



Houses of Justice

a Belgian approach to
'Community Justice'

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Crime, Justice & Community

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1. The making of

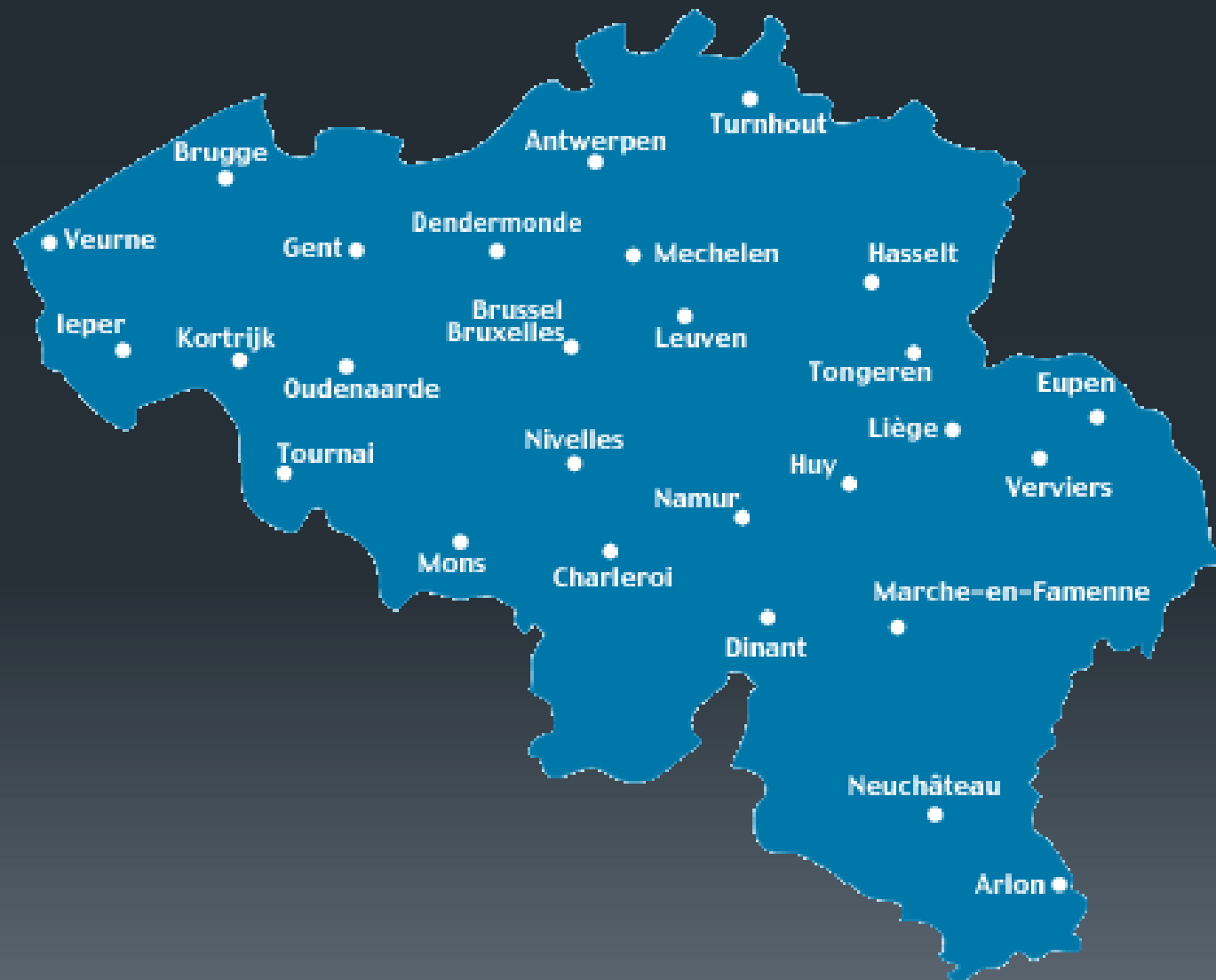
1996

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1999

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2007

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2. Houses of Justice

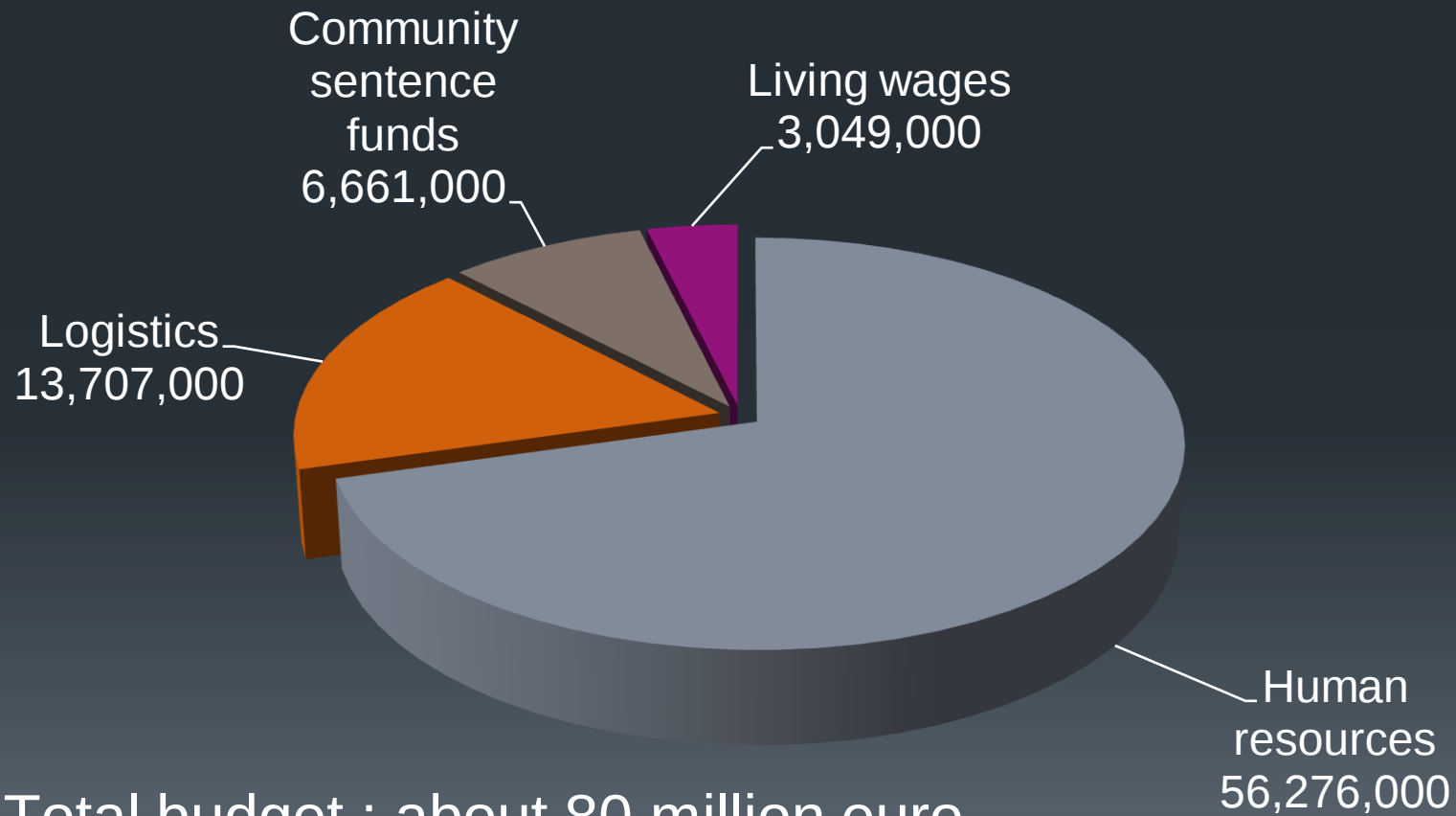


Who ?

- Justice assistants : 922
- Mobile unit (EM): 25
- Monitoring (EM) : 59
- Managers : 33
- Management support : 55
- Administrative support : 185
- Logistics : 57

Total Staff : 1.336

Budget ?



Total budget : about 80 million euro

What ?

Core - business

Conditional
Sentence

Mediation
(prosecutor)

Work punishment

Conditional
release

Civil Cases

Judicial Victim
Support

Electronic
monitoring

Innovation

Hosting

Legal aid

Collaboration
service providers

Offender
programs

Community
work
programs

Victim-offender
mediation

A. Conditional sentencing

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2013 : **6.964** new cases
19.535 active cases (31/12/2013)

- Probationary suspended sentence
- Conditional sentence
- Probation period 1 – 5 years
- Probation commission

B. Penal mediation

2013 : 6.484 new cases
5.127 active cases (31/12/2013)



Offences carrying a prison sentence of less than **2 years**

- mediation between the suspect and the victim on the claim settlement
- medical treatment or therapy in case of illness and addiction
- training (maximum 120 hours)
- community service (maximum 120 hours)

C. Electronic Monitoring

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2013 : **5.011** new cases
1.733 active cases (31/12/2013)

3 types :

- Pre-trial detention
- Way of execution prison sentence
(*short : front door – long : backdoor*)
- *Autonomous sentence*





