



EUROPEAN ORGANISATION OF
PRISON AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

EuroPris
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Prisoner Education Expert Meeting

Minutes

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Bratislava, Slovakia

Participants/Expert Group members:

Name	Organisation	Country
Ioana Morar	National Administration of Penitentiaries	Romania
Iakovos Stylianos	Ministry of Justice and Public Order: Department of Prisons	Cyprus
Martin Zachel	Ministry of Justice: Rhineland-Palatinate	Germany
Katharina Schwarzl	Federal Ministry of Justice	Austria
Kieran Moylan	Irish Prison Service	Ireland
Peter Kriska	General Directorate of the Corps of Prison and Court Guard	Slovakia
Kathleen van de Vijver	Belgian Prison Service	Belgium
Petra Prijatelj	Prison Administration of the Slovak Republic	Slovakia
Tanja Klee	Ministry of Justice: Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	Germany
James King	Scottish Prison Service	Scotland
Tamar Lisiaki (not present)	Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance of Georgia: Department of Penitentiary	Georgia



Developments over the past year

Ioana Morar, Romania

- report after last meeting to the MoJ and dissemination of information through the internal portal of the Romanian National Administration of Penitentiaries,
- MoEducation responsible for education; schools inside penitentiaries offering school programs similar to outside,
- recent developments (since the last meeting):
 - o legislative changes – compensation for inmates held in improper conditions – Law no. 169/2017; Memorandum adopted via Government Decision for the improvement of prison conditions (including the implementation of programs and reinsertion strategies for inmates/ex-inmates);
 - o update on the implementation of the national strategy for social reintegration – GD no. 389/2015 (period of implementation 2015-2019); 6 institutions responsible for implementing the strategy; interagency between MoE and MoJ consolidated since the approval of the Strategy; after release from prison for a period of 5 years;
 - o progress on the implementation of several activities (including before the Government by the minister of Justice, in February 2018): e.g. elaboration of a diagnosis system of training and vocational training for the staff responsible for prisoners' social reintegration; elaboration of a Report of analysis and proposals to change/adjust the legal framework; elaboration of six inter-institutional procedures regarding the involvement and cooperation of the central and local public authorities; development of common training and vocational training programmes for the staff working in the social reintegration field.
- hiring new specialist staff;
- educational, psychological and social assistance programs delivered by Prison Service;
- projects on education, in general, and, also, on the competences of educators.

Katharina Schwarzl, Austria

- MoE sends teachers for primary and secondary school education
- prison staff offers vocational training in several prisons; prisons have specialized in certain trainings; shorter certification period possible; theoretical part for all in one prison; prisoners are transferred to the prison that offers a specific vocational training;
- annual auditing the targets of the number of persons that have been trained; quantitative measurement; how can the quality of treatment programs be measured? A working group set up to find a solution for that; important to involve academic for making these measurements independently
- e-learning programs in all prisons in Austria; provider (IBI) is Germany; used as blended learning as well
- best would be to have one e-learning program that could be connected to other MS – very expensive and technically difficult
- 55% foreign prison population; general more focus on basic education and literacy; language education
- Lower Saxony & Hessen have developed an evaluation tool to measure the effectiveness



Iakovos Stylianos, Cyprus

- meeting with colleagues and Ministry of Education and Justice to discuss outcome of last expert meeting; decided to give more focus on vocational training;
- MoJ management of prison schools; MoE providing curricula
- opened new school for persons with mental health issues and chose programs to develop skills and support prisoners after sentence; skills for job interviews, CV writing
- new qualification system: a cooperation between MoLabour, MoE, MoJ and a HR development Association; assessment and qualification of an individual carrying out specific jobs that they have some experience with, but no qualification
- inmates are getting paid in work and in school
- cooperation with schools for blind and deaf – introduced special equipment for these disabilities

Martin Zschel, Germany

- gave presentation to his department after last meeting
- technical developments: greater use of digital media will create a digital workflow
- increasing problems with illiteracy; partly due to migration; many issues with foreign prisoners and language problems
- Austria has experience with video translation for medical and psychological reasons; can be a security problem to use uncertified interpreters
- growing number of questions from parliamentarians on educational activities

