

Crime and sentencing policy of courts in the Republic of Slovenia during the period 1950 - 1999

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The article presents a crime trend in the Republic of Slovenia during the period 1950-1999, the number of charged and convicted adult persons, criminal sanctions imposed on them and a degree of risk for a perpetrator of a reported crime to be sentenced to imprisonment.

The number of recorded criminal offences had increased in the period 1950-1999 from 10,009 criminal offences to 61,693 (index 616,4), while the number of charged persons had raised from 9,928 to 17,635 persons (index 177,6). The number of recorded criminal offences per 100,000 residents had increased for 354.8 % and the number of charged persons only for 31.0 %. In the period 1950 - 1999, 10,000 to 12,000 persons were convicted on average per year; most in 1955 (16,204) and the least in 1995 (3,462 - index 41,0 with regard to the year 1950). Conviction rate in 1951 was 574 persons convicted per 100,000 residents while in 1995 only 174. While the number of residents had increased in the period 1950-1999 for 35.6%, crime had raised for 516.4%. The increase in recorded criminal offences had not been followed by an increase in charged and convicted persons, indicating that police tend to record more and more minor criminal offences which do not have any impact on the number of persons sentenced to imprisonment. A risk to be convicted for a recorded crime was 84.3 % in 1950, while in 1999 only 9.4 %, which makes believe that crime makes now bigger profits. In 1950, the number of persons convicted by courts amounted to 8,434 and in 1999 to 5,783 persons. Courts tend to impose prison sentences on an increasingly smaller proportion of convicts: in 1973 there were 3,025 offenders who received prison sentences and in 1995 only 550 (index 18,2). A portion of suspended fines and prison sentences had increased during the period 1963 - 1999 from 51.9 % to 75.1 %, what clearly indicates a more lenient sentencing policy.

These data do not support a hypothesis about the correlation between the number of residents, a rate of recorded crime and the number of convicted persons. Court sentencing policy was relatively stable during the period 1950-1999 and independent of crime rate, for this reason it is not possible to deduce solely from the number of recorded criminal offences the number of persons to be sentenced to imprisonment and to plan on this basis the future prison capacities.

Keywords: crime, crime statistics, convicted persons, sentencing policy

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