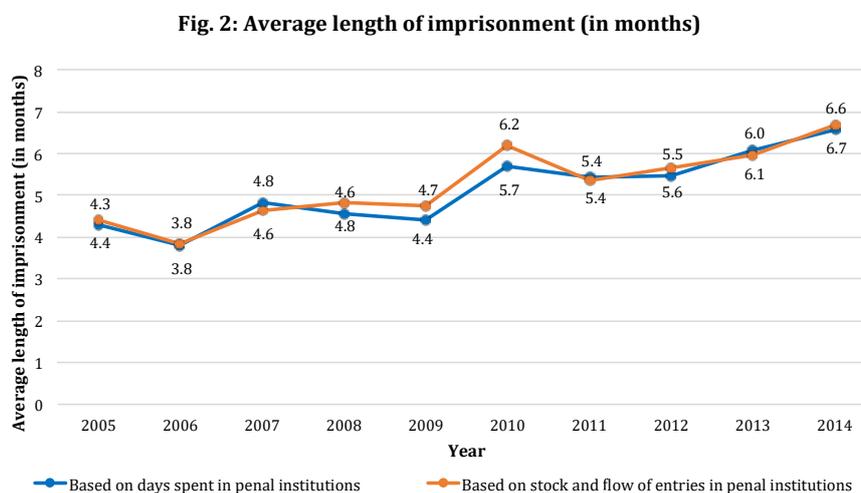


Figure 2 shows that, from 2005 to 2014, the average length of imprisonment based on the number of days spent in penal institutions increased by 53%. In 2005, the average length of imprisonment was 4.3 months, while in 2014 it was 6.6 months.

During the same period, the average length of imprisonment computed on the basis of the ratio between the stock and the flow increased by 51%. In 2005, the average length of imprisonment was 4.4 months, while in 2014 it was 6.7 months.

Figure 3 (155)

Fig. 3: Prison density per 100 places (Overcrowding)

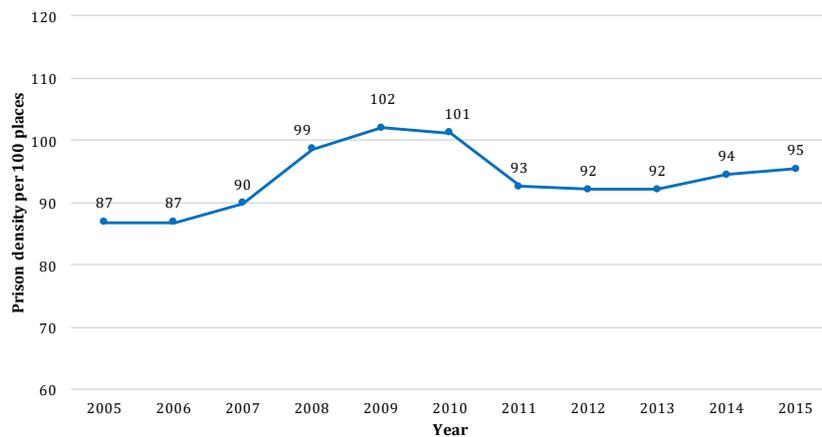


Figure 3 shows that, from 2005 to 2015, the prison density of Iceland increased by 10%. In 2005, the country had 87 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants, while in 2015 it had 95.

Figure 4 (156)

Fig. 4: Total capacity of penal institutions and number of inmates

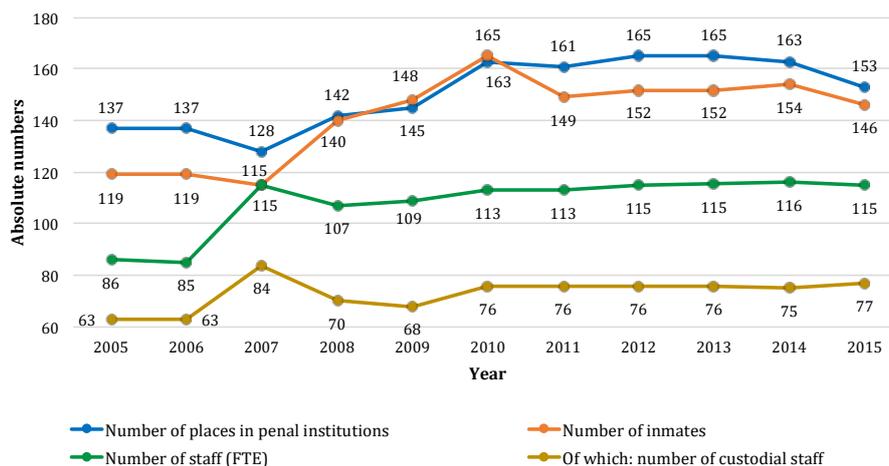


Figure 4 shows that, from 2005 to 2015, the total number of places in penal institutions in Iceland increased by 12%. In 2005, the country had 137 places, while in 2015 it had 153.

