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Survey on Prison Education and Training in Europe – Final Report

Order 23 of the DG Education and Culture Framework Contract 02/10 -
Lot 1

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A report submitted by **GHK**
in association with

Anne Costelloe, Torfinn Langelid and Anita Wilson

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Jo Hawley, Ilona Murphy, Manuel Souto-Otero

GHK
30 St Paul's Square
Birmingham
B3 1QZ

T +44 (0) 121 233 8900
FF +44 (0) 121 212 0308
birmingham@ghkint.com

www.ghkint.com

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1 Introduction

According to international conventions and recommendations, prisoners have the same right to education as other citizens. The provision of education and training opportunities in prison presents an opportunity to enable prisoners to address the gaps in their learning and thereby to support their transition to the outside world. It is also anticipated that 'filling the gap' can help in the prevention of a further criminal trajectory by improving their chances of employment on release and providing skills and competences to support their transition to the 'outside world'. Learning opportunities can give a sense of purpose and direction to individuals during their sentence and enhance the 'normalisation' of life in prison.

This study was commissioned by DG Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission, with the aim of providing an overview of the current 'state-of-play' of prison education provision in Europe. It sets out the findings of an electronic survey of national coordinators of prison education (or equivalents), as well as a small number of interviews with both national and international stakeholders and a small-scale review of relevant documents. In addition four case studies were carried out in Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Romania and Sweden. Collectively, the findings demonstrate key factors of success, lessons learned and serve to highlight the different level and nature of challenges different countries face in relation to prison education.

The project continues a series of work commissioned by DG EAC, commencing with the 'Pathways to Inclusion' conference held in Budapest in 2010¹, which brought together stakeholders with an interest in prison education from over 30 European countries. This was followed by a review and commentary of existing available literature², prepared by GHK in late 2010 and early 2011. This latest project aims to build further the evidence base of knowledge of prison education in Europe, by giving an idea of how different countries approach the management and delivery of prison education and training.

It is important to note at the outset the limitations of the data contained within this report. While the report draws to a certain extent on other sources, its main body relies on the survey responses from institutional sources in the different countries, which may not always provide a fully accurate description of the situation. The view taken is that an approximation based on institutional views is better than no data, in an area that has been under-researched, as this one. Future work could fine-tune the messages and data provided in this report, which is a 'first step' towards the mapping of prison education in Europe.

The development of a questionnaire on 'prison education' which can be applied to the different countries of Europe is a complex task given the different infrastructures in place for managing prison education and the different understandings of what actually constitutes 'education' for prisoners as such. Even though great care was taken to address these challenges, some respondents may have found it difficult to interpret and apply the questions to their national context, having an impact on the nature of their replies. Furthermore, the survey was conducted mainly among national coordinators of prison education in Europe (where available), thus there is a risk that this report paints only an 'official' picture of how prison education is envisaged at national level, rather than a reflection of actual practice within individual prisons. Completion of the survey was voluntary for the national contacts and it was not possible to get a full set of responses from the 35 countries originally envisaged. Although the response rate was good at over 80 %, the sample is relatively small at a total of 33 responses (equal to 31 countries), which means that the data resulting from the survey should be interpreted with caution. Furthermore, in some cases only partial responses were received, meaning that the analysis of certain questions is based on a smaller sample than others.

¹ All conference documentation can be found at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/confprison_en.htm

² See: GHK (2011), Prison education and training in Europe - A review and commentary of existing literature, analysis and evaluation and the suite of documentation produced for the 'Pathways to Inclusion' conference.

Finally, some of the responses provided to the survey were contradictory, or appeared to contradict information gathered via follow-up telephone interviews or the document review. Nevertheless, the resulting report presents an insight into prison education in Europe and provides a basis for further work in this area, in particular by identifying a range of areas for further investigation and discussion.

2 Method

This section presents a brief overview of the method used to collect the data which informed the drafting of this report. It is important to take into account the data sources and the scale of the project when reviewing the resulting findings.

2.1 Online survey of national coordinators of prison education

The main data collection tool used for this study was an online survey on prison education and training, which was distributed to national coordinators of prison education (or equivalents) in 35 countries of Europe³.

A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Annex 1 of this document. In brief, it covered the following topics:

- Responsibility, supervision and governance of prison education and training;
- Budget;
- Provision and organisation of learning opportunities in prison;
- The prisoner learners;
- Profile and support for teachers and trainers in prison;
- Trends and recommendations;
- Examples of good practice.

A small group of representatives from the field of prison education reviewed and gave feedback on the draft survey, in recognition of the fact that it is challenging to develop questions which can be applied to the different countries of Europe, given the different infrastructures in place for managing prison education and the different understandings of what actually constitutes 'education' for prisoners as such.

The survey was posted online at the end of December 2011. It was sent out to an initial tranche of confirmed contacts - either the national coordinator of prison education or the nearest equivalent where such a post does not exist - in 22 countries. Work continued into early January 2012 to identify the correct contact person in the remaining countries and the survey was sent out in January to the remaining countries. GHK provided a dedicated mailbox for any queries from respondents regarding the survey.

By the time the survey was closed in March 2012, a total of 32 responses had been received, although not all of these responses were 'complete', as some respondents had not answered certain questions or sections of the survey, possibly either due to lack of information or lack of time. The figure of 32 responses in fact represents 30 countries, since three responses have been received from the UK contacts (England, Scotland and Wales)⁴. The quantitative analysis provided in this report is therefore based on these 32 responses, plus one response given via a telephone interview (i.e. 33 responses in total).

Responses (online and one via telephone interview) were received from respondents in the following countries:

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Austria, | Hungary, | Serbia, |
| Belgium (Flanders), | Iceland, | Slovakia, |
| Bulgaria, | Ireland, | Slovenia, |
| Croatia, | Latvia, | Spain |
| Cyprus, | Lithuania, | Sweden, |
| Czech Republic, | Luxembourg, | Switzerland, |
| Denmark, | Malta, | Turkey, |
| Estonia, | The Netherlands, | UK – England |

³ The countries participating in the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP): the 27 EU Member States, the three EFTA-EEA countries, Switzerland, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

⁴ The survey was sent to four different contacts in the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and two different contacts in Belgium, to reflect the devolved responsibility for education policy in these countries.

Finland,
Germany,
Greece,

Norway,
Poland,
Portugal
Romania,

UK - Scotland
UK – Wales.

Amongst the 33 respondents, 15 indicated that they would consider themselves to be the national coordinator of prison education in their country and four indicated that they were answering on behalf of the national coordinator of prison education. Eight respondents answered that there is no national coordinator of prison education in their country and six did not provide an answer to this question.

2.2 Survey of ‘good practices’

As indicated above, a section of the survey of national coordinators of prison education (the ‘main survey’) contained a number of questions regarding examples of good practice in prison education - an area in which information has so far been scarce. These questions were also used to create a ‘mini survey’ which was posted on the EPEA website and sent out to over 200 contacts in the field of prison education, who had participated in the ‘Pathways to Inclusion’ conference on prison education held in Budapest in February 2010.

Examples of good practice suggested via both the ‘main’ and the ‘mini’ survey were used to compile a ‘catalogue’ of projects and initiatives, which can be found in Annex 2 of this report. As the quality of information provided via the surveys varied, further internet research was conducted to supplement the information provided via the survey, where possible. This enabled the research team to find out as much as possible about each project to inform the selection of four examples to be taken forward as case studies.

A shortlist of 10 examples which could be taken forward as case studies was submitted to the Commission in February 2012. Priority was given to examples which seemed to focus on key areas of importance as identified in GHK’s previous work on prison education⁵; where the initiative had been implemented for some time (so that there is sufficient written information / evaluations available); to examples which had been evaluated; and to those which demonstrated evidence of positive outcomes.

The shortlist was reviewed jointly with DG EAC and four case studies selected (see below). It was also agreed that the catalogue would be updated and quality checked, for inclusion as a final output with this final report (see Annex 2).

2.3 Stakeholder interviews

It was originally envisaged that around 12 telephone interviews would be carried out as a supplement to the main ‘mapping’ survey, as it was anticipated that some respondents might prefer to respond to the survey via a telephone interview (either in English or their own language), rather than complete it online.

In fact, while the survey was open, none of the contacts asked to provide their responses via a telephone interview. It is assumed that this was due to the complexity of the survey, which required some additional work on the part of the respondent to identify the answers to certain questions, or required input from a number of different respondents.

Once the survey had been closed, a small number of telephone interviews were carried out with national contacts. These served to:

- collect responses where the contact had not been able to provide an online response before the survey closed;
- collect responses to specific questions which had not been answered in the original response submitted electronically;
- enable respondents to provide further clarifications of their responses at their request;

⁵ See: GHK (2011), Prison education and training in Europe - A review and commentary of existing literature, analysis and evaluation and the suite of documentation produced for the ‘Pathways to Inclusion’ conference.

- enable further clarification of responses provided / further discussion of the issues raised in the survey to improve the information available for the final analytical report.

For those countries where responses to the survey questions were provided after the electronic survey had closed, it has not always been possible to take these responses into account in the quantitative analysis provided in this report (i.e. in the charts provided in the following sections of this document). The responses have however been taken into account in the analytical commentary.

In addition, four interviews were conducted with representatives of relevant international organisations: the European Prison Education Association (EPEA), the International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO), the European Learning Network on the rehabilitation of (ex)offenders (ExOCO) and the Council of Europe. These interviews have enabled the study team to gather the views and perspectives of these international organisations, to inform the analysis of the factual data collected via the 'main' survey.

2.4 Document Review

A review and commentary of literature was carried out by GHK on the topic of prison education in late 2010 and early 2011. Where appropriate, findings from this literature review have been used to inform the drafting of this report.

Further desk research was also conducted as part of the current 'mapping' project, in order to ensure that more recent literature and data could be taken into account in the drafting of the report, as well as to try to fill in - to the extent possible - gaps which had been left by non-responses to the survey. This included both a review of international literature and data sources and country-specific literature, as and when new sources of information were identified via the survey, by the research team or recommended by stakeholders.

2.5 Case studies

This report is accompanied by four case studies of examples which were identified as 'good practice' (either by respondents to the 'main' or 'mini' survey) in the field of prison education (see Annexes 3, 4, 5 and 6):

- Intensive Training for Skilled Workers (Facharbeiterintensivausbildung), Austria;
- Strategic plan of assistance and services for prisoners (Strategisch plan hulp- en dienstverlening aan gedetineerden), Flanders, Belgium;
- EU-funded projects support organisational change in Romania;
- The Learning Centre, Sweden.

The case studies are based on a review of relevant documentation (e.g. project website, project reports, evaluations etc) and telephone interviews with at least two relevant contacts. They have been written up according to a standard template, which presents an overview of the aims, objectives and activities of each initiative, their results, outcomes and impact, as well as a summary of success factors, lessons learned and challenges encountered. Material from the project's case studies has also been used to inform the drafting of this report.

2.6 Input from experts and stakeholders

A number of experts and stakeholders have been involved in or consulted for this study. An 'expert panel' has provided continuous guidance and support in the delivery of the study, based on their knowledge and experience of working in the field. The members of this panel⁶ have been involved in drafting the study tools, providing relevant references and contacts, analysing the data and both reviewing and contributing to this final report.

In addition, as mentioned above the initial draft survey questionnaire was reviewed by a committee of EPEA members, including both practitioners and researchers, and their feedback taken into account for the final version.

⁶ Anne Costelloe, Torfinn Langelid and Anita Wilson

The study has in fact already generated some interest among stakeholders and other researchers/ consultants have provided literature or taken part in a telephone interview to give their views on the issues raised in this ‘mapping’ exercise. Two researchers with a specific interest in this topic, together with a representative of ExOCOP, have also been invited to review and comment on the draft version of this final report.

The contributions of these experts and stakeholders have been invaluable in ensuring that the implications of the results of the survey of national contacts could be critically analysed, in order to inform future work in this area.

3 Background to countries covered by the study

The aim of this study was to try to put together a picture of the ‘state-of-play’ of prison education across Europe. Before providing an overview of the data gathered via the survey, it is important to emphasise that the context in which prison education is delivered varies considerably across the different countries covered by the study. As the data in Table 3.1 show, the size of the prison population and the number and size of establishments in each country varies considerably. A country with only one establishment will therefore approach the development and delivery of prison education and training in a very different manner to a country with over 200. Likewise, a prison with less than 100 inmates faces a very different set of needs and challenges in terms of the provision of education and training to one with nearer to 1,000 inmates.

Furthermore, as the table shows, in many countries of Europe prisons currently have occupancy levels of over 100%. A shortage of resources resulting from high occupancy levels tends to impact first on those measures which aim to prepare offenders for release (i.e. education and training, social work, therapies etc). Strain on the capacity of prisons can thus have an impact on the provision of education and training for offenders, as the opportunities for learning do not tend to be increased in line with the greater number of inmates⁷. Overcrowding can thus hinder the ability of prison authorities to effectively manage prisons in a way which maintains the balance between the imperatives of care and custody.

Other factors which vary across the countries concerned include for example the profile of the prisoner population⁸. The great majority of prisoners in the 27 EU Member States are male and although the age profile of prisoners varies across European countries, in most the largest numbers of prisoners can be found in the age groups 20-30 and 31-40 years⁹. Yet there are also smaller sub-groups of prisoners which should not be forgotten when developing and delivering education and training for prisoners, including notably female prisoners, juveniles, older prisoners, those serving short/long sentences and prisoners with mental health or learning difficulties. There are also substantial shares of prisoners in pre-trial/remand imprisonment (from 5% of the prison population in Belgium to 64 % in Malta) in certain countries, a group for whom it is particularly difficult to provide meaningful education and training opportunities. In addition, ‘foreign’ prisoners make up varying shares of prison populations - in some countries more than half - which can bring challenges in terms of communication with prison staff and interaction with other inmates for both linguistic and cultural reasons. The provision of education and training on offer therefore needs to be tailored, in terms of content and pedagogies employed, to the profile of the prison population in each country. The varying contexts in each country will also have an impact on the needs of prisoners and appropriate solutions in terms of education and training. To be effective, provision should be contextualised at the local level and tailored to the individual’s needs. It is important to bear this in mind when reviewing the results of this study.

⁷ Langelid, T., Mäki, M., Raundrup, K., Svensson, S. eds., 2009, *Nordic Prison Education, A Lifelong Learning Perspective*. Internet: <http://www.norden.org/is/utgafa/utgefidi-efni/2009-536>

⁸ Data on variables such as the share of females, foreign prisoners, juveniles and pre-trial/ remand detainees in the prison population can be obtained from the World Prison Brief: <http://www.prisonstudies.org/info/worldbrief/>

⁹ Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics (SPACE I), Survey 2009. Internet: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/cdpc/bureau%20documents/PC-CP\(2011\)3%20E%20-%20SPACE%20I%202009.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/cdpc/bureau%20documents/PC-CP(2011)3%20E%20-%20SPACE%20I%202009.pdf)

Table 3.1 Background data on prison populations and capacity

| Country | Prison population (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners) | Prison population rate (per 100,000 of the population) | Prison population trend | Number of establishments/ institutions | Official capacity of prison system | Occupancy rate of prisons (%) |
|----------------|--|--|-------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Austria | 8,694 (at 03.06.11) | 104 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures of 8.40 million at June 2010) | + 23 % (1992-2010) | 27 (2011) | 8,868 (3.6.2011) | 98.0 (3.6.2011) |
| Belgium | 10,561 (at 01.03.10) | 97 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 10.85 million at beginning of March 2010) | + 39 % (1992-2007) | 33 (2008) | 8,829 (1.3.2010) | 119.6 (1.3.2010) |
| Bulgaria | 9,071 (at 01.12.09) | 120 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 7.58 million at end of 2009) | + 38 % (1992-2007) | 14 (2008) | 5,828 (1.12.2009) | 155.6 (1.12.2009) |
| Croatia | 5,165 (at 01.01.2011) | 117 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures of 4.42 million at beginning of 2011) | + 257% (1992-2010) | 23 (2009) | 3,501 (1.1.2011) | 147.5 (1.1.2011) |
| Cyprus | 883 (at 01.09.2009) | 110 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 801,100 at beginning of September 2009) | + 235% (1992-2007) | 1 (2009) | 597 (1.9.2009 - 340 in the prison, 257 in police detention centres) | 147.9 (1.9.2009) |
| Czech Republic | 23,599 (at 24.2.2012) | 223 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 10.56 million at February 2012) | + 57 % (1992-2010) | 36 (2012) | 20,669 (24.2.2012) | 113.6 (24.2.2012) |
| Denmark | 4,091 (at 01.04.2011) | 74 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 5.56 million at June 2010) | + 10 % (1992-2010) | 50 (2011) | 4,134 (1.4.2011) | 99.0 (1.4.2011) |

| Country | Prison population (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners) | Prison population rate (per 100,000 of the population) | Prison population trend | Number of establishments/ institutions | Official capacity of prison system | Occupancy rate of prisons (%) |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | | million at beginning of April 2011) | | | | |
| Estonia | 3,381 (at October 2011) | 252 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 1.34 million at October 2011) | - 26 % (1992-2010) | 5 (2010) | 3,656 (1.1.2010) | 97.2 (1.1.2010) |
| Finland | 3,189 (at 01.01.2011) | 59 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures) of 5.38 million at beginning of 2011 | - 6 % (1992-2010) | 30 (2011) | 3,113 (1.1.2011) | 99.6 (1.1.2011 - excluding 89 prisoners located outside the prisons) |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | 2,329 (at November 2010) | 114 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 2.04 million at November 2010) | + 158 % (1992-2007) | 8 (2006) | 1,952 (November 2010) | 119.3 (November 2010) |
| France | 73,149 (at 01.11.2011) | 111 (based on an estimated national population, from INSEE figures, of 66.1 million at beginning of November 2011) | + 33 % (1992-2010) | 191 (2011) | 57,268 (1.11.2011) | 113.0 (1.11.2011) |
| Germany | 69,697 (at 31.08.2011) | 86 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 81.47 million at end of August 2011) | + 25 % (1992-2010) | 186 (2011) | 78,762 (31.8.2011) | 88.5 (31.8.2011) |
| Greece | 11,364 (at 01.01.2010) | 101 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 11.305 million at beginning of 2010) | + 59 % (1992-2007) | 33 (2009) | 9,103 (1.9.2008) | 129.6 (1.9.2008) |
| Hungary | 16,328 (at 31.12.2010) | 163 (based on an estimated | 10% (1992-2007) | 33 (2010) | 12,335 | 132.4 (31.12.2010) |

| Country | Prison population (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners) | Prison population rate (per 100,000 of the population) | Prison population trend | Number of establishments/ institutions | Official capacity of prison system | Occupancy rate of prisons (%) |
|---------------|--|--|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| | | national population, from Eurostat figures, of 10.00 million at end of 2010) | | | (31.12.2010) | |
| Iceland | 149 (at 01.09.2011) | 47 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 319,000 at beginning of September 2011) | + 63 % (1992-2010) | 5 (2011) | 161 (1.9.2011) | 92.5 (1.9.2011) |
| Ireland | 4,279 (at 30.10.2011) | 95 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 4.50 million at end of October 2011) | + 96 % (1992-2010) | 14 (2011) | 4,510 (30.10.2011 - bed capacity) | 94.9 (30.10.2011) |
| Italy | 66,973 (at 31.1.2012) | 110 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 60.94 million at end of January 2012) | + 44 % (1992-2010) | 223 (2011 - 206 penal institutions for adults, 17 for minors) | 45,688 (31.1.2012 - not including penal institutions for minors) | 146.6% (31.1.2012 - not including those in penal institutions for minors) |
| Latvia | 6,780 (at 1.1.2011) | 304 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 2.23 million at beginning of 2011) | - 22 % (1992-2007) | 15 (2006) | 9,168 (1.10.2007) | 70.4 (1.10.2007) |
| Liechtenstein | 7 (average for 2010) | 19 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 36,050 at mid-2010) | - 44 % (1994-2008) | 1 (2009) | 20 (2010) | 35.0 (2010) |
| Lithuania | 9,139 (at 01.01.2011) | 276 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures) of 3.31 million at beginning of 2011) | - 6 % (1992-2010) | 15 (2008) | 9,135 (1.1.2011) | 100 (1.1.2011) |

| Country | Prison population (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners) | Prison population rate (per 100,000 of the population) | Prison population trend | Number of establishments/ institutions | Official capacity of prison system | Occupancy rate of prisons (%) |
|-------------|--|---|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Luxembourg | 645 (at 01.09.2011) | 124 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 518,300 at beginning of September 2011) | + 96 % (1992-2010) | 2 (2011) | 710 (1.9.2011) | 90.8 (1.9.2011) |
| Malta | 580 (at August 2011) | 141 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures) of 411,900 at August 2011) | + 129 % (1992-2007) | 1 (2011) | 480 (1.9.2009) | 102.9 (1.9.2009) |
| Netherlands | 14,488 (at 30.09.2011) | 87 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 16.72 million at end of September 2011) | + 106 % (1992-2010) | 81 (2011) | 16,987 (30.9.2011) | 85.3 (30.9.2011) |
| Norway | 3,602 (at 01.05.2011) | 73 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 4.94 million at beginning of May 2011) | + 43 % (1992-2010) | 42 (2011) | 3,826 (1.5.2011 - excluding places in treatment centres) | 94.1 (1.5.2011) |
| Poland | 82,985 (at 31.1.2012) | 217 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 38.24 million at end of January 2012) | + 31 % (1992-2010) | 215 (2011) | 86,012 (31.1.2012 - normal capacity less places temporarily out of use) | 96.3% (31.1.2012 - not including prisoners temporarily outside the prisons) |
| Portugal | 12,918 (at 01.02.2012) | 121 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat statistics, of 10.64 million at beginning of February 2012) | + 21 % (1992-2010) | 49 (2010) | 12,077 (1.2.2012 - not including places in psychiatric institutions) | 105.8 % (1.2.2012 - not including prisoners in psychiatric institutions) |

| Country | Prison population (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners) | Prison population rate (per 100,000 of the population) | Prison population trend | Number of establishments/ institutions | Official capacity of prison system | Occupancy rate of prisons (%) |
|-------------|--|---|-------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Romania | 31,190 (at 28.2.2012) | 146 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 21.36 million at February 2012) | - 36 % (1992-2010) | 45 (2012) | 26,662 (28.2.2012 - legal capacity) | 117.0 % (28.2.2012) |
| Serbia | 12,000 (at 26.03.2010) | 164 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 7.30 million at March 2010) | + 183 % (1993-2009) | 28 (2009) | 6,500 (1.9.2009) | 157.9 (1.9.2009) |
| Slovakia | 10,031 (at 31.12.2010) | 184 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 5.44 million at end of 2010) | + 21 % (1992-2007) | 18 (2010) | 10,615 (31.12.2010) | 94.5 (31.12.2010) |
| Slovenia | 1,311 (at 26.05.2011) | 64 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures of 2.06 million at May 2011) | + 45 % (1992-2010) | 7 (2011 - 6 prisons, 1 correctional home for juveniles. The 6 prisons have facilities at 14 different locations) | 1,115 (26.5.2011) | 117.6 (26.5.2011) |
| Spain | 70,427 (at 24.2.2012) | 152 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 46.34 million at February 2012) | + 61 % (1992-2007) | 82 (2010) | 55,421 (1.9.2009 - 44,434 in State Administration, 10,987 in Catalonia) | 138.0 (1.9.2009) |
| Sweden | 6,669 (at 1.10.2011) | 70 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 9.47 million at beginning of October 2011) | + 25 % (1992-2007) | 83 (2011) | 7,063 (1.10.2011) | 94.4 % (1.10.2011) |
| Switzerland | 6,065 (at 7.9.2011) | 76 (based on an estimated | + 14 % (1992- | 113 (2011) | 6,660 (7.9.2011) | 91.1% (7.9.2011) |

| Country | Prison population (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners) | Prison population rate (per 100,000 of the population) | Prison population trend | Number of establishments/ institutions | Official capacity of prison system | Occupancy rate of prisons (%) |
|-----------------------|--|---|-------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| | | national population, from Eurostat figures, of 7.93 million at beginning of September 2011) | 2010) | | | |
| Turkey | 131,317 (at 31.1.2012) | 175 (based on an estimated national population, from Eurostat figures, of 74.98 million at end of January 2012) | + 284 % (1992-2010) | 371 (2011) | 104,650 (31.12.2009) | 110.4 (31.12.2009) |
| UK: England and Wales | 87,002 (at 2.3.2012) | 155 (based on an estimated national population, from ONS figures, of 55.96 million at beginning of March 2012) | + 85 % (1992-2010) | 140 (2010) | 77,479 (30.12.2011 - certified normal accommodation in use) | 111.2 (30.12.2011) |
| UK: Northern Ireland | 1,770 (at 24.2.2012) | 97 (based on an estimated national population of 1.82 million at February 2012) | - 19 % (1992-2010) | 3 (2012) | 1,765 (17.11.2011) | 103.6 % (17.11.2011) |
| UK: Scotland | 8,284 (at 02.03.2012) | 157 (based on an estimated national population, from ONS figures, of 5.27 million at the beginning of March 2012) | +49% (1992-2010) | 15 (2012) | 7,144 (2.3.2012 - design capacity less 4 places temporarily out of use) | 116.0% (2.3.2012) |

Source: International Centre for Prison Studies World Prison Brief, Internet: <http://www.prisonstudies.org/info/worldbrief/>. Data accessed April 2012.

4 Responsibility, supervision and governance of prison education and training

4.1 Legal provisions relating to education and training in prisons

Education is “*an imperative in its own right*”¹⁰, for prisoners as it is for those outside of prison, as outlined in various international guidelines and recommendations. The UN has approved conventions to which Member States have given their assent¹¹ and the Council of Europe has approved a number of recommendations in a variety of relevant areas, to which EU Member States have committed.

At European level, Protocol no. 1 to the Council of Europe’s European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that “*No person shall be denied the right to education*” (Art. 2)¹² and the European Social Charter (revised) sets out the right to work, the right to vocational guidance, and the right to vocational training¹³. More recently, the Lisbon Treaty recognised the rights of EU citizens through the enforcement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Article 14 of the Charter recognises that “*everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training*”¹⁴.

The Council of Europe has also approved a number of recommendations relating specifically to prisoners which EU Member States have committed to, notably the 1990 Recommendation on Education in Prison¹⁵ and the European Prison Rules (revised in 2006), which outline a number of specific recommendations in relation to education and training covering a range of aspects from the fundamental importance of facilitating access to learning opportunities, to measures to enable prisoners to continue their education after release¹⁶.

In 1990, the Council published 17 recommendations covering a range of aspects of education and training, from the fundamental importance of facilitating access to learning opportunities, to measures to enable prisoners to continue their education after release. The first paragraph of these recommendations states: “*All prisoners shall have access to education, which is envisaged as consisting of classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sport, social education and library facilities.*”

In 2006, the Council of Europe published the revised European Prison Rules, which outline a number of specific recommendations in relation to education and training, under Article 28¹⁷.

However, these recommendations of the Council of Europe are not legally binding, although they have been approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and therefore represent a consensus amongst the member states. Most of the international stakeholders we interviewed therefore felt it was important for the right for prisoners to access education to also be embedded in practice at national level (taking into account the national context), since actual implementation or application of these conventions and recommendations can vary across the countries of Europe.

¹⁰ The Right to education of persons in detention, report of the special rapporteur on the right to education, Victor Muñoz: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/11session/A.HRC.11.8_en.pdf

¹¹ The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1957); Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (1990);

¹² European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/html/005.htm>

¹³ European Social Charter (revised), 1996. Internet: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/163.htm>

¹⁴ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/c_303/c_30320071214en00010016.pdf

¹⁵ Council of Europe, (1990), Recommendation No. R (89) 12 adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 1989.

¹⁶ See Article 28, Council of Europe, *Recommendation Rec(2006)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules*. Internet: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=955747>

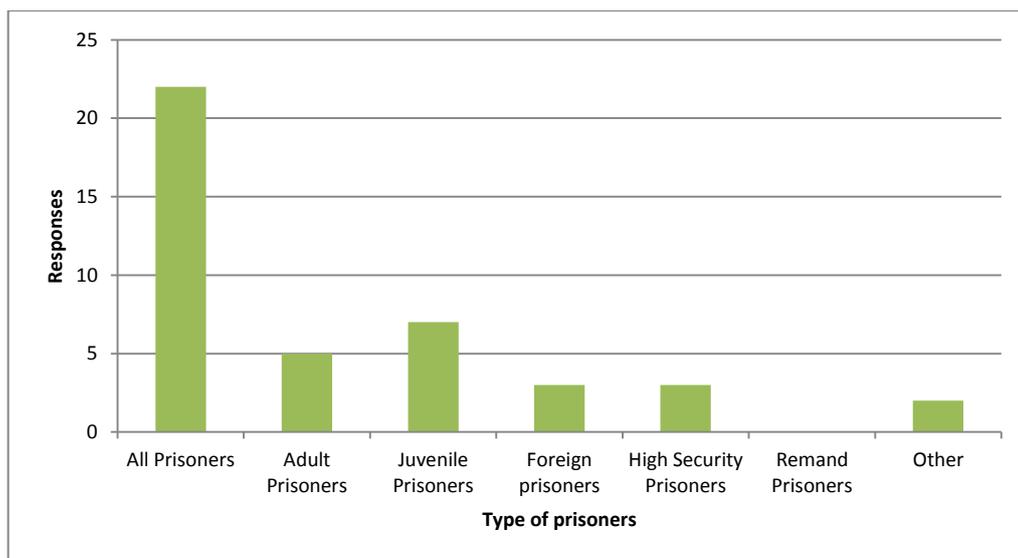
¹⁷ Council of Europe, *Recommendation Rec(2006)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules*. Internet: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=955747>

According to the results of our survey, of the 33 countries providing a response to the questionnaire, 30 stated that there is a legal obligation to provide education and training to prisoners in their countries whilst three (Greece, Sweden and UK - Scotland) stated that there is not. In Scotland however, learning for prisoners is identified as a priority in both the Scottish Government’s literacy strategy¹⁸ and the broader Scottish Skills Strategy¹⁹ and in Sweden, as outlined below, the prison service has the legal *right* to offer formal adult education provision to prisoners. According to the national contact in Greece, there is some evidence of a political commitment to prison education, for example through the recent appointment of a national coordinator of prison education, whose role it is to coordinate prison education between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education.

