

Summary

Forecasting the criminal justice system until 2012

This report describes the forecasting results of the “demand” for police, prosecution service, courts and prisons until the end of 2012. The forecasts are made using the forecasting model developed for the Dutch criminal justice system and the civil and administrative justice systems (PMJ). The base year for our forecasts was 2005. Legislative and policy changes after 2005 have therefore not been incorporated into these forecasts.

The PMJ model is based on developments in society outside the sphere of influence of the Ministry of Justice. The basic underlying assumption of the model is that developments in society drive trends in crime and private disputes. Four groups of factors can be distinguished: changes in the demographic structure of the population, economic conditions, social problems and institutional changes. Within each category, a number of background factors are chosen that, taken together, indicate problems like social inequality, culture conflict, social isolation and economic inequality.

The demographic determinants used in the PMJ model are: the size of the population, the number of migrants in various age categories and the number of 12- to 17-year-olds in the four main cities. The economic determinants are the employed labour force, purchasing power, average yearly income and the police budget, the number of unemployment and other social benefits, gross added value, tax burden, rents and the costs of lawyers. The social determinants are the number of children involved in divorce proceedings, alcohol consumption, the number of drug addicts, the number of divorces and divorcees, the number of migrants, the number of rentals, the total number of houses, and the number of people belonging to a religious or philosophical belief. The institutional factors are the number of police offices, the police budget, the number of lawyers and the legal own contribution when subsidized legal aid is used.

External forecasts of these indicators determine the forecasts for developments in the justice system. If there are no policy changes or new legislation, the number of reported crimes and the number of suspects is expected to increase by four percent over the period 2006-2012. This will affect the chain partners that follow in criminal justice system, but this growth cannot be extrapolated in a straightforward fashion. As charges will not be pressed against all suspects, the inflow of cases into the prosecutorial system will rise with only two percent.

The number of summonses will keep pace with the inflow into the prosecutorial system. This in turn will lead to an increase of applications for subsidized legal aid. Because of improved economic conditions less will be eligible. The demand for prison capacity for adults will be one percent lower in 2012 than in 2006. Although the number of prison sentences is decreasing more strongly, the number of default detentions due to failure of the community services or not paying

finer is increasing. There will be a fifteen percent higher demand for prison capacity for minors.

The number of new civil cases at the district courts will increase with 18 percent in the period 2006-2012, while the number of new civil cases at the subdistrict court will increase with 22 percent. Also the number of civil cases in appeal will rise with about thirteen percent. The number of civil cases in cassation will decrease by seven percent. The number of new administrative cases (excluding tax cases) at the district courts will increase with 22 percent in the period 2006-2012. The number of tax cases in first instance will fall by 10 percent, but the number of appeals will rise by 36 percent. The number of applications for subsidized legal aid in civil and administrative cases is expected to rise by fifteen percent.

A word of caution is in order. These forecasts are based on the information available at the moment of calculation. Both the forecasting process and the external forecasts of the determinants are surrounded by uncertainty. For this reason, these forecasts should be seen as no more than a signal about what could happen if nothing changes, rather than as prophecies. Unexpected events and new policy or legislation will alter the outcomes.