Kieran Moylan, Ireland

- MoE provides education; Prison service provides for facilities
- basic, secondary and university education along with non-formal learning opportunities
- Prison Education Management System PEMS: custom built IT system: national system to keep education record of prisoner, linked to central database; have to keep the data forever, also after release
- Replacement of standalone PCs with networked PCs; standardized educational software; remote on-site monitoring of PC usage
- IT department does not want to provide any programming or coding education to prisoners
- National Prison Arts coordinator appointed; national prisoner arts exhibition held in September 2019
- 44 prisoners approved for Open University programmes for 2018/2019; some access to internet is required for attending Open University courses; Prison Service pays the education fees
- quality assurance model for prison education to be developed with Education and Training Board; development of new education strategy for 2019
- staff shortages limits access to education



Peter Kriska, Slovakia

- used James' materials from last meeting on learning difficulties and learning disabilities
- large group of prisoners has learning difficulties all over Europe – often reason for why people do not engage into education – not knowing themselves that they actually have such problems
- new project for four years to start 1st October: 'chance for return' to increase competences for labor market
- exit units for prisoners: preparation for release of prisoners serving longer than 4 years; have to be in the last 2 months in this unit; outside agencies (probation, social services, ngo's) come and work with the inmate and take over after the release; placement in this unit, that looks like a home; strengthening family ties; will be piloted in 10 out of 18 prisons
- after four years evaluation if it will be continued
- identification of risk groups for risks after release; develop education for inmates

Kathleen van de Vijver, Belgium

- communities provide education and after the expert meeting contact with their coordinator to talk about experiences from the expert group – that contributed to a better contact between them and Prison Service
- vocational training is now better combined with the availability of workshops in prison
- many parliamentary questions about the use of education / training
- new goals: combination of working and learning between staff and inmates; staff gets same vocational training course as the inmates for new types of work; more and more inmates need higher university educations – starting pilots with university of Leuven (criminology), giving lessons inside the prison together with the normal university students and more digital distance education with prison cloud
- transfer of prisoners for vocational training to prisons offering such training

Petra Prijatelj, Slovakia

- cooperation with MoE strengthened with results:
 - o possibility of counseling for inmates: students want to know how to obtain higher education or vocational certificates
 - o possibilities for financing educational programs for inmates - inmate has to pay for a certain educational program - that is not available within the prison - and when inmate finishes the whole program he can ask for the refund
 - o public tender for adult education organisation for remand prisoners and prisoners brings a greater diversity of programs
 - o preparation of pilot project E-cell in Dob prison: in-cell computers with white listed internet and intranet with educational materials from adult education organisation are made available for free
- after Cyprus study visit was arranged to Scotland for inspiration in their system changes



Tanja Klee, Germany

- report of the last meeting to the weekly meetings of heads of unit and country wide meeting of prison governors and probation services
- participation in nationwide ESF project on radicalisation and prevention in prison and probation (result of contact from last year)
- new public tender for vocational training and work therapy 2019-2022 for 164 places plus 75 places for transition management
- started nationwide expert group children of imprisoned parents – on behalf of the nationwide ministers of justice conference: chair: Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saarland and North Rhine Westphalia
- distant learning; elis = electronic platform for all prisons in Germany; used also in vocational trainings

James King, Scotland

- new education contract with single provider for education
- each prison has to have an annual working plan dealing with individual education needs of their prisoners; working plan drafted with education provider, prison and head office coordinator
- progress national strategy to not only focus on vocational training and literacy; integrate literacy and numeracy into what is generally provided in prisons – discussion groups on contemporary issues that are interesting to prisoners; building creative approaches to education rather than normal class room education that does not work for most of them; could bring together prisoners from different education levels
- partnerships with universities; universities come in with post graduate students to teach in prison for gaining experiences in teaching and job experience; courses on astrobiology, or biology sessions - very different subjects; develop critical thinking skills
- creative / innovative approach is appealing to prisoners
- from what do we think the prisoner needs to what does the prisoner think he needs
- intranet in each prison; education providers upload materials / online learning courses
- 60 open university courses