The responses to this question should be treated with caution. Thus, for example, in relation to Austria, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Malta and Spain, a research report based on the work of country experts mentions that “an explicit reference to the legal right and obligation of the states to provide prisoners with the same right to education as other citizens is not pointed out in any of the countries legislation”²⁰, although this is a somewhat more stringent requirement than the ‘obligation to provide education and training’ stated in our survey.

Where it was stated that there is a legal obligation to provide prison education and training, respondents were asked a supplementary question regarding the types of prisoners that the legal obligation applied to (multiple responses were possible). Figure 4.1 below provides an overview of the responses given.

Figure 4.1 Legal obligation to provide education in prison – by type of prisoner



Source: GHK survey

While in the majority of countries (22) where there is a legal obligation to provide prison education and training this applies to all prisoners, in others (7 additional countries) the obligation is restricted to one or more particular groups²¹. There is some variation in the specific groups concerned but in all seven of these countries there is a legal obligation to provide education and training to juveniles. By contrast none of these seven country respondents stated that there is an obligation to provide access to education and training to

¹⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25121451/0>

¹⁹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/326739/0105315.pdf>

²⁰ Hammerschick, W., Hayes, J., Hjarne, U., Meyer, I., 2011, KEYS – Working and Learning in European Prisons. Internet: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/documents/grundtvig/multilateral_projects_2009/grundtvig-504508-de.pdf

²¹ Four countries did not respond to the question

prisoners on remand, although they may have assumed that remand prisoners would be included within the overall groups of 'adult' and 'juvenile' prisoners²².

In other countries, the legislation relating to the provision of education to prisoners may be limited according to the type of education which must be provided, rather than the types of learner which have a right to education. For example, in Hungary, according to the law, every prison should provide elementary education programmes but providing secondary school education is optional²³.

The national stakeholder interviews and literature review enabled us to identify some examples of national legislation and policies which refer to the right of prisoners to access education. In some countries, it appears that relevant legislation or policies have only recently been introduced. In Sweden for example, policy changes of relevance to prison education took place in 2007 and more recently in 2010. In 2007 a new decree / regulation stated that the Swedish Prison Service has the legal *right* (but not the legal obligation) to provide formal, general education in prison, including the right to issue grades. This means that the provision of education in prison requires qualified teachers and responsible principals, and that the education provided is in accordance with national curricula and syllabi. Later in 2010, vocational training also became a part of the prison education offer in Sweden, meaning that the staff working in the prison also have responsibility for vocational training, through collaboration with the Swedish Public Employment Service (PES). The Swedish PES contracts vocational training provision from external providers; the Employment Service also has responsibility for planning of the offer – deciding what kind of training and for what prison(s). In Belgium (Flanders), a national-level focus on prison education is said to have emerged only in 2000, when the Strategic Plan on social assistance and services to inmates (Het strategisch plan hulp-en dienstverlening aan gedetineerden) was made²⁴. More details of this plan can be found in the case study in Annex 4.

4.2 Organisations responsible for prison education and training

The organisations which hold responsibility for the different aspects of prison education and training vary across Europe. A series of questions were therefore included in the survey regarding the allocation of responsibility for the following different aspects of prison education:

- Overall responsibility,
- Delivery of prison education and training,
- Recruitment of education personnel,
- Initial training of prison teachers/ trainers,
- In-service training of prison teachers / trainers,
- Monitoring the quality of provision.

Across different countries, the understanding of the concept of 'education' and what it encompasses may vary. For example what in one country might be considered 'education' might be referred to in another country as 'treatment'. Furthermore, some specific educational subjects, such as physical education or preparatory courses prior to release, may not be regarded in some countries as constituting 'education' as such.

In order to try to take account of this differentiation in definitions and concepts of education and training across the different countries covered by this study, the survey questionnaire identified three main types of education/training offer in prisons:

²² However, during a telephone interview with the contact in one of the seven countries, it was stated that remand prisoners do have the right to access education. It is therefore possible that respondents misunderstood this question.

²³ Szöllösi, Á., (2010), *The Role of Hungarian Educational Institutions for Promotion of Access of Adults to Formal Education. Country report: Hungary*. LLL2010 project, Subproject 5. TÁRKI Social Research Centre, Budapest, Hungary

²⁴ Downes, P., 2010, *Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: the Contribution of the Education System*. LLL2010 Working Paper no. 59, Project Report no. 5. Internet: <http://lll2010.tlu.ee/>

- general education (i.e. courses in subjects such as mathematics, sciences, history, geography, foreign languages, literacy etc);
- vocational education and training (i.e. education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market); and
- non-formal learning, for example (but not restricted to) vocational training activities not typically leading to certification, some art and craft activities and offence-focused programmes to help prisoners to address issues such as anger management, thinking skills and substance abuse, as well as preparation for integrating in society on release.

The definitions given above apply to all instances where a distinction is made in the following sections of the report between these three different types of education. It is recognised that not all countries will apply the same definitions²⁵ but respondents were asked to take these into account in providing their responses.

An analysis of the 32 responses submitted via the online survey to these questions regarding the allocation of responsibilities for prison education follows.

4.2.1 Overall responsibility for education and training in prison

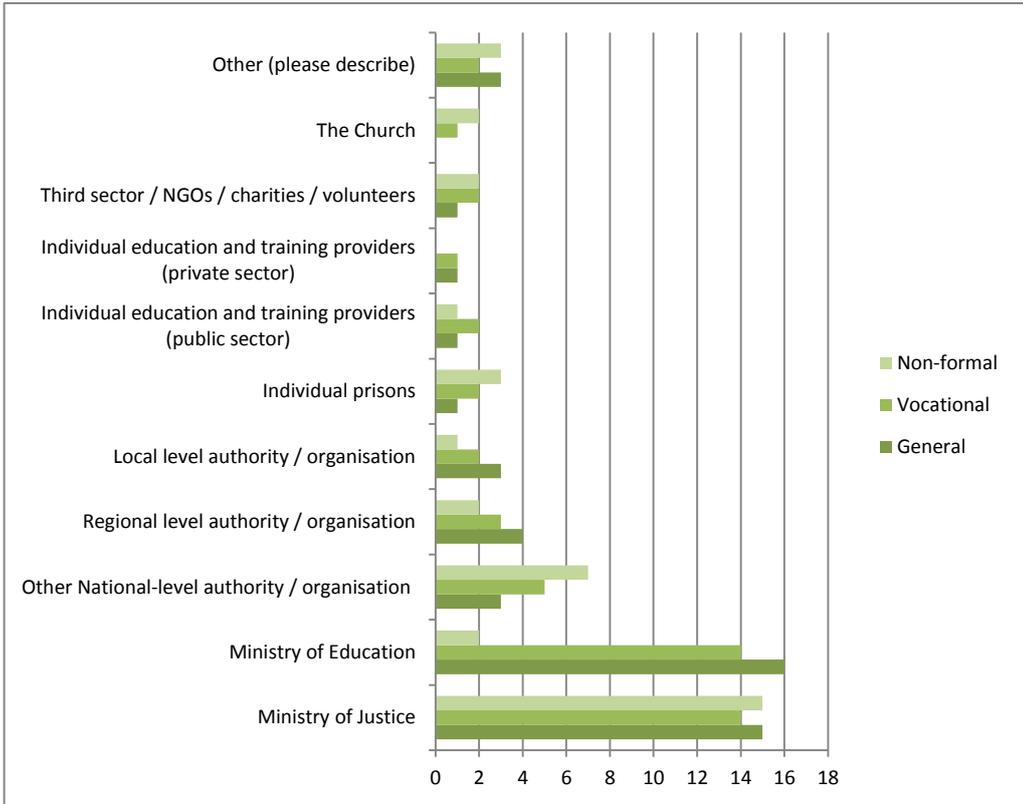
Figure 4.2 below shows where overall responsibility for education lies. Respondents indicated that overall responsibility for general education in prisons tends to lie with the national Ministry of Education (16 responses) and / or the national Ministry of Justice (15) (multiple responses were possible for these questions and therefore the responsibility may lie with a number of organisations).

Similarly to general education, responsibility for vocational education lies mainly with the national Ministry of Education (14) and/ or Justice (14). The third most common response was that responsibility for vocational education and training lies with other national-level authority / organisations (7), including for example the Ministry of Labour / Welfare and the national prison services.

It seems therefore that overall responsibility for *formal* education commonly lies with a central body, generally either the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Justice (or both). The same goes for *non-formal* education, which is most commonly the responsibility of the national Ministry of Justice (15) followed by other national-level authorities / organisations (7), although the Ministry of Education has responsibility for non-formal education in only two countries. Non-formal education is the area where individual prisons more often have overall responsibility, but still the figure is low – three countries.

²⁵ In Estonia for example the survey respondent clarified that the Prison Service identifies four categories of education: 1) formal general education 2) formal vocational education 3) rehabilitation programmes (programmes with the approval of the prison service such as anger management, aggression replacement training etc) 4) informal education (all other educational activities).

Figure 4.2 Overall responsibility for education in prisons



Source: GHK survey

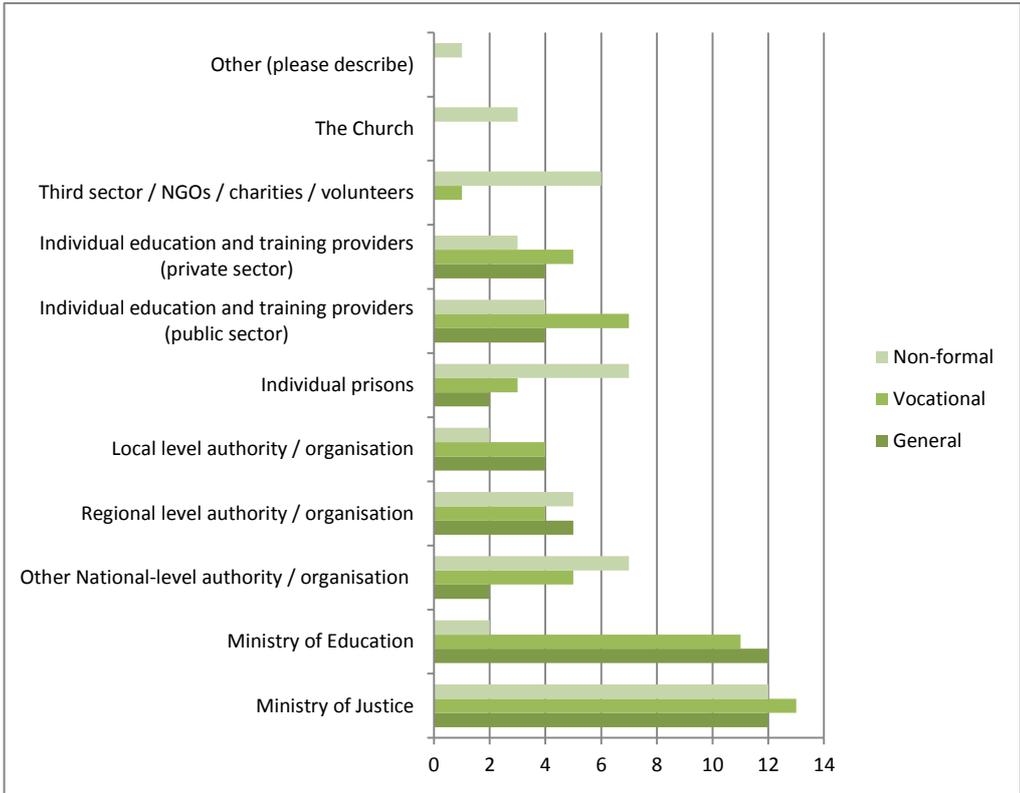
4.2.2 Responsibility for delivery of education and training

Responsibility for the delivery of general education in prisons showed a similar pattern and was most commonly the responsibility of Ministries of Education (12) and / or Justice (12), in some cases together with other organisations such as individual prisons and / or individual education and training providers. It was also reported that in some countries individual education and training providers from the public (4) and private (4) sectors had a responsibility for the delivery of education and training.

Again, responsibility for the delivery of vocational education and training most commonly remains with Ministries of Justice (13) and/or Education (11), often together with other organisations such as individual prisons and / or individual education and training providers. The role of individual education and training providers is more prominent than in general education, as public sector individual providers were reported to hold responsibility for the delivery of vocational education and training in seven countries and private sector providers in five.

Responsibility for the delivery of non-formal education was most often held by the national Ministry of Justice, either on its own or in combination with other organisations. However there is more variation in the range of organisations responsible for the delivery of non-formal education, in comparison with general or vocational education. Again, only two countries reported that the national Ministry of Education was responsible for the delivery of non-formal prison education and training. It is also much more common for individual prisons, or third sector organisations, to be involved in the delivery of non-formal education and training in comparison to general and vocational education and training.

Figure 4.3 Responsibility for delivery of education and training

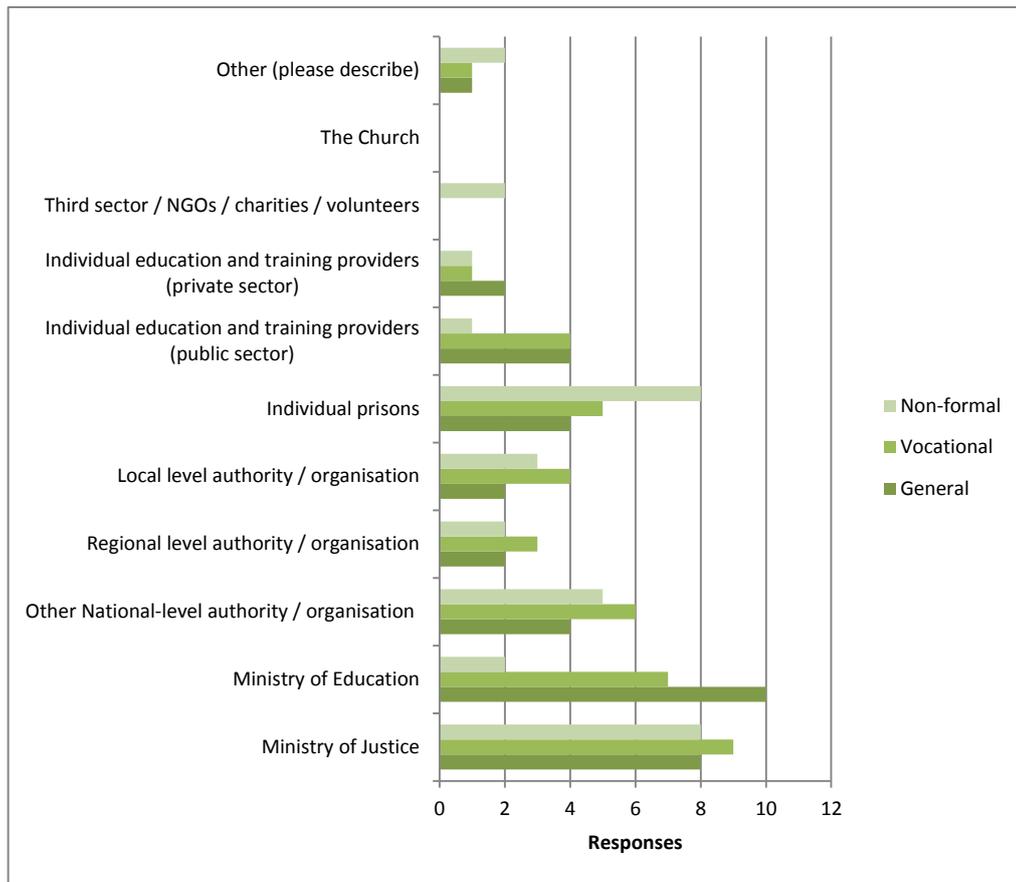


Source: GHK survey

4.2.3 Recruitment of education personnel

Responsibility for the recruitment of education personnel in general education most commonly lies with the national Ministry of Justice (10) and/or Education (8), according to the responses to our survey. The distribution of responsibility shows slightly more variation in the range of organisations involved in the recruitment of education personnel for vocational education than is the case for general education and training. As with delivery, individual prisons play a more prominent role in many countries with regard to recruitment of personnel to teach non-formal education. Ministries of Education also appear to have less of a role with regard to the recruitment of personnel in non-formal education.

Figure 4.4 Responsibility for recruitment of educational personnel



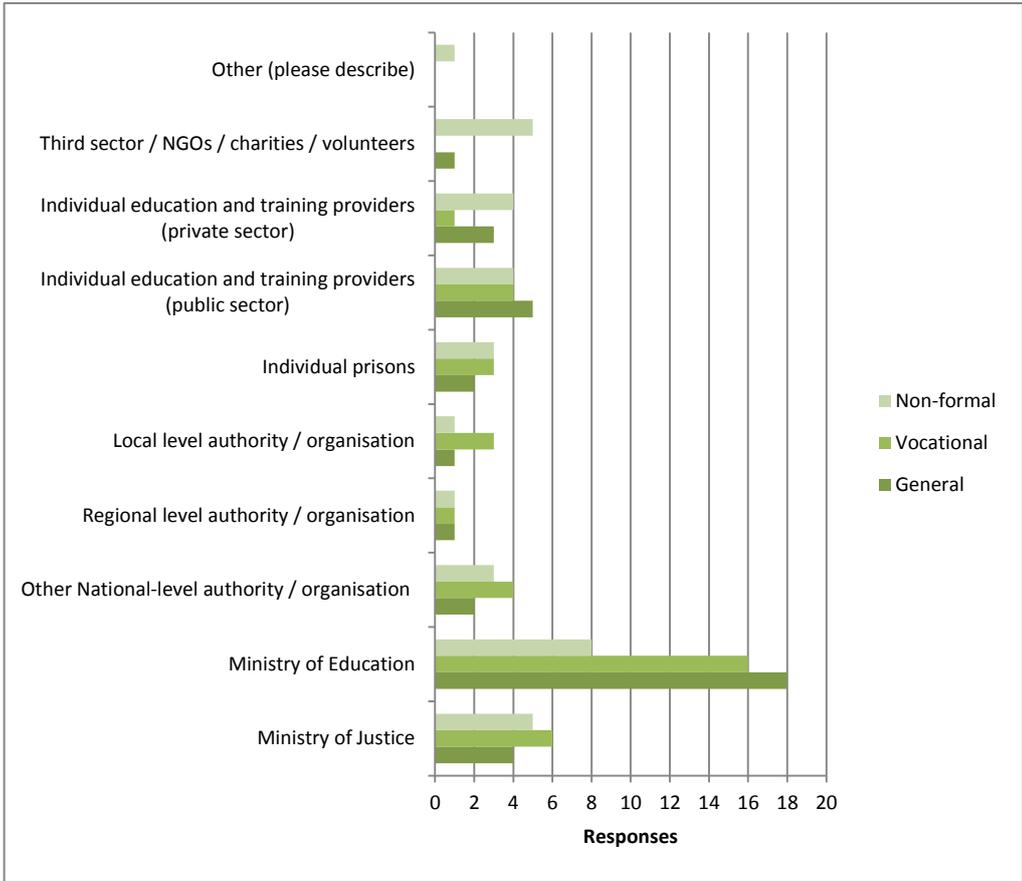
Source: GHK survey

4.2.4 Initial training of prison teachers / trainers²⁶

Responses to the survey show that Ministries of Education are most commonly responsible for initial teacher / trainer training in each of the varieties of education (general, vocational and non-formal). Organisations responsible for teacher / trainer training for non-formal education were more likely to vary across the countries than was the case for general and vocational education. In particular it was notably more common for third sector organisations to be responsible for training educators involved in the delivery of non-formal education than was the case for general and vocational education. Other national, regional and local organisations play a very minor role in this respect, except in vocational education and training. It is worth noting that while ‘private sector individual providers’ and ‘public sector individual providers’ play a similar role in the initial training of teachers and trainers in the area of non-formal learning, the role in initial training of ‘public sector individual providers’ is greater than that of ‘private sector individual providers’ for general education and, even more so for vocational education and training.

²⁶ By initial training, we refer to training prior to taking up the post, such as teacher training, rather than to induction at the individual prison

Figure 4.5 Responsibility for initial training of prison teachers / trainers

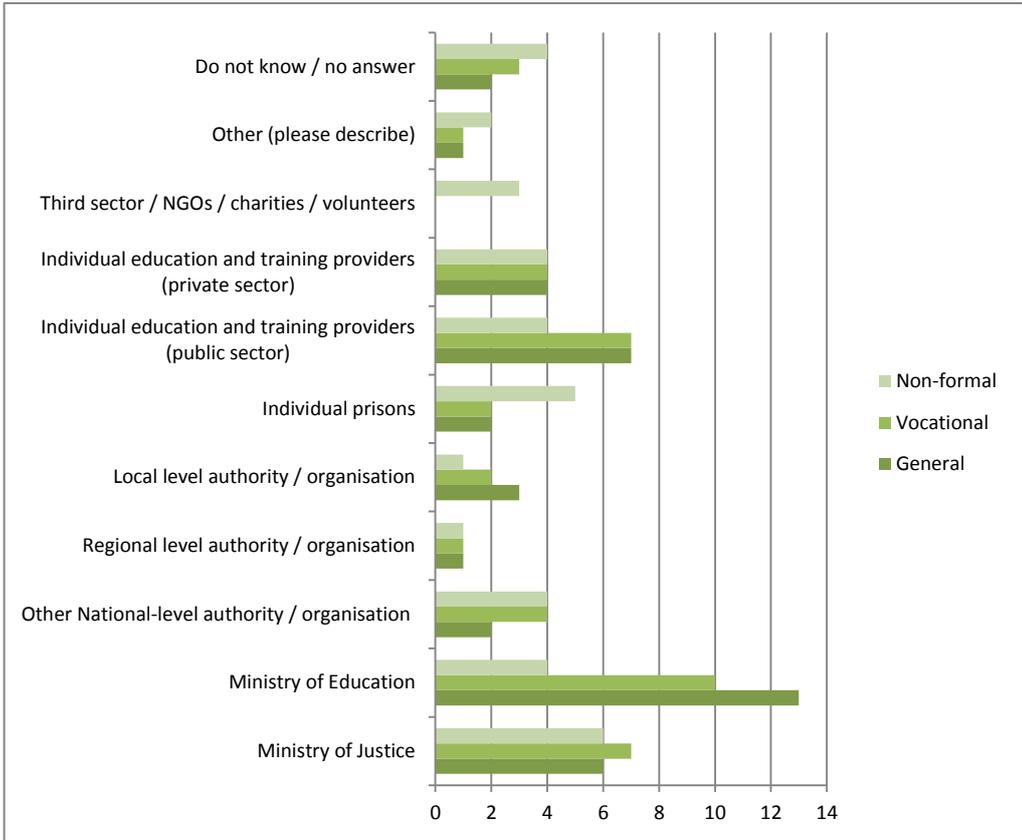


Source: GHK survey

4.2.5 In-service training of teachers / trainers

Similarly to initial training, in-service training of teachers / trainers in prison for general and vocational education was most commonly the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (shown in Figure 4.6), although Ministries of Justice play a somewhat more active role than in initial teacher/ trainer training. As was found to be the case with initial training, a wider range of organisations were found to hold responsibility for in-service training associated with non-formal education and training, with third sector organisations and individual prisons more commonly having a role to play than is the case for general or vocational training. It is in this area, however, that individual providers play a significant role in relation to both general and vocational education, and to some extent non-formal learning.

Figure 4.6 Responsibility for in-service training of prison teachers / trainers



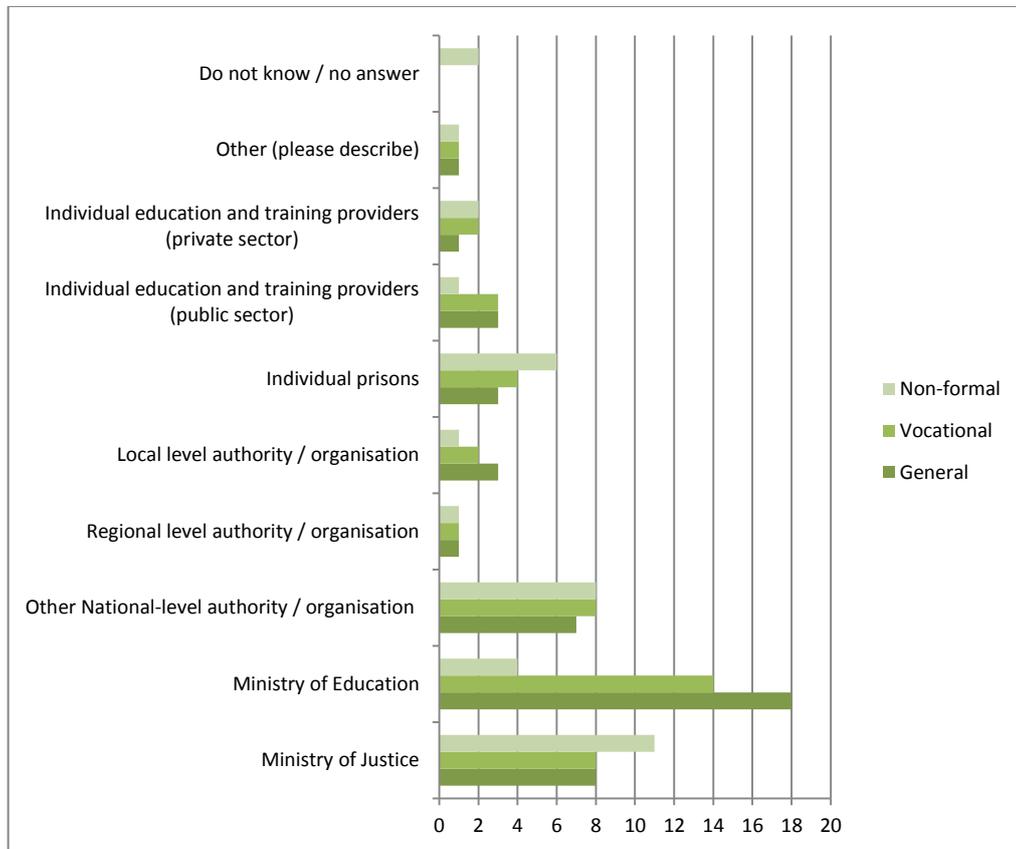
Source: GHK survey

4.2.6 Monitoring the quality of provision

Responsibility for monitoring the quality of provision commonly rests with a national level body, again most often the Ministry of Education in relation to general and vocational education. For non-formal education, the responsibility most frequently rests with the Ministry of Justice, with a range of other types of organisation also identified, including in particular other national-level authorities/ organisations and individual prisons. Other national-level authorities included:

- Devolved administrations (e.g. Welsh Government),
- National prison services (Ireland, Hungary and Slovenia, UK – Scotland and in Sweden for non-formal education), and
- National organisations with responsibilities for monitoring the quality of education (Finland, UK – England).

Figure 4.7 Responsibility for monitoring the quality of provision of prison education and training



Source: GHK survey

4.2.7 Juvenile prisoners

Although it is compulsory for many juveniles to take part in education (at least while they fall within the age group for which it is compulsory to attend school in the country where they are in prison) and they are often imprisoned in separate institutions to adults, in relation to the allocation of responsibilities for education and training, two thirds (22) of respondents said that there was no difference in the allocation of responsibilities for education and training for juveniles, while only a third of respondents (11) indicated that there was some difference (although three of these did not clarify what the difference was). Where differences were reported they related to:

- Overall responsibility for prison education and training in three countries. For instance in Austria, the prisons service (Vollzugsdirektion) has responsibility for prison education for adults, while the School Board (Stadtschulrat) has responsibility for the education of juveniles;
- Delivery of prison education and training in four countries. For example in the Netherlands educational provision for juveniles is based on cooperation with the local school and the teachers from the school attend the institution;
- Recruitment of education personnel in three countries;
- Monitoring the quality of provision in three countries.

Given the important role of Ministries in the allocation of responsibilities for education and training, this lack of formal differentiation at the organisational level may simply reflect the wide range of expertise available in those institutions.

Yet some juveniles are likely to have moved directly from public education to prison education and are therefore in need of access to national school curriculum courses, exams, materials etc. A number of juveniles will have also already distanced themselves from school

and are therefore in need of encouragement to re-commence their educational journeys. It therefore seems particularly important to look at how the specific needs, requirements and rights of juveniles are currently being met.

In Sweden for example, young people between the ages of 18 and 21 are considered as a priority group for education in prisons. The Swedish Prison and Probation Service has been issued a mission from the Ministry of Justice to ensure special measures are in place to support young people to enhance their opportunities for success upon their release from the prison environment. As such there is a Learning Centre (see below for more details of the Learning Centre model) in each of the three biggest prisons - Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö - with dedicated areas for young prisoners.