During the same period, the total number of inmates increased by 23%. In 2005, the country had 119 inmates, while in 2015 it had 146.

From 2005 to 2015, the total number of staff increased by 34%. In 2005, Iceland had in total a staff of 86 persons, while in 2015 it had 115.

During the same period, the total number of custodial staff increased by 22%. In 2005, the total custodial staff was 63 persons, while in 2015 it was 77.

Figure 5 (157)

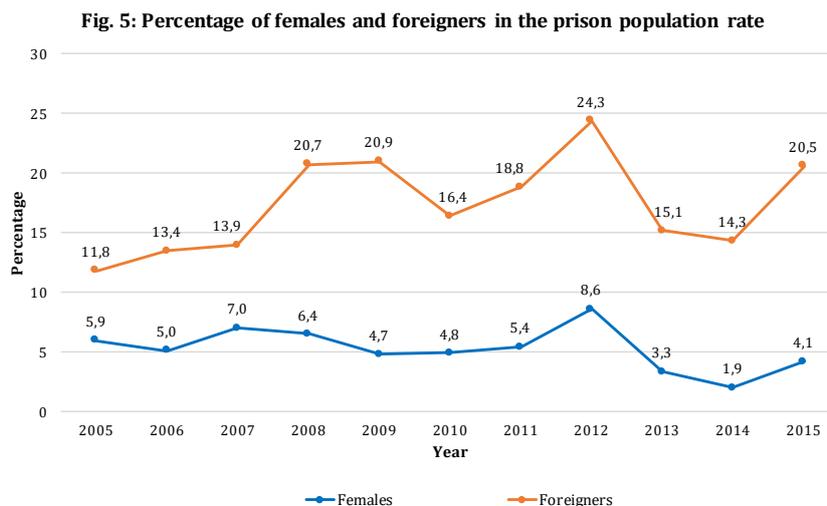


Figure 5 shows that, from 2005 to 2015, the percentage of female inmates decreased by 30%. In 2005, 5.9 % of the inmates were females, while in 2015 they represented 4.1% of the total prison population. According to the information collected during this research, the decrease in the percentage of female inmates is related to the closing of two prisons for women in 2014, which were replaced by a new one in 2016. As a consequence, more women were placed in the waiting list for incarceration instead of being sent to penal institutions. This led to a decrease in the number of women incarcerated from 2013 to 2015, but that number is expected to increase again with the opening of the new penal institution for women in 2016.

From 2005 to 2015, the percentage of foreign inmates increased by 75%. In 2005, 12% of the inmates were foreigners, while in 2015 they represented 21% of the total prison population.

Figure 6 (158)

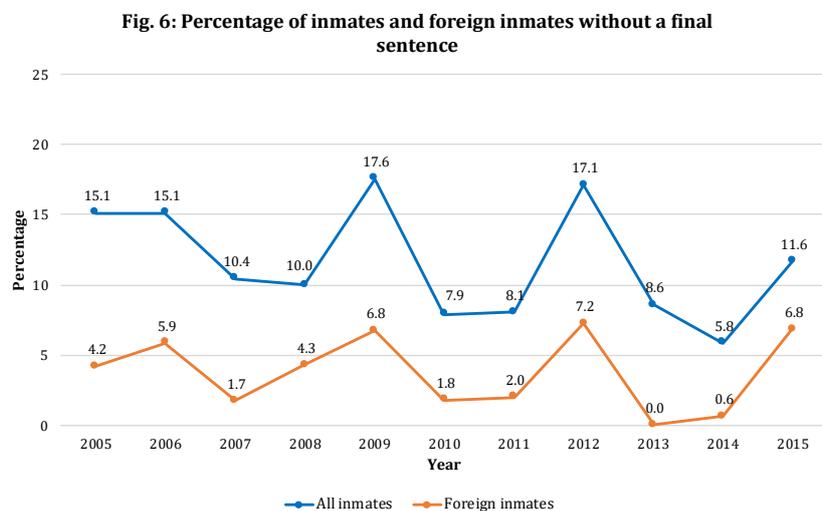


Figure 6 shows that, from 2005 to 2015, the percentage of inmates without a final sentence decreased by 23%. In 2005, 15.1% of the inmates did not have a final sentence while, in 2015, inmates without a final sentence represented 11.6% of all inmates.