Different technologies

- Bracelet & box
- GPS
- Voice recognition

Collaboration with :

- 33 prisons
- 28 houses of justice
- 50 investigating judges
- 6 sentencing courts
- police



D. Work punishment

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2013 : **9.902** new cases

8.267 active cases (31/12/2013)



Unpaid

20 – 300 hours

Close cooperation with local communities
and non profit organizations

E. Judicial Victim Support

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2013 : **13.771** new cases
7.193 active cases (31/12/2013)

- **Providing** specific information to the victims and/or their relatives
- **Offering support** to the victims and/or their relatives
- **Refer victims** and/or their relatives to more specialized organisations
- **Report on the difficulties encountered by the victims** and/or their relatives

G. Conditional Release

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- Alternatives for pre-trial detention :	2.359
- Conditional prison release :	2.325
- Limited detention :	112
- Conditional Release mentally ill offenders :	2.166
Total cases on 31/12/2013 :	6.962

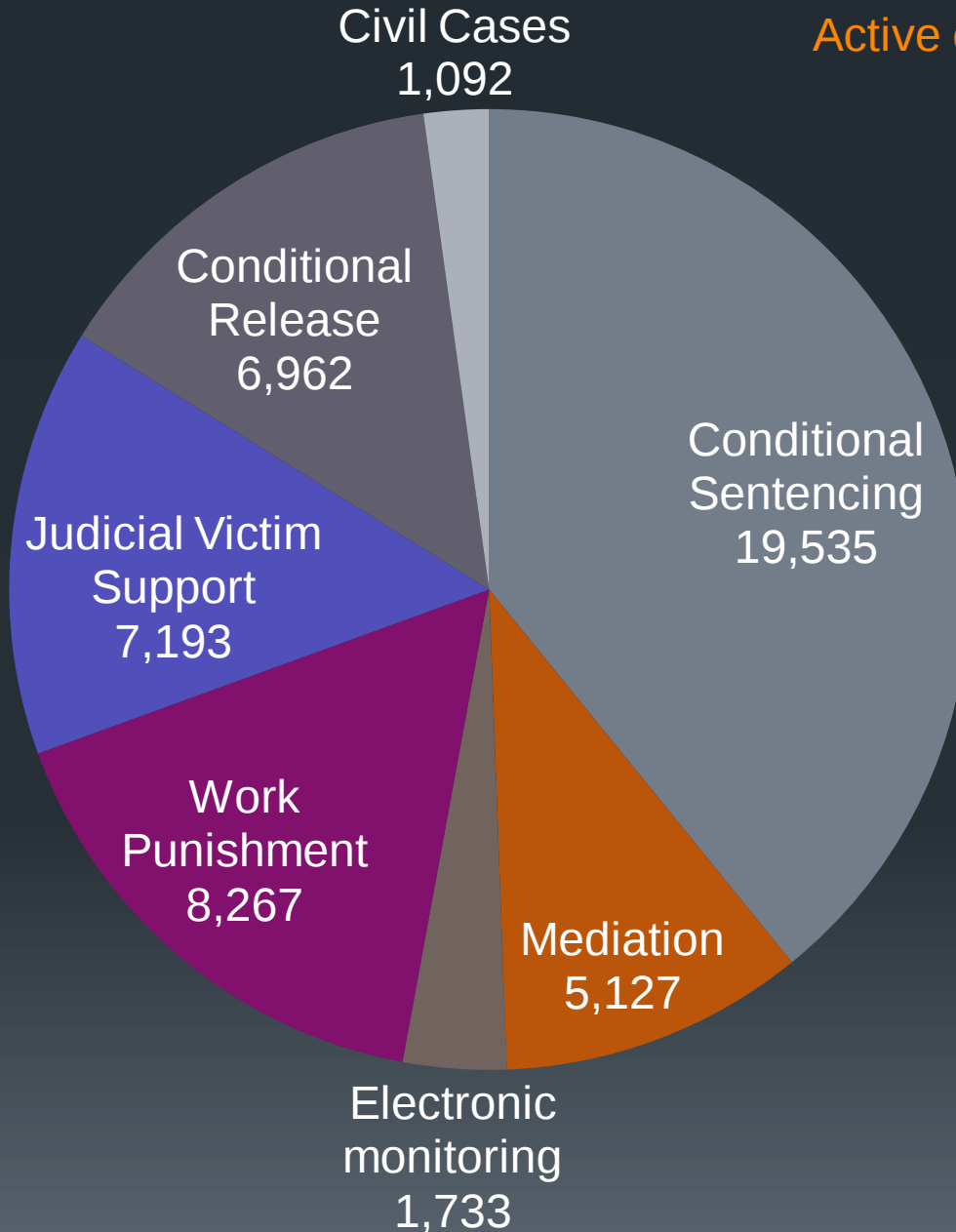
H. Civil cases

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2013 : **3.076** new cases
1.092 active cases (31/12/2013)



Active cases (stock) -31/12/2013



49.909 cases

+ 1.020 reports

50.929

Flow - new cases in 2013 : 65.255

Other

- Hosting
- Crossroad, Innovation (laboratory) and meeting place
- Funding local organizations and municipalities
- Legal Aid



3. Some reflections looking back

Looking back...

