

# RISE



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme

## Better prison systems: Less crime

Prisons should be learning environments in which *'the prisoner is at the centre of their reintegration into society through education and learning'*, states a position paper that was presented today in the Information office of the European Parliament in Luxembourg in the presence of European MEP Georges Bach and Claude Turmes.

The challenges facing each prisoner in achieving reintegration are undeniable. In EU prisons there are a significant proportion of low-skilled European early school leavers and it has further been estimated that less than five percent of them would be qualified to undertake higher education. For over two years, the Grundtvig Learning Partnership RiSE, *Reintegration into Society through Education and Learning*, eight organisations working and researching in the field of prison education, from six member states, namely Germany Luxembourg, Ireland, Finland, Belgium and Austria, worked together and have now collaboratively produced the first European position paper that aims to set new guidelines to make prisoner social and professional reintegration more successful.

Two Luxembourg MEPs were presented with the position paper for the purpose of promoting it at a European Agenda level. The position paper contains the following five key principles deemed integral to the reduction of recidivism through prison education and learning

- Prisoner at the Centre
- Common Coordinated Mission
- Continuum of Education and Learning
- Strengthening the Evidence Base
- Advocacy for Prisoner Education and Learning

The RiSE partners call for an approach that places the **prisoner at the centre**. Rather than 'schools of crime', prisons need to be learning environments that support prisoners' building of social and human capital.

To increase the chances of a successful reintegration upon release a **common coordinated mission** including all prison stakeholders and the prisoner himself is required. Prisoners must be supported holistically in every area of their life. Individual learning and development plans must be put into practice with the willingness and motivation of the prisoner. Adopting a **continuum of education and learning** supports the view of prison as a holistic learning environment.

The RiSE position paper offers a highly salient, **evidence-based** and timely perspective on how prison education and learning is a fundamental strategic opportunity to make lifelong

learning a reality for all. At both national and European levels, RiSE calls for the **advocacy of prison education and learning**, as integral to successful reintegration.

Prison employment prospects upon release have been found to be one of the key factors in whether or not ex-prisoners reoffend. This position paper highlights good practice models that exist and calls for the need to invest in such models and in strengthening the limited evidence base into prison education and learning.

The non-profit organization *défi-job*, the Luxembourgish partner of RiSE, is one of the good practice models presented in the position paper. This non-governmental organization has been developing projects to improve prisoners' competences and training opportunities in Givenich semi-open prison with the support of the ministries of Justice and Employment. *Défi-job* also establishes partnerships with employers to break down the barriers preventing prisoners and ex-prisoners employment.

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