

## Report to ACUNS Headquarter

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06.March 2014; D. Lovas

### Review discussion on the juvenile justice system in Austria on 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2014



On the basis of the 25-point programme where the Ministry of Justice had promised to improve the situation of youth in detention a very interesting and actual discussion on current urging matter on the juvenile justice system in Austria was held in the United Nations Vienna International Center.

It was time to reconsider which efforts have been taken and which are necessary to be able to respond to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and also to establish a safe and understanding environment for juveniles and young adults in pre trial detention as well as in detention.



After an introduction of Friedrich Forsthuber, the president of the regional criminal court of Vienna, welcoming remarks were spoken by Ms Valerie Lebaux, who is the chief of the Justice Section at UNODC. In the following among representatives from the Ministry of Justice, juvenile judges, prison authorities, Neustart, and representatives from the working group Jugend im Recht and many others who are actively involved in these issues in practice the evident problems in the juvenile justice system were discussed.

The review discussion was meant to be an open podium for all participants and was structured into four leading questions which were followed by 5-minute introductory talks of special appointed experts in juvenile justice.

The questions we have focused on in the discussion were the followings:



1. Which indicators and/or measures and/or arrangements had a positive effect on the juvenile justice system for the past few years; and which of those actions taken are still in use or are still working? Are there any success stories?
2. How can it be achieved that juveniles do not have to stay in any case at the detention center Josefstadt?
3. Which are the most pressing problems now? Name them and circumscribe demands coming from different parties regarding each pressing issue.
4. What are common future prospects for the juvenile justice system? Who has what kind of wishes? What can we do?



It was a very lively discussion where participants took the open podium to explain their concerns regarding the juvenile justice system and have discussed the nowadays situation, the improvements being made and efforts which still have to be done to enable a juvenile justice system to comply with the Convention of the Child Rights and United Nations Standards. Also methods and new arrangements instead of the current detention centers were broad on the floor. The representative of the task force which was set in place by the ministry of justice

last year, Mr. Schnattler Christian, presented the outcomes of the findings of month of research and consultations; these were heavily discussed not only by juvenile judges.

The aim of this discussion was not only to raise public awareness but to reach out to the level of ministry and inspire changes and to actively contribute to resolve pressing problems in the Juvenile Justice System in Austria.