

Prison for women in Řepy - Czech Republic

Introduction

Although the prison for women in Řepy is a ward of the Praha Ruzyně Remand Prison, it is situated in a different location, around three kilometers from the Praha Ruzyně Remand Prison. Both are located in the suburbs of the capital city of the Czech Republic, Prague. The prison for women in Řepy is known for its more or less open regime with its own rules. It falls under the jurisdiction of the Prison Service of the Czech Republic and operates according to the Internal Rules of Praha Ruzyně Remand Prison. The facility was established in 1996 in collaboration with the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Karel Boromejský. This is why it is located in the house of St. Karel Boromejský.

Scale

The prison for women in Řepy has a capacity of 56 women. The residents are divided into smaller groups in terms of accommodation, depending on their security level (low level of security versus medium level of security). The average occupancy rate is around 50 women.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

The target group of Řepy prison are women between 20 and 70 years old. The facility accommodates women with a sentence of liberty deprivation. There are several criteria for placement that the facility will take into consideration, although most of them are flexible. First and foremost, residents must meet the conditions to be able to leave the facility for work or other activities. In addition, the selection also takes into account the personality of the person in detention, the nature of the crime, the order for inpatient or outpatient treatment, etc. Finally, the person can only have a maximum of six years of their sentence left. Contra-indications for placement are no severe drug addiction and no criminal history of thefts (since most women will work in the day center for the elderly). The placement procedure can be started either at the

request of the person themselves, but also at the recommendation of a prison or the prison for women in Řepy itself.

Forms of security:

Relational security plays an important role in the way of working in the prison for women in Řepy. There is a familiar atmosphere between the staff and residents, which leads to a good connection between them. The facility has an open-door policy, which means the staff is always accessible to the residents. Because of this, the residents experience it as normal to go to the staff in case of problems or questions and to have an informal or in-depth conversation.

The residents describe the detention facility as “completely open, there are no bars”. However, there still are some other static and procedural security measures. The static security includes cameras, a grill at the entrance, an emergency call box, personal searches and urine or alcohol tests. In addition, the prison officers wear a uniform and a baton. Procedural security refers to the Internal Rules of Praha Ruzyně Remand Prison, which they also have to follow in this facility. Some of these rules may include security checks of residents during the arrival or departure and a notice board to record who is present and who is absent in the facility.

Activities:

The main focus of Řepy prison is to not exclude people in detention from normal life habits by giving them the opportunity to participate in several activities outside the facility, such as work, education, voluntary work, sports

First impression of a visitor: “The ward is part of the historic building of the Home, so from the outside it does not look like a prison at all. Even the inside is pleasant and does not look like a typical prison. The environment is welcoming”.

or other free time activities (such as going to a restaurant). Although residents are allowed to go outside regularly, they cannot move freely in the community. Residents are in charge of their own weekly schedule and have to take into account the mandatory time of employment and some required activities. The staff should also always be aware of the schedules.

In the facility it is compulsory to work and almost all residents work externally. Only about four residents work internally. This can be in cleaning, gardening, laundry, kitchen, etc. All residents receive a wage. Several partnerships have been initiated with local organizations to help residents find work. The main collaboration with the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Karel Boromejský leads to the employment of

residents of the detention facility in the daycare center for the elderly. Some of the residents are also taking a nursing course to be able to work there later. Another important collaboration is with a kindergarten in Čimice. Residents also find work there for cleaning, taking care of the garden, repairing children's clothing and arranging/organizing performances for children.

The property of the facility also has a garden where activities are regularly organized. These can be led by the staff as well as by the residents, with organizational support from the staff. Regarding visits, different rules are depending on how long a person has been in the facility and the regarded security level (low versus medium). In exceptional cases, there is the possibility of interrupting the sentence through extended visits.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:

A House of St. Karel Boromejský serves as the prison for women in Řepy. This house is situated within the community in the district of Řepy, which is part of the municipal district 17 in the West of Prague. Prague 17 has an average of 22 461 inhabitants (2021)¹. The facility is easily accessible by public transport. Situated in a residential area, the facility blends into its surroundings while maintaining its distinct purpose as a prison.

The architecture of the prison is focused on communal living. There are no private areas within the facility. In terms of living arrangements, the residents share bedrooms (with five to seven people), bathrooms, and a kitchen. Other common areas, such as a study room, a library, a room to do pottery and a therapy room, provide the residents with some extra space to unwind in a building where it is difficult to find privacy. Despite its classification as a prison, the environment within the facility is cozy and inviting. Paintings and decorations create a more homely atmosphere.

Interaction with the community:

The prison for women in Řepy engages with the local community, by fostering a positive interaction and contributing to the betterment of both the residents and the surrounding area. On the one hand, the residents are expected to participate in several activities outside the facility, which is why there is already a lot of interaction between the residents and the community. On the other hand, they have different

Prison for Women in Řepy

Founded: 1996

Capacity: 56

Security level: Low

Nearest city/town: Prague
(Czech Republic)

Nature of interaction: Visited
by the RESCALED movement
(19/10/2023 – 13/06/2024)

¹Praha 17 (Municipal District, Prague City, Czech Republic) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location. (n.d.). *City Population*. Retrieved June 15th, 2023, from https://citypopulation.de/en/czechrep/praguecity/PR171__praha_17/

partnerships with local organizations to help the residents find a job. Many residents are working in the community, such as in St. Karel Boromejský House for the elderly. One of the reasons the collaboration between the prison and the house for the elderly started was a lack of staff. By cooperation, the residents of the prison could help to solve the employment problem. In addition, residents work in the Prague 17 Municipal District Office by doing cleaning work in the office or outdoor areas and in the kindergarten in Čimice.

Publicity/ read more

- About the prison for women in Řepy at the official website of the Prison service of the Czech Republic (in Czech):

SRO, S. (n.d.). *Výkon trestu pro odsouzené ženy* | *Vězeňská služba České republiky* | *Vězeňská služba České republiky*. Retrieved June 15th, 2023, from <https://www.vscr.cz/organizacni-jednotky/vazebni-veznice-praha-ruzyne/sekce/vykon-trestu-pro-odsouzene-zeny>

- Document with the Internal Rules of Praha Ruzyně Remand Prison (in Czech):

SRO, S. (n.d.). *Vnitřní řády* | *Vězeňská služba České republiky* | *Vězeňská služba České republiky*. Retrieved June 15th, 2023, from <https://www.vscr.cz/organizacni-jednotky/vazebni-veznice-praha-ruzyne/sekce/vnitri-rady>