Addressing the specific learning needs of juveniles in prison is particularly important given the significant benefits that they may derive from participation in education and training and the social benefits their participation accrues, compared to other populations. This may therefore be another area for further, more in-depth research in the future, as is the extent to which juveniles are offered prison education in line with international conventions and recommendations.

4.2.8 Level of collaboration between stakeholders

With a range of organisations involved in the various aspects of prison education and training, strong communication and collaboration between these various stakeholders is crucial to ensure consistency and coherency in the education and training provided. In particular, and given their central role in a majority of countries, it seems that there is a need for national Ministries of Justice and Education to have strong lines of communication and clearly allocated responsibilities to ensure that the different aspects of prison education and training are coordinated to form a coherent whole. Communication and coherence will also be essential in those countries or sectors of education where the system of provision is more decentralised, to ensure that certain standards are adhered to across different points of educational delivery.

A question was therefore included in the survey regarding the quality of collaboration between the stakeholders involved in prison education and training in the countries concerned. The responses provided – which, as mentioned in the introduction to this report, generally show the view of central authorities - show that at national level, collaboration between stakeholders involved in prison education and training is considered to be very good or good in the majority of countries where responses were provided (23 out of 31 respondents to this question). Regional and local level collaboration were more commonly reported to be good, with variable levels of collaboration being more commonly reported at the local level (perhaps to be expected, given that the level of collaboration at local level will be determined by the specific conditions and personal involvement of the key players in each locality) and average collaboration more commonly reported at the regional level.

In some countries, there is a recognition of the need to facilitate 'joined-up'/multi-agency working amongst the stakeholders involved in prison education and training. Through the survey of examples of good practice, the document review and interviews, a number of examples of national efforts to support this type of collaboration were identified. Some of these are described in the box below.

Box 1 Collaboration between the stakeholders involved in prison education and training

In **Belgium (Flanders)**, the strategic plan on assistance and services for prisoners (strategisch plan hulp- en dienstverlening aan gedetineerden) was launched in 2000²⁷. The strategy aims to ensure that there is a coherent, integrated policy for educational activities in prisons in Flanders. Its aim is for the various services in the Flemish Community to work together in order to offer solid assistance, training, vocational training, education, sports and leisure to inmates. It also provides a framework for cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Justice, which employs the prison guards and directors. The Flemish government intended to signal through the strategy that prisoners remain full members of society during their sentence and are entitled to assistance and services to achieve a standing in society.

The main outcome of the strategic plan, ten years since it was introduced, is that the quality of the education and training provision in prisons has improved markedly. This is because now all kinds of education and training organisations go into the prisons and offer a range of courses. Prisoners benefit from trained and skilled teachers from 'the outside' who are informed of the latest developments and modern teaching techniques.

The regional government of Flanders is now in the process of developing a legislative basis to underpin the strategic plan. A government decree is in preparation, which aims to formalise and embed the interdepartmental effort and organisation achieved through the Strategic Plan for the future. (See the case study in Annex 4 for more details of this initiative).

In **Norway**, a Circular on the administrative cooperation between the education and training sector and the correctional services was issued in 2008. This circular clearly outlines the responsibilities of the institutional actors involved in the education and training of prisoners. It also sets out the procedures for cooperation at central and regional / county and local levels. For instance, responsibility is held at regional level for involving other agencies cooperating with the correctional services. Furthermore, the Norwegian correctional services have developed a number of similar agreements with different agencies, including the Labour and Welfare Service, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. The agreements and the circulars are based on the principle that prisoners have the same rights and duties as the rest of the population within the framework dictated by the Execution of Sentences Act and the Education Act²⁸. (See the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2 for more details of this initiative).

In **Sweden**, the current management structure of the Learning Centre (see below and Annex 6 for more details of the Learning Centre model) is as follows. One principal is employed in each of the six Swedish regions, who is responsible for the teachers and the educational provision within that region. The regional principal has a key role to play in supporting teachers across the region in terms of their professional development and in supporting collaboration between teachers by encouraging a regional peer review/support network. Regional principals also have a key role to play in developing and maintaining working relationships between regional governors²⁹, prison governors, prison staff and prisoners themselves. Their role is to understand the learning environment for teachers and prisoners within the context of the prison environment. There is also a national prison education manager who has responsibility to coordinate the education into one national, equivalent system. In addition there are national guidance counsellors to support the inmates in their study planning.

It is also important to maintain links and forging partnerships with local stakeholders and communities, both to help prisoners from the local area to make their transition back into the community on release and to improve public knowledge about the aims and purposes of education in prisons and the contribution they (i.e. local communities themselves) may have

²⁷ Strategic Plan for Assistance and Services to Prisoners. Internet: Source: <http://wvg.vlaanderen.be/welzinenjustitie/gedetineerden/stratplan.htm> and http://www.steunpunt.be/xcms/lang_nl-BE/mid_14061/ModelID_0/EhPageID_861/5096/default.aspx

²⁸ For more information see: <http://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/samarbeidsavtaler.78529.no.html>

²⁹ In every region one regional governor has been appointed - they are responsible for all prison regimes including that of education

to make³⁰. Therefore it seems that alongside a national coordinating body, it is also important for individual prisons and providers to complement this with a local approach to delivery of education and follow-up support for prisoners. Through this project's 'mini' survey and interviews, we identified some examples of efforts to do so, as outlined in the box below.

Box 2 Working with local communities and partners

In **Denmark**, the prisons and probation service works closely with the municipalities to ensure they are prepared for the prisoner on release through the new project 'Good Release', which tries to make sure that when a prisoner is released the municipality is 'ready' for them. As part of the project all prisoners are bound to a contract which is negotiated once a year with the central administration. This contract sets out a commitment to covering all the needs of the prisoner – including for example accommodation and education.

One of the outcomes of the **Laboratorio Teatrale** project in Italy, which set out to create a theatre company with participation from inmates, is said to be the improved relationship between the prison and the town/society – members of the public visit the prison to participate in theatre performances, thereby gaining a better understanding about what a prison exactly is. Also the inmates group brings its performances into public theatres to show themselves in a different situation. (For more details of this project see the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2).

The EU-funded project '**Training local stakeholders for prevention of reoffending**' (FALPREV) focuses on training staff either in prison or in local authorities that work with ex-prisoners. The training enables all participants to reach the same level of understanding on complex issues that creates transversality in service delivery and indeed creates connections between prison and the outside world, focused on the pre-release phase and reintegration of ex-inmates. (For more details of this project see the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2).

4.2.9 National coordinating role

Respondents were asked if there is a national coordinator of prison education in their country, which could facilitate collaboration both within countries and across countries. Only 23 respondents answered this question and the responses showed that there is considerable diversity across Europe in the way that prison education and training is coordinated, as also evidenced above in the range of organisations which are involved in the different aspects of prison education and training. The respondents indicated that there is a national coordinator of prison education, or a role at national level with responsibility for prison education, in 16 countries, while in six countries there is not (currently) a national coordinator of prison education as such.

In those countries where there is a national coordinator of prison education, there was some variation in the organisations where the national coordinator roles are based. In five countries for example the role is based in the national prison (and probation) service or administration. In four countries the role is based in an organisation which is part of the education sector, while in two countries the role is based in the Ministry of Justice. The consequences of the coordinating role being placed in these diverse organisations and associated trade-offs represent another issue which could be subject to further research in future.

4.2.10 Research into prison education and training

Respondents were asked to identify the main bodies commissioning/carrying out studies relating to prison education in their country. The main bodies identified were the Ministries of Justice and prison services themselves (as is the case in Ireland, Hungary, Latvia, Austria, Slovakia, the UK and Croatia); the Ministry of Education (as is the case in Spain and Turkey); or research institutes and universities (as is the case in Germany, Greece, Spain, Lithuania and Romania).

³⁰ See for example O'Brien, R. (2010), The Learning Prison, Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce Prison Learning Network. Internet: http://www.thersa.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/278925/RSA_The-Learning-Prison-report.pdf

4.2.11 Summary

It is clear that there is no 'one size fits all' model which can be applied to the allocation of responsibilities for prison education across every European country, and the most suitable approach may vary depending on the context of the country concerned, the profile of the prison population, and the institutional infrastructure in place. Nevertheless, given the range of actors involved it seems that there is a need for clear lines of responsibility and also for processes to be in place to facilitate effective collaboration and communication. While prison education functions in a prison and prisons are the responsibility of the Justice authorities, 'education' in the wider world is led by the authorities responsible for education and training, so there needs to be an emphasis on collaboration at the highest level so that each of the different authorities understands what the other is trying to achieve. There is also a need for a deeper understanding of the consequences of the different approaches to the allocation of responsibilities for prison education and training for the target population.

The different aspects of education and training in prisons are in many countries distributed across a range of different stakeholders, even though national Ministries of Justice or Education are key players in most countries. The United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners³¹ emphasise the importance of integrating prison education and training with the national education systems, to ensure prisoners can continue their learning on release, and this is reiterated in the Council of Europe's Recommendation on Education in Prison and European Prison Rules. Thus where the Ministry of Education, or other appropriate authorities from the education and training sector, are not allocated responsibilities in relation to prison education and training, this would suggest that there is work to be done to ensure that prison education and training is not seen as separate to mainstream education and training provision. For instance, if prison education is to be the same as in the mainstream, it would seem to make sense for the education / training authorities to take responsibility for the recruitment and training of education personnel working in prisons.

In addition, in many countries the third sector plays an important role in the provision of learning opportunities in prisons, in particular non-formal learning which can be an important first step towards taking part in education and training for prisoners and can also be of particular importance to prisoners serving long sentences. In France for example, the Groupement Etudiant National d'Enseignement aux Personnes Incarcérées (GENEPI)³² brings together over 1,000 student volunteers who provide tutoring and cultural, social and educational activities in 80 French prisons.

Although there is a risk that the involvement of volunteers in prison education could be seen as a substitute for professional educators, there can be a role for them to play in complementing the work of education staff, as well as increasing links between the community and those in prison. Expanding and encouraging the involvement of trained volunteers from the voluntary and community sector so that they play a major role in the localised rehabilitation of prisoners was a key message in the UK's 2009 strategy for reforming prisons and rehabilitating prisoners³³. Though the role of such volunteers remains generally limited, where volunteers are in place, it is important that they are given clear guidance and support regarding their role within the prison. It is therefore necessary to have strong relationships between the public and third sector agencies involved, in order to ensure that their involvement can be more systematically coordinated and to provide comprehensive and quality support to (ex-) prisoners.

Maintaining a national oversight with the relevant Ministries, may help to ensure that a consistent national approach to prison education and training can be developed and applied, providing there is sufficient coordination between the national bodies involved. This also demonstrates recognition of the fact that education in prison is a right, as set out in

³¹ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/treatmentprisoners.htm>

³² <http://www.genepi.fr/index.html>

³³ <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/client/downloads/CSJLockedUpPotentialFULLrEPORT.pdf>

international conventions and recommendations, which should be assured at national level³⁴ rather than left to the responsibility and discretion of the individual prison (governor).

There is also variation in the organisations responsible for the different types of education (general, vocational and non-formal). There appears to be greater variation in the allocation of responsibilities for non-formal education, which in some countries is attributed to local level organisations such as the individual prison or third sector bodies. This suggests that non-formal education is not managed, regulated or provided for in the same way as formal provision, and there is a risk that the quantity and quality of provision may be less consistent. Since non-formal educational opportunities may present a 'route' into formal education for prisoners, many of whom may have negative prior experience of formal education, an issue for further investigation in the future is the extent to which countries recognise the value of non-formal learning for prisoners in comparison to formal provision.

A number of examples of efforts to ensure collaboration and communication between the stakeholders involved in prison education were identified through the research process. This is an area where there seems to be potential for countries to share and learn from each other in terms of the methods /approaches used and lessons learned. In addition more evidence is needed of 'what works' and why, taking a multi-agency, multi-faceted approach to investigate the role of education and training within the overall rehabilitation effort.

³⁴ Or at regional level in countries such as Germany and Spain, where responsibility for education and training / justice is devolved to regional authorities.

5 Financial allocation to prison education and training

5.1 Financial allocation to prison education and training

A number of questions were included in the survey regarding the budget available for prison education and the sources of funding. Unfortunately, the rate of response and the quality of responses provided to the survey questions relating to the financial allocations to prison education and training was poor. Only 11 respondents provided estimates of the amount of public spending on prison education and training but where these estimates were provided, the information was confusing and seemed to be broken down in different ways (e.g. some respondents could not separate financial allocations to personnel from those for fees, equipment and materials etc). We have not therefore attempted to make an analysis of this data here. It seems however that this is an area for further discussion and / or research in the future.

It may be that it is too difficult to capture exact information on the funding available for prison education and training either because it is taken from a range of sources and / or is not given a dedicated budget line in national budgets. Sometimes funding is allocated to the individual prison and it is up to the Governor to decide how much will be spent on education, which may mean that there is no national oversight of the actual amounts spent. Furthermore, it can be hard to capture in monetary terms the full costs of the learning that takes place in prisons, since learning can also take place outside of the classroom, for instance through participation in regime activities such as catering, and expenditure may also be required for capital investment (such as building premises for learning) as well as for running costs such as educational personnel and learning materials.

It was however possible to determine from the survey where contributions had been made to prison budgets by varying types of organisation, as discussed below.

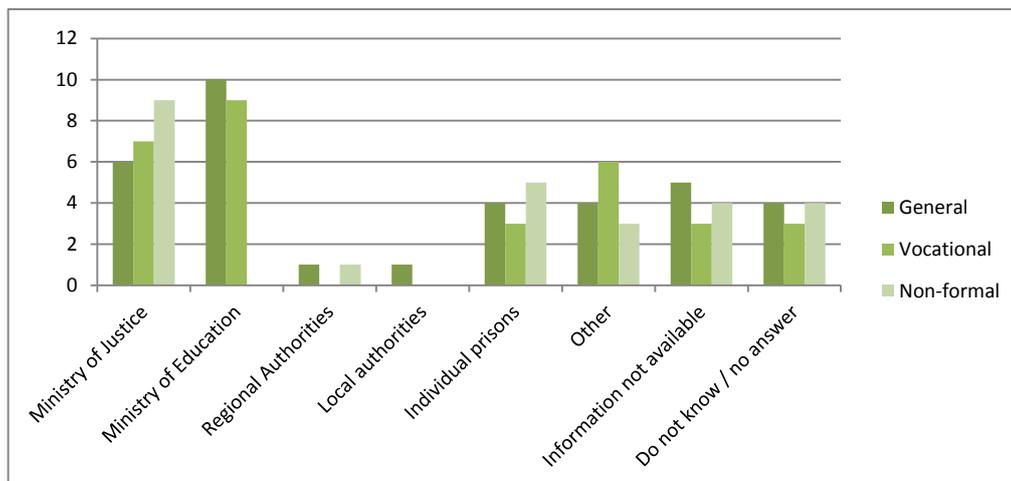
5.2 Sources of funding for prison education and training

The limited responses³⁵ to the survey indicated that funding is most often provided by a national-level organisation, most commonly the Ministries of Justice and / or Education, although it is worth noting that in no country is non-formal education funded by the Ministry of Education. Responses also indicated that individual prisons and other organisations were more common sources of funding than regional or local authorities. Other organisations which provided funding for prison education and training included prison services, probation services and devolved administrations/regional ministries. Where particular organisations were specified, this included:

- Devolved administrations and Federal States (such as the Welsh Government and German Bundesländer);
- National prison services (Austria, Ireland and Sweden);
- Probation services (Austria – Verein NEUSTART and Sweden);
- Ministries of Labour, public labour market agencies and job centres; and,
- National level authorities with responsibility for schools.

³⁵ 22 responses were provided for general education, 23 for vocational and 21 for non formal. In most cases these responses were provided in the form of 'ticked' boxes in order to indicate responsibility but providing no precise figure

Figure 5.1 Sources of funding for prison education and training



Source: GHK survey

Prisoners themselves are sometimes required to pay in full or make contributions towards the fees associated with their participation in education and training. This seems to be the case in relation to distance learning courses, in particular at higher level (for more detail of whether prisoners are required to pay for distance learning, see 7.2 below). In Estonia for example, prisoners (like all other learners) receive general and vocational education free of charge and it is also free to participate in Estonian language courses, but higher education is provided for a fee³⁶. In the UK, where prisoners are studying full-time as they approach the end of their sentences, they are expected to pay for the costs associated with higher education, supported by access to Fee Loans³⁷.

The provision of financial support to learners can be at the discretion of the local institution. In Denmark for example, distance learning is free for basic and lower secondary level education but from upper secondary level and above, it is necessary to pay fees, and it is up to the institution to decide how much the prisoner should pay him/herself. There are central guidelines which suggest that the institution should consider paying at least half of the fees and all prisons make some form of contribution, although this can vary, with some paying all of the fees. In France the organisation of education and the authorisation to take a course are subject to the approval of the prison governor³⁸.

EU programmes also seem to be an important source of funding for the provision of prison education in some countries, in particular the newer Member States and candidate countries. For example, EU funds appear to have been a “key driving policy source of reform in Hungarian prisons in relation to access to education”³⁹ and as shown in the case study in Annex 5, EU funding has helped to support two substantial projects in Romania.

The results from the ‘mini’ survey of examples of good practice in prison education, together with anecdotal evidence, also suggest that EU programmes present an important source of funding for pilot projects and initiatives in the field of prison education and training in some countries. Around a third of the examples put forward were given support from EU funding programmes (predominantly the Lifelong Learning Programme and the European Social Fund, ESF).

³⁶ Ivančič, A., Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar and Marko Radovan, (2010), *Access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education – policies and priorities. Country report: Estonia*. LLL2010 project, Subproject 5. Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and Ministry of Education and Sport.

³⁷ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011, Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation. Internet: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/m/11-828-making-prisons-work-skills-for-rehabilitation>

³⁸ Salane, F., 2008, Distance Education in Prisons: an educational right or a privilege? The case of ‘student inmates’. Internet: <http://www.distanceetdroitededucation.org/contents/DS2008-Salane-English.pdf>

³⁹ Downes, P., 2010, Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: the Contribution of the Education System. LLL2010 Working Paper no. 59, Project Report no. 5. Internet: <http://lll2010.tlu.ee/>

While EU funding can help to promote innovation and provide opportunities to try new things out, it can also in the long-term help to bring about sustainable changes to mainstream provision. For example, the EU-funded transnational project 'Increasing the chances of social reintegration' which is described in the case study in Annex 5 led to the development of six educational programmes and instruments which are now, since 2012, part of the education and training offer available in all prison units in Romania.

5.3 Recent trends in funding for prison education and training

During the interviews with stakeholders, some suggested that funding for prison education and training is generally insufficient. There were also concerns raised at the Pathways to Inclusion conference that the level of funding provided might be at risk in the context of the public sector budget cuts which have been taking place in many European countries as a result of the economic crisis.

Yet in response to the survey question regarding the trend in funding available for prison education over the last three years, it was most commonly reported that the level of funding for prison education and training had not changed. Where decreases in funding were reported, it was apparent that these had occurred in relation to more than one form of education. Funding was reported to have decreased in three countries for general education; five countries for vocational education; and three countries for non-formal education. Funding has also increased in some countries. Funding was reported to have increased for general education in four countries; vocational education in five countries; and non-formal education in three countries.

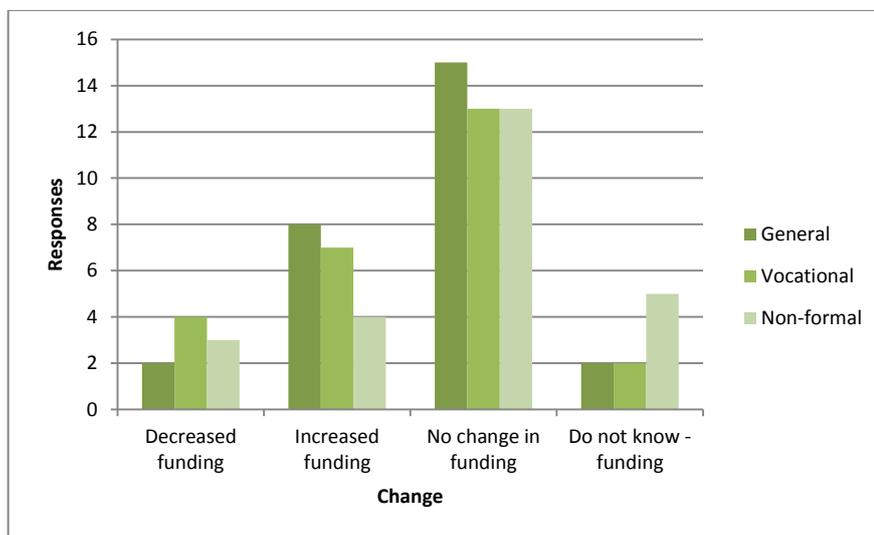
Thus on the whole, the survey results seem to show that countries have tended to protect funding for general education to a greater extent than funding for other types of education. Funding for general education has increased more often and decreased less often than funding for vocational and for non-formal education.

The increases in funding for prison education and training may be a reflection of the increased levels of participation / increased size of the prison populations or both in these countries. For example, increased levels of participation in education *over the last five years* (a slightly longer timeframe than the funding question) were reported in Iceland (for both adults and juveniles) and England (for adults). In both of these countries, funding for general education (and vocational education in England) was reported to have increased over the last three years. Furthermore, although funding for prison education may not have changed, funding for prisons as a whole may have changed, which in turn could have an impact on the delivery of prison education and training (e.g. due to staff shortages, the fact that the financial allocation to education / training may in some cases be decided at the level of the individual prison, etc).

Other factors which might have an influence on the funding provision for prison education and training include for example the extent to which research is undertaken into the issue. For example in Norway, the budget for prison education was increased from NOK 107 million in 2005 to NOK 225 million in 2012 and it is thought that research conducted by the University of Bergen in 2004, 2006 and 2009 on prisoners' educational backgrounds, preferences and motivation played an important role in influencing the decision to increase the budget.

Figure 5.2 provides an overview of the responses given to this question.

Figure 5.2 Changes in funding for prison education and training



Source: GHK survey

5.4 Summary

Few respondents were able to provide detailed information on the amount of funding allocated to prison education and training per year in their country. This may be due to the fact that the funding is taken from a range of sources and / or is not given a dedicated budget line at the national level. Furthermore, it can be hard to capture in monetary terms the full cost of the learning that takes place in prisons. Lack of systematic data collection could on the other hand also reflect that this area needs to be further developed and achieve greater political priority.

On the other hand, it was possible to identify from the survey the sources of funding for prison education and it seems that these are mainly national-level organisations, most commonly the Ministries of Justice and/or Education. EU funding also seems to be an important source of support for both projects and overall provision in some countries. Prisoners themselves are required to pay for or contribute to the costs associated with certain types of education, in particular higher education / distance learning.

Although public sector budgets are coming under increasing strain as a result of the global recession, it appears from the survey results that in the majority of countries there has so far been no change in the amount of funding allocated to prison education (although some interviewees did express concerns that they might face cuts in the future).

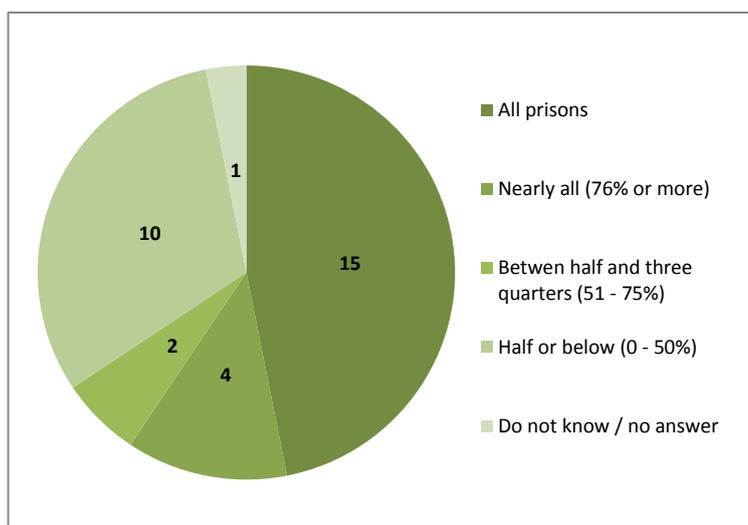
6 Scale of prison education and training

The following section is based on the survey questions relating to the scale of the offer of prison education in the country concerned (the share of prisons which offer education and training) and the rates of participation among prisoners, as well as a question relating to the number of qualifications awarded to prisoners each year.

6.1 Share of prisons offering education and training

Of the 32 responses provided to these questions, in around half of the countries (15 - Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and UK-England, UK-Scotland and UK-Wales) it was stated that general education is offered in all prisons. In four countries (Germany, Iceland, Lithuania and Romania) respondents indicated that general education and training was offered in nearly all prisons and in two countries general education was offered in between half and three quarters of prisons (Finland and the Slovak Republic). In 10 countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland Serbia, Slovenia and Switzerland) general education is offered in only half or below half of prisons. This is shown in Figure 6.1 below.

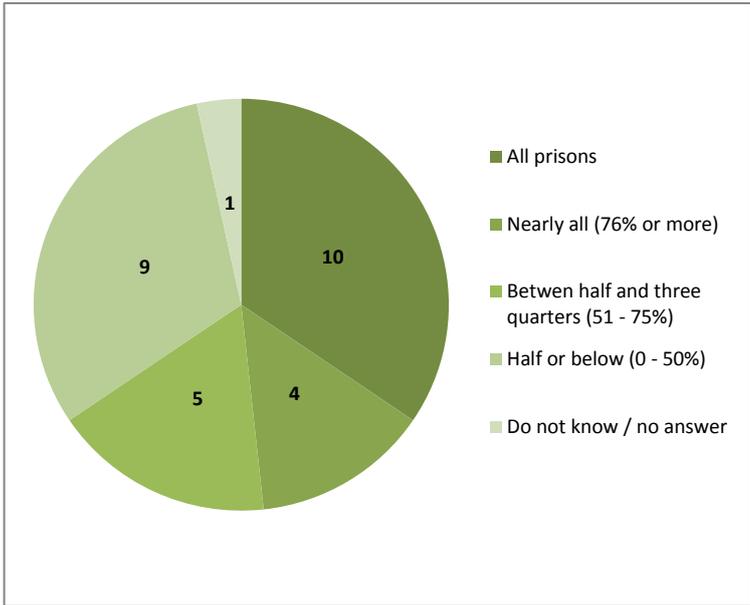
Figure 6.1 Prisons offering general education



Source: GHK survey

Figure 6.2 shows responses from 29 countries that responded to the question regarding the proportion of prisons offering vocational education. It seems that the share of prisons offering vocational education follows a similar pattern to that of general education. In around a third of the countries (10 in total: Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, UK-England, UK-Scotland and UK-Wales) it was reported that all prisons offered vocational education, while in four countries (Finland, Lithuania, Norway and Romania) it was reported that nearly all prisons (76 % or more) provided vocational education. Another third (nine countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Iceland, the Netherlands, Serbia, and Switzerland) reported half or less than half of prisons offering vocational education and training, whilst five (Belgium, Germany, Slovak Republic, Spain and Sweden) reported that vocational education was provided in between half and three-quarters of prisons.

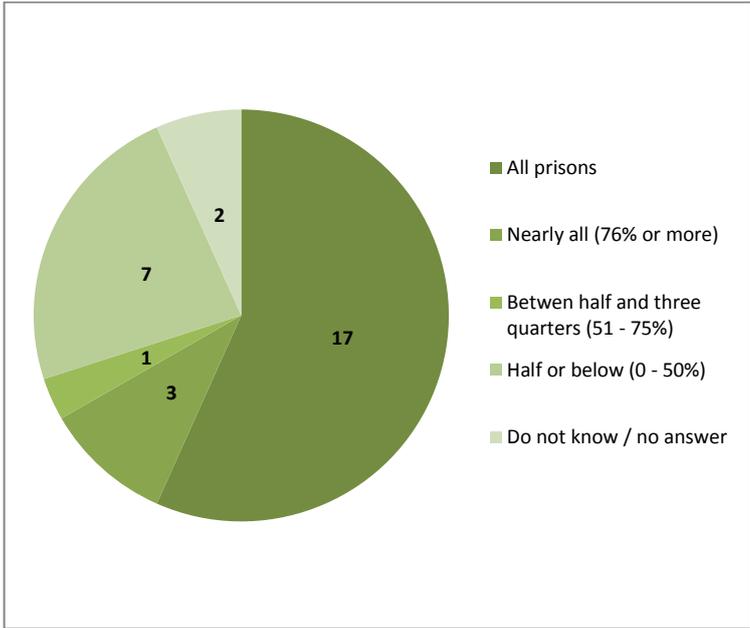
Figure 6.2 Prisons offering vocational education



Source: GHK survey

The provision of non-formal education appears to be slightly more widespread than general and vocational education. A total of 30 responses were provided to this question. All prisons were reported as offering non-formal education in 17 countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, UK-England, UK-Scotland and UK-Wales). Nearly all prisons were reported to offer non-formal education in three countries (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia). In only seven countries, half or below half of prisons offer non-formal education (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Switzerland). In one country, non-formal education is offered in between half and three-quarters of prisons (Iceland).

Figure 6.3 Prisons offering non-formal education



Source: GHK survey

On the whole, the figures presented appear to reflect a high degree of inequality of opportunity to access general and vocational education and training programmes across and within countries. Future work could focus on the analysis of trends to determine how this current situation compares with previous timeframes. It would also be interesting to compare the extent of provision of education and training in prisons, with the provision at national level.