During the same period, the percentage of foreigners held in pre-trial detention increased by 63%. In 2005, they represented 4.2% of the total number of inmates, while in 2015 they represented 6.8% of them.

Figure 7¹²³ (159)

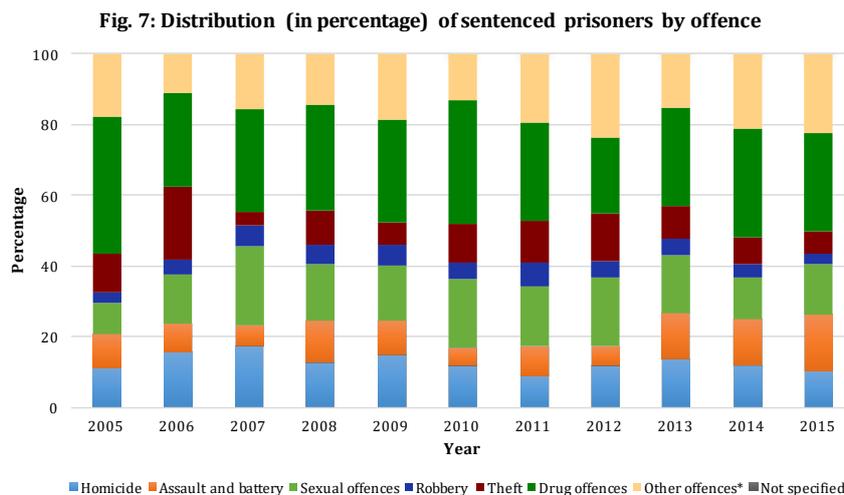
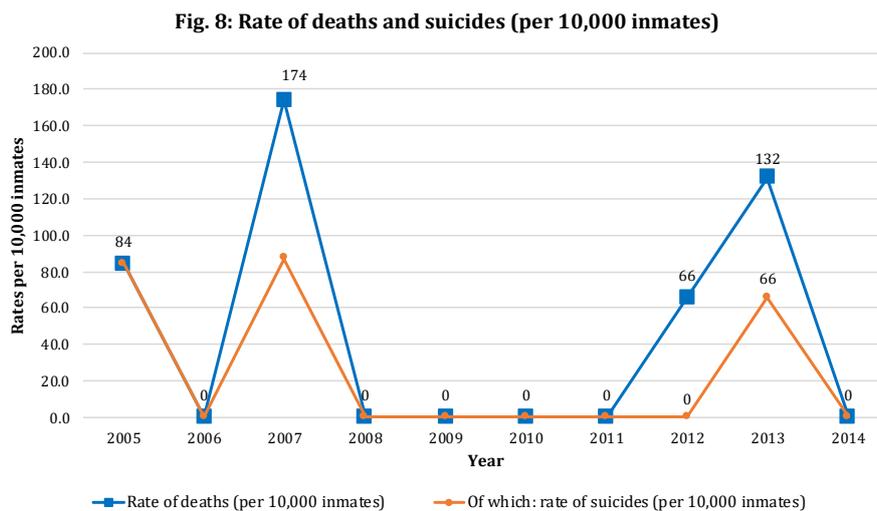


Figure 7 shows that, from 2005 to 2015, the percentages of prisoners serving sentences for assault and battery, sexual offences, and other types of offences have increased; while the percentages of those serving sentences for homicide, theft, and drug offences have decreased.

Figure 8 (160)



The instability of the trends for deaths and suicides per 10,000 inmates shown in Figure 8 illustrates the impossibility of reaching statistically reliable conclusions when the absolute number of cases that generated the rates is low. In most of the years under study, there were no deaths of inmates in penal institutions. The peaks observed in 2007 and 2013 correspond to two deaths in each of those years, while there was one suicide in 2005, one in 2007 and one in 2013.

¹ The figures provided by the country do not always add to 100%.

² Sexual offences include (1) rape (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2005), and (2) other sexual offences (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2008).

³ Other offences includes (1) economic and financial offences (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2008); (2) terrorism (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2007); (3) organised crime (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2007); (4) cybercrime (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2014); and (5) other cases (included in the SPACE questionnaire since 2005).