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Strengths

- Bringing 'social work' in judicial system



Looking back...

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Strengths

- Bringing 'social work' in judicial system
- Networking and cooperation



Looking back...

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Strengths

- Bringing 'social work' in judicial system
- Networking and cooperation
- Management



Looking back...

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Strengths

- Bringing 'social work' in judicial system
- Networking and cooperation
- Management
- Increase of community sentences, including budget/staff and support



Strengths

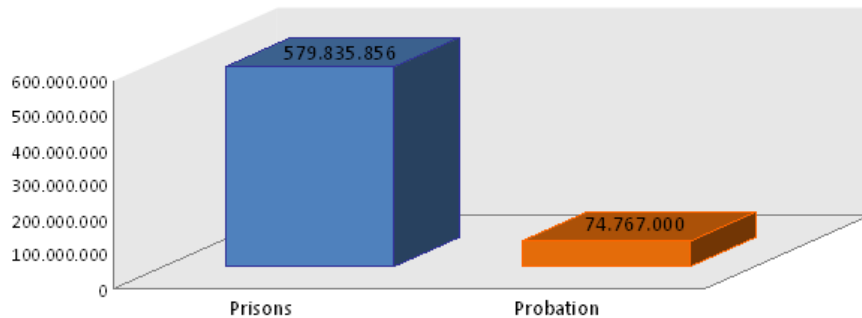
- Bringing 'social work' in judicial system
- Networking and cooperation
- Management
- Increase of community sentences, including budget/staff and support
- Increased rights of victims and offenders



Looking back...

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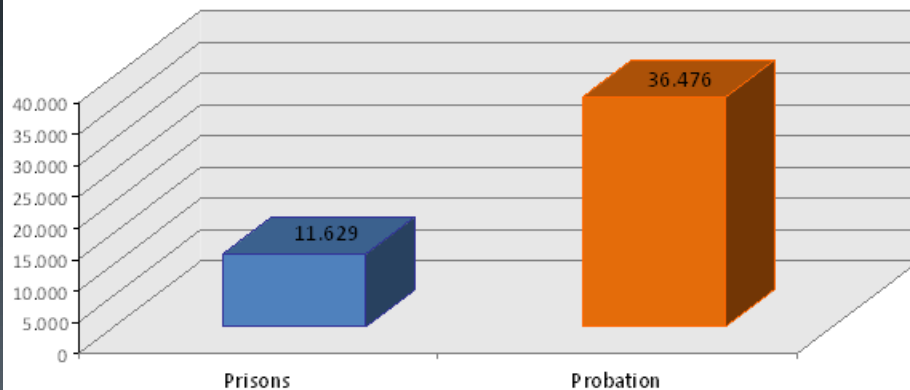
Budget 2012



Weaknesses

- Still in the shadow of the prisons

Active files Octobre 2013





Weaknesses

- Still in the shadow of the prisons
- Room for innovation



Drug Courts





Weaknesses

- Still in the shadow of the prisons
- Room for innovation
- “Penalisation du social” ?



Weaknesses

- Still in the shadow of the prisons
- Room for innovation
- “Penalisation du social” ?
- Managerialism ?



4. Looking forward



2014 - 2015

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Federal Public Service
Justice



Flemish community

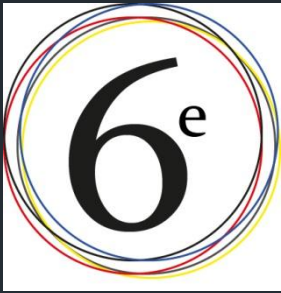


French community



German speaking community





State Reform

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1/7/2014 : Houses of Justice are a part of the “Flemish Community”

(1/1/2015 : staff and budget transfer)

- “Community” = closer to relevant competences like : health care, housing, culture, employment, education, etc.
- Closer to similar activities
 - Assistance for inmates
 - Victim support
 - Forensic welfare
 - ...



State Reform

- Policy letter 2014-2019 (Minister Vandeurzen)
 - ✓ New mission, vision and position for the Houses of Justice
 - ✓ Strategic Plan for assistance and services for community justice
 - ✓ Case-load and capacity
 - ✓ New legislation (2019)

5. Conclusions



Thank you

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