



European Prison Education Association

## EPEA May Newsletter



*"Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself!"*

Citizens' education is one of the most up-to-date concerns, reflected in the main lines of action promoted at the European level. One of the major challenges underlying this issue is to improve the educational status and increase the chances of social insertion of the vulnerable population categories, among which there are also former inmates.

The activities carried out in the custodial environment, the detention conditions, the interrelation of the personnel with the inmates are vectors of change which can contribute to the restructuring of the offenders' personality and their orientation towards assuming an autonomous and responsible way of life.

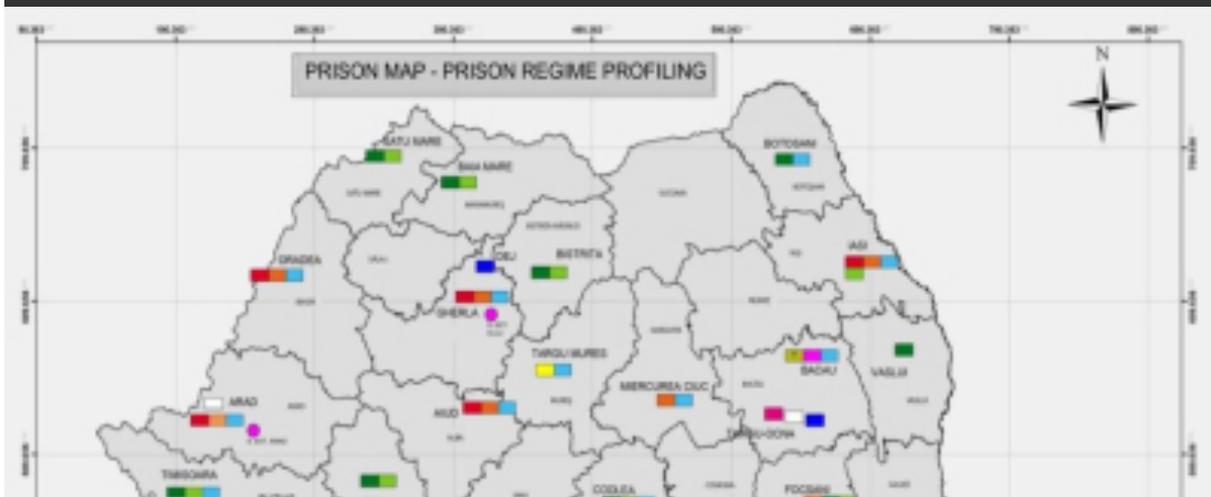
In line with the European trend in this matter, the process of placing education in the center of correctional interventions is being strengthened also in the Eastern Region of Europe.



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## Romania







## The Overall Legislative Reform Framework

In Romania, the systematic approach of education within prisons, from a scientific perspective, has been facilitated by the evolution of the legislative framework after 2006 and has been accelerated since 2010, as a result of nuancing of subsequent regulations

On the other hand, the accession of Romania to the European space allowed the opening of the public systems - implicitly of the correctional system - in relation to a multitude of innovative opportunities, generated on

the basis of the collaborations developed with the other Member States. Moreover, the necessity of alignment along with the European practices has imposed a significant and constant pressure on meeting the quality standards and international human rights regulations which have also been applied in the prison sector.

Regardless of the reporting locus on the issue of education within prisons – such as contextual, political, concept evolution determinations, etc. - it maintained its consistency in the concerns of the justice specialists, strengthening the basic function of a prison.

### **Opening and Continuum of Services**

In order to integrate the prison system education in the coherent complex of services meant to support the personal development and social integration of the vulnerable groups - including of former inmates - the National Administration of Penitentiaries in Romania has been and continues to remain the promoter and the mobilizing factor in the implementation of the National Strategy of Inmates' Social Reintegration, 2015-2019.

The Strategy is an inter-institutional, transdisciplinary approach aiming at streamlining the penal policies and preventing social marginalization, being adopted by a Government Decision (2015). The Strategy's mechanisms allow the harmonization of perspectives on the issue of inmates' education and social reintegration. Beside implementing the Strategy, obeying values such as humanism, integrity, loyalty, professionalism, respect for the law, openness towards the community, a coherent system of social reintegration of inmates can be ensured, with the institutional involvement and community support, responding to the needs of both beneficiaries and the society.

The good practice models identified in Europe, including Safety Houses in the Netherlands or the Norwegian White Charta, laid the basis of developing and promoting the Strategy, in Romania.



Between 2016 and 2017, the Romanian prison system organized impact educational activities, which aimed at encouraging inmates to get involved into cultural, artistic and sports performances and to participate in activities, which will contribute to the development and engagement of some life skills and habits and also at raising the awareness of the importance of getting engaged in activities focused on inmates' social reintegration:

### **Festivals**

The 7th Edition of the MultiArt Festival for inmates Unleashing through Culture was held in November 2016. This is a unique festival in the European space, carried out in collaboration with the Nottara Theater in Bucharest. The novelty was the inclusion of this event as a distinct section of the International Theater Festival Fest(in) on Boulevard, 2016.

- In addition the 8th Edition of the National Contest Creation and Penitence took place in 2016. It consisted of organizing a national creative contest, developed on three sections: poetry, interview and trophy creation. The intermediate stages of the competition foresaw organizing, at a local level, occupational workshops, competitions or roundtables and selecting the poems for the subsequent stage. The award ceremony of the Poetry section winners took place within the Multiart Festival for Inmates and it was

winners took place within the National Festival for Inmates and it was chaired by the poet Dan Mircea Cipariu.

