

ROMANIA: Solution to prison overcrowding in Romania: Some convicts to do time only in weekends

By Irina Popescu

Romania Insider (06.03.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2lzuJHK> – A group of MPs from the National Liberal Party (PNL) have initiated a draft bill that aims to solve the overcrowding problem of prisons in Romania in a different way: those sentenced to less than four years in prison would stay behind bars only on Saturdays and Sundays.

The draft bill proposed by the MPs, which also includes other alternative measures, was already submitted to the Senate, reports local Digi24.

One of the measures included in the bill targets those who get prison sentences of less than three years. They could be placed under house arrest, being monitored with the help of electronic bracelets.

Another measure targets those sentenced to a maximum of four years in prison. They would have to choose between two alternatives: they could do time only on Saturdays and Sundays in centers especially arranged for this purpose, or they could do community work. In the second case, two days of community work would represent one day of prison.

However, these provisions would not apply to those convicted of offences committed with violence, or to those who have committed criminal acts related to corruption. Moreover, the

recidivists would also not benefit from these measures.

The Romanian Parliament is currently discussing a draft bill on pardoning certain categories of prisoners, which would also help with the overcrowding issue of Romanian prisons. The idea of pardon was initiated by the Ministry of Justice, which in mid-January put up for public debate an emergency ordinance that was establishing what categories of prisoners would benefit from pardon. After street protests, the Ministry gave up the idea of introducing pardon through emergency ordinance, and turned it into a draft bill, letting the Parliament decide on it.

Last week, the Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM) gave a favorable opinion on the draft bill on pardoning some prisoners, but with two observations.

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