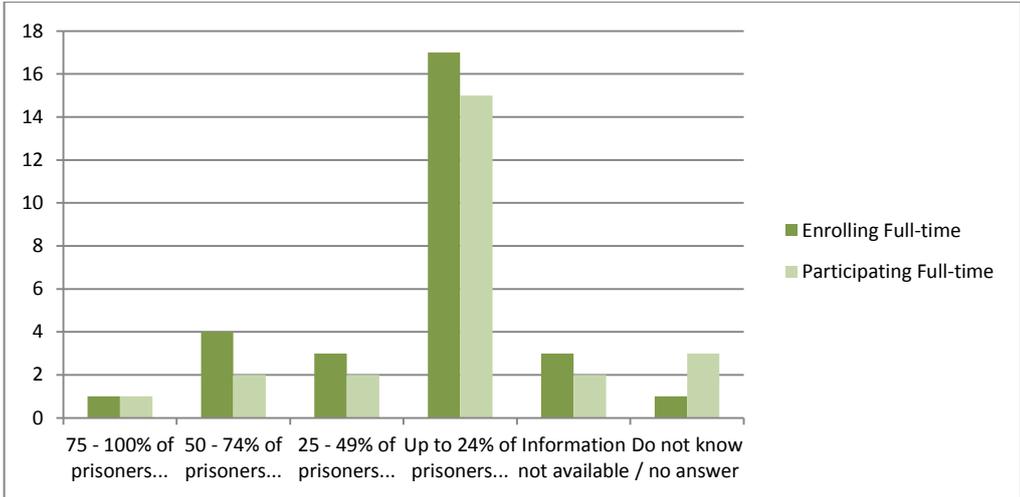
6.2 Participation in prison education and training

6.2.1 Adult enrolment and participation

Respondents were asked to provide an estimate of the rate of both enrolment and participation in prison education among adult and juvenile prisoners in their country. This distinction between *enrolment* and *participation* was made because it was thought that some prisoners might enrol in a course but then not take part. However, in general the rates of enrolment and participation were said to be similar.

The share of prisoners enrolling and participating in full time education and training was relatively low - the most common rate of both enrolment and participation was 0%-24%, as shown in Figure 6.4 below.

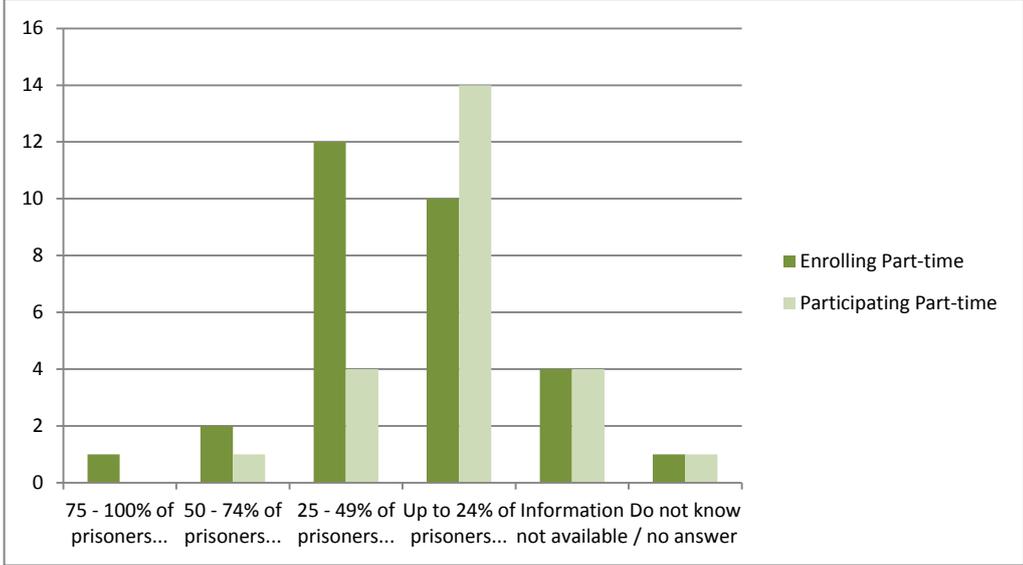
Figure 6.4 Enrolment and participation of adults in full-time education and training



Source: GHK survey

According to the survey results, a higher share of prisoners enrol in part-time education in comparison to full-time – 12 respondents reported rates of 25 – 49% of prisoners enrolling. However, only four countries reported participation at this rate.

Figure 6.5 Enrolment and participation in part-time education and training among adult prisoners



Source: GHK survey

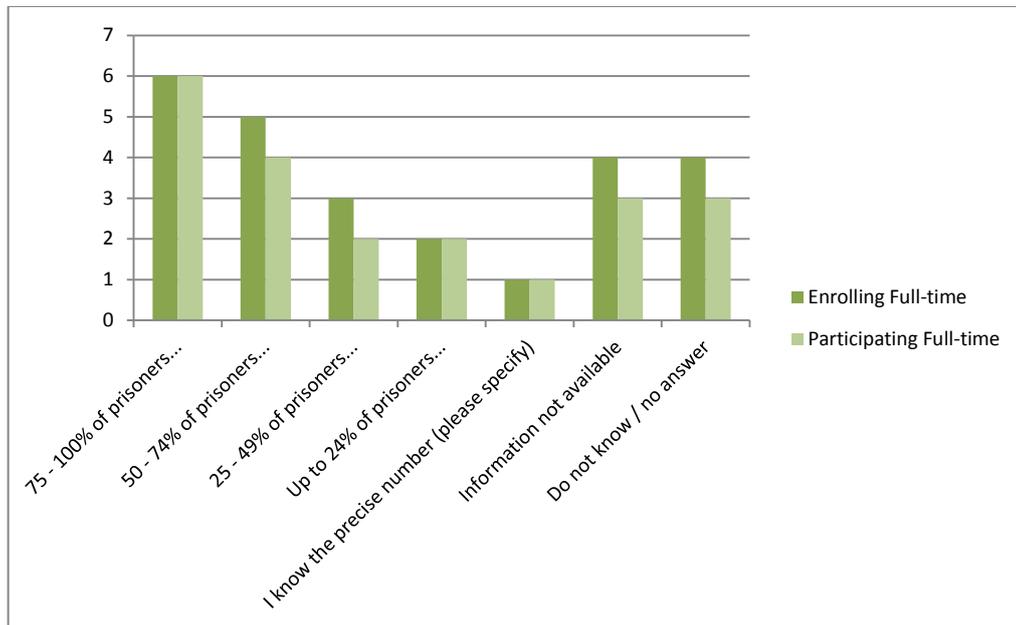
The figures show in general what seem to be low levels of participation in education and training. Further research could compare these rates of participation to those of adults outside of prison, and explore the causes behind the apparently low level of participation of prisoners, in particular regarding the availability and accessibility of provision, awareness of educational opportunities and the returns – both within and outside prisons - that prisoners can expect from investments in educational programmes at the level they can subscribe to.

6.3 Juvenile enrolment and participation

Amongst juveniles, participation in education and training was higher than for adults. This is not surprising, given that for many juvenile prisoners, participation in education is mandatory because they are under the official state school leaving age. Hence it was most common for 75-100% of juvenile prisoners to be participating in education and training. However a higher number of respondents reported that they did not know the answer to the questions on juvenile enrolment or participation, or that the information was not available compared with adults, and there were also fewer responses to the question. This is indicative of the fact that the focus of the survey was on adult prisoners, therefore respondents' expertise is likely to have been mainly relating to adults, not juveniles.

In relation to full-time education, as shown in Figure 6.6 below, enrolment and participation was high amongst juveniles, at 50-74% or 75-100% of juvenile prisoners in the majority of countries (11 and 10 countries respectively).

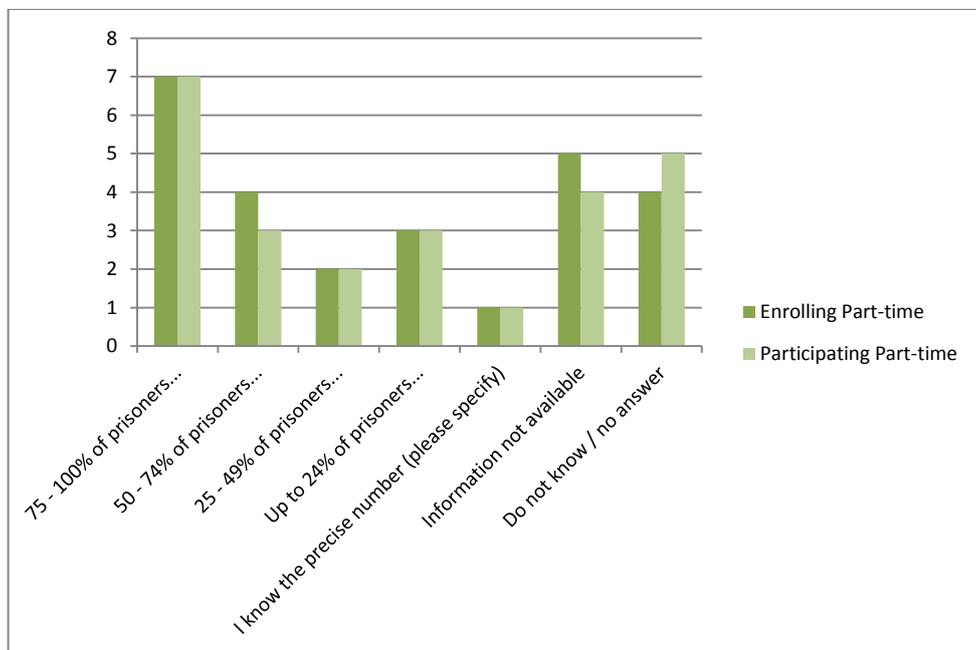
Figure 6.6 Enrolment and participation in full-time education and training among juvenile prisoners



Source: GHK survey

Similarly, countries reported higher proportions of juvenile prisoners both enrolling and participating in part-time education in comparison to adult prisoners.

Figure 6.7 Enrolment and participation in part-time education and training among juvenile prisoners



Source: GHK survey

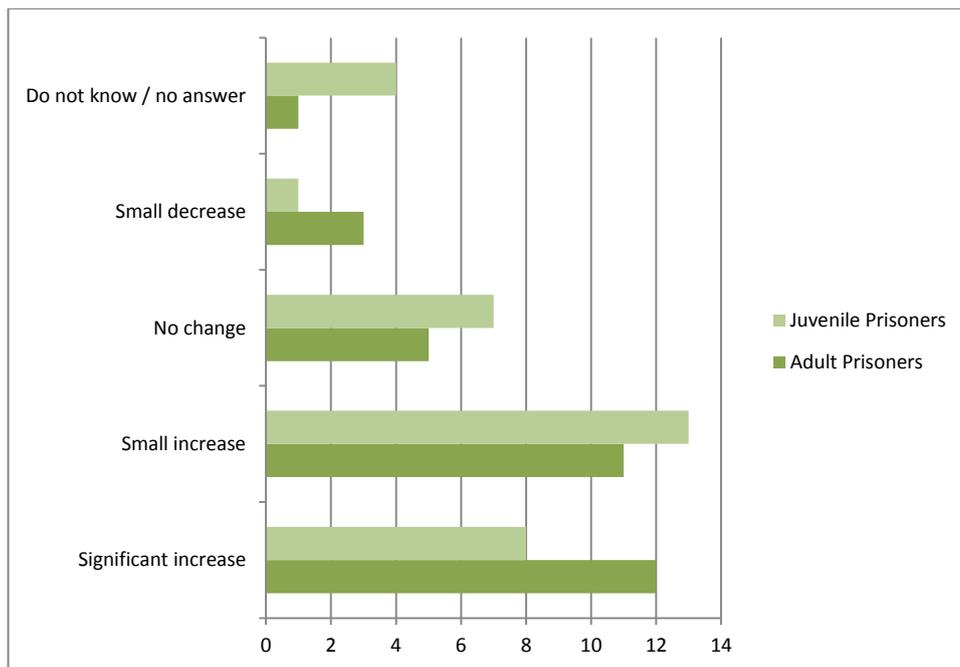
6.4 Changes in participation

The majority of respondents to the survey reported that there had been an increase in participation in prison education and training over the last five years. No significant decreases in participation – amongst either adults or juveniles - were reported by respondents.

Significant increases in participation among adults were more commonly reported compared to juvenile participation, where a small increase or no change were frequently reported. Again this is likely to be due to the fact that for many juveniles, participation in education is mandatory and is set at higher levels than adult participation. A significant increase, or a small increase, in adult participation was reported in 12 countries respectively. In four countries it was reported that there had been no change and only three reported a decrease in participation.

A significant or small increase in juvenile participation was reported by 8 and 13 respondents respectively, whilst seven reported no change.

Figure 6.8 Changes in participation in education and training



Source: GHK survey

6.5 Prisoners achieving qualifications

Respondents were asked to give an estimate of the number of prisoners achieving formal qualifications as a result of prison education and training in their country. There were 24 responses to this question, although a number of those who did respond to the question were unable to provide information on the numbers achieving qualifications by level - six respondents stated that they did not know / had no answer regarding school level and vocational training and eight respondents stated the same with regard to higher level qualifications.

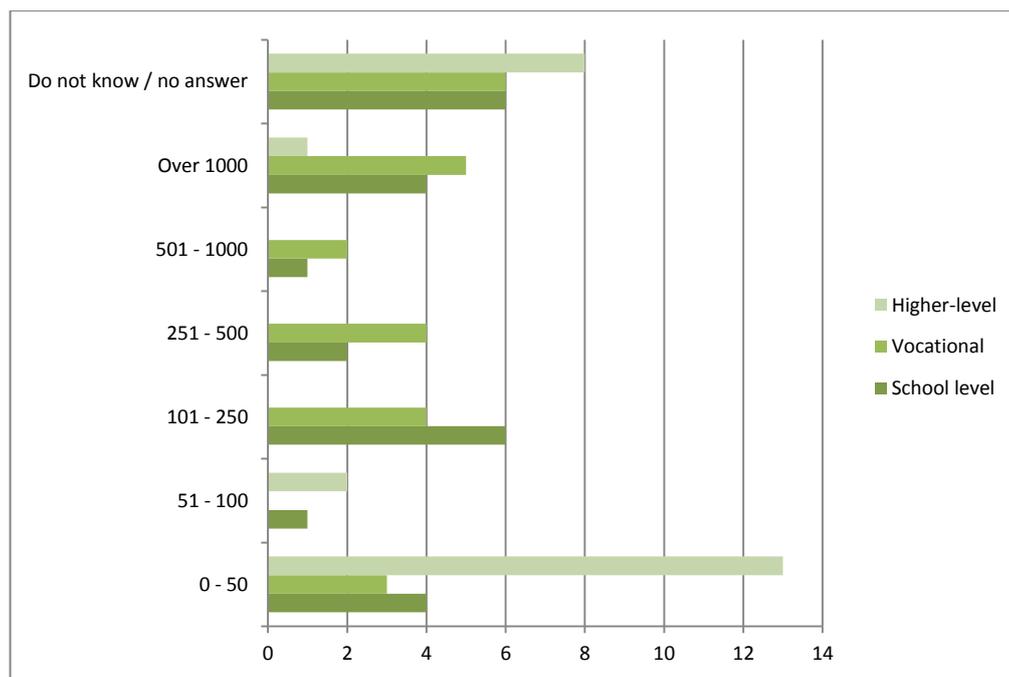
Figure 6.9 presents the responses to this question. It shows that higher-level qualifications are the least commonly awarded qualifications for prisoners, with 13 respondents stating that between 0 and 50 prisoners achieved higher level qualifications, 2 reporting that more than 101 prisoners achieved higher level qualifications, and only 1 reporting that over 1,000 prisoners achieved this type of qualification. This suggests that higher level qualifications are achieved by very few prisoners across Europe, which may be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, it is well documented in the literature that many prisoners have only very low levels of education on entering prison (it has been estimated that between 3% and 5% of European prisoners would be qualified to undertake higher education⁴⁰); secondly, higher level learning is not provided by most prisons and therefore accessibility is an issue; thirdly, there may be little encouragement or support for prisoners wishing to take up higher level learning as the

⁴⁰ Callejo, J. and Viedma, D., *Eurodesip: diagnosis of state of Higher Education in Penal Institutions in Europe*.

focus tends to be on improving basic skills such as literacy levels; finally, higher-level learning tends to be undertaken mainly by prisoners serving longer sentences, who form the minority of the prison population. The financial costs of studying at higher levels (as discussed earlier) may be a disincentive for prisoners to take up studies at this level.

Where prisoners achieve a greater number of qualifications, more vocational qualifications than general education qualifications are awarded. Two related aspects to consider is the value of the qualifications awarded in the labour market and the pathways for progression they may open – aspects which we review in more detail below.

Figure 6.9 Numbers of prisoners completing qualifications by level



Source: GHK survey

In terms of the certificates awarded to prisoners, it was reported that qualifications offered in prisons were most commonly the same as those awarded outside of prison and that they do not specify that the learning had been carried out within prison. This was reported to be the case in:

- 25 countries with regard to school level qualifications (out of 28 responses, including two 'do not know/no answer' responses);
- 25 countries with regard to vocational level qualifications (out of 29 responses, including two 'do not know/no answer' responses); and,
- 22 countries with regard to higher level qualifications (out of 27 responses, including three do not know /no answer responses).

The fact that the qualifications awarded in prisons are the same as those awarded in mainstream educational provision was seen by a number of interviewees as being an important point, since it means that it can help to avoid discrimination against prisoners in the labour market on leaving prison. Thus it seems from the responses that in the majority of countries, prison education and training can result in the achievement of qualifications which will have 'currency' on the labour market and allow prisoners compete equally for employment and/or further training/education opportunities.

6.6 Summary

It seems that general, vocational and non-formal education / training are offered to varying degrees in prisons across Europe and there are different levels of participation in the available provision, which seems to contradict somewhat with the fact that in most countries

there is a legal obligation to provide education and training opportunities to all prisoners, as well as international guidelines, conventions and recommendations – which European countries have signed up to – emphasising the importance of ensuring access to education and training for prisoners.

In less than half of the countries reviewed, all prisons offer general education and vocational training opportunities to inmates – the situation is slightly more positive in relation to non-formal education. On the whole, the figures presented reflect a high degree of inequality of opportunity to access formal general and vocational education and training programmes across and within countries. The share of prisoners participating in prison education and training appears to be quite low, in particular for the adult prison population, although in many countries it is reported that participation has increased in recent years. The number of prisoners achieving formal qualifications also seems to be low. Prisoners are achieving qualifications, which are generally the same qualifications as those awarded outside of prison, but very few at higher level. This is likely to primarily reflect the profile of the prison population in terms of educational background, but may also reflect to some extent the lower support that there is for higher education in prisons compared to primary and secondary education.

Future work could focus on the reasons for the low levels of participation in education and training among prisoners, as well as the low numbers of qualifications awarded. Future research could also compare participation levels with 'equivalent people' in the community, i.e. adult males who left school early, etc. This might give a better indication of whether the low levels of prison participation and qualifications are caused by institutional⁴¹, rather than dispositional⁴², barriers.

⁴¹ I.e. associated with their imprisonment, such as interrupted learning caused by a move to another institution, shortage of resources and/or staff, limited availability of places for learners and restricted offer in terms of level and content

⁴² E.g. Associated with coming from a disadvantaged background, previous failure in education and other factors such as low self-esteem or disability

7 Features of prison education and training

The following section summarises the findings of the survey questions relating to different features of the education and training offer in prisons, such as the subjects offered and the ways in which education and training is provided. The different questions are each discussed in turn and where relevant, further analysis and examples identified through the stakeholder interviews and literature review are also provided.

7.1 Priority subjects / areas of learning

Although distance learning and flexible delivery options may go some way in addressing the shortcomings in some countries, it is likely that the learning offer within prisons has to be restricted in terms of the range of subjects and areas of learning which can be made available to prisoners, for a number of reasons. These include for instance the limited resources available for education and training in prison, the limited capacity in terms of space and teaching staff for the delivery of learning, the sometimes limited importance placed on education and training and / or the focus on targeting prisoners in need of support to increase their basic skills, and finally the sometimes tight restrictions due to security requirements. Respondents were therefore asked to identify which subjects / areas of learning are given priority for prison education by policy makers in their country. Amongst the total of 32 responses, the three subjects which were most commonly reported as being 'very important' were basic skills, vocational training and preparatory courses prior to release, as illustrated in Figure 7.1. For both basic skills and vocational training, no respondents indicated that these subjects were 'not important'.

Regarding vocational training, it is important to note that a variety of provision is related to prison work, such as work in kitchens and bakeries combined with some course or formal training components, or work in prison farms or cleaning which can lead to an accreditation being obtained. Certain quality assurance procedures need to be in place before such training is accredited. Prisons also offer a range of other vocational training subjects, often taught in specific workshop, such as brick/block laying, welding, carpentry. A principle by which such provision is provided is that the vocational subjects covered should have a demand in the labour market.

It appears then that policy makers give priority to those areas where prisoners are known to lack skills (many prisoners have low levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills and low qualification levels - in the UK for instance, over half of all offenders do not have any qualifications at all⁴³) and to areas which have a clear link to rehabilitation and labour market reintegration on release (it is thought that employment is one of the most important factors in preventing re-offending and several studies have shown that prisoners wish to focus on gaining vocational skills in order to enter the labour market on release⁴⁴).

Soft / 'life' skills⁴⁵ were identified by 20 respondents as 'quite important' and by 10 respondents as 'very important'. Since these skills are also important to employers, this is perhaps again a reflection of policy makers' focus on improving prisoners' chances of finding work on release from prison.

⁴³ National Audit Office, 2008, *Meeting Needs? The Offenders' Learning and Skills Service*. Internet: http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/meeting_needs_the_offenders%E2%80%99.aspx

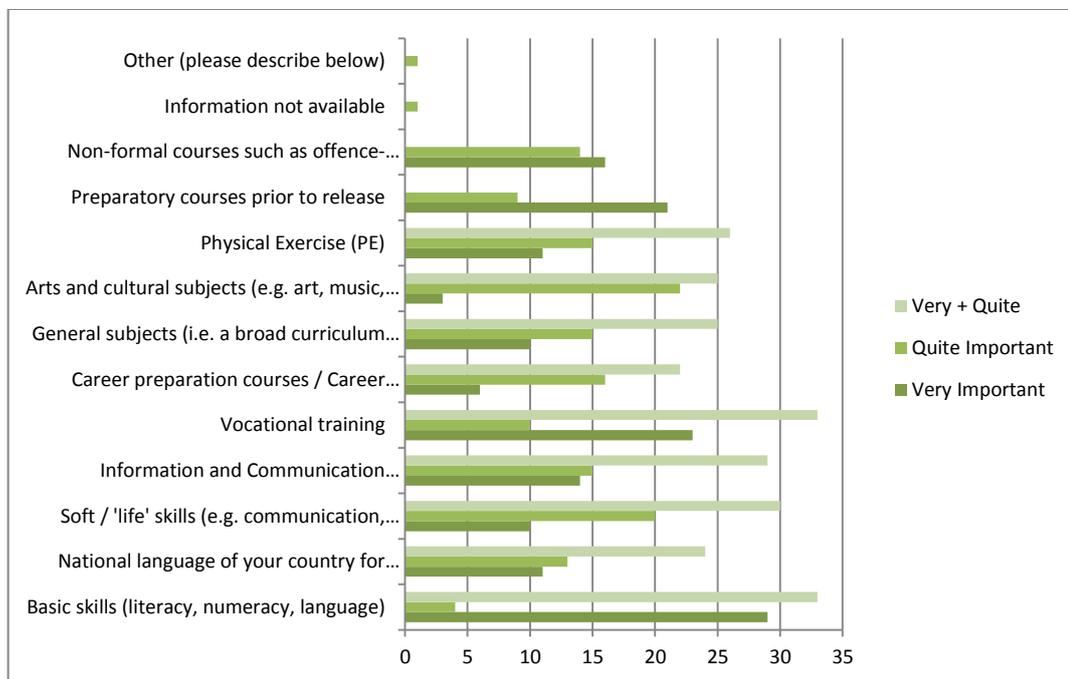
⁴⁴ Eikeland, O.-J., Manger, T. & Asbjørnsen, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Education in Nordic Prisons. Prisoners' educational background, preferences and motivation*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. Internet:

<http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publications/2009-508>; Schuller, Prof. T. (2009) *Crime and Lifelong Learning*, National Institute for Adult and Continuing Learning (NIACE). Internet: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Crime.pdf>

⁴⁵ By soft skills, we refer to personal attributes such as communication. By life skills, we refer to skills that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life, for example reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking.

Figure 7.1 below shows subjects ranked by their relative importance according to survey respondents.

Figure 7.1 Subjects given priority by policymakers



Source: GHK survey

The subject most likely to be identified as 'not important' was the national language of the country, for foreign prisoners. This is particularly interesting given that in some countries, the prison population is made up of a high proportion of foreign prisoners e.g. in Switzerland they make up 71.4% of the prison population and in Greece, 55.5%⁴⁶. Low language proficiency in the national language in the country of residence may make labour market and social integration particularly difficult for foreign prisoners. Arts and cultural subjects were identified by a total of 28 respondents as being 'quite' (22 responses) or not important (6 responses). Only three respondents said that policy makers see arts and cultural subjects as very important, yet it is noted in the literature that these subjects can provide an important 'route into learning' for prisoners⁴⁷, as well as helping participants to improve their personal and social skills, develop self-confidence and can be effective in supporting their rehabilitation and the reconstruction of their relationship with society. Participation in arts and cultural activities can also be a constructive use of time in prison, helping to keep the prisoners participating occupied, focused, motivated and facilitating good team work and relationships with other prisoners and staff. This suggests that there is perhaps more work to be done to formulate an evidence base to show the value of arts and cultural activities in prisons.

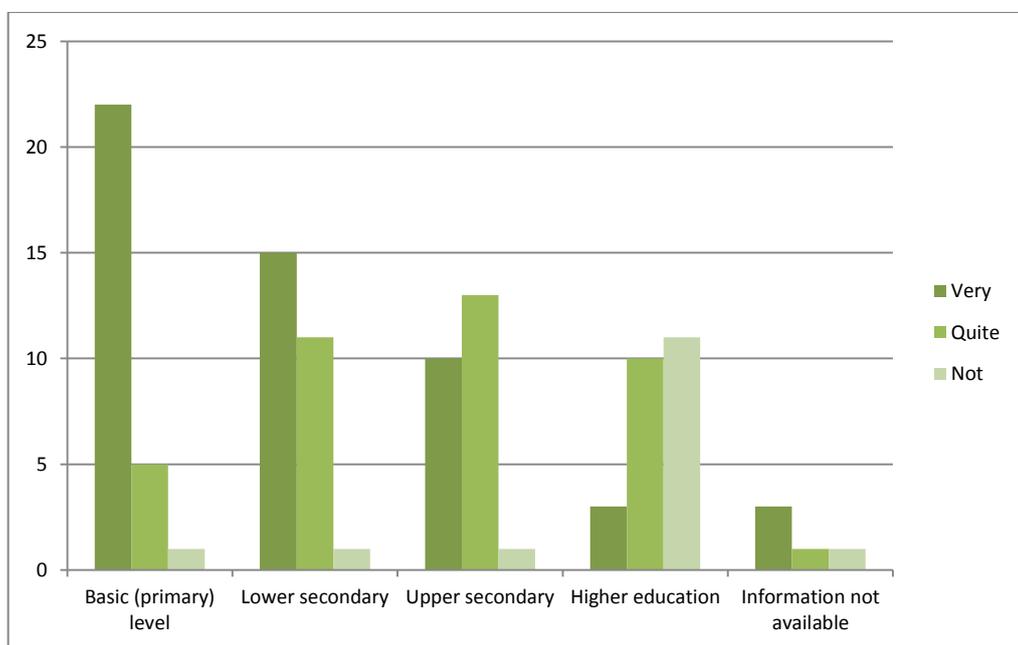
Career preparation courses / career management skills were also identified as being 'very important' by only a small number of respondents (6) and as being quite or not important by 22 respondents. Yet, as mentioned above, employment is widely recognised as a key factor in preventing re-offending. It is therefore perhaps surprising that these are not given higher priority by policymakers. It may be however that in some countries, these were not considered by respondents to be part of education and training provision.

⁴⁶ Data on share of foreign population in overall prison population: ICPS World Prison Brief (<http://www.prisonstudies.org/info/worldbrief/>). Data may not all be from the same year.

⁴⁷ See for example Anderson, K. and Overy, K. (2010), *Engaging Scottish young offenders in education through music and art*, International Journal of Community Music 3: 1 and Langelid, T., Mäki, M., Raundrup, K., Svensson, S. (Eds.) (2009) *Nordic Prison Education, A Lifelong Learning Perspective*. Internet: <http://www.norden.org/is/utgafa/utgefid-efni/2009>

In addition to the subjects given priority by policy makers, respondents were asked to identify which 'levels' of learning (ranging from basic (primary) level to higher education) are seen as more important. A total of 26 responses were received to this question. Responses are depicted in Figure 7.2, which clearly shows that policy makers give priority to lower levels of education, in particular basic (primary) level education, over higher levels. This is in accordance with the Council of Europe Recommendation on Education in Prison, which states that “*Special attention should be given to those prisoners with particular difficulties and especially those with reading or writing problems*” (Article 8) and the European Prison Rules, which specify that “*Prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs, and those who lack basic or vocational education, should be given priority*”. However it is also stated in the European Prison Rules that “*Every prison shall seek to provide all prisoners with access to educational programmes which are as comprehensive as possible and which meet their individual needs while taking into account their aspirations*”, which again reiterates the importance of offering a broad curriculum and range of levels of education and training in prisons.