- The 2nd Edition of the National Folklore Festival for Inmates was held in September 2016 and it was organized in collaboration with the National Museum of Village Dimitrie Gusti, Bucharest. More than 70 inmates from 23 prison units presented an extensive artistic program structured on four distinct sections: popular music, folk dances, an exhibition of traditional objects and a parade of folk costumes specific to different regions in the country.

### **Anniversary Days**

- The 13th of October, International Day of Education within Prison – an occasion on which several educational activities and programs were organized in the Romanian prison system;

- The 1st of June, International Children's Day - thematic contests and sports competitions, artistic events, visits to various touristic and cultural attractions, meetings with parents were organized throughout the entire prison system. As a novelty, in 2016, the Buziaş Educational Center, in partnership with SVASTA Foundation, organized a large sports competition, where awards were given to the participants.

### **Camps**

- The Strungari Camp in Pianu de Sus Village, Alba County (June - July 2016), was organized by the National Administration of Penitentiaries in partnership with the National Palace of Children, within the Project Expedition in the Carpathians - Sarmisegetuza. In 2016, its 14th Edition brought together children from the community, juvenile inmates, who participated in recreational, greening and environmental activities.

### **Other National Activities**

- The Project named Talking with the Personalities, initiated in 2012, consists of meetings with well-known personalities at local and national level, from various fields of activity such as: culture, art, education, science, religious, music, sport (e.g. Răzvan Martin - weightlifter, Bănel Nicolită - footballer), local administration, defense, law. By the dialogue between the participants and local personalities and by providing examples of authentic life, detainees benefit from real subjects of reflection and inspiration for

adopting socially accepted behaviors.

- The Alone on the Way to School program, promoted at the SVASTA Foundation's initiative, started in 2015 and it addresses children or young people who want to learn but whose parents are temporarily in detention and are faced with financial problems. The program aims to support children and young people who can not continue their studies, by offering RON 300 monthly scholarships for up to two years. So far, such scholarships have been awarded to 197 children, and it is estimated that other 100 people shall receive this support in 2017.

Specific examples that support the dynamics of approaches to the inmates' social reintegration were the good practices implemented within the subordinated prison units. These examples include independent, self-sustaining initiatives that have been materialized in local or regional activities, as well as results of implementing national projects, promoted by the specialized structure of the central administration.

## Local and Interregional Activities



### **Festivals:**

- Plai Festival, a traditional cultural event of City of Timișoara – the

11th Edition, was organized by Timisoara Prison in collaboration with the Village Museum (September 2016);

- Itinerat Short Film Festival (October 2016), held by Craiova Prison with the participation of all the prisons from the South-Western area of Romania;

- In February 2017, at the Tudor Vianu Theater from Giurgiu, an exhibition entitled The Spring Festival was organised. It exhibited paintings made by the inmates from Giurgiu Prison, models of some houses from the geographical areas of Romania and other art objects.

### **Sports Competitions:**

- Inter-penitentiary mini-football competition Sătmăruului Cup – the 1st Edition, (May 2016) - Satu Mare Prison;

- Inter-penitentiary athletics competition Spring Cup - 2016 (May 2016) - Bucharest-Jilava Prison;

- Inter-penitentiary football competition Danube Cup, the 6th Edition (August 2016) - Tulcea Prison;

- Sports competition Inmates' Olympics, the 3rd Edition (October 2016) – Mioveni Prison.

### **Other Cultural/Artistic Actions:**

- World Day for Cultural Diversity, Dialogue and Development, the opening of the 4th Edition of the National Art Exhibition namely Prison, Art and Hope (May 2016) - Deva Prison;

- Conference on "The positive interaction between humans and animals" and utility dog show - canine training exercise organized by the Utility Dogs Club - Bucharest-Jilava Prison;

- Television workshop – the visitors could become reporters for few minutes at the closed-circuit TV studio of Timisoara Prison;

- Performing the theater play Păcălici – a social satire, by the IMPACT stock company - Timișoara Prison;

- Participation of some inmates in the Pan flute extraordinary concert performed by some famous Romanian artists, composers and orchestra conductors (June 2016) - Timișoara Prison;

- A Spot of Color Project (August 2016) – customizing, by painting 1069 m<sup>2</sup> area of walls and access gates within the detention facility, to create a more friendly carceral environment - Vaslui Prison;

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- Casus Belli Project, implemented by Mărgineni Prison, in collaboration with the Europe Direct Center Târgoviște and the Youth for Europe of Tomorrow Association, aimed at identifying and capitalizing on inmates' talent and their artistic skills;

- In February 2017, Arad Prison, in collaboration with the non-governmental Association Colors within the Soul, organized the theater play Feelings, in order to promote the National Strategy of Inmates' Social Reintegration, as well as the social inclusion policy for people with intellectual disabilities.

- Liter-Art Project - focused on literary creation and book illustration - was organized in partnership with Liviu Rebreanu Cultural Center Aiud, Inter-Art Foundation Aiud and Marianosztra Prison (Hungary). During five days, creative workshops were organized involving inmates, staff from Aiud Prison, as well as authors from the community, some of whom being members of the Union of Romanian Writers (May 2016).

## Behind Belgian Bars





From April 24th to April 28th 2017 the Flemish Support Center for Adult Education hosted the international training week 'Education behind Belgian bars' for teachers, education coordinators and other interested stakeholders in prison education in Mechelen, Belgium. Here's a report about the activities going on during this week.

Nineteen people from 6 countries (Norway, Georgia, France, Spain, Greece and Belgium)...

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