

# Electronic monitoring in Belgium: solving the prison crisis?

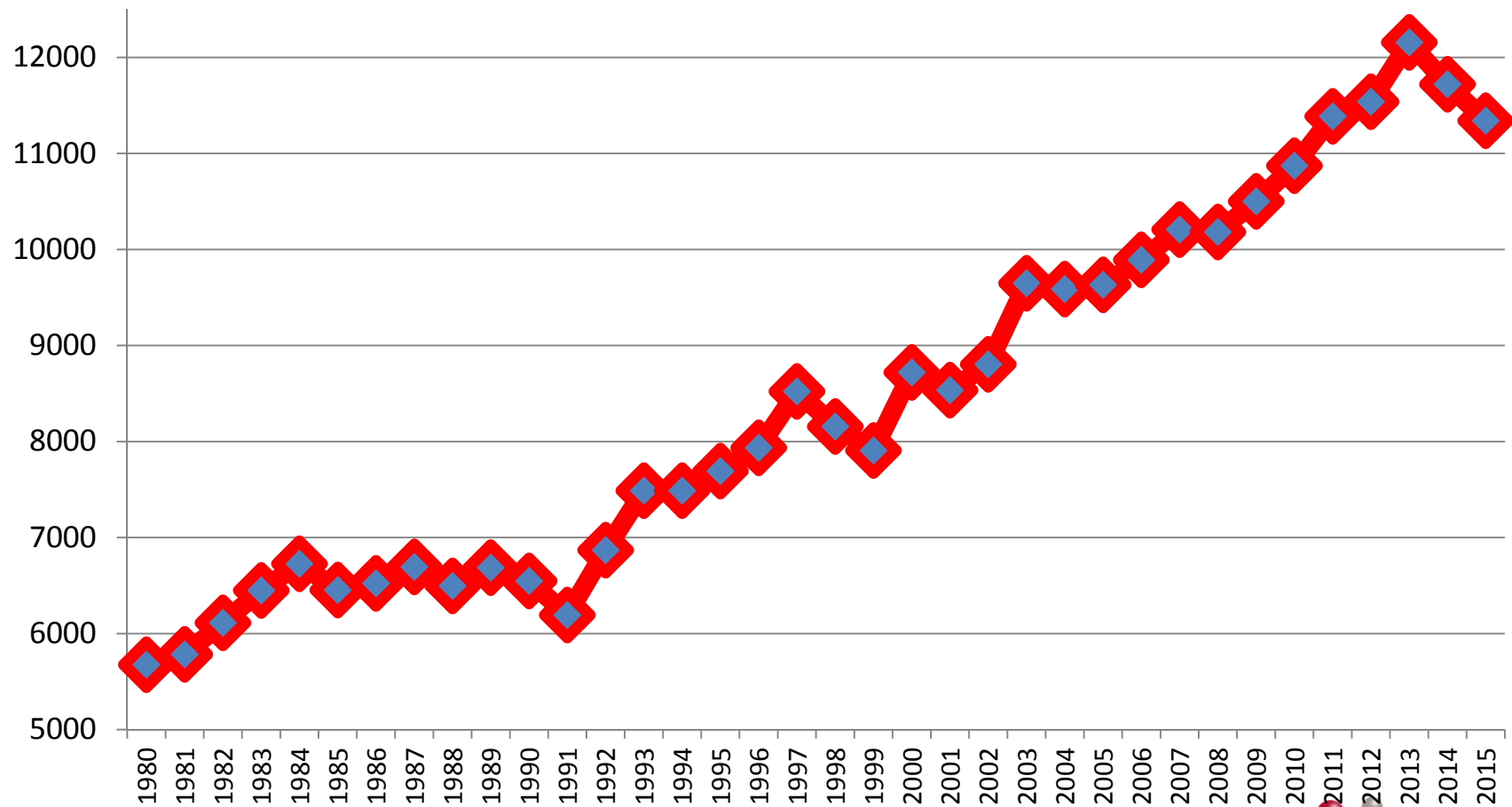
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**Vrije Universiteit Brussel**