Discussion on RecommendationsPrison Education in Europe - questionnaire

- questionnaire was sent to 30 jurisdictions and 22 responded
- overall feeling that prison services live up to the CoE recommendation, although not being sure if the aims were achieved
- main focus on literacy and vocational skills; also taking into consideration learning difficulties
- concern about appropriate provision for foreign nationals
- technology is considered as an important part of education, but access to internet is still very limited
- wide range of education providers from within and outside of Prison Services
- levels of participation in education differ largely in the countries

Feedback Kieran: IPEA comments on CoE Recommendation

Group evaluation of the CoE Recommendation

- contextual report linked to the recommendations would need an update

Article 1

- should life skills and offence related programs be included?; what does 'all prisoners' mean? Is it the right name? Include learning activities into everything – whole prison should be a learning experience; therapeutic approach to education, including yoga, mindfulness etc; Mandela rules refers to same treatment for prisoners in isolation – this should be included
- yoga should be included but under an umbrella name that also includes mindfulness etc;
- the term prisoners is generally accepted in Europe

Article 2

- delivered by qualified educators; age is maybe not the most important factor, but more look into the special needs and abilities of prisoners;
- how to define qualified? Could complicate things and qualification does not always guarantee best teachers
- should be like the outside world – is not possible – should be similar and designed to the needs of the prison; meant to normalize education as much as possible; built it around the specific needs of the individual
- possibility to have mixed groups of men and women as in the outside world; could increase the size of groups especially for females
- include diversity = also invite outsiders to follow education together with prisoners

Article 3

- add: their wellbeing as a learner? It is already included in the notion 'the whole person'
- refer to health and physical education?
- include nationality or ethnicity instead of cultural context? not needed, it is already clear

Article 4

- not only the ones in the prison system have a role in education; also those in the outside world; very often it is MoE, addiction services, employers, ngos: this should be added to the recommendation, it is not actually included
- it is not about who gives education, but it is about staff not blocking education because of other reasons, such as security
- take out the word administration – to make clear that it is about all prison staff (remark Martin: "all those involved in the prison system" which is very vague and unspecific. Does it include only prison staff or also externals, when nobody is sure, nobody will feel concerned.)

Article 5

- should not lose out educationally by taking part in prison work to be added

Article 6

- include formal and informal education: not needed



Article 7

- define what is appropriate
- balance between adult learning and person centred support

Article 8

- add the requirement to do special assessments by qualified professionals on the prisoner's learning needs and learning abilities; provision of assessment tools
- take into consideration the mental conditions of prisoners that influence their learning abilities

Article 9

- embed learning into practical subjects
- include development of entrepreneurial skills

Article 10

- to meet their cultural etc needs and digital skills
- current formulation is outdated
- reflect the cultural diversity in prison
- complementarity with prison education
- state regularly, rather than once a week
- libraries are not the same anymore as 30 years ago – more digital, more dynamic
- media library (correct wording? Native speaker?) rather than library
- include the role of the community library

Article 11

- as part of a wider diet and life style program? Health

Article 12

- creative activities can serve as an introduction to learning

Article 13

- social education needs to be defined more clearly? Citizenship, responsible member of society?
- include soft skills such as personal development

Article 14

- take security regimes into account; one does not need physically to be there to get education from outside providers
- participate rather than attend

Article 15

- example: Irish Red Cross community program
- programmes should be relevant, high standard and complementary to not interfere negatively with the education provided by the prison



Article 16

- need for protocols with education service providers
- guidance counselors that could advice prisoners
- what does it mean – measures? Better promoting ongoing participation

Article 17

- is this not a pre-requisite to everything and should be in the beginning of the recommendation?
- should it be acknowledged that MS have different approach to providing education

Additional recommendations

- digital learning and technology; enhance provision of distance learning
- language support to non-native speakers; include extra recommendation on FNP
- use of peer to peer learning in certain contexts in informal learning; peer would need training; careful to give authorities of prisoners above other prisoners; use of role models
- role of education in building more self esteem
- links with programmes provided by psychology service for example – possibly link to another article in the recommendation
- people leave prison with a higher self-efficacy and self-esteem: more like an introductory statement
- include pre-trial and nationality as education available to all prisoners independent also of sentence length