Figure 7.2 Levels of learning given priority by policymakers



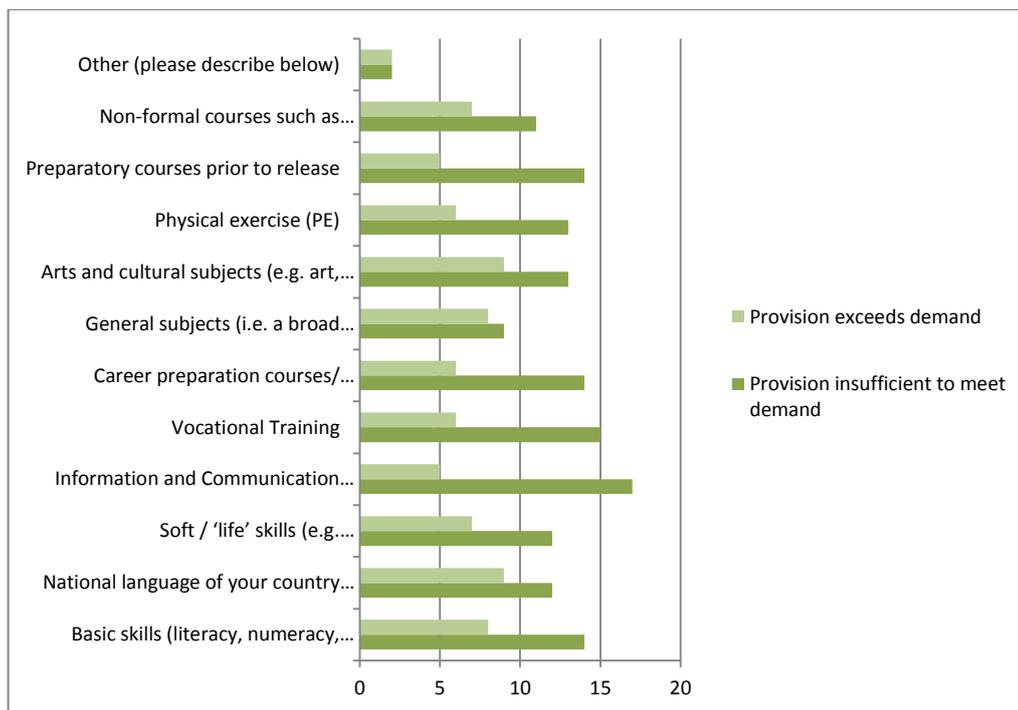
Source: GHK survey

The Council of Europe Recommendation on Education in Prison envisages that prison education should consist of classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities. The Recommendation also states that education for prisoners should aim to develop the whole person bearing in mind his or her social, economic and cultural context. In the stakeholder interviews, it was generally recommended that there should not be marked 'priority' subjects or levels of learning for prison education and training, rather there should be a broad offer in place, so that each learner is able to access opportunities which meet his/ her needs. This includes both formal and non-formal learning: while formal qualifications can provide the prisoner with recognition of his/her skills which has 'currency' on the labour market, non-formal learning can also help to support personal development and the acquisition of essential 'life skills' which prisoners may need to overcome the barriers they face to reintegration in both the labour market and society. Given the limitations in resources and facilities available for prison education, it may be that flexible alternatives to the 'traditional' format of classroom education need to be explored further in order to be able to provide this broad curriculum. Some approaches to providing flexible learning opportunities are discussed below (See Section 8.3).

In recognition of the fact that not all prisoners will be able to participate in the courses they want to, because there are limited or no places, survey respondents were asked to identify whether there are certain subjects / areas where either demand exceeds supply, or supply exceeds demand. A total of 30 responses were received to this question. As shown in Figure 7.3, the subject area which most respondents (17) indicated was not in sufficient supply to meet demand was Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills. This may be a reflection of the fact that access to ICT is limited for prisoners in some countries. The subject area with the second-highest number of responses (15) indicating that supply was insufficient to meet demand was vocational training. This may reflect the fact that vocational training can require greater investment in terms of equipment and facilities, and therefore it may not be possible to provide it in all prisons. Furthermore, prisoners tend to be more interested in courses which can help them to find a job on release⁴⁸ and it is possible therefore that demand for such courses is high. For example, demand for the intensive apprenticeship scheme in Austria (see case study in Annex 3) is said to exceed the supply of places, with twice or three times as many applications as actual training places.

Basic skills (literacy, numeracy, language) were also identified by 14 respondents as being insufficient in supply to meet demand, which is perhaps surprising given that it is also identified as being given high priority by policy makers. This may simply be a reflection of the profile of the prison population (with a high proportion of inmates with low levels of basic skills) and the fact that overall, the resources available for prison education are insufficient to meet demand. The next two subject areas with the highest number of respondents (9) indicating that demand exceeds supply were arts and cultural subjects and the national language of the country for foreign prisoners.

Figure 7.3 Demand and supply of subjects/ areas of learning



Source: GHK survey

On the whole, the fact that two of the areas given greatest priority by policy-makers are also areas where demand frequently outstrips supply may reflect that there are insufficient resources devoted to prison education provision or that more cost-effective ways of delivery need to be explored.

⁴⁸ Schuller, Prof. T. (2009) *Crime and Lifelong Learning*, National Institute for Adult and Continuing Learning (NIACE). Internet: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Crime.pdf>

7.2 E-learning and Distance Learning

ICT has become an integral part of ‘mainstream’ education as it is an important tool for finding information as well as a crucial skill to enable full participation in working and social life. Together with the Internet, ICT can be used to create new learning opportunities and to implement ‘eLearning’. This is a learner-focused approach to “*the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services, as well as remote exchanges and collaboration*”⁴⁹. The use of social networking technologies is also becoming increasingly embedded in both the curriculum and delivery of mainstream education.

In relation to allowing access to ICT for prison education and training, it is of course first and foremost essential to take account of security issues⁵⁰ in any developments relating to this area and there will always be some prisoners who will not be allowed access to the Internet, even with supervision. It is currently impossible to guarantee the secure use of ICT platforms in prison, although breaches in security can be minimised. Prison services employ ICT specialists to monitor the use of the systems, meaning that misuse of learning infrastructure is becoming very rare. Nevertheless, work is needed to build confidence across prison systems in the use of such technology and also to build capacity.

A number of projects at both national and transnational level have sought to maximise the potential of ICT, either as a tool to support e-learning / distance learning or to teach ICT skills and increase digital literacy among (ex-) offenders. Two examples of projects to provide ICT platforms for prison education and training, which take account of the security requirements of the prison regime, are provided in the box below.

Box 3 ICT platforms for prison education and training

The **Learning Platform in Prison (LIS)** project aims to sustain the findings and outputs of the e-LiS and BLiS EQUAL Development Partnerships (DP). e-LiS set out to promote the employability of (ex)-prisoners and to prepare them for their re-integration into the job market. The DP involved six Northern States (Länder) of Germany and was based on 32 separate but inter-related projects. One of its most significant innovations was the use of information and communication technologies in prisons, including the introduction of e-learning, and this raised particularly sensitive problems for the penal institutions involved. Project partners found that there were no ‘jail safe’ learning platforms and software programmes available on the open market, which met these regulations. Thus, such platforms and programmes had to be developed and also, prison staff and trainers, who were not yet familiar with new IT-based approaches, had to be trained in their use. The e-LiS DP tested responses to these problems through its extended network of projects, each of which had a particular focus on one or more specific aspect(s). This approach enabled every actor in the network to draw on, and benefit from, the experience of all the projects. The combined outcomes from these projects led to the development of a comprehensive and validated model of good practice that was applicable across all of the participating Länder (Federal States).

Based on the experience in an e-LiS sub-project of prison education staff in the State of Brandenburg, in which the platform was intensively used, the BLiS project – Blended Learning in *Strafvollzug* (Prison) - was launched in December 2008. This project, co-funded by ESF, mainly focused on teacher training and provided counselling and training in blended learning for teachers and multipliers in penal institutions within the 11 Federal States involved. Existing experience and new opportunities from across 11 German Federal States were shared through the project.

The aim of the LIS project is now to install and sustain the learning platform developed through the e-LiS DP in all prisons in Brandenburg. It aims to ensure the smooth technological implementation of the platform, make sure it can be easily used by teachers and learners, provide content tailored to the needs of Brandenburg prisons, introduce proven educational models into the educational provision in the prisons and strengthen cooperation. (See the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2 for

⁴⁹ The use of ICT to support innovation and lifelong learning for all – A report on progress, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc/sec2629.pdf>

⁵⁰ For example, the risks that prisoners might be able to contact (potential) victims or to access inappropriate websites.

more information on this initiative).

The aim of the **IFI – Internet for Inmates**⁵¹ project in Norway was to link up all prisons to a national network which facilitates access to the internet in line with the security requirements of the prison environment. This is based on the categorisation of sites according to over one hundred categories (e.g. 'search engines', 'news', 'sports' but also 'drugs', 'pornography' etc.). Sites which are not categorised cannot be accessed.

High security prisoners have restricted access to sites which are considered safe and are also restricted in their communication via the Internet. Low security prisoners are given access to more categories of website and are not subject to a communication filter. Common for the two security levels is that ICT is to be integrated in every subject - specific courses in ICT may not be offered and instead the students are expected to learn ICT as an integral part of other subjects like maths or history. Here they can download statistics from the internet or look up facts on Wikipedia.

The communication filter is also altered for pedagogical websites, so that users can undertake interactive tasks for educational purposes. The network also has a system for tracking usage of the Internet, which can be used by prison officers to monitor the activities of individual learners.

It is thought that IFI will help the student become an e-citizen. The student can use the web to find the bus schedule needed for his or her leave or learn how to use an online bank account. A popular activity on IFI is to study for the theoretical part of the driver's licence. (See the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2 for more information on this initiative).

A set of recommendations for European policy makers on e-learning in prisons has been produced as a result of several discussion processes among prison education professionals throughout Europe⁵², which are summarised in the box below.

Box 4 Recommendations on e-learning in prisons

The focus of the **recommendation on e-learning in prisons**⁵³ is the use of ICT for education and training purposes for prisoners (e-learning), with a view that education and training in prisons can aim at levels of digital competences that are comparable to those of citizens outside the prison. Consideration is given to the need to restrict the use of ICT in order to maintain an appropriate level of security.

The recommendations state that the use of e-learning for prisoners provides an opportunity to enhance prison education, by:

- using the flexibility of the technology to address the individual qualification needs of the inmates on a personal time schedule,
- broadening qualification opportunities,
- improving the quality of education and training,
- motivating (especially young) inmates,
- effectuating learning processes and
- saving financial means for improving individual support for inmates by teachers.

Yet at the same time the recommendations recognise that e-learning cannot substitute the personal guidance of inmates by teachers and that it is therefore necessary to take a 'blended learning' approach, combining interpersonal support and mentoring by the teacher with 'effective and efficient e-learning repositories for educational material and action-oriented learning'.

It is recommended that a group of prison teachers and e-learning specialists should be set up on a European level to collect and distribute appropriate content for e-learning in correctional services.

⁵¹ <http://www.fylkesmannen.no/faqom.aspx?m=20566&amid=3526903>

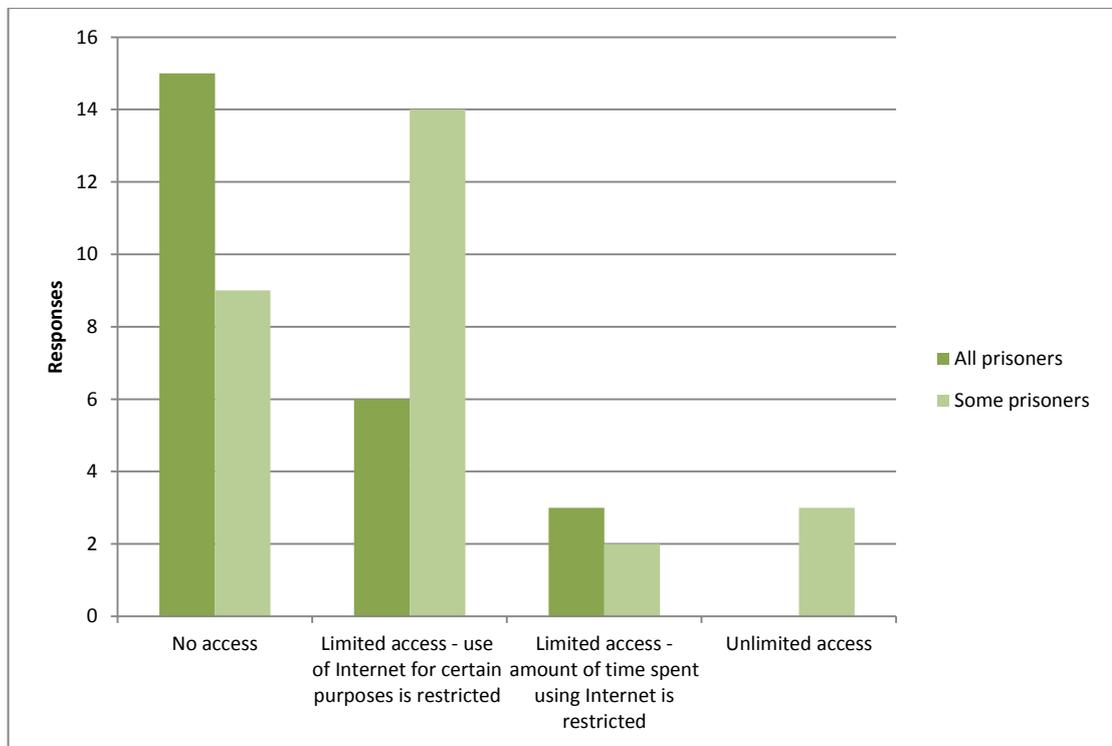
⁵² Among others, the 'Pathways to Inclusion' Conference; the Conference on "E-Learning and Knowledge Management in Correctional Services", (ICPA 2010 Pre-conference, Ghent (Belgium), 22-23 October 2010, organised by LICOS, ExOCOP and the Belgium Directorate General for Penitentiary Institutions); the LICOS final project meeting in Pécs (Hungary), 01-03 December 2010; and various discussions with professionals from penitentiary institutions in Europe.

⁵³ <http://www.adam-europe.eu/pri/3840/pri/33-lc-recommendations-e-learning-prison-10.pdf>

In order to determine the extent to which e-learning is possible for prisoners in Europe, survey respondents were asked to provide information about access to the Internet and ICT for prisoners in their country, as well as the extent to which prisoners are able to access distance learning opportunities.

With regard to access to the Internet, there were some conflicting answers to this question, with some respondents indicating that ‘all prisoners’ have no access to the internet – by which they may have meant that they do not have general access for undefined purposes - but at the same time responding that certain sub-groups of prisoners do have access, restricted to certain purposes. Nevertheless, although the data should be treated with caution, it is possible to identify some patterns. Responses showed that very few prisoners across Europe have *unlimited* Internet access – this is only the case for *some* prisoners in three countries. Where access to the Internet is allowed (for certain groups) but on a restricted basis, it is much more common for access to be limited to certain purposes than to a certain amount of time (when respondents have reported that prisoners do have access to the internet, it is probable that this is in all instances controlled access, i.e. that there are limits to which sites they can view).

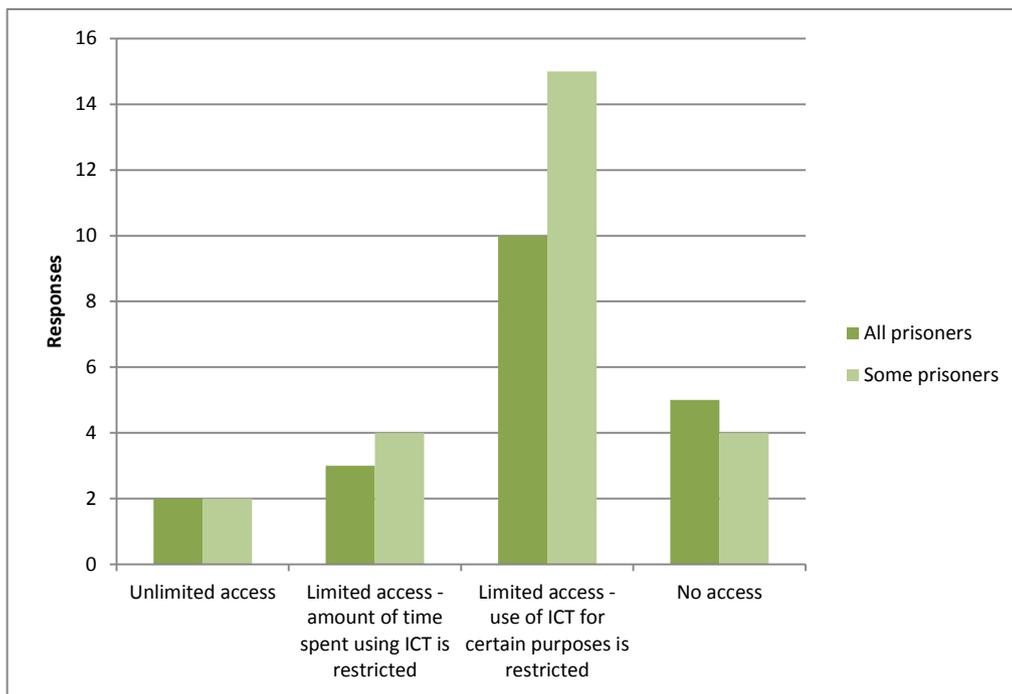
Figure 7.4 Access to the internet for prisoners



Source: GHK survey

Similarly to access to the Internet, it was most commonly reported that prisoners have access to ICT for certain purposes only. Again, there were some conflicting answers to this question, with some respondents indicating that ‘all prisoners’ have unlimited access to ICT but at the same time reporting that certain sub-groups do not have access. It is possible that respondents may have had different interpretations of what is referred to by the term ‘ICT’ and whether this refers simply to ‘computers’ or to also social media tools etc. This is an important point to bear in mind if a similar survey is to be carried out again in the future.

Figure 7.5 Prisoner access to ICT



Source: GHK survey

A number of EU-funded projects have sought to identify new and practical ways to exploit the use of ICT in prison education and these have been documented elsewhere⁵⁴. An example of a project identified through this study to enable prisoners to develop digital literacy skills in Belgium (Flanders) is described in the box below.

Box 5 Improving the digital literacy skills of prisoners

Part of the Flanders (Belgium) strategic plan on assistance and services to prisoners (see case study in Annex 4 for full details of this plan) is the ‘**e-learning for inmates**’ project, which offers distance learning to inmates with the aim of helping them to improve their educational level and their employability.

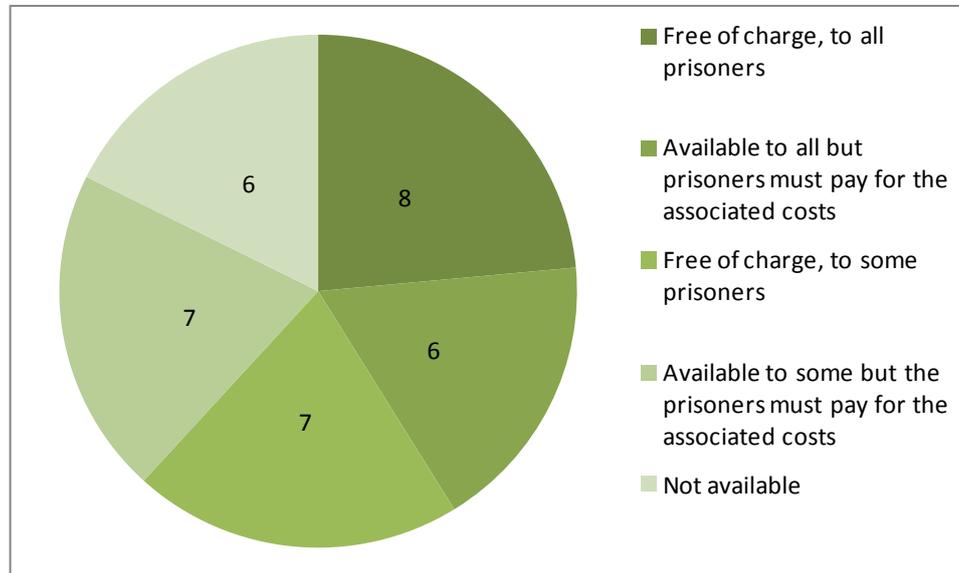
Internet access is forbidden for prisoners in Belgium, so this e-learning project is important since it experiments with providing limited internet access. The project is part of a much larger digital initiative of the federal Ministry of Justice to open up access to ICT, to e-learning and to the internet for inmates. Inmates will be able to access PCs through a computer room or through the library and possibly from their cells at a later stage. A central server has been set up that will give them access to e-learning courses, will offer them the possibility to look through their judicial file and appeal online, to access library catalogues and to use telephony to make calls via the PCs. The e-learning project is already running in three pilot prisons, offering a platform to educate prisoners in an interactive and independent way. The project offers a wide variety of courses and helps inmates to improve their educational level and their digital competences.

The key elements that make the e-learning for inmates project a success is the flexibility that the project offers inmates to choose from a variety of courses and the possibility that they can stop and re-start their courses at their convenience. Other key success factors of the scheme are: the fact that the same courses that are offered to inmates are also given to unemployed persons outside penitentiaries; the courses result in certificates; the courses offer possibilities for reintegration to the inmates that take part in them; the system provides coaching via interactive contact with teachers; and the system keeps track of completed lessons and grades attained.

⁵⁴ For examples, please refer to the Catalogue of EU-funded projects relating to prison education and training which can be found at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/conf11/doc4-catalogue_en.pdf, as well as the report from the Pathways to Inclusion conference workshop ‘E-learning platforms and distance learning’ <http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/conf11/a5report.pdf>

Distance learning was reported as being available (that is, prisoners have access to it) in the majority of the 30 countries where a survey response was received. It is not available in six countries, as shown in Figure 7.6 below. An interesting point for further research relates to the degree of support that prisoners may receive in order to follow distance learning courses.

Figure 7.6 Prisoners access to distance learning



Source: GHK survey

Again some responses to this question seemed contradictory (for example where it was stated that distance learning is available to *all* prisoners free of charge but that *some* prisoners must pay for the associated costs). This is probably because the question in the survey did not take account of the different levels of education that can be accessed through distance learning, or the fact that some countries base the decision on whether the prisoner has to pay on their personal financial situation. Thus participation in distance learning at lower levels may be free for all prisoners but for higher levels prisoners must pay the associated costs.

There are some interesting examples across Europe of the use of distance learning for prisoners, including the case of Sweden, which is described in the box below and presented in more detail in the case study which can be found in Annex 6.

Box 6 The Learning Centre model, Sweden

The Swedish Learning Centre model funds and delivers all formal general education in Swedish prisons. The project was set up with the overall aim of creating a system to allow prisoners to access a wide range of subjects and continue their learning pathways as they moved around the prison estate and after leaving prison. Prior to the introduction of the Learning Centre model, the delivery of education provision across the prison estate, the range of subjects/areas of learning offered and the type of education offered in terms of general, vocational, higher and non-formal education varied significantly. As a result each prison offered a 'mixed bag' of provision that failed to meet the needs of the prison population and had few if any visible outcomes in terms of qualification attainment and positive engagement of prisoners. With limited resources in terms of qualified teachers, there were few opportunities for learners to obtain recognised qualifications. Variations in the education offer from one prison to the next also meant there was a lack of continuity for those prisoners who were transferred from one institution to another. Prisoners were either forced to abandon their programmes or start again from the beginning once they were transferred to a new prison facility.

Following a review commissioned by the Prison Service and Probation Administration⁵⁵, a pilot project was established in 2001 which set out to improve the quality of education for prisoners, to

⁵⁵ The findings of this analysis are outlined in a report published by the Prison Service and Probation Administration - it is available in Swedish only.

ensure its equivalence with the national education system and to promote continuity in learning pathways for prisoners. The model was initially tested in 7-8 prisons. Following the success of the pilot project, the Learning Centre model was applied across the entire prison estate in 2003.

Today there is one Learning Centre in each of Sweden's prisons, each with one or more teachers employed by the Prison Service and Probation Administration, who are qualified to teach at upper secondary school as well as at more basic levels. The key tool to support prison education under the Learning Centre model is a computerised platform called the 'Net Centre' allowing all prisoners to study their chosen subject. The Net Centre provides prisoners with access to over 130 subjects/areas of learning, from basic skills to upper-secondary level, and to teaching competence beyond what is available in the prison where they are located. Communication between teaching staff and prisoners is carried out via the Net Centre, telephone and postal contact. In addition, prisoners have access to teaching staff and general education support. Learning Centre facilities are also used to enable prisoners to continue with their studies when they have been transferred to a different prison facility or once they have been released. The equivalence between general education in prison and general education offered through municipal adult education means that prisoners can continue with their qualifications after they have left the prison. As qualifications in Sweden are unit-based, prisoners have the opportunity to complete units towards full qualification achievement. To avoid duplication of learning and to support prisoners in their continued education, teaching staff issue a certificate to record achievement to date.

The structure of the Learning Centre approach therefore means that prisoners have continuous access to teaching staff at all times. The distance, or 'blended', learning approach is believed to increase access to education and attainment and to improve motivation and rates of participation. Moreover, it presents a true opportunity for the prisoner to be seen as a 'learner', rather than a 'prisoner', due to the distance learning approach taken.

Since its inception the number of prisoners participating in education provision in Sweden has increased, as has the number of qualifications awarded. For example, 140 prisoners achieved 197 courses in 2005, 870 prisoners finished 1,363 courses in 2008, and in 2011, 1,212 prisoners achieved 2,045 qualifications (prisoners can study up to three courses at any one time). There is now relatively widespread support for the Learning Centre model and a view that the distance learning approach applied to the prison population has proved to be highly innovative. The way in which the bank of teaching staff are used in their capacity as locally based teachers, instructors and mentors and as teachers of distance learning is also considered to be good value for money.

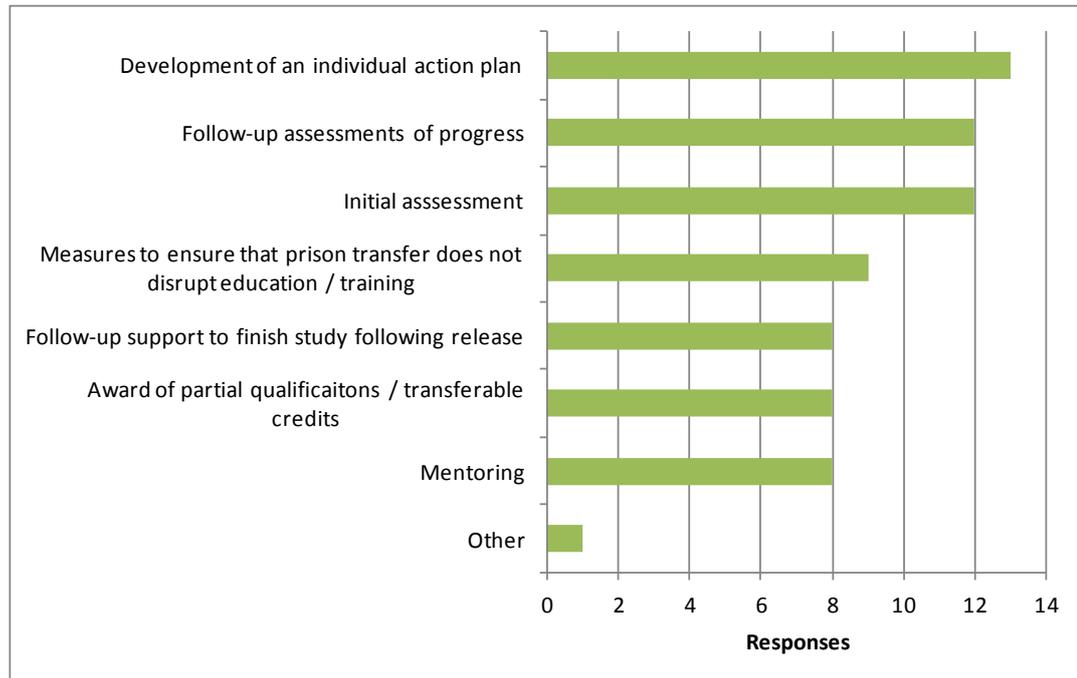
Given the concerns regarding the security risks associated with the use of Internet and ICT in particular, it seems that this is one area where countries could benefit from an exchange of experience and knowledge, to facilitate the transfer of good practice. This might also present an opportunity for countries to share knowledge on ways of overcoming the difficulties associated with learning which is not provided 'face-to-face', which may in particular be a challenge for prisoners with limited prior educational attainment, who may need more 'hands-on' support as they return to learning.

7.3 Provisions to ensure that learners are able to develop a tailored learning 'journey'

Prisoners are a heterogeneous group and as such have varied learning needs, learning styles, educational aims and ambitions. Survey respondents were asked whether there are provisions in place in their countries to ensure that prisoner learners are able to develop and pursue their own tailored learning 'journey' and from the 28 responses to this question, 20 indicated that measures are taken to ensure an individualised learning journey, whilst 7 respondents indicated that this was not the case and 1 reported that this information was not known.

As shown in Figure 7.7 below, a variety of measures are used across the countries to ensure prisoners can develop and pursue a tailored learning journey. The most commonly reported measure taken was the development of an individual action plan. Initial and follow-up assessments were also commonly reported, although it is likely that these might be carried out in association with the development of an individual action plan.

Figure 7.7 Provisions to ensure that prisoner learners are able to develop and pursue their own tailored learning ‘journey’



Source: GHK survey

Some examples of projects which have developed methods of ensuring prisoners can follow a tailored learning journey were identified through our review of documents.

Box 7 Offering prisoners an individualised, tailored learning ‘journey’

In **Ireland**, there is a standardised Adult Basic Education (ABE) assessment package which is used in prison education centres to identify the specific skills that the prisoner needs to develop. This package has been devised and adapted by prison literacy tutors in order to meet the needs of prison learners⁵⁶.

In **Spain**, all prisoners are given an individual treatment programme, which includes education and training activities (although participation in these programmes is voluntary). Prisoners who do not have a certificate of basic education on entering the prison are interviewed by a teacher, who decides which compulsory educational cycle he/she must follow. For prisoners who have completed basic but not higher education, access to other training is facilitated, including opportunities to access university education via the Spanish Open University. In addition, non-formal education is offered in subjects such as languages, basic computing skills and other specific subjects, as well as cultural and sports activities⁵⁷.

7.4 Steps taken to ensure education and training helps to improve employability

As noted previously in this report, employment is identified by many stakeholders and researchers as an important factor in preventing re-offending. British research from 2002 provides evidence to show that being in employment reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half⁵⁸. Therefore it seems important that education and training

⁵⁶ Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C & McLoughlin, V., (2010), Report on Access to Education for Adults Experiencing Disadvantage in Ireland. LLL2010 project, Subproject 5. Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin

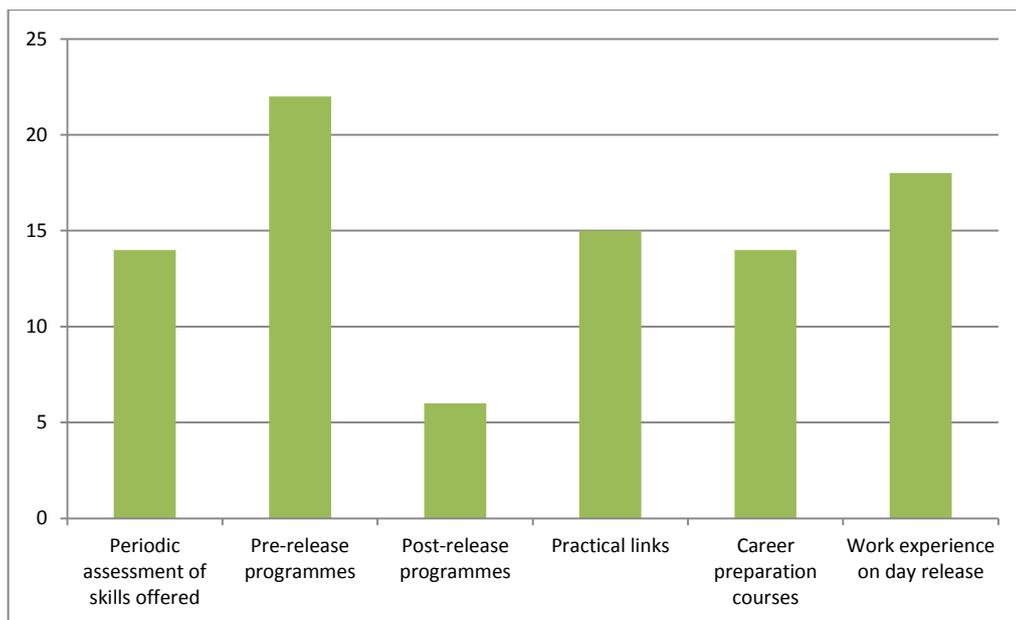
⁵⁷ Hammerschick, W., Hayes, J., Hjarne, U., and Meyer, I., 2011, KEYS – Innovative Models for the Integration of Working and Learning in Adult Prisons. Internet: http://www.keys.fczb.de/fileadmin/keys/Texte/111102_Keys_Handbook_online_final.pdf

⁵⁸ Social Exclusion Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002, Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners. Internet: http://www.qos.gov.uk/497296/docs/219643/431872/468960/SEU_Report.pdf. See also Hammerschick, W., Pilgram, A.,

opportunities in prison can help to prepare a prisoner to (re-) enter the labour market on release.

Respondents were asked to identify the steps taken in their countries to help to improve prisoners' employability on release, from a range of options as set out in Figure 7.8 below. A total of 29 respondents gave an answer to this question. The most common type of measure employed, with 22 responses, is said to be pre-release programmes to promote employability. This is followed by work experience opportunities for prisoners who are granted day release. Practical links was the third most common answer provided by respondents, which included links with particular employers. Here the research literature highlights the significance of day release programmes as a means of 'normalisation', providing increased opportunities for contact with society⁵⁹. Post-release programmes to promote employability are the least common type of measure employed, according to the survey responses. Yet follow-up support for prisoners on release is recognised as an important part of efforts to prevent re-offending. It is not clear however if the responses to this question are a reflection of a lack of follow-up programmes, or simply reflect the fact that post-release support is not considered to be part of prison education and training as such, and rather falls under the responsibility and budget of probation and other services outside of the prison.

Figure 7.8 Steps taken to ensure prison education and training helps to improve employability on release



Source: GHK survey

Prison work presents an opportunity for prisoners to positively engage in meaningful activities within the prison environment, gain experience of the demands and disciplines of a working environment and to gain self-respect as well as skills and competences to improve their employability. For example, in the UK Askham Grange provides opportunities for prisoners to participate in work placements and real work, both inside and outside the prison. As a specific example, female prisoners are involved in managing the reception for conferences at Askham Grange⁶⁰.

Riesenfelder, A. (1997): Zu den Erwerbsbiografien und Verurteilungskarrieren Strafgefangener und Straftentlassener. In: Hammerschick, W., Pilgram, A., (Ed.), Jahrbuch für Rechts- und Kriminalsoziologie 1997: Arbeitsmarkt, Strafvollzug und Gefangenenarbeit, 1997, (Nomos) Baden-Baden

⁵⁹ Langelid, T., Mäki, M., Raundrup, K., Svensson, S. eds., 2009, *Nordic Prison Education, A Lifelong Learning Perspective*. Internet: <http://www.norden.org/is/utgafa/utgefidi-efni/2009-536>

⁶⁰ <http://archive.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=253412>

A number of other examples of projects and initiatives to improve prisoners' employability were identified through the 'mini' survey, stakeholder interviews and literature review. Five of these are described in the box below.

Box 8 Improving prisoners' employability

In the **Netherlands**, a good practice example put forward in relation to improving prisoners' employability is the local cooperation between the prison and local employers in the Rotterdam area, which ensures that prisoners are trained in order to fill specific job vacancies when they are released from prison.

In **Norway**, the TAFU (resettlement through employment, social activities and education) project is a person-centered approach to developing essential skills for effective resettlement – for example CV skills, interviews, self-awareness and personal development and change. The training consists of three weeks of theory followed by 3-6 months of vocational training with an employer, leading to employment and / or education. The project is based on cooperation between the government agencies involved in the resettlement of the prisoner (See the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2 for more details of this initiative).

In **Portugal**, a course is offered in prisons and youth centres (for those aged 12-16) offering a 'double certificate' in both general education and professional skills to participants, thereby giving them a basis for finding employment post release.

In **Spain**, in 2005 La Caixa Social Fund introduced a programme of professional training grants for inmates in prison centres who are serving the last phase of their sentences. These grants give prisoners the chance to train in trades for which there is high professional demand and thus to obtain skills with which to rejoin society with a job. The courses are run outside the prison centres on a semi-employment basis. Since the programme started, a total of 4,288 professional training grants have been awarded through the programme⁶¹.

In the **UK**, the 'Virtual Campus' (VC) is a secure web-based resettlement tool, which is currently being used by prisoner learners and jobseekers in the UK as a supplement to other teaching. Based on seven pathways to resettlement (nine for women), the VC offers learners the chance to access training materials which assist them on their journey towards social integration and ensures that they are better prepared for the labour market.

The VC is accessible to most learners, with the exception of certain high-risk groups. Each prisoner student is risk-assessed and given a unique log-in, which determines the content that they can use and view. The number of websites that can be accessed is restricted and all activity is heavily monitored.

The Virtual Campus provides a seamless "*through the gate*" system for prisoners. When a prisoner transfers to a different prison or is released, they take their profile and coursework, which are saved to their *eportfolio*, with them. This means that learners can now continue with coursework and build on previous documents (CVs and assignments etc.) already created, rather than starting from the beginning every time they are transferred or go out into the community. In addition, learners have the ability to communicate with and receive support from advisors and tutors through the '*secure relay messaging*' functionality.

According to the evaluation of the VC pilot, the VC has benefits to the organisations, staff and prisoners involved. It brings economic advantages due to the streamlining of delivery, staff are able to improve their performance and practice, and in turn feel more fulfilled, while prisoners found that working towards a qualification or looking for a job using a computer and the Internet helped them to feel 'normal', despite being in custody. The VC also creates a 'level playing field' for prisoners, by enabling them to submit a CV or to access live vacancies whilst in prison⁶². (See the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2 for more details of this initiative).

⁶¹ http://obrasocial.lacaixa.es/laCaixaFoundation/integrationintowork_en.html

⁶² Turley, C., and Webster, S., 2010, Implementation and Delivery of the Test Beds Virtual Campus Case Study, National Centre for Social Research.

Given the wide range of social and personal issues that prisoners face, the research literature points to a more integrated approach to help prisoners secure employment post release. Here, education programmes that take a 'holistic' approach, combining support in different areas such as housing, relationships and addiction for example are seen to be effective. As Webster et al (2001) and Morgan and Owers (2001) have argued, integrated programmes are necessary to help prisoners find employment post release and to help them address other problems they may face such as homelessness or substance abuse for example. In Greece, the Women's Prison of Theva is piloting an integrated programme to help inmates receive vocational training combined with support to address barriers that may be precluding them from finding employment. Through a collaborative approach between the prison, a vocational training institute and NGOs, prisoners participate in education and training in catering and also have access to support that enable them to deal with a range of personal and social issues they face pre and post release⁶³.

7.5 Summary

According to the results of the survey, policy makers tend to give priority to basic skills, vocational training and preparatory courses prior to release and to prioritise provision at lower levels over higher level education. Two of these – basic skills and vocational education – were also identified as areas where there is insufficient supply of places to meet demand from prisoners, which may reflect a lack of sufficient resources to devote to prison education and training.

In some stakeholder interviews, the importance of providing a broad educational offer, in order to meet the varying needs of individual prisoners, was noted thus it seems that given the limitations in resources and facilities available for prison education, it may be that flexible alternatives to the 'traditional' format of classroom education need to be explored in order to provide this broad curriculum. Examples of projects to support e-learning, distance learning and a more flexible approach to provision (such as modular courses) were also identified through the research and given the concerns regarding the security risks associated with the use of Internet and ICT in prisons, it seems this is an area where countries could benefit from opportunities to learn from each other. The survey responses showed that the most commonly-used method to assure a tailored learning journey can be pursued by individual prisoners was the development of an individual action plan. It is important however that the provision of education and training on offer in prisons is sufficient to meet the needs identified in such an individual action plan. Pre-release programmes, together with work experience for prisoners who are permitted day release, were the most commonly-used methods to support prisoners to improve their employability. Where measures to promote the employability of prisoners are in place, it is important for these to be designed with the skills needs of the (local) labour market in mind.

It is also important to bear in mind that prisoners need further support after their release from prison in order to continue their learning or to access employment. As well as specific post-release programmes to support employability, which according to the results of the survey are only offered in the minority of countries, this also means ensuring that education and training commenced in prison can be continued or completed after release, to ensure that the investment made in prison education is not wasted. It also means that the various stakeholders involved in providing support to the prisoner need to work together to ensure the prisoner can benefit from a 'seamless' transition.

⁶³ (Source: telephone interviews with Ms Faragoulitaki, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and Mr Pirounakis, Prison Director of the Female Prison of Thebes, 2 May 2012).

8 Prisoner learners

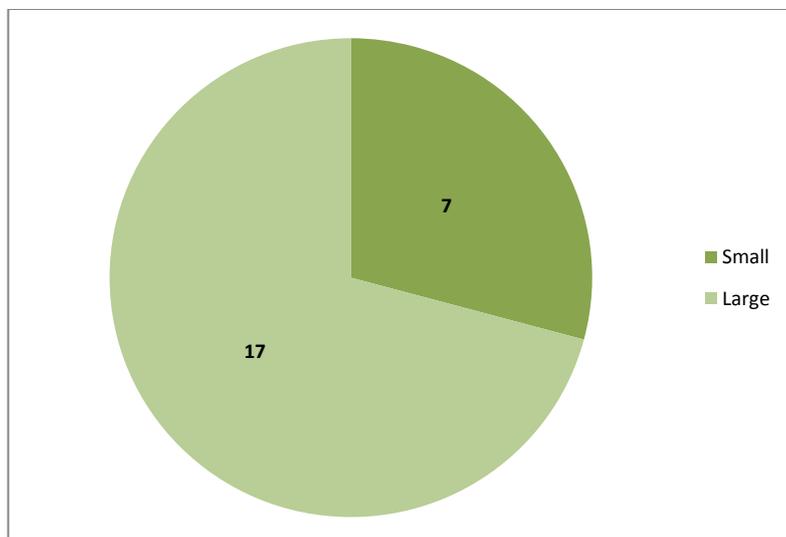
8.1 Profile of participating prisoners

In recognition of the fact that the prisoner cohort is made up of a diverse range of sub-groups with varying needs in terms of education and training, respondents were asked to suggest whether participation in education and training in prison is more common among certain types of prisoners. A list of sub-categories of prisoners was set out, which can be broken down according to the following four categories: prisoners in different establishment types; prisoners serving different types of sentence; prisoners with different levels of education and training; and other characteristics (including for example gender, age, minority groups etc).

Overall, the responses to this question seem to show that prisoners are more likely to participate (or be encouraged / facilitated to participate) in education and training if they are young, and / or serving a long sentence, and / or based in a large prison. This is most likely because: for many juveniles participation in education is mandatory; the age profile of the prison population tends to be more weighted towards the younger age groups (as mentioned above, although the age profile of offenders varies across European countries, in most European countries, the largest numbers of prisoners can be found in the age groups 20-30 and 31-40 years⁶⁴) it can be more difficult to complete an education course if only serving a short sentence; and larger institutions have more capacity in terms of resources and facilities to provide educational opportunities.

As shown in Figure 8.1, participation in prison education and training across Europe was most frequently reported to be more common among prisoners based in large prisons, in comparison to prisoners based in small institutions.

Figure 8.1 Responses indicating that participation in prison education and training is more common among prisoners...in small or large institutions

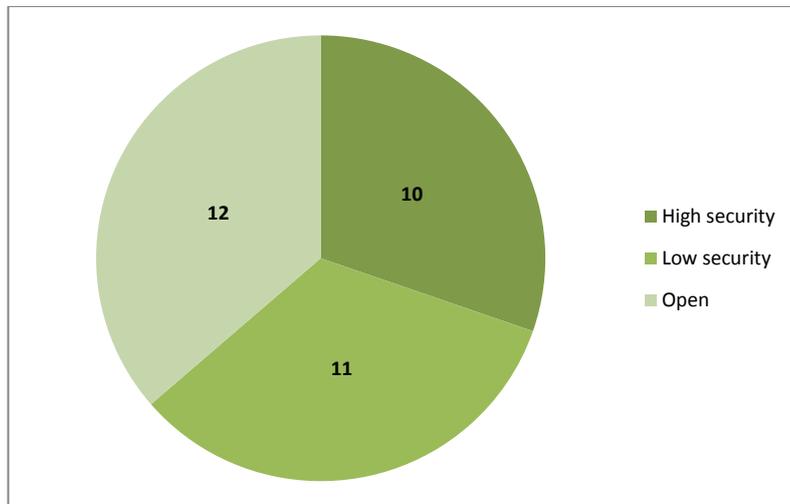


Source: GHK survey

A relatively even number of countries reported that participation in prison education was more common in high security, low security or open prisons. This suggests that the level of security of the prison does not have a large effect on whether it is more common for prisoners to participate in education and training.

⁶⁴ Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics (SPACE I), Survey 2009. Internet: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/cdpc/bureau%20documents/PC-CP\(2011\)3%20E%20-%20SPACE%20I%202009.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/cdpc/bureau%20documents/PC-CP(2011)3%20E%20-%20SPACE%20I%202009.pdf)

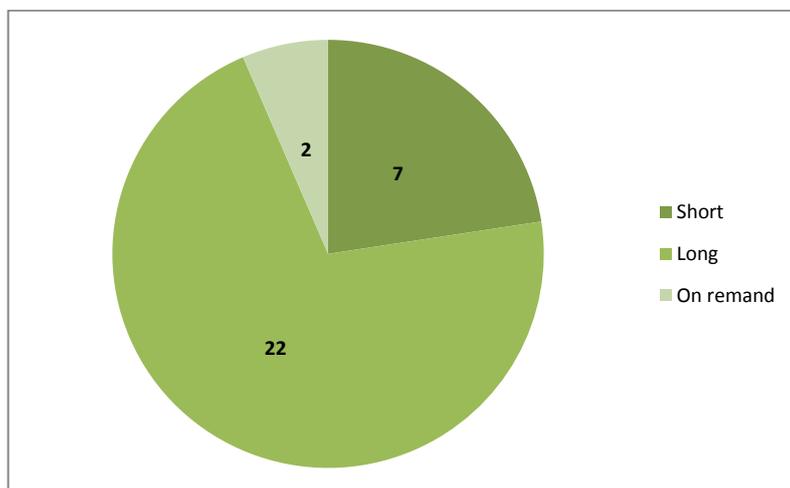
Figure 8.2 Responses indicating that participation in prison education and training is more common among prisoners...in high security, low security and open prisons



Source: GHK survey

With regard to sentence type, the survey responses indicated a strong trend with regard to participation in education and training. Respondents indicated that prisoners more commonly participate in education and training if they are serving a long sentence, and are least likely to participate if they are on remand. There may thus be greater scope to explore the use of short vocational courses which give credit in the labour market, short ICT courses, guidance services, or to developing an individual educational plan for the time after release to encourage those serving short sentences to take up learning opportunities.

Figure 8.3 Responses indicating that participation in prison education and training is more common among prisoners...serving long or short sentences, or on remand



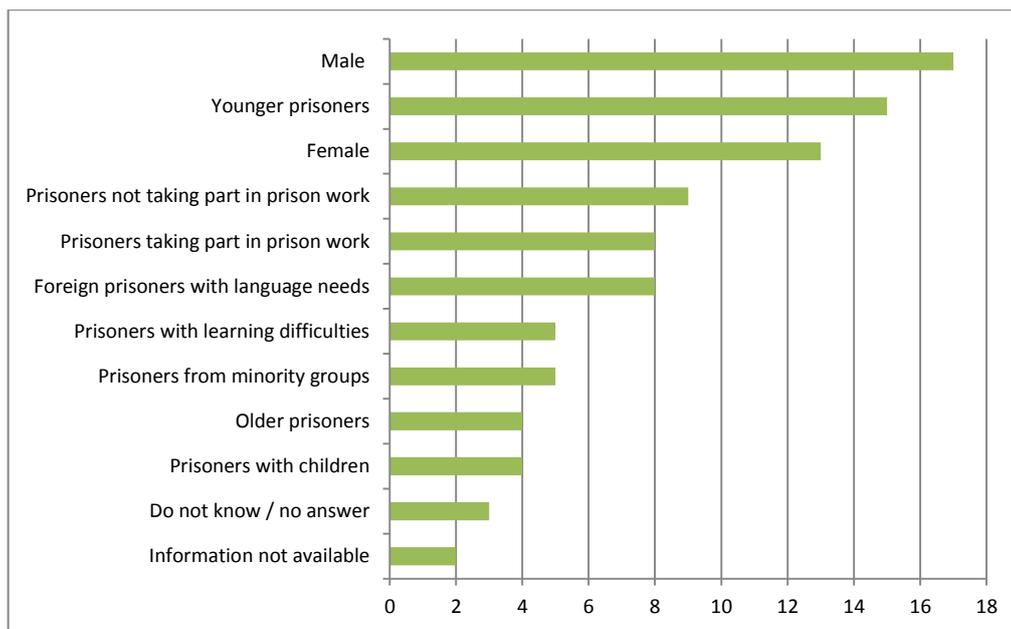
Source: GHK survey

Figure 8.4 shows where respondents reported participation in education and training being more common among prisoners with particular characteristics. There does not seem to be a significant trend in participation by gender (13 respondents indicated that participation is more common among female prisoners, with 17 indicating that it is more common among males) or participation in prison work (participation in education and training was said to be more common among prisoners taking part in prison work by 8 respondents, with 9 indicating that it is more common among prisoners who do not take part in prison work). This seems to indicate that these factors are less important in determining whether prisoners take part in prison education and training. In relation to prison work in particular, this is quite a

surprising result, as it is suggested elsewhere that adult prisoners, when given the choice, prefer to work rather than to participate in education or training⁶⁵.

The most notable difference by characteristic was age. Younger prisoners were more frequently reported as more commonly participating in education and training (15 responses) than older prisoners (4 responses), which is line with the information regarding participation in education and training provided in Section 6 of this report.

Figure 8.4 Responses indicating that participation in prison education and training is more common among prisoners...by other characteristics



Source: GHK survey

Based on the review of literature and anecdotal evidence from the stakeholder interviews, it appears that in some countries, prison education and training is targeted specifically at or prioritised for certain groups, in particular the low-skilled / low-qualified and juveniles. This is in line with the Recommendation on Education in Prison, which states that “*Special attention should be given to those prisoners with particular difficulties and especially those with reading or writing problems*” and the European Prison Rules, which recommend that:

- *Prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs, and those who lack basic or vocational education, should be given priority;*
- *Young prisoners and those with special needs should be given particular attention.*

8.2 Efforts and incentives to encourage participation in education and training

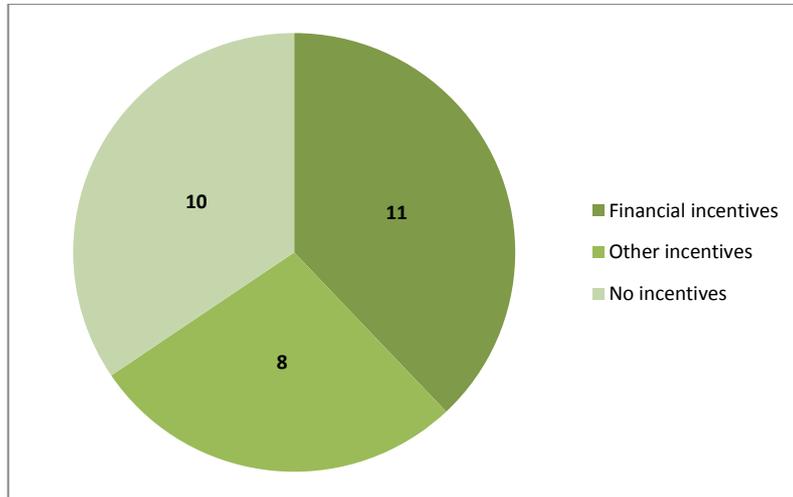
In relation to efforts to encourage participation in education amongst certain target groups, only 10 of the 33 respondents to the survey replied to this question and reported that specific efforts to encourage participation were made in their countries. Respondents from three countries reported projects aimed at foreign prisoners. Three respondents had targeted projects aimed at young prisoners. Projects to encourage long-term prisoners to engage in education, aimed at minority groups, targeted at those with learning difficulties and targeted at specific groups with lower levels of engagement (older prisoners, those with mental health and substance abuse problems) were also identified.

According to the results of the survey, in a number of countries prisoners are given incentives to take part in the different types of education and training. Firstly, in relation to

⁶⁵ See for example Hammerschick, W., Hayes, J., Hjarne, U., and Meyer, I., 2011, KEYS – Innovative Models for the Integration of Working and Learning in Adult Prisons. Internet: http://www.keys.fczb.de/fileadmin/keys/Texte/111102_Keys_Handbook_online_final.pdf

general education, 11 respondents indicated that prisoners are given financial incentives, while 8 stated that other incentives are given (this does not represent 19 countries in total, as in two countries it was stated that both financial and other incentives are given). In 10 countries no incentives are given to prisoners to encourage them to participate in general education.

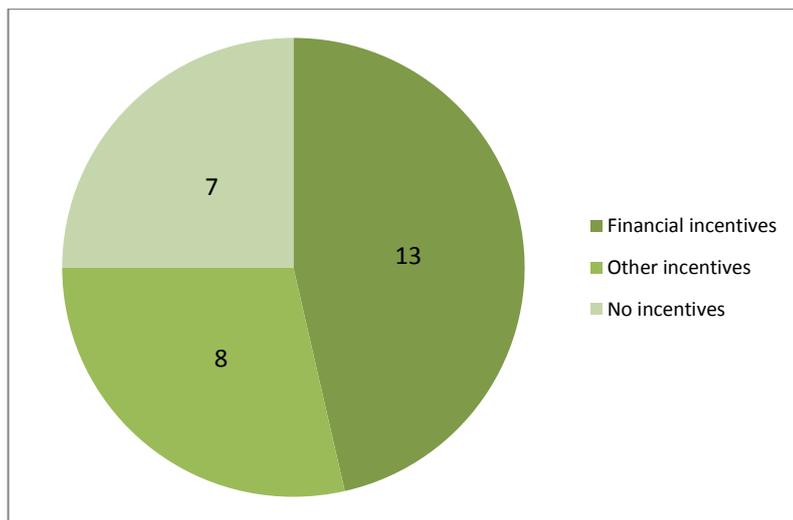
Figure 8.5 Incentives to take part in general education



Source: GHK survey

With regard to vocational education, as shown in Figure 8.6, a slightly higher number of respondents (13) indicated that financial incentives are given to prisoners for taking part, while 8 respondents stated that other incentives are given (again this does not represent 21 countries in total, as in three countries it was stated that both financial and other incentives are given). A slightly smaller number of respondents (7) indicated that no incentives are given for participation in vocational training.

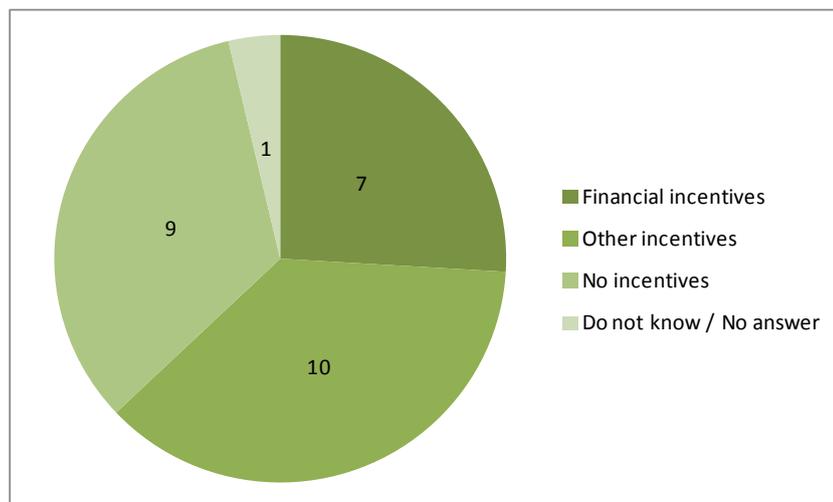
Figure 8.6 Incentives to take part in vocational education



Source: GHK survey

Finally, with regard to non-formal education, a smaller number of respondents indicated that financial incentives are given for taking part (7), while a larger number of respondents stated that other incentives are given for participating (10). No incentives are given in 9 countries for taking part in non-formal education.

Figure 8.7 Incentives to take part in non-formal education



Source: GHK survey

Where respondents specified that 'other' incentives are granted, examples of these included: greater access to privileges (family visits, books, sanction reductions) and penitentiary benefits (conditional release, partial pardon, sentence reduction). In Romania for example, since 2011, a credit system has been used, which means that for every activity and educational programme that a prisoner finishes, if s/he makes a consistent effort to follow the programme until its completion, s/he gains points. By accumulating these points, there are various awards in the context of the law that prisoners can gain, hence they have an incentive to complete the courses that they start. For example, if a prisoner completes the course 'Education for Health' and participates in all sessions, s/he will gain 20 points which can be translated into more family visits, additional permission to go outside etc. For attending general education and vocational training, prisoners can even gain, under some conditions, a number of days that are deducted from their sentence.

The Council of Europe Recommendation on Education in Prison states that "*Education should have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners should not lose out financially or otherwise by taking part in education*" (Article 5) and this point is reiterated in the European Prison Rules, which state that "*education should not have less status than work within the prison regime and prisoners should not be disadvantaged, financially or otherwise, for taking part in education*". Although prison work could be a way of enabling prisoners to obtain skills, rather than a way of 'filling their time', where prisoners do undertake work in prison, it is often menial and low-skilled, yet takes priority over education. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the relative levels of remuneration of prison work on the one hand and the allowances payable to prisoners who engage in learning on the other, can have an important impact on inmates' decisions.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether there are incentives (financial or other) for participating in education / training opportunities and whether these are higher than those obtained for prison work. The number of responses received in relation to this question was quite low, compared to other survey questions. The majority of survey respondents indicated that where incentives are given for participation in education and training – financial or other - these are equal to those provided for prison work. However, there are a small number of countries where incentives are lower for participation in education and training compared to participation in prison work. It is important to bear in mind though that even where the incentives are equal for education and training to those given for prison work, in reality work can be more beneficial from a financial perspective, because there are often more hours available. Furthermore, in some countries work is compulsory for sentenced prisoners, which can make it difficult to find the time to take part in education and training opportunities.

Other efforts to ensure that prison work does not act as a disincentive to taking part in education or training were identified through the survey and interviews. These include for

instance offering part-time rather than full-time courses in order to allow prisoners to both work and follow education / training courses, meaning that prisoners can take part in education and training without the time devoted to education competing with the time they can devote to prison work. Educational coordinators in Flemish prisons for example try to make the combination of working and learning possible for inmates, by organising part-time courses or courses delivered in the afternoon to allow prisoners to both work and learn.

It should be noted that this is not always the case. For example, in France, a 2006 stocktaking report on the conditions of reinsertion of inmates⁶⁶ highlighted that although work and education and training should be linked to having a positive impact on the reinsertion of inmates, in practice, the articulation between training and work in prison is problematic. Generally where the offer of prison work is well developed, training is relatively less available. Often for very practical reasons, both activities cannot be combined during the same day/week.

The EU-funded project 'KEYS – Working and Learning in European Prisons' set out to explore models that combine working and learning in prisons, in order to improve the educational opportunities of adult prisoners. It is described in the box below.

Box 9 Working and Learning in Prison – the KEYS project⁶⁷

The 'KEYS' project set out to develop innovative and transferable models of combining learning and working in both women's and men's prisons. Eight partner organisations from six countries participated in the project consortium, which was divided into a development and a review group. By linking the development activities with a broad scale review process, innovative educational models for working prisoners were developed according to the respective conditions of the different national and/or regional penal systems. The specific needs and individual situation of the heterogeneous group of adult prisoners were thereby taken into account.

Altogether, nine different educational modules were developed, ranging from traffic education, fitness and health subjects, an introduction to prison life, to occupational therapy. In addition, two competence assessment tools tailored to the needs of specific target groups (short-term prisoners and female inmates with substance abuse problems) were developed and implemented. The project involved staff and decision makers in the penal system in the development process from the very beginning. In addition to the development activities, human resources and organisational development processes were initiated.

The project followed a participative approach which involved prison staff in the development, application and piloting of the newly developed models. In addition, both educational and non-educational staff were provided with practical training sessions as regards how to work with the newly developed gender sensitive educational modules and innovative inmates' competence assessment procedures. Altogether, 96 staff members in four prisons took part in the training. An essential success factor for the project was the involvement of decision makers. Their involvement ranged from the support and active participation in project-related activities to the participation as associated project partners.

The project partners consciously used the EU funding for the creation of sustainable educational programmes: as a result, nearly all of the modules developed are now part of the regular provision of the educational programmes in the participating prisons in Austria, Denmark and Germany.

With growing prison populations and limited resources, identifying and supporting opportunities to combine education and work can be seen as one way of preparing prisoners for employment following their release but also as a way of overcoming resource constraints. Here opportunities exist to provide accredited training to prisoners engaged in prison work – this may apply to prisoners working in catering, cleaning or horticulture positions within the prison for example.

⁶⁶ Decisier D. (2006), *Les conditions de la réinsertion professionnelle des détenus en France*, Journal officiel de la République française, avis et rapports du Conseil économique et social Internet: <http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/064000250/0000.pdf>

⁶⁷ <http://www.keys.fczb.de/index.php?id=294>

8.3 Barriers to participation

Prisoners face a range of barriers to participation in education and training. These include ‘dispositional barriers’ to learning resulting from their disadvantaged background, previous failure in education and other factors such as low self-esteem or disability⁶⁸, as well as institutional and situational barriers associated with their imprisonment, such as interrupted learning caused by a move to another institution, shortage of resources and/or staff, limited availability of places for learners and restricted offer in terms of level and content⁶⁹.

Survey respondents were asked to assess a range of reasons for prisoners’ non-participation in education and to state whether they considered each one to be ‘very important’, ‘quite important’ or ‘not important’. Responses to this question are presented in Figure 8.8, below. ‘Lack of motivation to learn’ and ‘previous negative experiences of education’ were the reasons most commonly reported by participants as being very important, with ‘lack of motivation’ more frequently reported as being either very or quite important than any other reason for not engaging in prison education and training. This is most likely a reflection of the fact that many prisoners will have previous negative experiences of education and are likely to have dropped out of school early. In the Netherlands for instance it has been calculated that 27 % of early school leavers were suspected of a crime in comparison to 7 % of non-school leavers⁷⁰ and in Ireland the committal rate for males is considerably higher for early school leavers (46.6 out of 1,000) compared with those who achieve the Leaving Certificate (1.6 out of 1000)⁷¹. Eikeland, Manger and Asbjørnsen (2010) found that in Norway, in 2009 86.6 % of prisoners below the age of 25 had not completed three years upper secondary school⁷². Wider research shows that offenders with negative attitudes towards mainstream education do not perceive education as a key priority. In Bulgaria, female prisoners’ ‘value system’ is identified as one of the reasons for dropping out of educational opportunities offered to them - for many education is ‘not part of their life priorities’⁷³. In Slovenia, the reasons given for prisoners to drop-out of education are most often lack of motivation, problems with drug addiction and learning difficulties⁷⁴.

A lack of learning opportunities compatible with sentence duration (particularly for prisoners on short sentences) was frequently reported as being either quite or very important. This is also an issue identified in the literature, for example a survey among prisoners in the Nordic countries found that prisoners with short sentences, for instance three to four months, seemed to believe that it is impossible to begin or complete a course of education within the short period of incarceration⁷⁵.

Other factors that were frequently reported as being important included ‘lack of encouragement’ and ‘greater incentives to take part in prison work than education / training’. This seems however to contradict the answers given by respondents to the previous question in the survey regarding incentives, where most respondents indicated that incentives to take part in prison work are not greater than those to take part in education and

⁶⁸ The Right to education of persons in detention, report of the special rapporteur on the right to education, Victor Muñoz: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/11session/A.HRC.11.8_en.pdf

⁶⁹ The Right to education of persons in detention, report of the special rapporteur on the right to education, Victor Muñoz: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/11session/A.HRC.11.8_en.pdf

⁷⁰ Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2010) *The approach to school drop-out: Policy in the Netherlands and the provisional figures of the 2008 – 2009 performance agreements*

⁷¹ Smyth, E. and McCoy, S. (2009), *Investing in Education: Combating Educational Disadvantage*, Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin, 2009.

⁷² Eikeland, Manger and Asbjørnsen (2010), *Innsatte I norske fengsel: Kompetanse gjennom utdanning og arbeid*

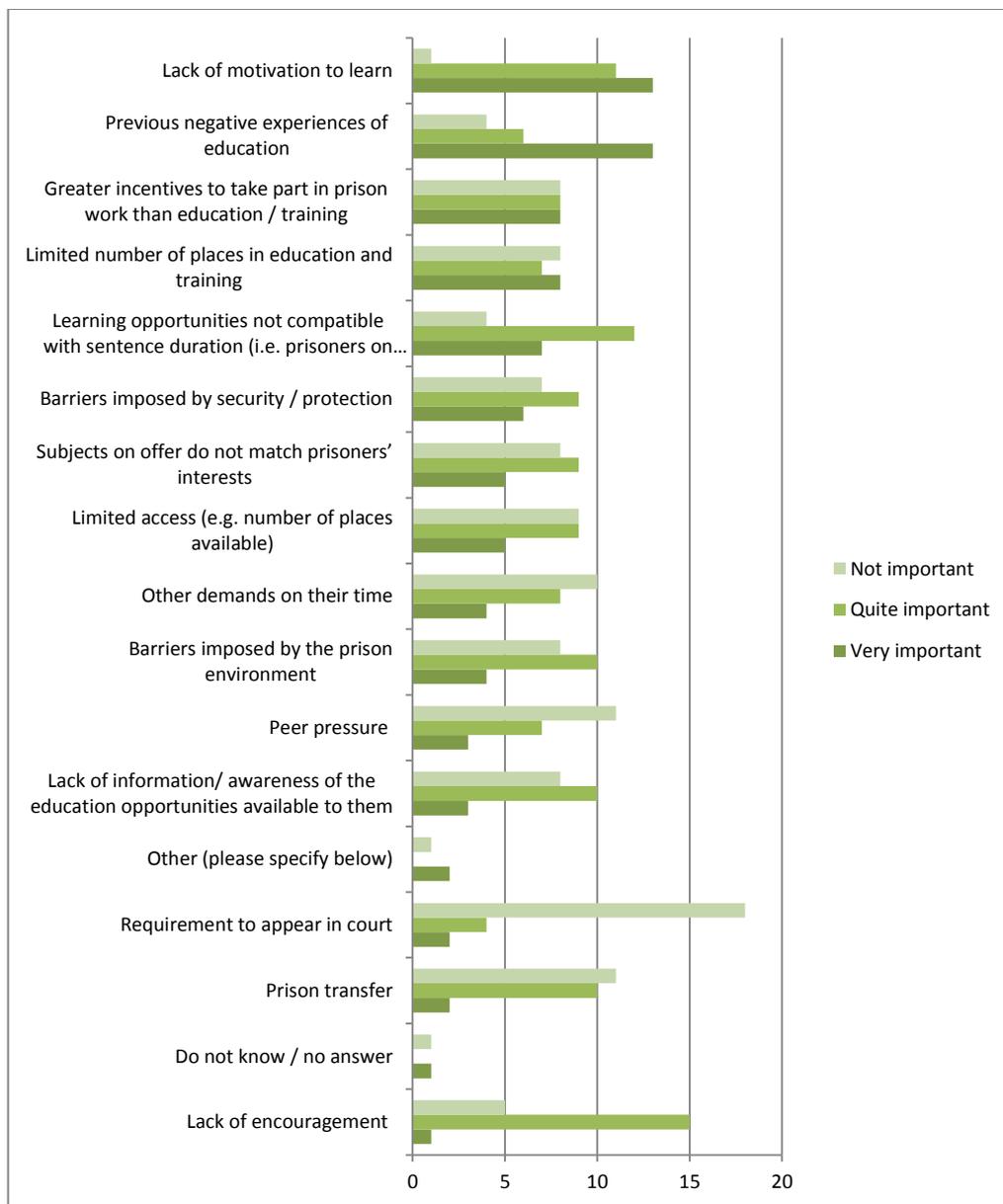
⁷³ Boyadjieva, P., Valentina Milenkova, Galin Gornev, Kristina Petkova and Diana Nenkova, (2010), *The Role of Bulgarian Educational Institutions for Promotion of Access of Adults to Formal Education*. LLL2010 project, Subproject 5. Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

⁷⁴ Ivančič, A., Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar and Marko Radovan, (2010), *Access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education – policies and priorities. Country report: Estonia*. LLL2010 project, Subproject 5. Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and Ministry of Education and Sport.

⁷⁵ Langelid, T., Mäki, M., Raundrup, K., Svensson, S. eds., 2009, *Nordic Prison Education, A Lifelong Learning Perspective*. Internet: <http://www.norden.org/is/utgafa/utgefifid-efni/2009-536>

training. ‘Requirement to appear in court’ was the least frequently reported reason given as being of importance as a barrier to participation in prison education and training.

Figure 8.8 Barriers to participation in prison education and training

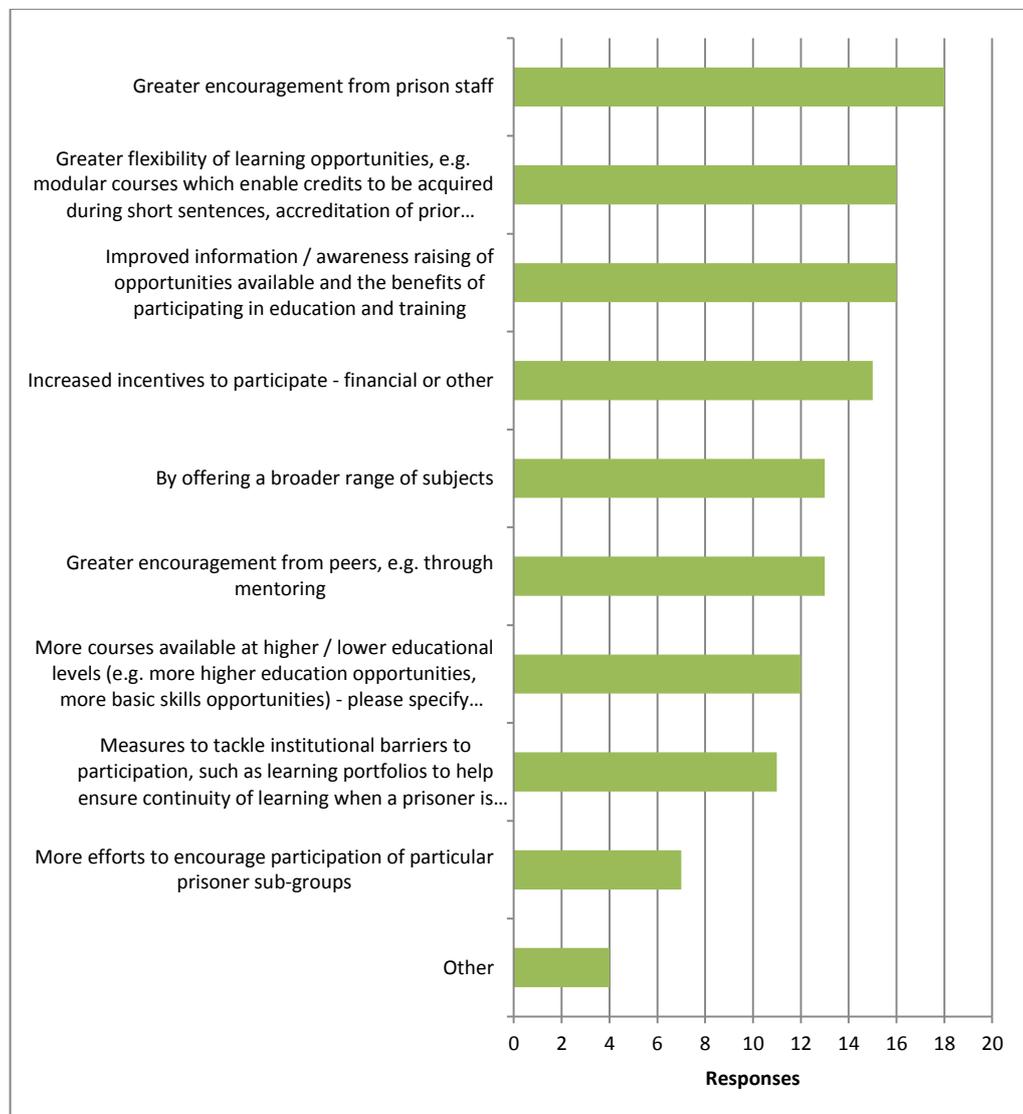


Source: GHK survey

Survey respondents were also asked to select from a list of options of ways in which, in their opinion, the number of prisoners participating in education / training opportunities could be increased. Some of the methods to increase participation that were commonly identified by respondents could be seen as logically addressing some of the barriers identified above. For example, greater encouragement from both prison staff and peers was commonly reported as one way in which participation in education and training could be increased. This could logically be seen as addressing the two problems of lack of motivation and lack of encouragement. The second most commonly identified ways of increasing participation were ‘greater flexibility of learning opportunities’ and ‘improved information / awareness raising’. More flexible learning opportunities, such as modular courses which enable credits to be acquired during short sentences, could be seen as a potential solution to the barrier that

learning opportunities are not compatible with sentence durations⁷⁶. Improved information / awareness-raising could also be a way of addressing low motivation and of providing encouragement. It is also worth noting that a considerable proportion of prisoners are not on general prison locations, but on ‘vulnerable wings’ (in the prison hospital, in segregation, etc.) which adds difficulties to their access to education and training.

Figure 8.9 Ways to increase participation in prison education and training



Source: GHK survey

In order to overcome the barriers to learning faced by prisoners with negative previous experience of education, some of the stakeholders interviewed suggested that it is important for prison education and training to adopt an adult education approach – i.e. instilling a much wider range of skills and competencies than employability-focused efforts - and to use alternative teaching / learning methods to those used in mainstream education. This is in line with the Council of Europe Recommendation on Education in Prison, which states that “*Development programmes should be provided to ensure that prison educators adopt appropriate adult education methods*” (Article 7).

⁷⁶ In fact it is also suggested that training measures with short units or modularised offers should be offered to prisoners serving long sentences, so that these can be carried out alongside prison work. See: Hammerschick, W., Hayes, J., Hjarne, U., Meyer, I., 2011, KEYS – Working and Learning in European Prisons. Internet: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/documents/grundtvig/multilateral_projects_2009/grundtvig-504508-de.pdf

The importance of non-formal learning as a route into formal education was also emphasised by one international stakeholder, who also referred to the need to offer a range of learning opportunities that cater for the interests of the prisoners. The need to change the ‘culture’ in prisons was also mentioned, including attitudes towards prison education among both prisoners themselves and prison staff. A national contact suggested that it is important to work on a one-to-one basis with each individual prisoner in order to overcome any motivational barriers they may face. Small steps and achievements, such as certificates that can be achieved in a short period of time, were also suggested to be a good way of helping prisoners to find a route into learning.

In terms of the prison culture and environment, an example was given of an initiative in the Netherlands, where dedicated parts of a prison in Rotterdam have been established for those who follow education, so that they can study, concentrate etc. A similar approach can be found in Estonia, where prisoners who engage in learning are given the opportunity to live in a separate section of prison, where they have a little more freedom and extra time outside cells⁷⁷. In England, wing-based learning (in addition to a separate educational site in the prison) has been found to be successful in expanding access to educational opportunities. It can help to engage prisoners because they feel more comfortable in their own surroundings and can be more flexible in terms of access to learning⁷⁸.

A number of survey respondents identified the flexibility and variety of the education and training offer as a strength of the prison education provision in their country. Examples of projects to promote flexible learning were also identified through our ‘mini’ survey and document review, some of which are described in the box below.

Box 10 Flexible learning opportunities for prisoners

In **Belgium**, courses are organised in such a way as to allow prisoners serving both long and short sentences to participate. In remand prisons where people stay for a short time, courses are organised differently than in long sentence prisons: for example, in prisons in the area of Leuven, the school year is divided into four blocks of eight weeks with a small graduation ceremony after each block, while other prisons may plan the courses throughout the year, as they see fit in order to match the needs of the prisoners in each prison.

In **Norway**, the use of validation of prior learning has been piloted with prisoners as a possible means of offering them an education that is adapted to their backgrounds and needs⁷⁹. Five local projects were implemented, each bringing together partners from the school department, prison staff and Norwegian Welfare and the local office of the labour administration.

The participants concluded that VPL is an adequate method for many prisoners. In total, 186 prisoners were assessed during the project period. The method was first and foremost used within vocational study programmes and candidates were able to shorten their study period by 1.5 – 2 years. Some of them were able to achieve a journeyman’s/trade certificate level by accessing additional education following the validation exercise.

An evaluation of the pilot project⁸⁰ has found that validation of prior learning in itself constitutes an element of motivation for students in prisons, which appears to assist in forward-looking orientation of students upon completion of their prison terms. It also found that validation of prior learning for this group of students appears to function most favourably when paired with personal follow-up and

⁷⁷ National Report for Estonia, in P. Downes (2010). A Systems Level Focus on Access to Education for Traditionally Marginalised Groups in Europe: Comparing Strategies, Policy and Practice in Twelve European Countries. Report for Subproject 5 of LLL2010, European Commission Sixth Framework Project, Towards a lifelong learning society: The contribution of the education system. Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick’s College, Dublin

⁷⁸ Engel, L., Holford, J. & Mieczko, A. (2010), *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education. Country report: England*. LLL2010 project, Subproject 5. University of Nottingham: Nottingham, UK.

⁷⁹ More detail on this information can be found in: Duchemin, C., 2010, Validation of prior learning: a stepping stone for the reintegration of inmates into society (Norway). Internet: <http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/77485.pdf>

⁸⁰ Garmannslund, P. –E. and Meltevik, S., 2010, Med blikket rettet fremover (Looking forward) Sluttrapport for evaluering av realkompetansevurderingsprosjektet innenfor kriminalomsorgen (Final report in the evaluation of “The National Project of Prior Learning within the Norwegian Correctional Services”), Bergen: Fylkesmannen i Hordaland

guidance. (See the Catalogue of Practices in Annex 2 for more detail of this initiative.)

At Neuruppin-Wulkow prison in Brandenburg, **Germany**, a modularised structure of the apprenticeship training enables prisoners serving short sentences to complete part of the apprenticeship and to pursue it after release⁸¹.

In **Austria**, the intensive apprenticeships offered in four Austrian prisons present an opportunity for prisoners to undertake a vocational training course within one year, rather than the three years which is normally required. The reduced timeframe is made possible by narrowing down the content of the theoretical learning – more general learning content like mathematics, foreign languages or religion that is part of the school curriculum throughout a three-year-training, is not part of the required learning content in the intensive apprenticeship measure (See the case study in Annex 3 for more details of this project).

Access to guidance and counselling serves to increase participation in prison education and training and supports prisoners in their transition to the community. In preparing for reintegration, the literature highlights some interesting examples. For example, in Greece, guidance and counselling is generally available to prisoners participating in an educational programme. Prisoners can access information in relation to education and training opportunities inside and outside prison, information on employment and entrepreneurship opportunities and can access support in searching for employment, preparing CVs and developing interview techniques. In Ireland, career guidance teachers also work alongside prisoners to support them in their preparation for transition to the community by assisting prisoners search for employment or identify further opportunities for training post release. In addition, there are a number of wider guidance and support services available in particular prisons. For instance, a guidance counsellor and psychologist are available at the Female Prison of Thebes on a daily basis to prisoners⁸².

Peer mentoring can also be used to support prisoners in their participation in education and training and in preparation for their release. For example the EU Peer Mentoring Support Project was aimed at providing a peer mentoring service to support excluded or marginalised young people, including young offenders to help them access training, education and employment. A further example from the UK's Prisoners' Education Trust Peer Monitoring Project⁸³ involved training peer mentors for distance learning in several UK prisons during 2009. Participants were found to be motivated, enthusiastic and expressed a desire to accredit their learning and to participate in further studies in the field of mentoring, information, advice and guidance.

As indicated, peer mentors can be involved in delivering learning and providing advice and guidance. This in turn provides a learning opportunity and a chance to acquire valuable skills for those involved. The 'Toe by Toe' Reading Plan mentoring programme in the UK, which is run by the Shannon Trust⁸⁴, for example, has developed a training module for prisoners who take on a mentoring role. In Greece, peer learning and peer support and a positive predisposition of classmates are evident in the second chance schools operating in prisons, with older prisoners offering help to younger prisoners with their learning and native speakers assisting foreign nationals in learning Greek. This peer support starts with prison education within the prison second chance schools, but is then extended to all areas of prison life making second chance schools an environment conducive to peer learning and support within prisons⁸⁵. In Hungary, former prisoners have been invited to participate in training programmes in prison. They offer practical advice to young prisoners based on their experiences of being in prison and also present discussions in relation to key areas such as

⁸¹ Hammerschick, W., Hayes, J., Hjarne, U., Meyer, I., 2011, KEYS – Working and Learning in European Prisons. Internet: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/lip/project_reports/documents/grundtvig/multilateral_projects_2009/grundtvig-504508-de.pdf

⁸² Rigoutsou E., Prisoner Counselling, Ministry of Education, January 2005 and telephone interviews on 2 May 2012 with Mr Pirounakis, Prison Director of the Female Prison of Thebes

⁸³ <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/index.php?id=301>

⁸⁴ <http://www.shannontrust.org.uk/>

⁸⁵ Source: <http://3sdethes.wordpress.com> and telephone interview with the coordinator of the tele-psychiatry unit run by NGO KLIMAKA and the Female Prison of Thebes, 2 May 2012.

crime-prevention. In England, the St Giles Trust's Peer Advice project trains serving prisoners to achieve a recognised information, advice and guidance qualification. These peer advisers support fellow prisoners by providing guidance on issues such as housing, employment and training opportunities⁸⁶.

8.4 Summary

It appears from the survey results that prisoners are more likely to participate (or be facilitated to participate) in education and training if they are young, serving a long sentence, or based in a large prison. It is also possible that for other prisoner sub-groups, such as those serving short sentences or older prisoners, the learning opportunities available do not meet their needs. Specific efforts to encourage certain target groups were referred to in less than a third of countries but incentives to take part in education and training – both financial and other – are offered to prisoners in a number of countries. According to the survey responses, these are generally equal to, or higher than, incentives given to participate in prison work (although it is important to bear in mind that survey respondents may have had different understandings of what was meant by 'prison work' and also that it is often possible to earn more through prison work because of the number of hours involved).

The barriers to participation most commonly identified were lack of motivation and previous negative experiences of education. It may in the future be worth investigating further however whether this lack of motivation relates to education in general, or specifically to the education on offer in prisons; the education on offer to prisoners has to be seen as meaningful, useful and applicable, just as it would for mainstream provision. In addition to awareness-raising of the opportunities available to prisoners in order to increase participation, it might also therefore be important to carry out more work to find out what prisoners want, or need, to learn. (Some research has already been carried out on this topic in the Nordic countries⁸⁷).

Stakeholders interviewed echoed this view and suggested a range of ways of overcoming these barriers, including the importance of providing a relevant offer and delivering education according to the principles of adult education. Respondents to the survey identified greater encouragement from both prison staff and peers as one way in which participation in education and training could be increased; other highly regarded strategies include greater flexibility of learning opportunities and improved information/awareness raising. Some examples of projects which have sought to address these barriers were identified through the survey of good practices and review of literature, and again this is potentially an area where countries and providers could learn from each other's' experiences.

⁸⁶ <http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/s/what-we-do/p489/prison-based%20services.html>

⁸⁷ Eikeland, O.-J., Manger, T. & Asbjørnsen, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Education in Nordic Prisons. Prisoners' educational background, preferences and motivation*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. Internet: <http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publications/2009-508>

9 Prison educators – profile and support

Teachers working in prisons face a very unique set of constraints and challenges in which to deliver learning and work. They work with an often diverse cohort of learners, with various different needs in terms of both learning content and support. It is therefore important that teachers and trainers working in prisons have the appropriate skills and competences to be able to adapt and flourish in this unique working environment while meeting the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs of their students. They also need to have the ability to cooperate with the range of other staff involved in the prison regime (e.g. prison officers, social workers etc), some of whom may not share the teacher's belief in the importance of education. It would therefore seem that appropriate training and support is important to enable prison educators to fulfil their role, for example training covering areas that relate to prison processes and are unique to the prison context such as negotiating security constraints and adapting materials and resources for prison learners. Several questions relating to teacher and trainer training – both prior to and during their work in prisons - were therefore included in the 'main' survey.

Responses regarding the requirements in terms of training of teachers and trainers were received from 28 and 26 countries respectively. It was reported that the same or equivalent training as required for *teachers* in mainstream education was necessary for those teaching in prisons in 24 of the 28 countries that responded. In only one country is it permissible for the qualification to differ from that required in mainstream education and in only three countries is a specific qualification required for teaching in prisons.

(*Vocational*) *trainers* working in prisons are required to have a formal qualification in 20 of the 26 countries where a response was provided to the question, with qualifications the same or equivalent to those required in mainstream provision being required in 9 countries while in 6 countries qualifications required could vary from those necessary to teach in mainstream education. In four countries specialist qualifications relating to training in prisons were required and in one country a specific qualification related to training in prisons was required in addition to a mainstream teaching qualification. Four countries responded that no qualification was necessary but trainers were required to have relevant training experience and two additional countries stated that there was no known answer.

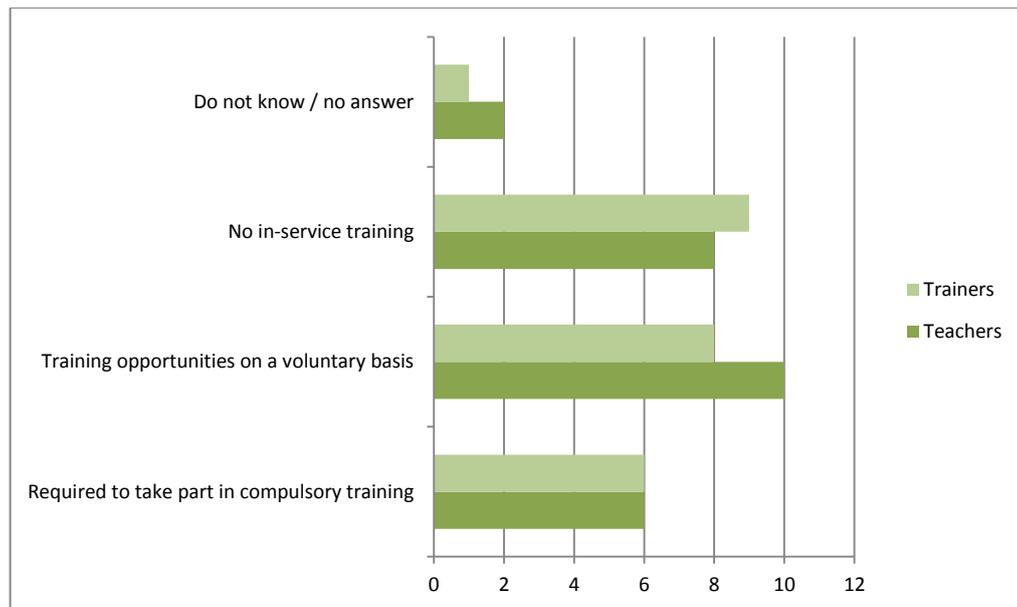
Figure 9.1 Initial training of teachers / trainers in prisons



Source: GHK survey

Respondents were also asked if teachers / trainers working in prison education are offered or required to take part in continuing / in-service training. A total of 26 responses were received to this question for teachers, and 24 responses for trainers. Although the majority of respondents reported that training is offered to prison educators (where either participation was required or on a voluntary basis) there were also a significant number of respondents reporting that no in-service training was offered to teachers (8 respondents) or trainers (9 respondents). It was also less commonly reported that countries have compulsory continuing / in-service training for prison teachers/trainers than voluntary training or no training at all.

Figure 9.2 In-service training for teachers / trainers in prisons



Source: GHK survey

Given the very specific nature of prison education and training, it would seem to be important to provide teachers and trainers with some form of induction or training to help them to understand the prison environment, issues of security and that their role and responsibility as a member of staff working in the prison. Respondents were therefore asked an open question regarding whether prison educators are given an induction prior to taking up their role, which organisation provides the induction and what it entails.

From a total of 21 responses, 18 stated that prison educators are given some form of induction in their country (only one stated that prison educators are not given an induction at all and there was one response that 'no information is available'). One respondent indicated that an induction relating to teaching in prison is not provided but new teachers are trained on safety procedures and self defence in the prison and in one country work is ongoing on plans for an induction course for prison educators.

The duration of inductions provided ranged in length from 1-2 days to three weeks. The induction training is provided by the individual prisons in seven countries, by teachers themselves (either teachers in prisons or teachers from the mainstream education system) in five countries and by other authorities in five countries.

The survey therefore seems to suggest that many of those employed in prison education have been recruited on the basis of a second level teaching qualification. Many of them may have taken a variety of induction and other programmes relating to working with adults, or prisoners, but they will not in most cases be accorded professional recognition for this.

In Sweden, teachers involved in delivering the 'Learning Centre' model (see Annex 6 for the full case study on this initiative) are required to have a qualification to teach at upper secondary level and are also required to take part in an induction, as described in the box below.

Box 11 Teachers working for the Learning Centre, Sweden

As outlined above (see Box 6) general formal education is delivered in prisons in Sweden via the 'Learning Centre' model. Each Learning Centre has one or more teachers employed by the Prison Service and Probation Administration, who are qualified to teach at upper secondary school as well as at more basic levels.

An important condition for the success of the project relates to the educational requirements of the teaching staff. The Prison Service and Probation Administration insist that all teachers must be qualified to teach at upper-secondary level and experienced and qualified in their own subject matters. All new employees of the Learning Centre are required to undergo an induction programme of three weeks. It entails knowledge about the prison and probation service, the management structure of the organisation, laws and regulations and so on. The Prison Service and Probation Administration also encourage continued professional development by inviting external guest speakers, for example an expert from the Swedish National Agency for Education or the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Staff are also encouraged to participate in conferences related to adult education.

However, though teachers are encouraged to participate in the same kind of continuing training opportunities as teachers from the municipal education system, the reality is that opportunities and resources to support professional development are generally limited across the entire prison estate, primarily due to resource constraints.

The interviews and document review showed that across the different countries of Europe, different approaches are taken to the appointment of teachers and trainers working in prisons. Where sometimes these staff are employed by the Ministry of Justice or individual prisons and work only in prison education, in other countries prison educators are employed by the Ministry of Education or other bodies from the education and training sector. In some countries, NGOs and volunteers provide education and training opportunities to prisoners. Thus in some countries there are many educators with high levels of experience and expertise but who lack the professional recognition of a formal qualification.

An advantage of having teachers/trainers employed by the Ministry of Education or other bodies from the education and training sector may be that they are able to benefit from continuing professional development opportunities to update their knowledge and practices which are made available to teachers / trainers working in mainstream provision.

One stakeholder suggested that the extent to which teachers and trainers working in prisons should have formal teaching qualifications or additional qualifications/training depends on what type of provision the teachers / trainers are responsible for, i.e. formal education or non-formal provision. These different aspects of education have their own professional context and qualifications and therefore prison educators should be qualified accordingly. Yet another stakeholder suggested that a specialist qualification for prison educators would recognise that they are professionals, working in a different environment, and would therefore recognise the important skills and competences required of prison educators, as distinct from teachers in mainstream provision. Yet given that in some countries third sector organisations play an important role in delivering non-formal learning opportunities, including for example arts and cultural activities, a requirement for prison educators to have a certain qualification might present a barrier to their involvement. Finally, one recommendation put forward by a national contact was that prison educators should be given greater opportunities to network and share experiences. The issue of training and qualifications for prison educators therefore seems to be an area for further discussion in the future.

Few specific examples of training programmes for prison educators were identified during the course of this study, although the case study on the development of handbooks for prison educators in Romania presents an interesting example, which is described in the box below and outlined in more detail in the case study in Annex 5.

Box 12 Transnational learning to support prison education staff, Romania

The National Administration of Prisons in Romania has recently carried out two EU co-funded projects with transnational cooperation from partners in Portugal and the UK. The projects have helped to change the existing organisational culture in the national prison system, with the ultimate aim to improve the access to and participation of prisoners in the labour market. Both projects focused on prison education and training as a means to reach this aim.

The first project, 'Increasing the chances of social reintegration', was carried out in cooperation with the Portuguese General Department of the Prison Service. The aim was to create, at national level, a standardised programme of educational activities and programmes for inmates and to improve the quality of the education and other support services offered to prisoners. Starting from products developed within the Portuguese prison system, various educational programmes were adapted to the reality of the Romanian penitentiary system and were first implemented in six pilot prison institutions, then later rolled out on a national basis. The project also set up an intranet to support all categories of prison staff, which includes a section for the educational staff. An e-learning course for teacher training was also developed, while educators received training in e-tutoring.

The second project, 'Partnership for social inclusion', was developed in cooperation with Lancaster University between 2009 and 2011 and developed three guides of good practice for prison staff involved in education, training and counselling for prisoners. After the end of the project these handbooks - addressed to prison educators, psychologists and social workers - have been distributed to all Romanian prisons. This project has been crucial in improving the quality of prison education and training offered in Romanian prisons.

The two projects allowed the education, psychological assistance and social assistance activities offered in Romanian prisons to be very much improved. The projects helped to create an environment that encourages learning and development, which will increase the opportunities of prisoners to reintegrate in society. The educational offer is richer after the projects, while prison staff have received training (under Project 1) and have tools available (good practice handbooks developed by Project 2) at their disposal.

National resources available for prison education are low, hence the EU co-funding made it possible to learn from other prison systems and to apply this learning to the prison system in Romania, benefiting a large number of prisoners and staff members.

9.2 Summary

There is some debate and conflicting views about the type of qualifications, training and experience teachers and trainers in prisoners should have. Whilst some argue that teachers and trainers need additional training to work successfully in the prison environment, others argue that this approach implies that prisoners are a different category of learners who need to be treated in a different / special way. Instead, they argue, what is needed is well qualified teachers who understand the process of learning and are able to apply this to the prison population as the principles of teaching apply to all types of learning.

The results of this survey have shown that in most countries where a response was provided, teachers and trainers in prison are required to have a relevant teaching / training qualification. While for teachers this tends to be the same qualification as is required of teachers working in mainstream provision, for vocational trainers there is greater variation across the countries covered by the study in the types of qualification required. In terms of continuing / in-service training, the majority of respondents reported that training is offered to prison educators although there were also a significant number of respondents reporting that no in-service training was offered to teachers or trainers. It was also less commonly reported that countries have compulsory continuing / in-service training for prison teachers/trainers than voluntary training or no training at all. Teachers and trainers are offered inductions in the majority of countries where a response was provided to this question, although these vary in terms of length and the organisation which takes responsibility for providing the induction training.

It seems that this is an area where there is scope for further discussion about what constitutes 'good' or 'best' practice and that there is considerable scope for countries to learn from one another, as well as from the findings of European projects in this area. One possibility would be to develop a reference framework of key skills and attitudes for prison educators, which could be based on the generic competences required of adult educators, together with a more specific focus on the competences needed by prison educators. Greater opportunities for prison educators themselves to share experiences and learning would also be beneficial in the future.

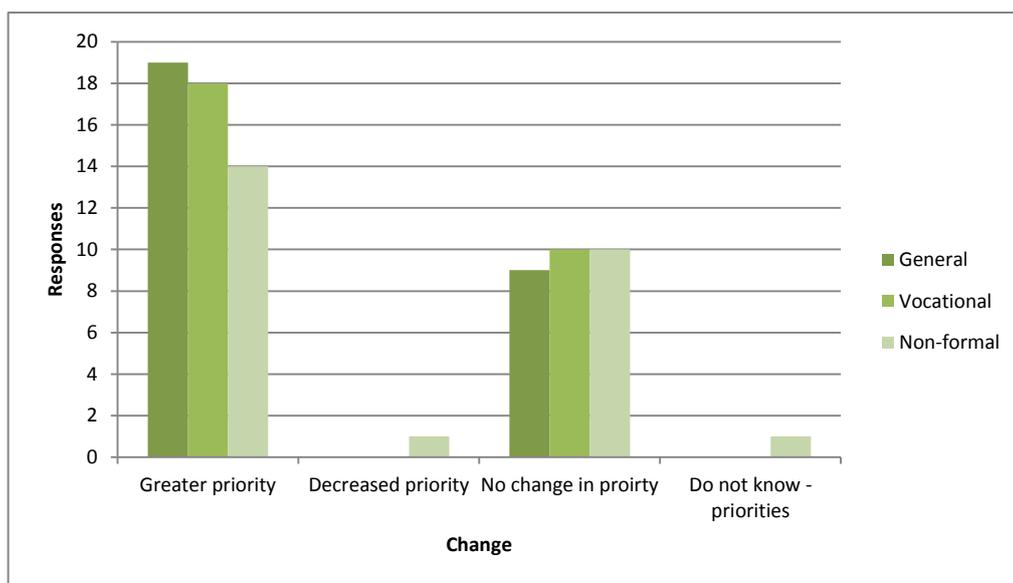
10 Current trends and policy changes

To conclude the survey, respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the latest trends in policy and approaches to prison education. This Section summarises the responses to the questions on recent trends, while answers to the questions on strengths and recommendations have been incorporated into the following Section of the report ‘Conclusions and Recommendations’.

10.1 Priority given to prison education by relevant authorities

Respondents were asked whether prison education and training had been given greater priority by the relevant authorities in their country in the last three years. The responses show that the priority accorded to prison education and training has become greater in a large number of the countries: almost two-thirds of responses for general education and vocational education, and almost three-fifths of responses in relation to non-formal education where a response was provided. This is interesting in the context of the economic crisis – which has had to take priority for policy makers in most of the countries of Europe – and may suggest that there is a growing awareness of the importance of providing education and training to prisoners and the benefits this can bring.

Figure 10.1 Changes in the importance accorded to prison education and training



Source: GHK survey

10.2 Changes in policies, systems and legislation affecting prison education

Respondents were then asked if there had been any changes to policies, systems or legislation that have affected prison education in their country in recent years. There were a total of 21 responses to this question, with varying levels of detail (a small number of respondents simply answered ‘no’, ‘n/a’, or ‘yes’). A summary of the more detailed responses provided now follows. Findings from the document review, case studies and interviews have also been incorporated into this overview.

Recent policy changes in four countries encourage or recognise the importance of prison education and in some cases give it more emphasis in comparison to prison work. In Latvia for example, a ‘Penalty code’ was introduced which clearly indicates that education is one of the tools available for the ‘re-socialisation’ of prisoners. In Romania, recent legislative changes allow prisoners to attend university courses and for those attending school or training courses to receive a monthly remuneration equal to the minimum wage (whilst participating in the course). In Switzerland, recent legislative changes imply that work and education are now of equal status and introduce an obligation to offer education in prisons.

In Germany, with the enactment of youth custody laws in all Länder, the duty to take part in vocational and further training programmes has been given priority over the duty to work.

Other recent policy and legislative changes include increased emphasis on vocational training, allowing internet access and expanding internet access to more prisoner learners, changes to the policy on national language courses, introducing new bodies with responsibility for prison education and the publication of key reports on prison education.

Again in Germany, increased emphasis has been placed on vocational training. This includes the implementation and expansion of modular education and training, greater focus within general education (in prisons) on specific professional requirements and a close connection with vocational training; more opportunities to continue vocational training commenced in prison upon release as a result of cooperation with external providers; and increasing cooperation with teachers from vocational colleges to ensure that prison teaching moves with the times.

In three countries (Malta, Lithuania and Romania), it was reported that there have been trials of sending inmates to take part in courses outside prison. In Malta for example, it is the policy of the prison to send inmates to courses 'outside' of the prison for educational purposes. Prisoners are eligible if they have served at least six months of their sentence, if they have a sentence of a minimum of 18 months and are in the last two years of their sentence. It has been made a priority to prepare inmates and make the necessary arrangements for them to follow courses at the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), the Malta College of Art, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies, the Lifelong Learning Centre and the University of Malta. This is considered to be most beneficial to the education and training of inmates as it is considered that it provides them with certificates and qualifications which have more currency than the ones they can obtain in prison, given also that the educational offer in prisons can be limited, and also paves the way for their re-integration in society. It also provides a very good incentive for inmates to prepare themselves academically so that they can meet the requirements of studying outside of prison.

A strategy on the modernisation of prisons was recently introduced in the Netherlands. In this context, a new policy plan on prison education was prepared two years ago. This plan aims to streamline the provision of education in all prisons and states that each prison should provide the same form/type of education. In Belgium, regional organisations were created in 2007 which have responsibility for the coordination of prison education in the local prisons.

In Norway, the most important development of recent years regarding prison education was said to be the two reports presented by the Ministry of Education and Research and by the Ministry of Justice to the Storting (Parliament) entitled "Education and Training in the Correctional Services 'Another Spring'"⁸⁸ (Ministry of Education and Research) and "Punishment that works – less crime – a safer society"⁸⁹ (Ministry of Justice). In England, the most significant changes in prison education for adults follow the recent publication of a review of offender learning, entitled 'Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation'⁹⁰.

Respondents were also asked if there are any plans in their country to make changes to provision in the near future or to implement any new initiatives. A total of 22 responses were received to this question. The more detailed responses showed that countries are setting out to tackle a range of issues in the near future with regard to education for adult prisoners, including plans to develop more e-learning programmes (Austria and Iceland); to increase the provision of vocational training (Estonia, Sweden and Turkey); to favour treatment

⁸⁸ Ministry of Education and Research (Norway), *Short Version of Report no. 27 to the Storting [the Norwegian Storting] (2004-2005) Education and Training in the Correctional Services "Another Spring"*. Internet: [http://www.epea.org/images/pdf/AnotherSpring\(Norway\).pdf](http://www.epea.org/images/pdf/AnotherSpring(Norway).pdf)

⁸⁹ *Punishment that works – less crime – a safer society, Report to the Storting on the Norwegian Correctional Services*. Internet: <http://img3.custompublish.com/getfile.php/757321.823.pysuvuxtrf/engelsk.pdf?return=www.kriminalomsorgen.no>

⁹⁰ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011, *Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation*. Internet: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/m/11-828-making-prisons-work-skills-for-rehabilitation>

measures (including vocational and further training) over work (Germany); and structural changes to the authorities responsible for prison education and training (Luxembourg).

In Estonia, the government has agreed to increase the number of participants in vocational training in prisons. Currently discussions are ongoing regarding the kind of measures that should be taken to achieve the agreement. Similarly to the above-mentioned development in Germany, these discussions focus on introducing more flexible curricula, modular courses and course-based studies which would still remain part of national vocational training system, but would be shorter in duration. This would allow prisoners to still continue their studies after release. Additionally, 10 of the regions (Länder) submitted a joint bill for a Land Prison Act for adult prisoners in August 2011. This provides for the abolition of the duty to work in favour of treatment measures, which include vocational and further training.

In Luxembourg, anticipated new legislation that may come into force by 2013 would further institutionalise educational programmes to be offered to all prisoners and integrate the prison education service into the national education system, under the authority of the Ministry of Education (thus fixing by law the current practice).

11 Conclusions and recommendations

These conclusions and recommendations have been formulated on the basis of a critical analysis of the survey results, together with the review of documents and interviews.

Responses to the final survey questions asking national contacts to put forward strengths in their countries' approach to prison education and recommendations on how prison education and training could be improved in future in their country have also been incorporated into this section, rather than as a separate section in the main body of the report.

Ensuring prisoners can access equivalent education opportunities to those offered to citizens 'on the outside'

According to international conventions and recommendations, prisoners have a right to access education and training opportunities. These international provisions need to be reflected in national legislation, policy and also in practice in the delivery of prison education and training.

It does appear from the findings of this study that education and training for prisoners is today an issue which is 'on the map' – i.e. it has greater recognition at both national and international level. This is reflected in the facts that, according to the survey responses, funding allocated to prison education and training, as well as the priority given to the issue by national-level stakeholders, have either stayed the same or increased in recent years. At international level, EU programmes have supported a wide range of projects relating to prison education and training and new efforts to facilitate collaboration and sharing of experiences and knowledge have emerged. On the other hand, the widespread lack of data on prison education generally and budgetary allocations in particular makes us cautious regarding strong interpretations of the results reported on this particular point.

Survey findings also show that the availability of the different types of education (general, vocational and non-formal) in prisons is variable both across and within countries.

Furthermore, the share of adult prisoners taking part in education and training (although it is reported to have increased in the majority of countries in recent years) remains below a quarter in the majority of European countries – there are low participation rates beyond the age of compulsory schooling. It would be interesting in future to further explore differences and similarities in the provision and participation among prisoners, with those of mainstream provision and the general population. In addition, the relative importance of the different causes of these low rates of participation also merit further research, such as the availability and accessibility of provision, the awareness of the opportunities available, and the returns prisoners can expect from participating in education and training programmes. This might give a better indication of whether the low levels of prison participation and qualifications are caused by institutional, rather than dispositional, barriers to learning.

It is important to ensure that the quality of education on offer to prisoners is adequate and commensurate with the mainstream educational offer in the country concerned. This would suggest that it is important for the education authorities and / or other partners from the mainstream education and training sector to be involved in both the development and delivery of prison education and training. The fact that education and training offered in prisons is the same as that available in the outside world is considered to be a strength of the provision in several of the countries and is considered to be important for motivating learners. A number of respondents identified as a good practice the fact that certificates obtained by prisoners are the same as those obtained outside prison and do not specify that they were obtained in prison, thus may help the prisoners to avoid discrimination in accessing employment or further education / training opportunities once they are released. Allowing some prisoners to participate in education and training away from the prison, through day release, is another way of implementing a process of 'normalisation'.

Some survey respondents recommended that the financial resources available for prison education should be increased. This includes improving the infrastructure available for prison education and training. It was also recommended by one respondent that provisions for

classrooms and equipment should be taken into account more often when designing new prison buildings and facilities.

Joined-up working and strong local cooperation

The context in which prison education and training is delivered and the profile of the prisoner population vary considerably across the countries covered by this study. It is clear therefore that there is no 'one size fits all' model which can be applied to the allocation of responsibilities and the approaches taken to prison education and training in each country. Nevertheless, given that it is recommended that education in prison should be integrated with mainstream education and training, it seems that there should be an important role for education authorities and other partners from the education and training sector to play.

In most countries, overall responsibility for prison education and training is held by a central authority (generally the Ministry of Education and / or the Ministry of Justice). Leadership at national level, backed up by political commitment to assuring the right of prisoners to access education in practice, is important. But it is also necessary to have the same level of commitment in individual prisons, where education and training provision has to be put into place. Strong collaboration between stakeholders with a clear allocation of responsibilities and lines of communication – both inside and outside of prisons - would therefore seem to be important.

In several countries the survey respondents recommended that steps should be taken to improve local cooperation in relation to prison education and training. This involves cooperation between the prison establishments and external providers of education and training in their localities, as well as with the local authorities and with local employers. As an example, the case study (see Annex 4) on the national strategic plan which is in place in Belgium (Flanders) shows that the quality of prison education in Belgium has benefited from formalised cooperation agreements between prisons and networks of local training providers. Cooperation within individual prisons is also important – between the staff responsible for security, education, and other supports given to prisoners. A number of examples of efforts to ensure collaboration and communication between the stakeholders involved in prison education were identified through the research process. A collaborative and integrated approach between stakeholders (including guidance and employment services) to support prisoners through guidance and counselling for example is essential to support prisoners in preparation for their release and post-release. This seems to be an area where there is potential for countries to share and learn from each other in terms of the methods /approaches used and lessons learned.

Ensuring the educational offer is in line with prisoners needs

The lack of motivation of prisoners to participate in education and training is identified as a problem in many countries covered by this study. It is therefore important that the educational offer is motivating, meaningful and applicable to their lives after release and provides learning which meets their needs and aspirations in both content and methods. This means in particular providing adult learning that is different in its approach to mainstream schooling, since many prisoners have previous negative experiences of education, and increasing prisoners' awareness of those differences.

Subjects/ content which meet the interests of prisoner learners will vary but it is clear that the provision of basic skills and vocational education and training is important to help to address the low level of education among the prison population and to improve their employability on release. These subjects are recognised as being important by policy makers in many European countries but at the same time, provision is said to be insufficient to meet demand, which suggests that either more resources need to be allocated to prison education and training, or more cost-effective methods of delivery need to be explored.

Though the provision of education and training is considered a major element in the rehabilitation of prisoners and their transition to society, recent research from Northern Ireland shows evidence of inadequate provision failing to meet the needs of prisoners and society as a whole. It is noted that progress in the provision of prison education has been

negligible given the low status afforded to learning and skills across the prison service in general⁹¹.

Whilst it is important prisoners participate in education and training that improves their employability on release, in preparation for their transition into society, prisoners may also need to be supported in meeting certain personal and social issues they may face.

Education programmes that take a 'holistic' approach, combining support in different areas such as housing, civic competences, relationships management, self-esteem and/or addiction for example are seen to be effective. This important follow-up support can help to ensure that the prisoner can capitalise on the learning he/she has undertaken inside prison and can prevent the investment made in such learning opportunities from being wasted. It is also important to find ways of ensuring that the educational offer can be tailored to the needs and aspirations of each individual, which may in many countries mean finding ways of providing a broader curriculum and offering (more) education and training opportunities at higher levels. Since resources are finite, it may be necessary to consider alternative ways of providing a broad curriculum, such as e-learning or distance learning approaches. According to the survey results, there is variation across Europe in the extent to which prisoners are able to participate in such flexible learning opportunities. Given the complexities involved in developing e-learning provision which is compatible with the security restrictions imposed by the prison environment, as well as the difficulties associated with distance learning due to the lack of face-to-face interaction between the learner and teacher / tutor, it seems that this is an area where there is considerable scope for countries to learn from each other. A combination of ICT used with face to face interaction may be a more effective approach. ICT could also be offered as a complement to – rather than as a substitute for face to face contact regarding a range of learner support functions, such as mentoring.

The barriers to participation most commonly identified were lack of motivation and previous negative experiences of education. It may in the future be worth investigating further however whether this lack of motivation relates to education in general, or specifically to the education on offer in prisons; the education on offer to prisoners has to be seen as meaningful, useful and applicable, just as it would for mainstream provision. In addition to awareness-raising of the opportunities available to prisoners in order to increase participation, it might also therefore be important to carry out more work to find out what prisoners want, or need, to learn.

In terms of the teaching and learning methods, it seems that a more flexible approach is important, which allows the learning to be tailored to the individual's needs. Individual action plans are already used in many countries. It is important however that the provision of education and training on offer in prisons is sufficient to meet the needs identified in such an individual action plan. Examples were also identified through the study of the use of validation of prior learning and shorter versions of courses offered through mainstream education to ensure prisoners can maximise the use of their time in prison (see for example the case study on intensive apprenticeships in Austria in Annex 3, as well as the case study on the use of validation of prior learning in prisons prepared for the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning on this topic⁹², for more detail). The assessment and validation of current skills levels and the design of individual learning plans that could be followed upon release could also be pursued more often to support prisoners undergoing short sentences. This approach may be particularly useful when interagency collaboration facilitates the implementation of such plans upon release.

It is also important for varied provision to be on offer to take account of the diversity of the prisoner cohort, including for example juveniles, female prisoners and prisoners with special educational needs or learning disabilities. The educational offer also needs to be flexible in order to adapt to changes in the profile of the prison population, for example due to an increase in the share of foreign prisoners, older/aging prisoners, etc. As previously

⁹¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-17005066>

⁹² Duchemin, C., 2010, Validation of prior learning: a stepping stone for the reintegration of inmates into society (Norway). Internet: <http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/77485.pdf>

mentioned, peer mentoring can also be used as a valuable means of supporting prisoners in their participation in education and training and in preparation for their release. Peer mentors can also be involved in delivering learning and providing advice and guidance, which in turn provides a learning opportunity and a chance to acquire valuable skills for those involved.

Supporting employability and other post-release outcomes

Prisoners can be supported to enhance their employability in various ways and steps are already being taken to address this in a number of countries. The most common type of measure used to increase prisoners' employability is said to be pre-release programmes to promote employability. This is followed by work experience opportunities for prisoners who are granted day release.

The provision of vocational education is also seen as an important means of improving prisoners' employability and social inclusion but the courses and their content must be relevant to the needs of the (local) labour market and provide up-to-date skills and techniques. Cooperation with employers – for example in informing the content of courses or providing work experience opportunities for prisoners who are permitted to leave the prison on day release - is important to ensure this key link with the labour market is maintained.

Individuals need a combination of transversal core skills with the specific skills and key competences needed for a job⁹³. These transversal skills are particularly important to facilitate mobility on the labour market, as the specific vocational skills in demand can quickly change. In line with the European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, the key skills individuals require is made up of competences in 'traditional' subjects (e.g. mother tongue literacy, numeracy, knowledge of foreign languages, science and ICT skills) and also other 'softer' skills, such as learning to learn, social and civic competence, taking initiative, entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and self-expression. Thus it is important to balance the provision of vocational skills with increased opportunity for key/soft skills courses which also enhance employability, especially for those with a criminal record. This includes non-formal learning, which might also be taken into consideration by employers during the recruitment process.

It is also important to bear in mind that prisoners need further support after their release from prison in order to continue their learning or to access employment. As well as specific post-release programmes to support employability, which according to the results of the survey are only offered (as part of education and training) in the minority of countries, this also means ensuring that education and training commenced in prison can be continued or completed after release. It also means that probation services and the various stakeholders involved in providing support to the prisoner in preparation for reintegration and on release need to work together to ensure the prisoner can benefit from a 'seamless' transition. As previously mentioned, this important follow-up support can help to ensure that the prisoner can capitalise on the learning he/she has undertaken inside prison and can prevent the investment made in such learning opportunities from being wasted.

Support and training for prison educators

Teachers and trainers working in prisons must have appropriate skills and competences to be able to deliver learning appropriate to their target group and setting. Adequate training and support therefore seems particularly important to help prepare and support prison educators to provide quality education and training to their learners. This should include both pre-service training in the specific demands associated with delivering learning in prison as well as in-service training to ensure that prison educators can remain up-to-date with pedagogical and vocational knowledge. Opportunities to network and share experiences and resources – both with colleagues in other prisons (as prison education can often be isolating by its nature) and also colleagues working in mainstream education (in order to acquire up-to-date knowledge of mainstream developments and initiatives) - may also be useful. It also seems there is scope for further discussion about what is 'good' or 'bad practice' in terms of

⁹³ European Commission (Expert Group on New Skills for New Jobs), *New Skills for New Jobs: Action Now*. Internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=568&langId=en&eventId=232&furtherEvents=yes>

training for prison educators and again there is potential for countries to learn from each other and / or from the findings of transnational projects in this area.

Research and evaluation to inform evidence-based policy-making

It seems that across Europe there is room for more research and evaluation into a range of different aspects of prison education, to inform more evidence-based policy making and practice in the future. For example, in Norway, the move in recent years to develop a research-based education in prisons was identified as an example of a good practice in the response to our survey. Since 2004, the University of Bergen has been conducting research into prisoners' educational backgrounds, preferences and motivation and research is now ongoing into foreign prisoners' educational backgrounds, preferences and motivation. There is also need for better baseline data on the skills levels of the prison population, such as that provided by PIAAC for the whole population.

A number of issues which might merit further research / discussion in the future are outlined in this report. For example, more evidence is needed of 'what works' and why, taking a multi-agency, multi-faceted approach to investigate the role of education and training within the overall rehabilitation effort. A more detailed list of 'gaps' in terms of knowledge and research can also be found in the review and commentary of literature prepared by GHK prior to this study⁹⁴.

Opportunities to share experiences and disseminate good practices

It seems from this study and the previous work commissioned by DG EAC in relation to this topic, that there is a wealth of innovative and good practice activity taking place across Europe in providing education to prisoners. Yet there is also more work to be done to improve provision in some countries and in some specific areas. It seems therefore there is scope for further opportunities for practitioners and policy makers to learn from each other in the future, as well as to discuss possible solutions and alternatives to the existing issues and challenges. Furthermore ESF and other EU financing programmes should continue to offer support and opportunities to develop prison education across Europe.

⁹⁴ GHK (2011), Prison education and training in Europe - A review and commentary of existing literature, analysis and evaluation

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ANNEXES

Annex 1 Survey Questionnaire

See separate document

Annex 2 Catalogue of practices

See separate document

Annex 3 Case study - Intensive training for skilled workers (Facharbeiterintensivausbildung), Austria

See separate document

Annex 4 Case study - Strategic plan of assistance and services to prisoners, Flanders, Belgium

See separate document

Annex 5 Case study - EU-funded projects support organisational change in Romania

See separate document

Annex 6 Case study – The Learning Centre, Sweden

See separate document