**Brussels, 18 February 2016**

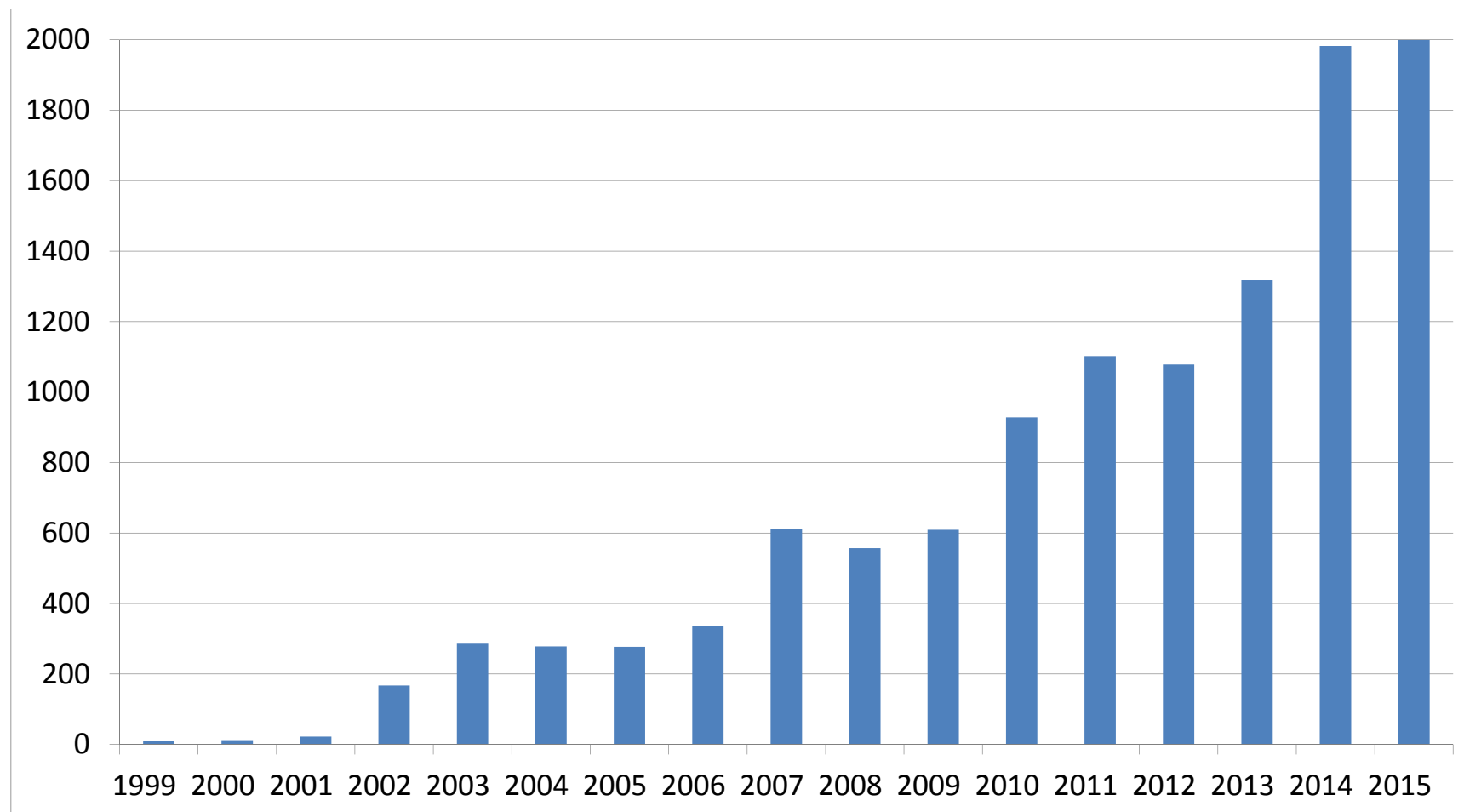


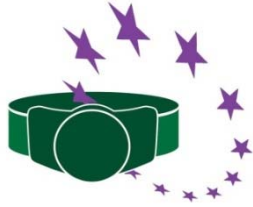
# Context of rising prison population





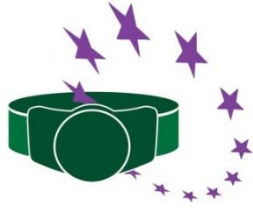
# EM: A story of growth





# Expansion, expansion,...

- Extending the scope of EM
  - Today: back-door, front-door, pre-trial
  - Future : sentencing phase, mentally ill
- New techniques
  - RF, voice-verification, GPS
- Political eagerness
  - EM as a panacea for penitentiary problems
  - ! Systemic goal



# From supervision to control

**2000 – 2007**

## **SUPERVISORY APPROACH**

- EM as a rehabilitative penitentiary strategy
- Strict selection and close supervision
- *Active* rehabilitative goal

