

Handout: Intervention through Community Service

“Schwitzen statt Sitzen” („Sweat Rather Than Serve“)

If you commit a crime in Germany, the police investigates. Then the police hands the file to the public prosecutor.

The prosecutor can suggest community service or a fine instead of a prison sentence.

The court too can impose community service or a fine during a trial.



If the defendant/offender cannot pay the fine, the defendant can file a motion with the prosecutor or court to convert the fine to community service. They then determine the amount of hours that have to be served and inform the intervention/placement agency of a network supporting offenders called "Straffälligenhilfe".

The intervention/placement agency discusses with the defendant, who has to complete the community service, where it can be done. The community service can be completed at retirement homes, sports clubs, animal shelters and so forth. These facilities are employment organizations called "Einsatzstellen". Then the intervention/placement agency informs the employment organization about the defendant and arranges an interview.



The defendant should be on time for this interview. During this interview the assigned days, times and type of work will be discussed. These arrangements should be strictly adhered to. Should the defendant be unable to come to work for any reason, it is imperative to contact the workplace. The intervention/placement agencies can always be contacted should there be any problems.

The employment organization informs the intervention/placement agency when the assigned hours of community service are completed. The intervention/placement agency informs the court or the prosecutor. Then the matter is settled.

If the community service is not carried out/fulfilled, a prison term is impending.