



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | JUSTICE LAB

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Columbia University’s Justice Lab hosts educational trip to Germany for Massachusetts delegation to learn about European emerging adult justice systems

Contact: Lael Chester, 617-949-0172, lec2115@columbia.edu

New York City The Justice Lab at Columbia University will host a delegation from Massachusetts in Germany from March 25 – 30 to learn about European emerging adult justice systems. The 22 participants include officials from all branches of Massachusetts’ government (judiciary, legislature, executive branch, prosecutors, defense attorneys, police and corrections) as well as community-based organizations that specialize in serving system-involved emerging adults.

Since 1953, Germany has included 18, 19 and 20-year olds in its juvenile justice system and has focused on providing rehabilitative services for the older adolescent population. Youth younger than age 14 are served outside of the criminal justice system (usually in the child welfare system).

Unlike the United States, European countries have a history of providing more developmentally appropriate and less punitive responses to emerging adults (age 18 to their early 20s) involved in their justice system. The majority of European countries, 28 out of 35, provide special legal provisions for youth over age 18 while Germany, along with Croatia and the Netherlands, allow youth until their 21st (Croatia) or 23rd (the Netherlands) birthday to be sentenced under juvenile law and confined in juvenile facilities.

The delegation from Massachusetts will meet with justice officials in Germany (including judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys), tour youth prisons, and visit community-based organizations serving justice-involved emerging adults. Members of the German Ministry of Justice and European academics with expertise in the field will also be presenting information to the delegation.

Educational trip itinerary is attached.

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