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## Book review

# **MIHAELA TOMIȚĂ – PROBATION AS A FIELD OF STUDY. INSTITUTION AND PROFESSION 2012, BUCHAREST: UNIVERSUL JURIDIC PUBLISHING HOUSE**

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Transition from planned to market economy shaped the configuration of Romanian social policy. Vulnerable groups not properly approached by suitable social protection measures during early post-communist period were exposed to vicious circle of poverty. Among them, some groups received a better attention and even later adopted social policy programs managed to ameliorate their condition and reduce their exposure to social exclusion. It is specially the case of children, orphans from institutionalized foster cares, people with disabilities, or victims of domestic violence (Ilie, Vonica, 2004: 4-6). International media played an important role during early '1990. A second external factor was represented by the negotiation to EU procedures represented especially by the harmonization of the *acquis communautaire*.

The analysis of Romanian Governmental programs adopted after 1990 (1992, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2012), the Social Assistance Laws (2001, 2005, 2011) and the draft Law of social economy (2012) concluded that 62 different categories of vulnerabilities were mentioned by 134 different references (Stănescu, 2013a, 226-263; Stănescu, 2013b: 146). Only few mentions are made with reference to beneficiaries directly or indirectly linked with probation services: people deprived of liberty (Social Assistance Law 2011), people sanctioned with educative measure or measure outside prison under the surveillance of probation services (2011), people free from detention (2012), people which finalized the in prison period according with the law (2013) (Stănescu, 2013a, 247-263).

As Professor Stefan Buzarnescu argues within the forward of the book, the interdisciplinary probation as “a social science applied to the justice field” was practically ignored in Romania till 1998 despite its three development stages: the

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philological one, the epistemic one, and the stage of semantic and methodological reconstruction (Tomiță, 2012: 9).

The volume includes an argument for the second edition, the foreword, and 12 chapters followed by references and annex.

The first chapter Introduction briefly raises awareness to the interested reader on the potential of probation field research. Chapter II Anomy, deviance, delinquency, socialization, socialization deficit, resocialization overviewed main scientific concepts used in international and national relevant literature.

Chapter III Criminality as a social phenomenon and possible answers for the public policies of the probation institution and Chapter IV The judiciary system as a decision factor for penal policies and social practice argue that constantly increased costs of criminality as social phenomena shaped the attention paid by public stakeholders. The link between penal justice and moral connotations allows a better understanding of the role and purpose of the law (Tomiță, 2012: 53).

The following three chapters (Chapter V Custodial versus community sanctions; Chapter VI European regulations and institutions on Probation, and Chapter VII Prison between traditional and modern management of the criminality phenomenon) valuable contribute to an in-depth analyse of current paradigms and trends at international level. The transfer of best practices at national level highly depends on assesment of supporting domestic factors.

Chapter VIII Probation – a form of social work for Justice proposes and Chapter IX Probation, social space and community safety propose alternative perspectives on the provision of probation services challenged by the current socio-economic context.

Chapter X Probation institutions and the new criminal reglementations overviews recent developments among which we mention „the renunciation of applying the penalty (...) and the postponement of punciishment aplicaton, and the suspension of sentence execution under supervision was redesigned” (Tomiță, 2012: 173).

Detailed analyse of the institutional design related to probation in Romania is examined in Chapter XI. Legislative and institutional construction of the probation institution.

As conclusion of the book, Chapter XII Factors that influence the effectiveness of probation identified weak and strong points supporting the development of probation in Romania.

The book represents the English revised and added edition of the Romanian “Probațiunea ca disciplină de studiu. Instituție și profesie” published in 2009 at Solness Publishing House, Timișoara.

Taking into account the innovatory and original scientific contribution of the book strongly supported by theoretic and methodological frameworks, we consider it is as an asset for the Romanian stakeholders involved especially the academia community and last, but not least the Direction of Probation and its local structures, the probation services. The research outputs as arguments for the maturity and legitimacy of the

probation institution in Romania sustainable fundament the policy decisions related to justice process towards achieving nationally assumed goals as member state of the European Union and international respect for human rights.

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