



Press release

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19 Crime and criminal justice

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Criminal judgements: minors and adults

A youth conviction leads to a fivefold increase in the risk of an adult conviction

Neuchâtel, 21 August 2018 (FSO) – **Previous convictions and gender among minors are determining factors when evaluating the risk of (re)conviction in adulthood, according to a series of analyses carried out in 2015. Juvenile delinquents are almost five times as likely to be convicted in adulthood as young people without a juvenile criminal record and, in general, boys are five and a half times more likely than girls to be convicted on reaching the age of majority, according to an analysis by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).**

The criminal history of individuals was studied by means of two statistics: the statistics on criminal convictions of minors (JUSUS), and, up to the age of 23, the statistics on adult convictions (SUS). The FSO analysed two separate data sets: a large group of 95 695 persons born in 1992 and holding either Swiss nationality or a C permit and a smaller group – originating from the first group – of 7428 juvenile delinquents listed in the JUSUS.

Higher risk of recidivism among young men

The gender of persons is the most influential variable when it comes to the risk of (re)conviction during adulthood: in general, a man's risk of conviction in adulthood is almost five and a half times greater than that of a woman. Among juvenile delinquents, boys that have already been convicted by a youth court are almost four times more likely to reoffend on reaching the age of majority than girls convicted by a youth court.

The first conviction is key

A conviction in youth has a strong impact on the rest of an offender's path of delinquency: young people that have been convicted at least once by a youth court are almost five times more likely to be convicted in adulthood than persons who have never been convicted during their childhood or adolescence. Among juvenile delinquents, the risk of recidivism in adulthood increases with the

Press release

number of convictions received by a youth court. However, the impact of the “number of convictions in youth” factor is not as important as the impact of the first conviction. This means that the risk of continuing a criminal career increases most with the delivery of a first conviction by a youth court.

The risk of recidivism also depends on other factors

All factors available for this publication only predict part of the trend studied. This means that other variables such as socio-demographic variables (school level, area of residence or family environment) probably have a certain impact on the risk of (re)conviction in adulthood. However, these variables are not included in the JUSUS and SUS databases. It was therefore not possible to confirm any such impact from the conducted analyses.

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