

**Dugald Craig Head of Education & Training Department
Socrates, Leonardo & Youth Technical Assistance Office,
European Commission**

INTRODUCTION

- May I start by expressing my gratitude to the Association and to the Bulgarian organisers, especially Valentina Petrova for inviting representation from Brussels to participate in this important conference
- Apologies from Alan Smith for being unable to attend in person but I'm confident that all associated with EPEA are aware of his personal and professional support for prison education
- Before proceeding to my presentation I should like to use this occasion, to formally record, on behalf of Alan Smith and all the colleagues involved in Grundtvig at the Commission and the TAO, our recognition of the work and impact in his own country and elsewhere of Jim Turley. Apparently, Jim attended the same school in Northern Ireland as Alan although, typically, of such things they didn't meet until much later. Jim's work and personality ensures that he leaves an admirable legacy in the field of prison education.

For my part, I am delighted to be here. Firstly, because I have never visited Bulgaria. Secondly, as during my pre-Brussels life I spent a period of 5 years in a prison as a teacher and Head of Education programmes in a large penal establishment in Scotland. Whilst engaged in that capacity I taught a range of communications and social science subjects to prisoners serving life sentences and young offenders. At the same time the contract to deliver the prison education programme which I managed was an important piece of business for my department. Prior to that I was engaged for some 10 years in managing vocational training programmes for young people and long-term unemployed adults at risk of social and economic exclusion. Finally, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity of presenting the European Commission's commitment to promoting the improvement of quality and the strengthening of the European dimension of this important sector of education. And to encourage you to participate in the funding programmes which are available to you.

In order for you to understand my perspective on European Programmes in Prison Education, I should explain a couple of things. The first of these is to tell you why I think these programmes are important and this is best described in Forster's words:

One must be fond of people and trust them if one is not to make a mess of life. E M Forster, British novelist

Secondly, I need to clarify for you, what I actually do in Brussels. I do not work for the European Commission; I work for the Socrates, Leonardo & Youth Technical Assistance Office. The picture



may help me illustrate the principal actors involved in selecting; monitoring and evaluation of projects for funding from the EU's main education and training programmes:

- o The European Commission through its Directorate-General for Education and Culture creates the programmes to implement the policies which are decided at a political level. They also make decisions on which projects receive funding
- o The Technical Assistance Office (TAO) provides professional, technical and administrative services to the European Commission and does most of the practical work involved in supporting the selection, contracting, monitoring, reporting and payment of projects. The TAO is the organisation which interacts and supports projects on a practical level.
- o There are National Agencies in all of the participating countries to co-ordinate the programmes at a National level.

My role in the TAO in Brussels is to manage the services to all Socrates centralised Actions. I apologise for the jargon: centralised simply means that the application for funding is made directly to Brussels. Why is it centralised to Brussels? It's usually because the grant is larger.

I have been working in the TAO for nearly 3 years but prior to that I worked extensively in managing EU-funded education programmes since 1989 and also as a so-called "expert" in the field. Consequently I do know what it's like to apply for funding and to run EU projects. My current duties may make seem a little like a poacher turned gamekeeper. One benefit which I hope this brings, to my presentation, is that I have practical experience in applying for funding, running projects on the one hand and, on the other of being involved in the selection and monitoring of projects.

In speaking to you my aim is to raise your awareness of the support provided for prison education by the European Union, in particular through Grundtvig Action of the Socrates programme, and to encourage you to explore ways in which this Action and other Actions and programmes could continue to promote improved quality and European cooperation in the future.

My approach to this will follow the following road map:

o Overview of the policy context: politics, policy and underpinning principles
 o Practical implementation of policy: programmes and practice
 o Adult education and prison education in EU programmes: participation, past present and future
 o The end of SOCRATES: the story doesn't end there
 o Questions: yours and mine
 With this approach, I hope to take you on an informative and interesting tour of the major European educational programmes associated with prison education and to leave you sufficiently well-informed to evaluate whether or not to participate in these programmes. That being said, I cannot deny that I shall be recommending the benefits of participation to you.

POLITICS, POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

<p>Articles 149 & 150</p> <p>1999 Bologna Declaration</p> <p>2000 Lisbon Council</p> <p>2001 Stockholm Council</p> <p>2001 Bruges initiative</p> <p>2002 Barcelona Council</p> <p>2002 Copenhagen Declaration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treaty establishing the EC ➤ Creation of a European Higher Education Area by 2010 ➤ Europe to become world's most dynamic & competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010 ➤ Concrete future objectives of education systems ➤ Increased co-operation in VET ➤ Europe's education systems to be « world quality reference » by 2010 ➤ enhanced co-operation in European VET
--	---

The decisions

From its inception the EU has made provisions for contributing to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States (article 149) and to implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States while fully respecting the responsibility of Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training (article 150).

All of the listed political developments have a set of clear underpinning objectives:

- Improving the quality of educational and training systems
- Making lifelong learning more accessible to everyone
- Making our education and training systems more outward-looking as regards the rest of the world

If we look further into the detail of these underpinning objectives we get a more concrete vision of what the EU is trying to achieve:

The first objective is all about:

Improving education and training for teachers and trainers

Developing skills for the knowledge society, that is, • increasing literacy and numeracy • updating the definition of skills for the knowledge society • maintaining the ability to learn

Ensuring access to ICTs for everyone by: • Equipping schools and learning centres • Involving teachers and trainers • Using networks and resources

Increasing recruitment to scientific and technical studies Making the best use of resources through

- Improving the quality assurance • Ensuring efficient use of resources

The second objective may be described as:

- Creating a more open learning environment • Making learning attractive • Supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion

And, finally the third objective is about:

- Strengthening links with working life and research and society at large
- Developing the spirit of enterprise
- Improving foreign language learning
- Increasing mobility and exchanges
- Strengthening European co-operation

All of these form the agreed set of Common objectives for education and training systems for the period up to 2010 adopted by the Council of education ministers. The significance of this development cannot be exaggerated as it is a first in the history of policy-making on educational matters at an educational level. The practical implementation of a "Detailed work programme", adopted in 2002 which provides for the development of appropriate indicators to enable Member States' progress towards meeting these jointly agreed objectives to be monitored.

So, in practical terms, how does this impact on those of you involved in the field. Well, put simply it means that EU funding is available to support the following types of activities:

- Multinational education, training & youth partnerships

- Exchange schemes and opportunities to learn abroad (in your case, this would probably NOT apply to your students).
- Innovative teaching & learning projects
- Networks of academic & professional expertise
- A framework to address across-the-board issues, such as new technologies in education & the international recognition of qualifications
- A platform for dialogue & consultation with a view to comparisons, bench-marking & policy-making

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN EUROPEAN UNION POLICY, AND THE RELEVANCE OF THIS FOR PRISON EDUCATION

That which I have presented so far underpins all EU education and training programmes. I'd now like to look more closely at the specific field of lifelong learning as that tends to be field into which most prison education would be categorised in EU terms.

It's heartening to note that in recent years lifelong learning has started to have a higher profile and moved further up the European policy agenda.

- The preamble to the EU Treaty, as amended in Amsterdam in 1997, contains a new commitment of Member States to provide their citizens with high quality education and access to continuous updating of their acquired skills and knowledge (in other words : lifelong learning).
- The 2000 Lisbon meeting of the European Council (Heads of State and Government of the EU Member States) – subsequently confirmed by European Councils held in Feira, Stockholm and Barcelona – set the key objective to make the European Union the world's most dynamic economy by the year 2010. Lifelong learning is identified as a key factor in making sure this vision is transformed into reality.
- At the same time, the Lisbon aim is to ensure that in the process of achieving this economic objective, Europe does not sacrifice the social cohesion which is rightly seen as an intrinsic dimension of the European social model. This implies outreach to groups endangered by social marginalisation; the prison population clearly falls within this category.
- Seen in this perspective, prison education – as a dimension of lifelong and lifewide learning – is an important facet of European social and educational policy.

SPECIFIC POLICY INITIATIVES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AT EUROPEAN UNION LEVEL

The EU addresses the challenge of lifelong learning by a dual approach : through the development and coordination of policies, and through programme activities.

The Commission's policy initiative on Lifelong learning. This began with the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000), which was the subject of intensive debate across Europe. Alongside the nationally coordinated consultation processes, European NGOs were also consulted. The European Prison Education Association contributed actively to this debate. Taking into account the results of the consultation, the Commission then issued a formal Communication in 2001 on Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality. The Communication, most of the salient recommendations in which were then incorporated within the Council resolution adopted in 2002, identifies key elements of successful lifelong learning policies and sets out an agenda for action at both national and European level.

The Lifelong learning Communication identifies six key areas for future priority action, all of which are very much applicable to prison education: – Stimulating demand / Bringing together learners and learning opportunities – Valuing prior learning – Information, guidance and counselling – Basic skills – Innovative pedagogy – Investing time and money in learning.

THE EUROPEAN UNION CONCEPT OF LIFELONG LEARNING, AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR PRISON EDUCATION

In all of the policy initiatives outlined above and in the programme activities I shall describe in the next part of the speech there is a strong emphasis on the need for priority to be given to the socially and otherwise disadvantaged sections of the population. This approach encompasses learning in all contexts, whether formal education, non-formal education or informal learning. The concept of 'adult learning' is taken in its broadest sense to mean learning at any stage in adult life, other than in formal school or on higher education degree programmes. It therefore also embraces the context of 'second chance education' for those without formal qualifications;

The emphasis is on helping to improve learning pathways for all adults, whatever their motivation for learning may be: to increase their capacity for active citizenship or their intercultural awareness, to enhance their employability by upgrading their general or vocational skills, to regain access to formal education, or simply to help them to fulfil their personal aspirations.

Given this inclusive concept lifelong learning, covering all situations in which individuals learn, it is clear that learning in prisons and detention centres falls clearly within the remit of the EU policy and programme initiatives. That is why education in prisons is specifically mentioned in the basic documentation on the EU's adult education programme Socrates-Grundtvig as being an area for support.

Indeed, prison education and adult education as a whole have much in common: both tend to be a 'marginal' concern within their respective fields: traditionally, prison education has tended to be a marginal aspect of prison policy as a whole; and adult education as a whole tends to be marginalised – compared with the higher profile and better resourced sectors of higher education and school education – within the overall spectrum of education systems. At the EU, we are committed to helping this marginality to become a thing of the past.

Above all, the inclusion of prison education within the overall spectrum of lifelong learning makes it clear that in the European Commission's view, prison education should not be regarded as a separate field, but as an intrinsic and important part of

education and training as a whole. Prison inmates have every bit as much to benefit from educational services as any other section of the population. Education and training for the younger and older adults in prisons should therefore be seen as part of a country's adult education and training system as a whole. Furthermore, learning opportunities available in prisons and as part of the re-integration process on release are an integral part of the individual process of learning throughout life.

EUROPEAN UNION PROGRAMMES FOR ADULT LEARNING

The EU pursues the twin policy objectives of an economically dynamic yet socially cohesive Union not only by means of policy initiatives in the field of lifelong learning, but also through concrete funding programmes to help improve the quality, accessibility and openness of education and training across Europe.

In terms of programmes, it should be recognised that the actions managed by the Commission's Education and training directorate-general are only part of the overall picture. Considerable funding is provided via other channels also, notably the Structural Funds and in particular the European Social Fund, including the EQUAL initiative, which has supported specific projects in the prison education and training field.

In this speech, however, as indicated in the session title, we shall be looking more closely at the programmes offered by the Education and Training directorate. Consequently, my primary focus will be the Socrates programme with its « Grundtvig » action for « adult education and other educational pathways ». However, in parallel with Socrates, one should also recognise the importance of the Leonardo da Vinci programme for European cooperation in the vocational training field (which has in the past supported projects for sharing experience in vocational training in prisons) and the Youth programme, including the European Voluntary Service scheme for young people.

Let us turn our attention to the Socrates programme:

Objective: to enhance the quality of education through European co-operation and strengthen the European dimension in all sectors of education. 7-year time span: January 2000 – December 2006 Budget of €2.060 million 31 Participating countries n 25 EU Member States n 3 accession candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) n 3 EFTA-EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Leichtenstein) Centralised and decentralised management n European Commission n National Agencies Projects / Networks / Small-scale partnerships / Mobility

The Socrates actions identify the areas of education at which the EU funding is targeted. In the past, people involved in prison education have, quite naturally, looked mainly at the Grundtvig action. However, one message I'd like to give, especially for those of you who are experienced in transnational projects, is to consider the potential for injecting fresh and novel ideas into prison education by looking at the other actions, too.

THE SOCRATES PROGRAMME FOR COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Objective: to enhance the quality of education through European cooperation and strengthen the European dimension of all educational sectors.

Socrates is open to:

- the 25 Member States of the European Union (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)
- the 3 countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) which, along with the EU, form the "European Economic Area";
- the three countries seeking accession to the EU (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey).

Budget of €2,060 million (EU-25) for the period 2000-2006, of which unfortunately only a minimum of 7% is allocated to adult education (this nonetheless represents a considerable increase compared with the first phase of the programme, in terms of both percentage and amount).

8 actions:

- Comenius (school education)
- Erasmus (higher education)
- Grundtvig (adult education)
- Lingua (languages)
- Minerva (new technologies)
- Education studies and analyses
- Joint actions spanning education, training and youth (annual calls for proposals on specified themes – in 2002 the emphasis was on social cohesion, and the grants awarded included one to a project on prison education)
- Accompanying measures (including notably support for European associations, conferences and seminars, studies and publications of European interest and other initiatives supporting the Socrates objectives) (closing date generally 1 April and 1 October of each year). In 2002 a grant was awarded to EPEA under this part of the programme.

GRUNDTVIG : STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF ADULT EDUCATION

Who was Grundtvig?

Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), Danish clergyman and writer, is regarded as the founder of the Nordic tradition of "learning for life". His "folk high school" concept was based on the idea that education must be available to all citizens throughout life and should encompass not only knowledge but also civic responsibility, personal and cultural development.

The objectives of Grundtvig are:

- To promote and support the development of the quality of adult education and lifelong learning in Europe
- To promote and support the development of the European dimension of adult education and lifelong learning

Who is Grundtvig?

Grundtvig addresses all adult learners who, at whatever stage of their lives, want to: – increase their capacity to play a full and active role in society; – develop their intercultural awareness; – improve their employability by acquiring or updating their general skills; – enhance their capacity to enter or re-enter formal education

It also concerns people of whatever age who have left school without basic qualifications, and parental and family education of all kinds.

Special attention is given to encouraging activities relating to: – persons lacking basic education and qualifications; – persons living in rural or disadvantaged areas, or who are disadvantaged for socio-economic reasons; – persons belonging to other “hard to reach” groups who do not generally tend to take part in adult education or lifelong learning initiatives; – disabled persons with special educational needs

Grundtvig is open to all types of organisations which contribute to providing lifelong learning opportunities, whether in the formal, non-formal or informal sector. This clearly includes prisons and the other bodies working with them in the provision of learning opportunities for detainees and ex-offenders.

What kinds of activities does Grundtvig support?

Grundtvig provides financial support for four different kinds of European activities:
Grundtvig 1: European cooperation projects

Institutions / organisations from at least three European countries (but on average around 7 countries among the projects selected) work together, pooling their knowledge and experience to produce an innovative outcome or “product” designed to improve quality and strengthen the European dimension of a particular aspect of adult learning. This Action is managed centrally by the Commission, and selection is carried out in a two-stage procedure (closing date for pre-proposals: 1 November each year). The average grant is around €90,000 per project per year, and selectivity is fairly severe with only project ‘surviving’ the selection for every six pre-proposals submitted.

Activities typically supported include:

- development of strategies and methods for promoting individual demand for lifelong learning among the adult population, including demand for remedial learning by individuals lacking basic skills and competencies for adult education and lifelong learning;
- adaptation, development, testing and dissemination of : - modules and courses, didactic materials for educational staff or learners; - new teaching methodologies; - tools and methods for assessing, validating or certifying knowledge and skills people acquire through experiential or autonomous learning or through non-formal education;
- development of information and support services for adult learners and for providers of adult education, including services related to guidance and counselling;
- conducting and disseminating the results of action-research, dissemination of innovation in the field of adult education.

Key themes which projects are currently encouraged to address include:

- providing adult learners with basic skills and competences
- information and communication technology in the field of adult education as a subject of learning for adults and as a teaching tool for adult educators;
- intercultural education and the integration of minorities through adult education activities;
- preparing adult learners for life in an increasingly integrated Europe, in particular by improving their knowledge of European languages and cultures;
- teaching and learning for active citizenship;
- parental and family education, intergenerational learning;
- optimising funding strategies for lifelong learning;
- developing the concept of the learning

community : learning cities, learning regions, promoting cooperation between all types of learning providers

Grundtvig 1 European Projects would be an ideal vehicle for bringing together insights and expertise from a number of European countries on producing new materials and methodologies for any aspect of prison education, organising training courses for prison education staff from several countries, or sharing and further developing successful approaches and adapting them for use in other European countries. Many different topics could be addressed by Grundtvig 1 projects in the future, for example:

– Strategies and models for training prison educators – Organisation of European training courses – ICT and prison education – The intercultural challenge of prison education and the particular situation of prisons with a high incidence of inmates from ethnic minority groups – Strategies for actively involving prison staff in prison education – Methods of tackling the particular problems of young drugs offenders or HIV/AIDS – Arts and creative learning in prison education – Management and funding of prison education – Methods of linking general and vocational education in prisons – Evaluation and quality assurance issues in prison education – The role of education in maximising the effectiveness of post-release strategies – Models for improving collaboration between prisons and the local community in the area of education – The gender dimension of prison education.

In fact, whatever the current and future concerns of the prison education community, the potential for improving performance through Grundtvig 1 projects is immense.

Grundtvig 2 : Learning Partnerships

Grundtvig Learning Partnerships (LP) provide a framework for smaller-scale cooperation activities between organisations from at least three European countries working in the field of adult education, usually at local level, including prisons. Each partnership involves joint work by trainers / educators and learners (or the managers of adult education institutions and other staff categories such as advisers and counsellors) on one or more topics of common interest.

The exchange of experiences, practices and methods contributes to a better understanding of the topics themselves, but also to an increased awareness of other European countries. Visits and exchanges are a feature of the partnerships, and full use is made of computers to promote cooperation among the participating staff and learners. Special importance is attached to involving adult learners themselves in all aspects of the projects.

This Action is managed on a decentralised basis via the Socrates-Grundtvig National Agencies in each participating country. Project selection is carried out in one single stage (closing date 1 March) annually; selectivity varies from country to country depending on demand and budgetary availability.

Some typical topics of the LPs supported so far include: • Basic skills • Active citizenship • Intercultural issues • Learning about European countries / Europe • ICT • Languages • Environment & sustainable development • Arts, music, culture

and the media • Health and consumer issues • Parental education • Learning opportunities for senior citizens • Prison education.

This Action is managed on a decentralised basis via the Socrates-Grundtvig National Agencies in each participating country. Project selection is carried out in one single stage (closing date 1 March) annually; selectivity varies from country to country depending on demand and budgetary availability.

Each participating organisation receives a grant (€ 5000 for coordinator, € 4000 partners) consisting of a "standard amount" (to help cover the linguistic preparation of staff and learners, materials, translation costs, documentation, software, other relevant costs such as room hire, fees for speakers etc. and general administration costs except staff), and a "variable amount" to cover travel, subsistence and travel insurance. In 2002, the average annual grant was around € 8,000 per organisation.

Grundtvig 2 Learning Partnerships offer another exciting opportunity – with a high likelihood of funding and a minimum of red tape – for people involved in prison education to get together across national borders to exchange experience on any aspect of prison education which is of importance to them in their daily work. Many of the possible topics have already been mentioned under "Grundtvig 1" above. As well as involving educators in prisons in different European countries, Learning Partnerships could also build on linkages between prisons and other local education providers, and the bodies responsible for overseeing prison education such as local and regional education authorities and agencies. As several successful Grundtvig "LPs" have already demonstrated, there are many opportunities for the inmates themselves and ex-offenders to be directly involved in the European experience-sharing process which the Learning Partnerships offer – a potentially exciting means of helping to boost their motivation for learning and facilitating their subsequent social reintegration.

For colleagues who would basically like to set up such a partnership but do not know where to start or how to find a suitable partner, the National Agencies will be more than willing to help. Preparatory visit grants are also available to help in this process, as is an Internet-based partner search tool (see website information).

Grundtvig 3 : Individual training grants for adult education staff

Grants are available to enable persons working in adult education in the broadest sense, or engaged in the training of such persons, to spend from just a few days up to four weeks in another European country, either to attend a training course or to undertake some other form of training activity such as job-shadowing or the observation of good practice. Participants are encouraged to disseminate the new experience they have obtained, and where possible to help to develop further European initiatives involving their organisations.

Typical participants include:

- teachers / trainers working with adults, and the trainers of such teachers / trainers;
- heads and managerial staff of institutions providing adult learning opportunities or remedial education;
- counsellors, tutors, mentors;
- the inspectorate;
- mediators and street educators working with people at risk of social exclusion;
- persons involved in intercultural education or performing educational tasks relating to migrant workers and travellers;
- staff assisting people who have

special educational needs; • other categories of adult education staff (at the discretion of national authorities).

Grants generally do not exceed €1,500 and are intended to help cover travel, subsistence, language preparation, a course fees.

Thanks to the Grundtvig 3 training grants, anyone engaged in prison education, directly or indirectly, whether as educators or administrators, or prison staff not directly involved in education but who have an interest in enhancing the environment for education in their respective institution, has the chance of going to other European countries to find out at first hand how prison education functions there and, if they wish, visit their colleagues. This does not need to – though it can – take the form of a formal training course. It can also simply involve observing practices, job-shadowing or information-gathering visits. As the minimum duration for such visits has been abolished, access to grants has become easier still, and in most participating countries the majority of applicants' requests are accepted.

Grundtvig 4 : Networks

Each Network is a forum for discussion and exchange of information on key issues, policy or research in a specific area of adult education. Drawing together organisations participating in past or present Grundtvig projects, as well as other key players in the particular field of adult learning concerned (minimum of 10 countries required from 2004 on), Grundtvig Networks provide a European forum for disseminating innovation. They also act as "information relays" to promote new projects, provide advice for organisations wishing to develop transnational cooperation, and help to make project results and products available to a broader public. Like Grundtvig 1, this Action is managed centrally by the Commission, and selection is carried out in a two-stage procedure. Each Network receives an average grant of € 90,000 per network per year. A network in prison education has been operating since 2002.

Finally, Grundtvig 4 offers the prospect of networking across Europe to share and disseminate experience and good practice between prison educators across the continent, and to ensure that the projects and partnerships which have been supported in the past have a natural forum in which they can continue to meet. A network has now been launched in the area of prison education, and its coordinator will be delighted to make contact with colleagues involved in European cooperation in this field or wishing to establish projects or partnerships in the future.

- So far, the opportunities opened up by Grundtvig have only been rather sparsely used by the prison education community. This is not meant as a criticism. The day-to-day problems with which the colleagues involved in prison education have to contend, and the burden of work they have to bear, are all too evident. It is therefore not surprising that European cooperation – at least within Grundtvig – has not so far emerged as one of their major concerns.

- Happily, however, there are signs that prison educators are beginning to recognise the benefits which Grundtvig offers, and we at the European Commission are extremely keen that they should.

In 2004, the Commission provided support for and looking at those parts of the action which we handle in Brussels the following trends emerged. Taking all of this

into account, from where we sit in Brussels we observe the following issues for the future:

- Need to redefine / re-position
- Relationship between general and vocational education
- Move to a more learner-centred approach
- Need for innovative pedagogy
- Need to enhance the professional profile of adult educators
- Need for private investment in adult education
- Yet need to retain strong sense of public commitment
- Need for greater cooperation between all 'players'

GRUNDTVIG AND PRISON EDUCATION

As can be seen from the profile of Grundtvig, and in particular the inclusive nature of the Action with its emphasis on lifewide as well as lifelong learning and the priority given to disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society, prison education is not only eligible for support from Grundtvig, but is to be regarded as one of the priority sectors. Not only prisons themselves, but also all the other organisations working – directly or indirectly – with prisons to improve the learning opportunities for inmates during detention and for ex-offenders after release, can avail themselves of the opportunities which Grundtvig has to offer.

All of the four Grundtvig actions, as described above, have high potential for prison education and it is encouraging to see that the numbers of applications from proposed prison projects is increasing and has been year on year.

I would encourage all of you who are based in the SOC 31 countries to look seriously at using EU funding to improve the quality of education that is being delivered in prisons. The priorities of the Grundtvig Action and of the Socrates programme accord with much of what you are doing: ♣ Promoting equality between women and men ♣ Integration of disabled people ♣ Contributing to the fight against racism and xenophobia ♣ Helping to offset the effects of socio-economic disadvantage ♣ Exploiting the full educational potential of ICT ♣ Language teaching and learning (priority for the less widely used and less taught EU languages)

and there are a variety of ways in which to get started: • As coordinator (and find partners) • or partner (be found by others) • Individual preparatory visits • Preparatory visits to attend "Contact seminars" • EPEA?

To stimulate some further thinking on exploiting the potential of EU funding, I pose the following questions to you:

1. What improvements can you identify in the initial training and continuing professional development of prison educators?
2. In what ways can ICT be better harnessed as a practical and useful tool for extending the reach of education in prisons?
3. In what ways would transnational co-operation projects add value to prison education?

4. What are the European issues in prison education?

5. How can prison learners profit from credit accumulation and transfer and certification systems?

6. Should learning programmes in prison be focused on: a) basic skills and life skills? b) developing vocational? c) addressing offending behaviour? d) purely educational?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

No doubt the Association will come up with many more ideas itself, and the European Commission will be delighted to consider any proposals which it may put forward. The Grundtvig team at the Commission is strongly committed to working with the prison education community to make the European opportunities for experience-sharing better known, and to help ensure that in the future this sector is given the importance it deserves within the broad overall area covered by adult education. But ultimately, the ideas for concrete cooperation activities must come from the 'field' itself: the European Commission's approach to cooperation is very much one of 'bottom-up' – listening to needs and helping the good ideas to find the funding they deserve.

Conferences such as the present one are a vital means of helping to forge the necessary partnership between Grundtvig and the prison education community. So my very sincere thanks are due to the organisers – both EPEA itself and our Bulgarian hosts – for making it possible for us to share our ideas on this important occasion. Let us hope that the discussions during the conference, and the contacts to which it gives rise, will be a springboard for new ideas, new projects and partnerships, and for more European collaboration in prison education in the years ahead. I leave you with a closing thought:

To paraphrase someone else:

Don't ask what Europe (and funds) can do for you!

Ask what you can do for Europe!

and a short list of useful sources to guide you in exploring the opportunities available from EU funding for educational programmes in prisons.

Thank you

Useful information

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/socrates_en.html

www.socleoyouth.be

<http://partbase.eupro.se/>

Socrates Guidelines for Applicants (2004 update)

Socrates Annual Call for Proposals

National Agencies