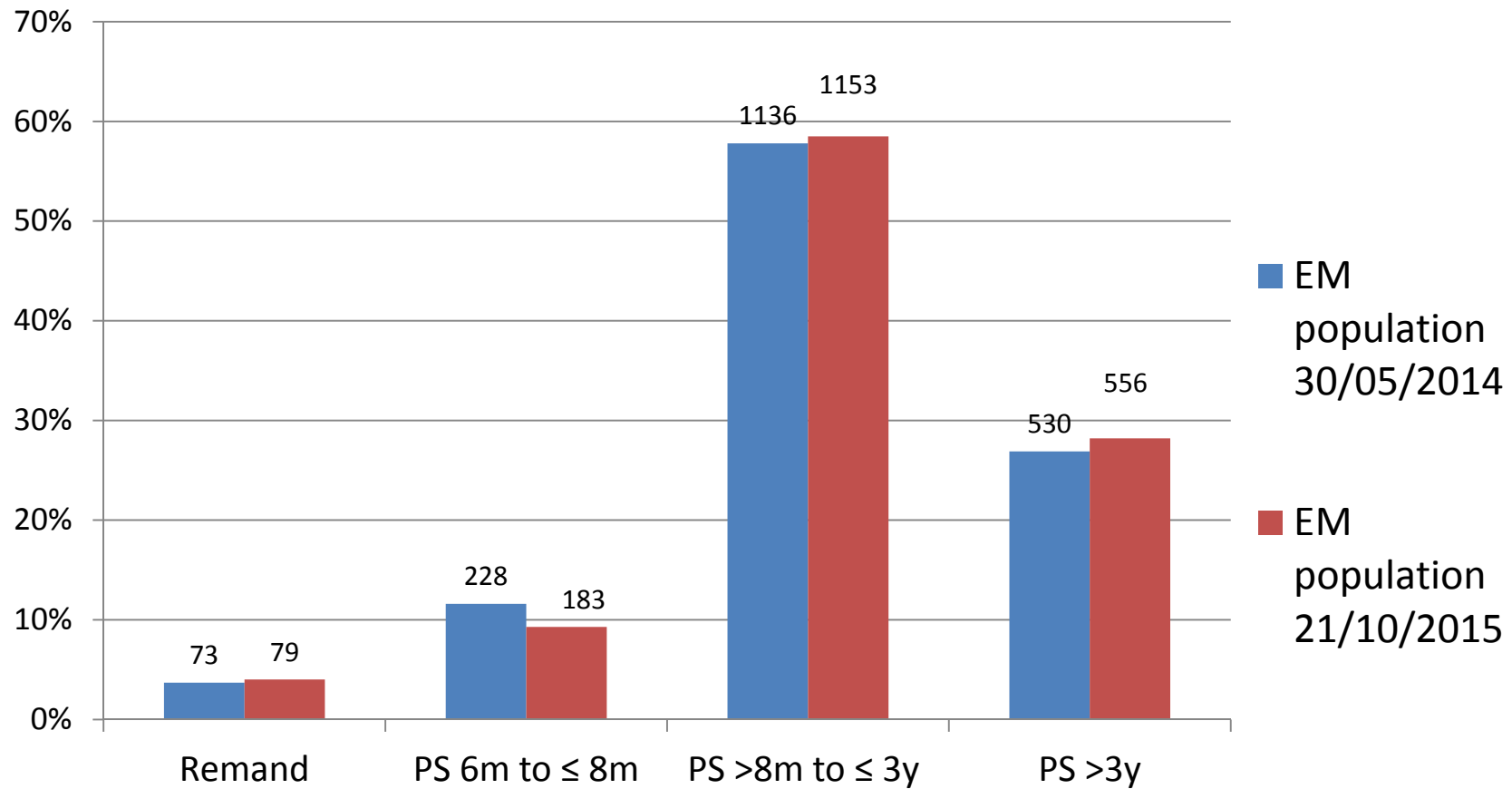
**2007 –**

## **CONTROL APPROACH**

- Solving the prison crisis
  - Cost-effective and quick solution for prison overcrowding
- Pressure to increase political credibility
- Regaining legitimacy
- *Passive* rehabilitative goal



# Daily EM population





# Convicted prisoners : two-track policy

## PS ≤ 3Y

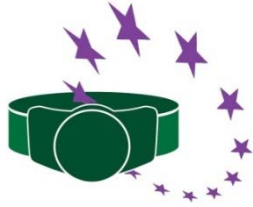
### CONTROL APPROACH

- Full replacement of PS
- Quasi-automatic application
- ‘Encouraging’ policy
- Stand alone
- Little flexibility
- *Passive* reintegration
- Prevention of detention harm
- Substanceless, retributive form of punishment

## PS > 3 Y

### SUPERVISORY APPROACH

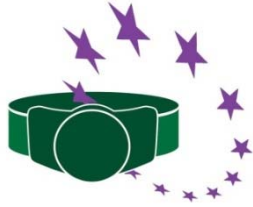
- Transition to release
- Individualised application
- Strict selection
- Integrated
- Flexibility
- *Active* reintegration and supervision
- Limitation of detention harm
- Preparation early release



# Discussion

- Expanding system → cutting costs
  - Standardisation, less flexibility
  - Social reports and consent of cohabitants
- EM 'crisis'
  - Organizational problems, waiting lists, staff turn-over, absenteeism, ....
- Effectiveness
  - Passive versus active reintegration?
  - Solving the penal crisis?
    - Transferring the crisis from one system to another
    - Reduction of PP?





# Recommendations

- Allocation of Justice Assistants based on individual assessments of monitored people's needs
- The work processes and the staff's workload should be assessed to ensure adequate services are provided to monitored people. Sufficient time and opportunities should be allocated for positive personal interactions between the monitoring and supervision staff and the monitored individuals.