

## Press Release

### **The Second European Justice Roundtable in Prague Had Addressed the Need for Awareness**

**Prague, 5th February 2025 - In cooperation with Norway, European justice representatives had met in Prague to discuss awareness, support, and integration of people with criminal backgrounds. The meeting had been part of a bilateral cooperation with the Norwegian Prison Service and the non-profit organization Yellow Ribbon. The successful initiative in the form of a run for better integration of people with a criminal past, the Yellow Ribbon Run, had been launched in Europe by the Czech Republic. The run had since gained a European dimension.**

#### European Enlightenment Centre in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic had become an important European centre for raising awareness and sharing experiences on the topic of supporting people with criminal backgrounds. On Tuesday, 5th February, the NGO Yellow Ribbon had hosted a roundtable entitled Yellow Ribbon Growing Strategically Together, where the new European visual identity of the project had been presented, and the first experiences from the pilot runs in Croatia and Lithuania had been shared.

#### International Dimension of the Yellow Ribbon Run

After the pilot projects in Croatia and Lithuania, the next countries to have organised Czech-style runs had been Norway and Poland. Inspiration had come from Singapore, where the Yellow Ribbon Run had originally been created to raise awareness about second chances and destigmatise people with criminal backgrounds.

The event in Prague had been attended by representatives from Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Croatia, Germany, and Singapore, all of whom had shared a passion for the Yellow Ribbon idea and the same vision—to support people with criminal backgrounds and their families.

Gabriela Slováková: Together We Change the Future

*"It had been wonderful to see how the idea of the Yellow Ribbon Run had inspired other countries to undertake similar activities. Our new European identity had been another step towards creating a strong platform for sharing and collaborating across Europe. Each country had brought its own unique experience. I had believed that together we could change society's attitude towards people with criminal backgrounds and find ways to a safer and more inclusive society,"* said Gabriela Slováková, Director of the Yellow Ribbon Association.

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Yellow Ribbon Run - the aim of the project is to break down prejudices, to give people with criminal records and their families a second chance to live a decent life, to contribute to crime prevention, reduce recidivism and make safer society.

In 2024, 911 people registered for the 9th annual Yellow Ribbon Run.

Yellow Ribbon Run is the main project of the NGO Yellow Ribbon. The is themed since 2022.

The main motive is to support people with criminal backgrounds in their parenting roles.

Thus, all lines in the themes lead to children and their destigmatization. From meeting supporters and addressing their situation, to expanding opportunities to spend quality time with their family in an informal setting, to direct financial support.

#### [9th Yellow Ribbon Run](#)

Gabriela Slováková - She worked for the Prison Service of the Czech Republic since 2003. In 2010, she became the director of a female prison in Světlá nad Sázavou, and since 2019 she continued as the director of a male prison in Kuřim. She is an international expert specialized in the issue of imprisoned women, also dedicated to the meaningful treatment of convicts as well as the issue of children and families of imprisoned parents. For a total of 8 years, she was a member of Board of Directors of the worldwide organization ICPA (International Corrections and Prisons Association) which brings together over 5,000 experts on the issue of prisons, as well as a chair of the expert group EuropPris which was focused on the relationships of inmates with their families in relation to their smooth integration into society after they served their sentence. She is a co-founder of MECR (Middle European Correctional Roundtable), which deals with strategies in the field of prisons in Central Europe, and works in several expert groups organized by the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic or the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic focusing on criminal justice. She is of the opinion that the families and children of prisoners are invisible victims of crime and cooperation with the family can significantly affect successful integration into society.

In her work, she implements the principles of restorative justice, which she considers essential for minimizing the impact of crime on victims as well as reducing recidivism.

She is the founder and director of the Yellow Ribbon awareness raising project that aims to raise public interest in the issue of people with criminal history and to connect institutions operating in this area. In a T-shirt with a yellow ribbon, all runners are equal, and so the motivation comes to pay more attention to the above mentioned issues. She herself is the mother of three children - eleven-year-old Matyáš and two-year-old twins Mariana and Natália.

Since 2024, she has been the Director of the Criminal Policy Department at the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic