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LEARNING FOR RESETTLEMENT AND REINTEGRATION

Analysis of EQUAL Projects and Key Messages

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Pathways to Inclusion –

Strengthening European Cooperation
in Prison Education and Training

Conference Paper 3



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LEARNING FOR RESETTLEMENT AND REINTEGRATION

The EQUAL Community Initiative was designed to combat all forms of discrimination and inequality on the labour market. Its core projects were called Development Partnerships (DPs) and these were selected after calls for proposals in Member States in 2002 and 2004. All DPs forged Transnational Partnerships (TPs) with their counterparts in other countries and some participated in National Thematic Networks (NTNs) and European Mainstreaming Platforms. This document is based on the experience and achievements of those EQUAL projects and activities that focused on the resettlement of (ex)-prisoners and Annex 1 provides hyperlinks to fuller descriptions of those examples the names of which are highlighted in bold type.

1. THE BACKGROUND

Prison Services throughout the European Union are stretched although the strain to which they are currently subjected does not appear to quite as great as it was a few years ago. Now, there is an overall occupancy level, based on officially stated capacity, of 109% (see Annex 1) whereas in 2006, the occupancy level was 114% (see Annex 2). There seems to have been marked reduction in the number of prisoners over the last three years in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden, whereas it appears that there has been a significant deterioration in the situations in Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Malta, Spain and the UK. However, in overall terms, there is still one prisoner to every 800 European citizens. The relatively small percentage of female and young prisoners (see Annex 1) make it difficult to offer a range of education and training provision tailored to the needs of these groups, whereas the large percentage of foreign prisoners (see Annex 1 again) has considerable ramifications for such provision in terms of language training and the acquisition of social and cultural knowledge and skills.

A major factor in producing and maintaining the existing large numbers of inmates are high reconviction rates but it is difficult to find reliable and consistent figures on these rates. In 2005, two studies were published that provide some indication of the size of the problem. The UK study¹ of all adults released from prison in the first quarter of 2003 showed that 58.9% were reconvicted in the following two year period. Whereas, the Netherlands² seems to have one of the lowest rates but it is still 37% over a post-release period of four years.

1.1. ACTION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Up until relatively recently, issues related to prisoners' resettlement had not been strongly reflected at EU level, whereas, since 1989, the Council of Europe has been particularly active in the areas of criminal justice and penal policies and has established a number of recommendations on a broad range of topics. The last recommendation that was agreed, in 2006, concerned a set of European Prison Rules.³ The final section of this recommendation speaks about the regime for sentenced prisoners being designed to enable them to lead a

¹ Home Office Statistical Bulletin - Re-offending of adults: results from the 2003 cohort – November 2005

² Recidivism following treatment; a statistical overview of criminal recidivism of former offenders under an entrustment order in the Netherlands - ISBN: 90-5454-613-1 - 2005

³ Recommendation Rec(2006)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Prison Rules - Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2006 at the 952nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies

responsible and crime-free life and the drawing up, in partnership with each prisoner, of an individual sentence plan.

Whilst it has not been very active in the areas of policy, the European Union (EU) has supported reforms in prisons and the development of prisons' educational and training systems through its programmes. Criminal justice and prison services have used such programmes to test new approaches and to promote mutual learning between peers in different Member States. These have included the AGIS Programme and a Twinning Programme with 3rd Partners operated by DG Justice, Freedom and Security and, in the case of DG Education and Culture, projects have been financed within the Socrates, Grundtvig and Leonardo Programmes.

1.2. THE CONTRIBUTION OF EQUAL

The 121 Development Partnerships (DPs) launched under EQUAL that were exclusively concerned with (ex)-prisoners probably offer the widest and deepest pool of experience in resettlement practices. They received financial support from the ESF in excess of 170m €, which is a very substantial European investment in the development and testing of innovative good practices that have a potential for dissemination and mainstreaming throughout the EU.

Though in the first Round of EQUAL no National Thematic Networks (NTNs) were formally established on the reintegration of prisoners, many 'ex-offender DPs' cooperated closely in strong informal networks, notably in Germany and the UK. These networking activities not only increased the visibility of the new approaches piloted by the DPs but also helped to attract and maintain the interest of decision makers, as a basis for further developmental work on a larger scale. Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands launched, National EQUAL Offender Networks (NEONs) early in 2nd Selection Round and several other Member States including Italy, Poland and Portugal then established similar networks. These networks are important in mainstreaming at a national level because the majority of them relate to, or liaise with, agencies that have important roles in the formulation or implementation of penal and criminal justice policies.

However, the mainstreaming of EQUAL's innovative resettlement approaches at European level was led by UKgb and Germany in a Steering Group⁴ of ten Member States which were twinned with another 12 countries. The first stage in this European Mainstreaming Programme was a major **Exchange Event 'Passport2Freedom'** held in Lisbon, during October 2006. The event brought together EQUAL DPs to agree on a set of topics to be presented at a subsequent **Policy Forum**, in Poland, during June 2007. The main outcome of this forum was a Set of Recommendations for the Re-Integration of (Ex)-Offenders many of which are reflected in the remainder of this chapter. One of the concluding recommendations was that *"There should be continuity of approach with (ex)-offenders being a priority group in ESF Operational Programmes and the emphases on innovation and transnationality should be maintained."*

The Set of EU-level Recommendations for the Re-integration of (Ex)-offenders that was endorsed at the EQUAL Policy Forum in Warsaw (see Annex 4) was subsequently sent to the Bureau of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC). One item on the agenda of this Bureau's meeting in Strasbourg, on 12-14 November 2008, was the 'Draft Recommendation on guidelines to agencies providing probation and aftercare to offenders' that was being prepared by the Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP). The minutes of this meeting record that the Bureau of the CDPC decided to *"instruct the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Chair of PC-CP the following comments made by individual members of the Bureau: the necessity to take into account the EU Policy Recommendations presented in Warsaw, 2007."* The 36 recommendations are grouped under the following six statements, and these statements provide the headings for the remaining sections of this text which are shown in italics:

⁴ **Belgium (fr)** with Belgium (nl); **The Netherlands**; **Germany** with France, Czech Republic and Greece; **Luxemburg**; **Italy** with Sweden and Austria; **Portugal**; **Poland** with Lithuania and Finland; **Spain**; **UKgb** with Estonia; **UKni** with Latvia, Hungary and Ireland

- Successful re-integration of (ex)-offenders requires a case management approach from arrest, through the period of imprisonment, to the time of release and beyond - *Constructing Pathways*;
- All prisoners should have the opportunity of engaging in training and educational programmes that will increase their employability - *Delivering Education and Training*;
- Having a job is the most important factor in preventing re-offending so more efforts are required to engage both public and private employers and to explore other forms of job creation - *Promoting Employment*;
- Attention must also be given to other aspects of the lives of (ex)-offenders [housing, health family life etc.] if re-integration is to be successfully achieved - *Providing Support*;
- There is an urgent need to promote change in prisons and to foster a culture of innovation and feedback in order to support cooperation with external agencies and developmental action - *Stimulating Change and Cooperation*;
- The developments that have been pioneered in, and through, EQUAL should be consolidated - *Moving On*.

2. CONSTRUCTING PATHWAYS

Within EQUAL and other European, national and regional programmes, attempts have been made to introduce more 'tailor – made' provision to assist offenders in their social and vocation reintegration. The main innovative aspect in these approaches lies in providing a low threshold, entry point to a multi-stage integration process that may take place at several levels, linking and matching the needs and interests of offenders to different, hitherto separate services and offering individualised support and follow up. The approaches draw on the whole range of resources that can be mobilised in a local or territorial context.

These approaches are sometimes know as integration pathways, resettlement plans or even employability programmes but they generally include a series of stages, which were given different emphases depending on needs and opportunities. Participants received guidance through a structured menu of opportunities for information, guidance and counselling, pre-training, vocational training, assistance in career planning and job search, work placements and help with activities. The approaches often empower (ex)-prisoners to assess and orient their own progress and to draw strength from each other. At the same time, the approaches encourage public services, employers and organisations in the integration chain were encouraged to make a contribution within a structured partnership process.

The resultant pathways, plans or programmes are as diverse as the circumstances of the target groups and local labour markets and yet, the following common features can be identified and these will be refelected in the presentations and discussions during the workshop:

- Designing the pathway;
- Training and education;
- Employment;
- On-going support;
- Cementing the pathway together.

2.1. STARTING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND COVERING A RANGE OF NEEDS

In terms of combating re-offending, the sooner a start is made on creating a pathway the more effective the result is likely to be. In an ideal world, the pathway should stretch from the arrest, through the period of imprisonment, to the time of release and beyond. In the majority of EQUAL DPs working with (ex)-prisoners, the planning for resettlement began in prison, and in some Member States, this represented a considerable advance, as resettlement had previously been seen as the responsibility of agencies operating outside the prison walls.

In designing the integration pathway, enhancing the employability of the offender is the central issue but there are other aspects that require attention. Experience from EQUAL indicates that (ex)-prisoners are unable to focus on training or on their jobs when they have serious problems in other areas of their lives. Thus, apart from the obvious requirements for education and training, and employment, (ex)-prisoners can also need support⁵ with:

- Housing or other types of living accommodation;
- Finances including access to social benefits and help with debt;
- Health issues including drug abuse;
- Re-establishing social and family relationships;
- Hobbies and leisure time.

In all instances, the objective of this assistance is to create an acceptable living situation and a rhythm of life that prevents re-offending.

The Intervention Programme of the Finnish **PoMo** DP started with the discovery of the crime and it provided timely assistance between then and the actual court proceedings. If the young person had completed the programme successfully, this could reduce the severity of the fine or sentence and, in some cases, the prosecution was even waived. In its other Support Programme, Pomo used the time of imprisonment to assist resettlement, through rehabilitation, work and education and the offender also planned for the return to the civilian life and his or her housing situation, income, employment and education. During the whole process, the case manager coordinated the required back up services. This was a very important task because many of the participants had social, emotional and behavioural problems that were intertwined.

The *MABIS* programme, which was a predecessor to the **ZUBILIS** DP, operated in 11 of the 37 prisons in North Rhine-Westphalia. In each of the 11 prisons, a (team of) *MABIS* counsellor(s) was in place to work out, together with each willing prisoner, an individualised support plan involving guidance on suitable training opportunities and possible placements in employment after release. The counsellors also had a crucial interface function in ensuring effective links with the after-care agencies that were established by **MABIS.Net** in seven regions of the state.

Work-Wise operated by the **MATCH** DP in the Netherlands continues to provide young people with a seamless into-employment programme, creating a nationwide network for preparing release and providing aftercare. The programme is focused on boys and girls aged 15 to 24 and it has three routings that are followed simultaneously:

- 'Work and Education' prepares young offenders to function effectively in a paid job by providing training and work experience placements and assistance in making an application for a job or work placement;

⁵ These three components of the Integration Pathway are covered in more detail in the next three chapters of this document

- 'Living Independently and Coping with Leisure Time' assists juveniles and young offenders in creating a rhythm and a structure for their daily life, which will help them exercise their responsibilities and reduce their chances of re-offending;
- 'Creating a Social Network' provides intensive coaching in socially acceptable behaviour, relationships and social skills.

2.2. ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP OF THE PATHWAY

The outcomes of a number of EQUAL DPs indicate that resettlement pathways are more successful when the individual offender recognises that he or she is involved in, and responsible for, the process. This sense of ownership is obviously boosted if it is apparent that the pathway is a direct reflection of the individual prisoner's competences, needs and aspirations. Thus, most DPs established assessment procedures at the point of admission which actively engaged the offender.

The **S.A.L.I.S.** DP operated in the Abruzzo Region, which is in the east just slightly below the centre of Italy, although its activities mainly took place in the Metropolitan Area of Pescara. The project was a successor to the **ReLaIS** DP and continued to establish 'Individualised Inclusion Paths' after release. The Path started with what the project called a 'Demand Analysis,' which identified the individual's strengths and weaknesses and on this basis, an assessment was made of the best Inclusion Path to follow.

In the Netherlands, an individual assessment of the potential quality of life of the woman prisoner is made by the Individual Guidance Service (ITB), or the Education Department in the prison. This covers housing, employment, finances, health, education, social environment and hobbies. In addition, one of the partner organisation from **Balancing the Future, a New Challenge DP**, called *Delinkwentie & Samenleving* (Delinquency and Society), was actively involved in explaining what the DP could offer to the women prisoners. This organisation distributed promotional leaflets and then spoke directly to the female prisoners, either individually or during group seminars, about how the DP and its partners could provide immediate help.

The **Personal Progression System** was a DP led by the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO). A dedicated staff member employed by NIACRO, with EQUAL funding, was located in each of the three penal establishments in Northern Ireland. These members of staff pioneered the concept of employability assessments, which were then followed up by a consideration of what could be done to reinforce the individual prisoner's employability through the prison's education department or training workshops and/or by providing additional training opportunities after release.

Both, **PoMo** and **MATCH** encouraged young people to live independently and in their programmes and in many other DPs, the individual's motivation was central and people only joined these support programmes at their own request. The **Car.Te.S.I.O.** DP, in Northern Italy, accepted that its 'work insertion' plans should start from the situation of each prisoner or ex-offender and recognised that *"It was important that he or she should be encouraged and motivated to assume an active attitude and to bring his or her own resources, no matter how minimal, as an essential contribution to the plan. In this way, the individuals, with their own histories and systems of relationships, became the protagonists and creators of their own success."*

3. DELIVERING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The text at Section 1.2 refers to the Set of EU-level Recommendations for the Re-integration of (Ex)-offenders that was developed on the basis of EQUAL experience and endorsed at the EQUAL Policy Forum in Warsaw. The box below outlines the full series of recommendations related to education and training and this Chapter together with Chapters 2 and 4 provide some practical examples of EQUAL experiences from which these recommendations have been developed.

2. All prisoners should have the opportunity of engaging in training and educational programmes that will increase their employability.

- 2.1 In most Member States, policies on the provision of basic and vocational skills in prison already exist but there is a need to provide better solutions for their implementation. These should include procedures for a thorough assessment of the individual prisoner's competences, needs and aspirations, at the point of admission, on the basis of which an appropriate resettlement plan can be developed.
- 2.2 Flexible prison training systems that have the capacity to respond to local labour market needs must be developed in cooperation with local employers.
- 2.3 There should also be opportunities for employers to visit prisons to gain their own perspective on the training offered and the suitability of inmates for employment.
- 2.4 More opportunities for relevant work experience should be provided both inside and outside prisons.
- 2.5 Experiments in the use of e-learning in prisons should be expanded.
- 2.6 Any new solution must be embedded in current practices and not simply be an add-on and thus, cost effectiveness is a major driver and the solution must give better outcomes for the same or a lower price.

3.1. FINDING BETTER SOLUTIONS

In the 2nd Selection Round of EQUAL, 60% of 55 DPs were attempting to extend the range of opportunities that were available. The most ambitious of these was the EQUAL **REINSERT** Development Partnership (DP) that introduced learning opportunities as part of the regular provision in all 17 prisons in the French (and German) speaking Community, of Belgium. Within the context of **REINSERT**, a total of 28 further education and training centres were actively engaged in prison education and training. Qualified staff developed and delivered courses, assisted in interviewing and assessing potential participants and then, in offering them advice and guidance.

Eight of the participating further education and training centres nominated a socio-pedagogical coordinator. These coordinators met every two months to discuss, and find solutions to, issues that might have arisen from the training courses, such as the need to adapt course material or how to handle psychological problems that were related to course groups or individual participants.

Prisoners' participation in the training programmes was voluntary and they could select from a range of training options that were operated by different penal institutions and if necessary, they were transferred to the prison in which their choices of training programmes were available.

3.2. REFLECTING SKILL AND JOB REQUIREMENTS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Successful reintegration into employment requires access to skills and qualifications that have a real market value. Therefore, in EQUAL, some DPs focused on adapting education and training to changing labour market needs and on linking vocational preparation with new forms of after-care that enabled ex-prisoners to continue their training on release and also facilitated their placement in a job.

All of new education and training opportunities for prisoners in **REINSERT** are coordinated by 'Local Monitoring Committees' comprising prison wardens, the psycho-social service and the external training staff. The committee is chaired by each Prison Director and also includes the senior staff member of the prison (normally the Deputy Director) who has the responsibility for maintaining close links with relevant agencies and actors outside the prison, like the employment

services and social and labour market intermediaries. Through these links, information was received about skill requirements and gaps in the locality and the provision could then be adapted accordingly. During its work, **REINSERT** integrated its new training provision with further training or work experience opportunities that existed outside the prisons, thus paving new pathways that signposted more clearly the transition from prison to work and civil society.

The primary aim of **ZUBILIS** was to increase the relevance of education and training provision for (ex)-prisoners, by modernising its content and methods of delivery, in close cooperation with employers and other labour market actors. Its activities focused on three main areas:

- Increasing the media competence of teaching and training staff in the penal system and developing media-supported programmes for prison inmates that offered a combination of vocational and basic educational qualifications;
- Adapting existing vocational qualification programmes for use in prisons, through modular design and certification of learning units and the introduction of e-learning;
- Mobilising, and capitalising on, relevant expertise available outside the penal system, such as that available from temporary employment agencies and research organisations.

3.3. PRIORITY AREAS FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ITC Skills

Whilst ITC skills are essential prerequisites for most jobs in the labour market, the introduction of related learning opportunities into prisons can present a number of difficulties. For a long time, the idea of allowing access to the internet from jail has been perceived as being incompatible with the nature of penal institutions. However, some EQUAL DPs were able to overcome the barriers posed by security issues, specific legal requirements and also conventional attitudes towards prisoners.

The German **e-LiS** DP was launched, in 2002, 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 the Federal Republic of Germany⁶ and was based on 32 separate but inter-related projects. It focused on new forms of learning and support that facilitated access to marketable training qualifications, covered existing gaps in provision and stimulated the motivation of the participants. 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. **e-LiS** 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. Now, the combined outcomes from these projects provide a comprehensive and validated model of good practice that is applicable across all of the participating Länd

The **Tele-Learning for Imprisoned People (Telfi)** DP, in Austria, provided new practical tools and an infrastructure for e-learning in prisons. A central 'prison education server' and a server platform were established that complied with the security requirements of the individual institutions and available learning software was tested and then adapted to make it suitable for use in prisons. Though participation in the courses was voluntary, the number of people who were interested generally exceeded the number of available places. The programme included low threshold, and more demanding, courses and enabled participants to progress at a pace that matched their own capabilities. Courses could last up to 12 weeks and comprise about 20 - 25

⁶ The originally six of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Schleswig-Holstein have been joined by the State of Lower Saxony

hours of course work per week. The training took place in small groups of six participants and involved periods of self-study allied to cooperative learning. Each group was supported by a tutor recruited from the prison's staff and by a trainer, who was on site at least half a day per week to provide individual assistance and group coaching. Psychological support was offered in the weekly group meetings, when attempts were made to develop greater group cohesion and also to identify and address any personal problems such as falling levels of motivation, social competence and self-reliance.

Soft Skills

In addition to developing the vocational and technical skills of prisoners, DPs in EQUAL have also worked on skills that could be helpful in acquiring employment or in retaining employment. For example the **Women into Work** DP prepared its participants for the 'world outside prison' by running a series of exercises and workshops that were designed to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. The results were so significant that before their release some women were able to represent the DP at a range of meetings or make presentations about its activities. In addition, tuition was also provided in a range of specific job search skills such as:

- Completing Application Forms;
- Compiling CVs;
- Preparing for job interviews;
- Making a disclosure of convictions;
- Improving self presentation.

Other DPs concentrated on skills that would improve the individual's performance in the workplace and thereby, his or her value to an employer. Here an emphasis was placed on increasing knowledge about what is expected of employee and on improving personal relationship both in terms dealings with customers and working with fellow employees. The elements in the **S.A.L.I.S** programme included:

- Health and safety in the workplace;
- Company organisation;
- Labour market requirements;
- Team-working;
- Problem-solving.

A few DPs saw art as an important aid to getting ex-prisoners into employment. They believed that art could make a particular difference in altering offenders' thinking and behaviour, which could be just as important in reintegration as overcoming "harder" factors like accommodation, debt or the family situation. For example, KunstWerk(t) or '**ArtWork(s)**,' was a Dutch DP that piloted the use of art as a tool for labour market integration with four separate groups of severely disadvantaged people - migrants, young people at risk, people with learning difficulties and prisoners. Inmates at the Ter Peel women's prison at Evertsoord near Venlo, on the German border, and the nearby Maashegge semi-open men's prison were offered the opportunity to perform in a choir led by professional musicians. Anne van Otterloo the Project Coordinator explained that *"Art taps the wells of a person's creativity and gives them a way of expressing themselves. Once you have established a rapport through one medium you can generalise this to build a relationship and you can't lie when you are singing."* The governor of Maashegge prison, Willem Lingmont, said why it works from his point of view, *"We have a long history of this type of activity and we know it works – it makes a difference, and increases the chances of work in the future. One day everybody leaves prison and so the community also benefits."*

4. PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT

Time after time, statistics and research produced in all of the EU Member States confirm that having a job or some other form of socially valuable occupation is the single most important factor in preventing individuals from re-offending. Thus, it is very understandable that most of the EQUAL DPs attempted to involve employers and convince them that they should hire ex-prisoners. This was not always easy as many employers associate a criminal offence with dishonesty and very few include offenders in their Equal Opportunities policies.

4.1. CREATING AND MAINTAINING THE INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYERS

In EQUAL, a number of different tools and techniques were used to raise employers' awareness of the untapped pool of workers represented by ex-prisoners and to promote the 'business case' for their employment. The assistance of employers' federations and trade unions was also sought in changing some of the stereotypical views held by employers and in combating any potential discrimination in the workplace. Finally, DPs developed many kinds of services in order to persuade employers that they would have the necessary support if they decided to employ ex-prisoners.

S.A.L.I.S used the employers that were involved with the DP, as advocates of its approaches as it believed that they were the best people to stimulate the interest of other employers. Employers from two of its partners helped in this respects. Confesercenti, in Abruzzo, had 8.000 members, the majority of whom were shopkeepers, while CNA, the National Crafts Association, had 2.000 members in the region. In addition, the Italian Farmers' Federation, which was not a formal partner, helped the DP to contact its members. An employer representative explained that *"Once we employers have had a successful experience of employing an offender, we get together and try to come up with strategies for involving others. Quite often we will get together over a glass of wine with those entrepreneurs or employers that we want to recruit into the project."*

The **IMPACT** DP in the north of England established an 'Employment Charter' and a 'Portfolio of Achievement.' After consultations with employers and prisoners, it was agreed that the Charter would be presented in two sections. The first part stated the Prison Service's willingness to share accurate information about a prisoner's offending history and their suitability for employment and the employer's willingness, in turn, to treat such information in a confidential and sensitive manner. The second part, signed by the offender, HM Prison Service and the employer was a demonstration of the offender's willingness to openly disclose his or her criminal record to the employer and was included in the Portfolio of Achievement.

This Portfolio was an open acknowledgement that a prospective job seeker had spent time in prison but it also set out to demonstrate that the job seeker's attitudes, behaviour and expectations had been changed by the learning opportunities and the support that he or she had experienced during the time inside. In constructing the Portfolio, an emphasis was placed on frank and honest statements that were understandable to employers and each Portfolio had a Certificate of Verification countersigned by a Prison Service representative. Employers now admit to not having previously considered ex-prisoners for employment and report that they are pleased with performance of those that they had recruited.

As the lead partner within the **Personal Progression System** DP, the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) was keen to develop an innovative, effective service for employers in Northern Ireland. The resulting service provided immediate back-up and support by offering information and advice over a telephone 'help-line.' Complementary support was available through NIACRO's publications and a training workshop on 'The Fair Recruitment of People with Criminal Convictions' that covered best recruitment practice when requesting and handling conviction information and assessing the relevance of convictions against the duties of the job.

The **Balancing the Future** DP believed that employers would be more willing to hire ex-prisoners if they knew that they had additional support and assistance. The job coaches in the DP supported women in their attempts to find employment and once employment was found, a coach discussed with the new employee the level of commitment that she had to make in order to keep the new job. In addition to providing support for the woman, the job coach also provided support for her new employer, if this appeared to be necessary. Most of the employers had little or no experience of hiring female ex-prisoners and the job coaches helped them to understand the behaviour of the new employees which had, of course, been influenced by the time that they spent in prison.

4.2. DEVELOPING WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS OR 'STAGES'

In many different situations, work experience placements increased (ex)-prisoners' employability and were invaluable in the creation of permanent employment. Such placements gave (ex)-prisoners the chance to overcome employers prejudices and stereotypes and to prove that they could be efficient and effective employees. At the same time, they also had the opportunity to test out the enterprise or agency and the potential job to see if they were happy in that situation.

While a number of DPs mentioned in Section 3 have attempted to extend provision after release, some have extending work experience for prisoners. **Car.Te.S.I.O.** made useful initial steps in transforming the time spent in prison into an opportunity for vocational re-integration. One of its partners, Confcooperative, with its eight provincial offices in Piedmont, was in a good position to make effective contacts with cooperatives who could offer a "stage" or work placement or even a full time job. In doing this, Confcooperative was very careful to match the demand and supply of jobs. In the end, 48 local cooperatives were associated with the employment activities of the DP. As one of the trainers, explained, *"Today, many prisoners can work outside jail because we have together created social and economic reinsertion programmes for them and the prison authorities recognise the value of these plans."* Also, learning from the French system just across the border, about how to structure and organise work options in prisons helped the DP make a strong start on the extending the value and the number of the work experience opportunities that were available within the penal institutions.

4.3. PREPARING (EX)-PRISONERS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT OR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

One of the most challenging and the most ambitious tasks is to create entrepreneurs from (ex)-prisoners. However, this autonomous route is one way of avoiding the prejudice or stereotyping of employers or work colleagues, as ex-prisoners search for an acceptable and economically-viable form of work.

The Italian **SALIS** DP was one of only twelve DPs in the 2nd Selection Round of EQUAL that took the risk of pioneering entrepreneurship. Two of its partners CNA (the National Crafts Association and Confesercenti (the Association of Commerce, Tourism and Service Enterprises) had offices throughout the Province of Pescara that offered a variety of support services to entrepreneurs and micro-businesses. Each of these centres accepted the additional task of providing guidance and entrepreneurial training to ex-prisoners, and of helping them with the design of their new enterprises and the production of their business plans. Another significant advance was the establishing of a line of micro-credit that could be used by ex-prisoners. The CNA in Pescara and the Province of Pescara worked with the *Cooperativa Artigiana di Garanzia Futura* and also FINART, which are two organisations providing loans and financial guarantees to local artisans. Together, they provided a fund of 50.000 euro to be used to cover guarantees with local banks, when ex-prisoners ask for a small loan.

Two English DPs have also been active in this respect. A sub-project in **Women into Work** developed a **Creative Business Pilot Course** which aimed to provide women prisoners with the opportunity to become self-employed on their release. This project broke new ground, as some of the businesses were developed in, and operated from, prisons. Also, one of these would-be entrepreneurs had the idea of making and marketing sausages made from the meat of a rare variety of pig. As a result of the marketing skills acquired on the course, she made contact with a number of high quality food shops and succeeded in convincing them to stock her products. Then **IMPACT – Changing Directions** worked with carefully selected sex-offenders, who had previously been assessed for the risk of reoffending and their suitability for self-employment.

These individuals were trained as entrepreneurs and the DP had some success in attracting potential funders for these new business including local bank managers.

Basta was, and still is, a Swedish project that provides an empowering experience for a range of different target groups including (ex)-prisoners, long-term unemployed people, drug users, psychiatric patients and people with various physical disabilities. The approach of involving and employing such people in social enterprise has proved to be very cost effective. For example, an external evaluation⁷ of Basta and another Swedish project called Vägen ut!, or 'Exit' in English, calculated their social profits per year, which are the public costs that are eliminated or reduced when addicts recover plus the production values in these two cooperatives. The resulting figure of € 13 million roughly equates to the budget for the addiction programmes in a Swedish city of 200,000 inhabitants. It has set up its own education system called YES or Yrkes- och Entreprenörutbildning (vocational and entrepreneurial education). The school offers a one-year course that leads to a secondary school certificate that recognised by both employers and trade unions. Students work in small groups of up to eight. They learn social and entrepreneurial skills in the mornings and trade skills, taught by specialist tutors who come in from local schools, in the afternoons. Half the time is spent on the Basta premises and half on work placements. Skills offered include carpentry, bricklaying, dog and horse breeding, computer training, plumbing and restaurant operation.

5. PROVIDING SUPPORT

5.1. IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

Whilst, the support component of an integration pathway should start in prison or even, if possible, on arrest, it really swings into play on release and particularly during the first days or weeks after release when the chance of reoffending is the greatest. Thus, a smooth handover between sources of support in prison and sources of support in the community is vital.

On the day of the release, the case manager and the mentor from the **PoMo** DP picked up the participant from the prison and took him or her home. From then on, support was available every day for an average of 37 hours per week because the risk of recidivism is at its greatest just after release. The plan was to find a rhythm for everyday life and to investigate the possibilities for work. The mentors and the young (ex)-offenders also spent leisure time together trying out the young person's former hobbies or starting new ones. There were also practical things that had to be done and with their mentors, some of the participants redecorated their flats or learned to cook. All of these hobbies, sports and activities were designed to boost the young people self-confidence and autonomy. The mentor's support in finding useful and fulfilling activities was also vital because the unemployment rate in the area was around 20% and most of the young people could not rely on a job as a way of establishing a daily routine that would stop them from reoffending.

Within the framework of the **Women into Work** DP, a similar type of approach was adopted by the 'Peer Support and Resettlement Pilot' that employed members of staff who were women from an offending background. These peer supporters started their work while offenders were still in prisons in the Yorkshire and Humberside area. Then, they were there to meet each woman as she came through the prison gates and they continued to offer her support and assistance in resettlement, particularly in terms of increasing her chances of finding a job. In addition, the response of many women when they were told of, or found out about, a staff member's background was often *"If they can do something like this, maybe I can."*

5.2. COORDINATED SUPPORT

In order to identify the barriers to education, training and employment faced by women prisoners in Britain, **Women into Work** trained a team of peer researchers, who were all female ex-

⁷ "From the public perspective" – a copy in English is available from eva.johansson@tillvaxtverket.se

offenders. One of the main findings of the research carried out by this team was that women require practical and emotional support particularly during the transition phase between prison and the community, as they felt as though they were "*fighting a losing battle*" and that they were powerless to change their lives. The research revealed a need for support for those issues which have a more immediate priority than education, training and employment, such as housing and child care and other social problems. Fortunately, the coordinated provision of both practical and emotional support was reflected in the staffing and structure of many of the EQUAL DPs.

The **Personal Progression System (PPS)** established strong working relationships with a range of public sector, private sector, voluntary and community agencies so that these agencies could be called on, sometimes at short notice, to offer different forms of support to prisoners as they left the prison gates. A very important new element of coordination pioneered by the DP was the detailed planning for the period immediately after release. Every ex-offender had a series of meetings lined up with those agencies that could assist his or her reintegration. These could include appointments at a wide range of services such as a housing association, the social security office, the doctor's surgery or a training agency. The Probation Service welcomed these developments because it felt that some agencies took the view that until a prisoner was on their doorstep they didn't exist and DP helped to change this attitude by starting the process earlier.

In the **Balancing the Future** DP, a job coach from Zorgconcept, one of the partners in the DP, became directly involved, three months before the woman's release. The Detention Trajectory Plan (Integration Pathway) was updated and once any other problems were resolved, the job coach advised on, and helped to arrange, suitable education or training opportunities either inside prison or on release. The support from the job coach was available for 6 months up to a maximum period of 12 months and was geared to fostering the woman's independence. Whilst the job coach concentrated on employment aspects, he or she also coordinated the work of the external 'chain' partners. Questions related to accommodation, which was a big problem for 40% of the women, were covered by Exodus, an NGO with considerable experience in the field of housing. During the 1st Selection Round, Exodus opened a new house in which female ex-prisoners could stay with their children for up to 9 months before they found permanent accommodation. A third partner, Humanitas, offered assistance with all aspects of family life and particularly childcare.

Within the context of the **ZUBILIS** DP, the counsellors that operated in prisons had a crucial interface function in ensuring effective links with the after-care agencies that were established by **MABIS.NeT**, a 1st Selection Round DP, in seven regions of the state. These agencies had knowledge and expertise in both the world of prisons and the field of employment, unlike most other labour market intermediaries. They were thus particularly well placed to offer advice and services to ex-prisoners, training providers and employers. This helped to normalise the situation of ex-convicts during the first six months after their period of custody and to prevent drop out from training or work.

The **IMPACT** DP in the Netherlands was the predecessor to the **MATCH** DP and it developed a new model of Dual Case Management through a 'twosome' of officials. This duo comprised the individual employment counsellor (IEC) from the penal institution and the (youth) probation officer of a youth care service. The IEC acted as case manager during the routing within the institution and could be seen as the 'routing manager'. Together, the twosome and the young person drafted the routing plan and then the IEC consulted internal or external experts and controlled the progress of the routing. The two officials maintained close communication and if young offenders established a natural affinity with one or other of the officials, then the arrangement was flexible enough for that individual to act as their main support or contact person when they were released.

6. STIMULATING CHANGE AND COOPERATION

The fact that partnership was a key principle in EQUAL facilitated changes in prisons and supported cooperation with external agencies. Such coordinated approaches are needed if the individual offender is to have a straight and unbroken pathway to successful re-integration. If the many different, individual needs of prisoners are to be met and all the related problems resolved, there has to be close communication and collaboration between the prison and the outside world

and between those agencies involved in the integration process or chain. Fortunately, in EQUAL time and money was made available so that effective, working partnerships could be established. Thus, the partnership principle of EQUAL produced many positive examples of cooperation involving prisons, education, health and social security, NGOs, employers' and trade union organisations and, at local level, organisations representing prisoners, their families and their victims were also involved. Some of these new approaches are described in greater detail below.

6.1. CREATING A REGIONAL MODEL OF COOPERATION

The **Car.Te.S.I.O.** DP created local networks called GOLs (Local Operatives Groups) in the Piedmont Region of the north of Italy. The 12 GOLs were formed in the geographical areas around each prison and brought together the municipality, the social service centre, vocational training providers, voluntary organisations and representatives of the DP's partners. The DP was constructed in a way that maximised the chances of its model being mainstreamed. One of the most important players in this respect was the Regional Office of PRAP (the National Department for Prison Administration) as PRAP brought on board the managers and staff of all the penal institutions and all the other offices and agencies concerned with the administration of the criminal justice system in Piedmont. Another partner, the Regional Confederation of Cooperatives also had a very important role to play in raising the awareness of employers. The model developed by CarTeSIO that included the training of operators, vocational training and 'stages' or work experience for prisoners, support in finding housing on release and information desks in all prisons has now become known as the 'Piedmont model.' In addition, in recognition of the value of the GOLs, the Provinces within Piedmont took on the role of coordination and provided their secretariats and this ensured the continued sustainability and success of this cooperative model.

6.2. COMING TOGETHER TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE AFTER-CARE

During the 1st Selection Round, the German **MABIS.NeT** DP's after-care agencies were established in seven regions of North Rhine-Westphalia. Different types of private providers played a central role in piloting these new agencies, including NGOs, trade unions and employers' organisations. The effective networking contacts that existed between the regional agencies make it possible to ensure that resettlement support was also available to the large number of individuals who, after having served their sentence, decided to move away from the location of their previous imprisonment. The large majority of those who called on the services of the **MABIS.NeT** after-care agencies were ex-prisoners who did not access employment or had dropped out of an initial placement. During the period 2003-2004, 85% of the 1100 individuals who were 'registered' with the after-care agencies after their release from prison⁸ were facing these problematic situations. For half of this large group of clients, the agencies were able to offer job or training opportunities. Whilst help in providing placements appeared to be the most frequently requested form of support, it was not the only one. More than one third of the clients also required other types of assistance to enable them to stabilise their life situations. These included job coaching, help with social or health issues, solving housing problems or advice in dealing with debt and other financial matters. Only 16% of all its participants abandoned the after-care programme and this was a testimony to the relevance of the assistance that it offered.

6.3. INVOLVING ALMOST HALF OF GERMANY

The German EQUAL **e-LiS Development Partnership** was launched in 2002 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 the Federal Republic of Germany⁹. One important outcome of its networking activities was the adoption of a formal agreement by the Ministries of Justice of those federal states that participated in the e-LiS DP and, also the State of Lower Saxony, to establish the '**RESO-Northern Alliance.**' This is a structured framework for

⁸ In addition, **MABIS.NeT** provided support to more than 500 prisoners **during** their period of detention.

⁹ Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Schleswig-Holstein.

cooperation between the administrations of justice in the fields of education, training and labour-market programmes for the social and vocational integration of prisoners.

The members of the Northern Alliance have made a firm commitment to engage in coordinated action to improve the employability of prison inmates, and to promote the exchange of experience and transfer of good practice between the relevant institutions in their justice and penal systems. They have also agreed to coordinate their action in initiating the necessary legal changes and creating favourable framework conditions for their work. Each of the participating Länder has taken a lead role in one of the thematic areas, and/or a responsibility for particular tasks in the organisation and management of the Alliance. The thematic areas include:

- Combining relevant assistance and employment measures inside and outside the penal institutions, as part of an integrated support system;
- Introducing modular, flexible and individualised education/training processes, based on a common approach to individual assessment and profiling;
- Developing the use of IT-based learning systems;
- Ensuring the labour market relevance of education and employment offers in prisons;
- Creating a common system for the re-integration of ex-prisoners after their period of custody.

Since its establishment, the RESO Northern Alliance has attracted considerable attention and a similar type of agreement has been concluded between the Länder of Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz and Saarland to establish the South West Cooperation.

6.4. AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THE NEEDS OF WOMEN PRISONERS

The **Balancing the Future – A New Challenge** DP, in the Netherlands, was carefully constructed so that each partner brings specific expertise to the various aspects of the resettlement processes of women prisoners. The partnership included agencies or departments that work inside the prison and those which mainly operated outside the prison. During the period in detention, support was provided by the Individuele Traject Begeleider or individualised vocational guidance. Through this Individuele Traject Begeleider (ITB), the training that could take place in the prison was planned, as were the links between this training and work experience placements outside the prison. ITB also arranged all the paper-work and certificates that the women would need for their lives when they left the institution. In addition, Delinkwentie & Samenleving (Delinquency and Society), was actively involved in explaining what the DP could offer to the women prisoners both inside prison and on release.

In terms of those agencies that work mainly outside the prison walls, Zorgconcept (Care Concept) was responsible for employment-related support that included job mediation, vocational training and education. Zorgconcept also coordinated the work of the other external partners, which were Exodus, an NGO with considerable experience in the field of housing, and Humanitas with expertise in family matters and childcare. This combined, intensive support represented a highly developed and specialised reintegration service that could not have been guaranteed by the prison service or the probation department working alone.

6.5. COUNTING THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP

In Finland, the **PoMo** DP developed two novel, comprehensive programmes of after-care. However, it was unlikely that individual partners would have maintained their interest in these reforms unless they had evidence that they were bringing some benefit to their agencies. Happily this was the case for PoMo. The Chief of Police in Koillismaa identified one aspect of the project's success as being the fact that two brothers had not reoffended over the last year and compared with their previous records that meant that his officers had 30 less crimes to investigate. Similarly, the prosecutors, courts, housing departments, joint social work/employment offices and youth work offices all realised that these young people would be making fewer and less frequent demands on their time and resources, as a result of their participation in the programmes. Also, in a more positive sense, they knew that if they were having problems with a

young offender, they could call on other agencies who could assist them or on mentors who might have been in a better position to advise or counsel that individual. For the prisons involved, the situation was slightly different but certainly they welcomed the increased contact with the 'outside world' and the fact that they were in direct contact with organisations that could assist in the planning and implementation of plans for the release of their inmates.

7. MOVING ON

The final section of the Set of EU-level Recommendations for the Re-integration of (Ex)-offenders that was established on the basis of EQUAL experience proposes that *"The developments that have been pioneered in, and through, EQUAL should be consolidated"* (see Annex 4). Fortunately, opportunities arose for consolidation and were taken at all levels.

National and Regional Level

In the first instance, various Member States have built on the EQUAL experience and have used their national and regional ESF Operational Programmes to continue support for projects that address the needs of (ex)-prisoners. The modes that have been used to provide this support have varied and include:

- Direct allocation of finance to Departments or Administrations of Justice in Spain, England, Poland and the Netherlands and also German Länder, such as Thüringen, Berlin and Baden Württemberg. This funding has then been passed on to contract providers;
- Tendering procedures initiated by ESF Managing Authorities to which prison regimes or individual prisons have responded;
- Selection by ESF Managing Authorities of NGOs or private providers of resettlement programmes selection without the involvement of prison regimes.

The ESF support that is currently available to (ex)-prisoner projects in the Member States is detailed in Annexe 5.

European level

An opportunity to continue the valuable exchange of experience and development work at European level that was initiated under EQUAL was created by the Commission's Restricted Call for Proposals VP/2008/018 – 'Learning for change - Setting up learning networks under the ESF 2007-2013.' The German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, invited ESF Managing Authorities in Member States and regions to a meeting in April 2008, to discuss the possibility of establishing a network on the topic of (ex)-offenders. There was considerable interest in submitting an application and the German Partner was asked to develop a proposal. This work resulted in the establishing of ExOCoP (Ex-Offender Community of Practice that will be funded by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities until the beginning of 2012. This learning network currently has partners from 11 Member States, with four of these countries also being represented at regional level. At both national and regional level an emphasis has been placed on having ministries or departments of both labour (ESF) and justice (prison and probation services) represented. The three objectives of ExOCoP are:

▪ 1. Linking good practice to improved policy

In terms of realising this first objective, ExOCoP intends to develop the Set of Recommendations on the Reintegration of (Ex)-Offenders that emerged from EQUAL by engaging Departments or Ministries of Justice and the Prison Regimes in a series of workshops on specific themes and seminars to explore these issues further (see Annexe 5). All of the outcomes will be fed into a final policy forum that is intended to produce a second, updated set of recommendations;

▪ 2. Developing criteria for the evaluation of work with (ex)-prisoners

Whilst the progress and developments in working with (ex)-prisoners achieved under EQUAL were considerable and there is a lot of anecdotal evidence to suggest that EQUAL approaches were successful in combating recidivism, this evidence is rarely underpinned by hard facts and figures. In ExOCOP's Evaluation sub-project, there will be the opportunity to concentrate on gathering the evidence that currently exists and to formulate a framework that will ensure that projects collect the data and make the measurements that will provide an acceptable standard of proof of the validity of their new approaches;

▪ 3. Sharing knowledge and experience throughout Europe

The Knowledge Management sub-project involves four interested parties - Germany, Italy, Spain and England but will be extended to other countries. The whole purpose of the Knowledge Management sub-project is to share the knowledge and experience that has been acquired by individual prisons and probation services across Member States and then across Europe. Also, the process, as distinct from the content, will be shared through a final European event on 'Knowledge Management in Penitentiary Systems.'

Another point worth noting is that DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has established a support team for this Learning Network that involves representatives of DG Justice, Freedom and Security and DG Education and Culture. This means that all aspects - social, vocational, legal and educational - are covered in a concerted attempt to improve European and Member State policies and practices for resettlement. One demonstrable aspect of this cooperation is that four workshops in ExOCOP's work programme (see Annex 5) are being held at DG Education and Culture's European Conference on Prison Education.

7.1. ISSUES FOR FURTHER ATTENTION

It is to be hoped that this new Learning Network and the transnational and European level cooperation that has been established around it can address some of the outstanding issues.

Changes in Prison

There was limited experience within EQUAL of innovations in prisons that were structural and related to the management of change, the introduction of quality systems and the motivation of staff to adopt a more creative, pro-active attitude to the rehabilitation of inmates. If the pathway approach is to be really effective, it must start as early as possible. Thus, members of prison staff must be able to initiate and maintain the pathway process. Existing practice suggests that some members of staff require training or awareness raising on opening up prisons to agencies and individuals, including employers, so that they can support and prepare prisoners to play a more positive role in society on their release.

Then, trainers in prison have to be prepared to deliver training in the new skills that respond to the needs of employers and the local labour market. In this respect, IT is one of the priority areas for development of the skills of prisoners and at the same time it also offers a technique through which the training or teaching skills of staff can be upgraded. It would be very valuable, if new staff development modules were to be established covering these and other issues.

Changes in Society

Some attempts were made by EQUAL to develop activities that could provide a structure and a rhythm for the lives of those offenders and ex-prisoners who did not have any employment. This is a topic that requires more urgent attention in this economic crisis, where jobs are increasingly difficult to find and are even scarcer for those with low skill levels. For many of these individuals, and especially the current large numbers of rootless and directionless young people, a return to the classroom is a non-starter because they have already failed in, or been failed by, the normal educational system. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop new forms of experiential learning that will engage the interest of potential offenders and (ex)-offenders and provide a positive sense of purpose in their lives.

The 'DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities' Contribution to the BEPA Working Group on Social Innovation' indicates that *"Combining competitiveness and solidarity will require the promotion of new forms of partnership between authorities and organisations at all levels, and strengthening the involvement of citizens. Innovative solutions should be informed by the crises to prevent a return to exclusion or to the worsening of inequalities."* Developing these new forms of experiential learning is not only the task of education and training authorities or prison and probation services, particularly as many of these learning opportunities will take place outside their walls and require the involvement of civil society. There are existing initiatives like social cooperatives and enterprises, voluntary and community-based projects, sporting and outdoor educational activities and mobility programmes that offer empowering experiences, as they provide opportunities to exercise responsibility and to build skills and self-confidence. The challenge that faces us all is to put these initiatives together in a programme that can be generalised or mainstreamed, with all the associated questions of financing and the even more important issue of resourcing in terms of a sufficient number of suitably qualified and committed members of staff.

ANNEX1: EQUAL (EX)-OFFENDER DPs AND ACTIVITIES

- **Austria**
 - Telfi http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-suc-telfi.pdf
- **Belgium**
 - REINSERT http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-reinsert.pdf
- **Germany**
 - MABIS.NeT and ZUBILIS http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-zubilis.pdf
 - e-LIS and the Northern Alliance http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-off-ntn.pdf
- **Finland**
 - PoMo (Path with own mentor) and Youth RISE http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-pomo.pdf
- **Italy**
 - Car.Te.S.I.O. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-cartesio.pdf
 - S.A.L.I.S. and R.e.L.a.I.S. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/practical-examples/employ-06-salis_en.cfm
- **The Netherlands**
 - MATCH and IMPACT (Integration of Mediation Planning Assures Chances in Transition) http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-match.pdf
 - Toekomst in Balans, een nieuwe uitdaging (Balancing the Future, a New Challenge) http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-balancing.pdf
 - ArtWork(s) in the Third Sector http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/practical-examples/entrep-07-kunstenaars_en.cfm
- **Sweden**
 - Basta http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg2-suc-eff.pdf
- **UKgb**
 - IMPACT - Innovation Means Prisons And Community Together http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-exa2-impact.pdf
 - Women into Work (WiW) http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/practical-examples/employ-06-wiw_en.cfm
 - NEON UK http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-off-ntn.pdf
- **UKni**
 - Personal Progression System (PPS) and The Reachout Programme http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg1-suc-progresinnov.pdf
- **European Level**
 - Exchange Event 'Passport2Freedom' http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200703-offend_en.cfm
 - Policy Forum 'Prevention or Re-imprisonment?' http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200707-warsoff_en.cfm

ANNEX 2: THE EU PRISON POPULATION IN 2009¹⁰

Country	Prison ¹¹ Population	Percentage Change in Prison Population since 1995	Occupancy level (based on official capacity)	Prison population per 100,000 of national population	Foreign	Female	Youth ¹²
Austria	8,308	+34.4%	97.1%	99	43.6%	6.0%	2.5%
Belgium	10,002	+ 33.0%	118.8%	93	42.1%	4.5%	0.3%
Bulgaria	9,408	+35.1%	105.2%	124	1.9%	3.2%	0.5%
Cyprus	671	+ 294.7%	152.7%	83	4.8%	4.8%	5.8%
Czech Republic	22,019	+ 17.4%	98.2%	209	7.4%	5.4%	1.0%
Denmark	3,448	+ 0.3%	90.5%	63	22.5%	4.4%	0.3%
Estonia	3,656	- 16.9%	94.2%	273	6.9%	5.2%	1.4%
Finland	3,583	+18.7%	101.1%	67	10.3%	6.8%	0.1%
France	59,655	+ 15.6%	118.1%	96	19.2%	3.7%	1.1%
Germany	73,592	+ 11.3%	92.6%	90	26.3%	5.3%	3.8%
Greece	12,300	+ 108.9%	141.9%	109	43.9%	5.4%	3.5%
Hungary	15,227	+ 22.3%	121.2%	152	3.7%	6.3%	3.3%
Ireland	3,895	+ 89.6%	106.9%	85	12.6%	3.5%	1.7%
Italy	58,597	+ 18.0%	112.8%	97	37.1%	4.4%	0.5%
Latvia	7,200	- 14.2%	70.4%	319	1.3%	5.5%	2.7%
Lithuania	7,866	- 38.5%	86.8%	234	0.9%	4.4%	2.4%
Luxembourg	745	+ 58.8%	106.9%	155	73.3%	3.5%	1.1%
Malta	480	+ 144.9%	84.5%	116	39.7%	5.0%	6.1%
Netherlands	16,416	+ 60.2%	76.7%	100	30.5%	8.7%	7.6%
Poland	85,598	+ 40.0%	103.0%	225	0.7%	3.1%	1.3%
Portugal	11,082	-10.22%	91.6%	104	20.3%	5.6%	0.8%
Romania	27,071	- 40.2%	79.4%	126	4.7%	4.7%	1.7%
Slovakia	8,166	+ 3.4%	75.4%	151	1.8%	4.6%	0.6%
Slovenia	1,317	+ 41.8%	119.9%	65	10.5%	4.5%	0.4%
Spain	76,455	+ 90.4%	136.3%	164	35.1%	7.9%	2.2%
Sweden	6,853	+ 18.8%	97.5%	74	27.5%	5.5%	0%
UK- Eng/Wales	84,409	+ 65.6%	112.2%	154	13.6%	13.6%	2.5%
UK-Scotland	7,980	+ 41.1%	107.4%	153	2.8%	5.3%	6.2%
UK-NI	1,456	- 16.3%	90.5%	81	8.8%	3.4%	0.7%
EU Overall	627,455	+ 24.2%	109.4%	126¹³	19.6%	6.2%	2.1%

¹⁰ Latest National Data available from the International Centre for Prison Studies at Kings College, University of London

¹¹ Figures include pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners

¹² While terms vary (Juveniles / minors / young prisoners) all %ages for under 18s except Cyprus and Spain (under 21) and Spain and Sweden have no prisoners under 18

¹³ Taking the Eurostat figure for the total population of the EU in January 2009, as being 499,723,520

ANNEX 3: THE EU PRISON POPULATION IN 2006¹⁴

M S	Prison ¹⁵ Population	Percentage Change in Prison Population since 1995	Occupancy level (based on official capacity)	Prison population per 100,000 of national population	Foreign prisoners
Austria	8,766	+ 41.8%	107.2%	105	45.1%
Belgium	9,597	+ 26.9%	110.6%	91	4.2%
Cyprus	580	+ 241.2%	170.6%	76	47.1%
Czech Republic	18,980	+ 1.2%	99.8%	185	7.2%
Denmark	4,198	+ 22.1%	95.3%	77	17.5%
Estonia	4,463	+ 1.4%	102.2%	333	36.4%
Finland	3,954	+ 31.0%	112.4%	75	8.0%
France	52,009	+ 0.7%	109.9%	85	21.4%
Germany	77,166	+ 16.7%	96.5%	94	28.2%
Greece	9,984	+ 69.6%	178.8%	90	41.7%
Hungary	15,720	+ 23.8%	139.6%	156	3.8%
Ireland	3,080	+ 50.0%	98.5%	72	9.0%
Italy	61,721	+ 24.3%	131.5%	104	33.2%
Latvia	6,676	- 29.4%	79.0%	292	0.5%
Lithuania	8,124	- 38.4%	84.6%	240	0.8%
Luxembourg	768	+ 63.8%	110.3%	167	75.0%
Malta	352	+ 79.6%	79.3%	86	35.0%
Netherlands	21,013	+ 105.0%	95.6%	128	31.7%
Poland	88,494	+ 41.1%	122.6%	232	0.7%
Portugal	12,846	+ 4.1%	104.4%	121	18.5%
Slovakia	8,493	+ 14.6%	81.2%	158	2.0%
Slovenia	1,301	+ 57.7%	116.6%	65	13.0%
Spain	64,215	+ 59.9%	129.5%	145	29.7%
Sweden	7,450	+ 29.2%	102.7%	82	26.2%
UK-Eng./Wales	79,950	+ 56.9%	112.7%	148	13.6%
UK-Scotland	7,171	+ 26.8%	111.5%	140	1.3%
UK-N. Ireland	1,454	- 16.4%	97.3%	84	0.8%
EU Overall	578,525	+ 27.9%	114.0%	125¹⁶	19.1%

¹⁴ Based on National Data, last updated on 10 December 2006, from the International Centre for Prison Studies at Kings College, University of London

¹⁵ Figures include pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners and whilst all relate to 2006, the counts for each country have been taken at different times

¹⁶ Taking the Eurostat figure for the total population of the EU in January 2006, as being 463,523.4 million

Annex 4: Recommendations for the Reintegration of (Ex)-offenders

Based on new approaches developed within the EQUAL Community Initiative

This Set of Recommendations was produced by a European Steering Group¹⁷ of ten Member States. This group coordinated a series of activities¹⁸ to mainstream the innovative resettlement practices that had been tested within EQUAL. It believed that the process of mainstreaming the approaches that have been tried and tested in EQUAL would be significantly enhanced through the establishment of European level Recommendations for the Reintegration of (Ex)-offenders. Whilst it was aware of the Council of Europe Recommendation on European Prison Rules¹⁹, it felt that a stronger emphasis needed to be placed on improving employability through providing marketable training in prisons, strengthening equality of opportunity and delivering more effective inter-service cooperation. The Steering Group was also of the opinion that the development and implementation of such recommendations should be embedded in a process of continuous and regular dialogue, at European level, on the transnational piloting and validation of new practices.

The Set of Recommendations for Reintegration produced by the Steering Group, was endorsed at the EQUAL Policy Forum entitled "Prevention or Re-imprisonment?" held in Warsaw, on 21 and 22 June 2007. At this event, representatives from EQUAL were joined by representatives of European criminal justice and penal systems, employers, educationalists and non-governmental organisations. One of speakers in the final session, Gudrun Tolzmann, Head of the Prison and Probation Division in the German Federal Ministry of Justice, was very strongly in favour of sending the Set of Recommendations to the Council of Europe, as she believed that the Council of Europe could act in this area and was also interested in improving conditions for (ex)-prisoners.

After consultation with EQUAL interests, she forwarded the recommendations, through the appropriate channels, to the Bureau of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC). One item on the agenda of this Bureau's meeting in Strasbourg, on 12-14 November 2008, was the 'Draft Recommendation on guidelines to agencies providing probation and aftercare to offenders' that was being prepared by the Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP). The minutes of this meeting record that the Bureau of the CDPC decided to "*instruct the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Chair of PC-CP the following comments made by individual members of the Bureau: the necessity to take into account the EU Policy Recommendations presented in Warsaw, 2007.*"

Thus, proper weight will be given to EQUAL's recommendations by the Council for Penological Co-operation in its drafting of new European guidelines for offenders' probation and aftercare services.

¹⁷ **Belgium (fr)** with Belgium (nl); **The Netherlands**; **Germany** with France, Czech Republic and Greece; **Luxemburg**; **Italy** with Sweden and Austria; **Portugal**; **Poland** with Lithuania and Finland; **Spain**; **UKgb** with Estonia; **UKni** with Latvia, Hungary and Ireland

¹⁸ Please see http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200603-off-euwk_en.cfm

¹⁹ Recommendation Rec(2006)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Prison Rules (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2006 at the 952nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Recommendations

National or regional level

1. *Successful reintegration of (ex)-offenders requires a case management approach from arrest, through the period of imprisonment, to the time of release and beyond.*

- 1.1 This necessitates the engagement of stakeholders, including statutory, non-governmental and private agencies and the offenders together with their families and victims, in the design, development and implementation of these approaches.
- 1.2 The vertical systems of delivery and of accountability in prison services and other public and private agencies concerned with resettlement represent a major barrier to such approaches and thus, more structured inter-institutional cooperation is required.
- 1.3 Professional staff must realise that multi-disciplinary interventions carry imperatives to communicate, share and interact.
- 1.4 The use of transversal or “single pot” funding, such as that offered through EQUAL, should be investigated as a method of stimulating more multi-agency, holistic approaches to resettlement activities.
- 1.5 The financing of these approaches should be driven by innovation to ensure continual change and development.
- 1.6 Partnership approaches to resettlement should be further encouraged by promoting demonstration projects in coalition with champions in relevant institutions and by actions led by municipalities that increase society’s responsibility for successful reintegration.

2. *All prisoners should have the opportunity of engaging in training and educational programmes that will increase their employability.*

- 2.7 In most Member States, policies on the provision of basic and vocational skills in prison already exist but there is a need to provide better solutions for their implementation. These should include procedures for a thorough assessment of the individual prisoner’s competences, needs and aspirations, at the point of admission, on the basis of which an appropriate resettlement plan can be developed.
- 2.8 Where possible, prisoners should serve their sentences in one location, as close as possible to their homes or families, as this arrangement increases the chances of such resettlement plans being successful.
- 2.9 Flexible prison training systems that have the capacity to respond to local labour market needs must be developed in cooperation with local employers.
- 2.10 There should also be opportunities for employers to visit prisons to gain their own perspective on the training offered and the suitability of inmates for employment.
- 2.11 More opportunities for relevant work experience should be provided both inside and outside prisons.
- 2.12 Experiments in the use of e-learning in prisons should be expanded.
- 2.13 Any new solution must be embedded in current practices and not simply be an add-on and thus, cost effectiveness is a major driver and the solution must give better outcomes for the same or a lower price.

3. *Having a job is the most important factor in preventing re-offending so more efforts are required to engage both public and private employers and to explore other forms of job creation.*

- 3.1 There is a need for more intensive public information campaigns that will raise employers' awareness of the untapped pool of workers represented by ex-offenders and promote the "business case" for their employment.
- 3.2 The assistance of employers' federations and trade unions should be sought in both finding employment for (ex)-offenders and in combating any potential discrimination in the workplace.
- 3.3 Employers should be given more encouragement to recruit ex-offenders by establishing targets for the number of socially excluded persons in their work forces or by providing financial incentives for employing ex-offenders.
- 3.4 The legal barriers to employing ex-offenders that exist in some Member States should be reduced or removed.
- 3.5 National, regional and local authorities should lead by example through implementing the principle of equality in their employment policies and introducing legislation that alleviates the stigma of possessing a criminal conviction.
- 3.6 Existing obligations to disclose criminal convictions to a potential employer should be reviewed and it would be helpful to introduce additional financial incentives for employers to recruit (ex)-offenders and for (ex)-offenders to seek employment.
- 3.7 Initial positive experiences in cooperating with temporary employment agencies and in using experienced enterprise agencies and business incubators to promote self-employment should be extended.

4. *Attention must also be given to other aspects of the lives of (ex)-offenders if reintegration is to be successfully achieved.*

- 4.1 Housing is often a crucial factor for the (ex)-offender and any resettlement plan should ensure that the individual has somewhere to live on his, or her, release.
- 4.2 Aspects concerned with families and the care of children are particularly relevant to women prisoners and these should be addressed in resettlement planning prior to leaving prison.
- 4.3 Apart from local partnership projects, attention needs to be given to innovative institutional structures to ensure a comprehensive response. Inter-Ministerial Groups should be established that draw together senior government officials from all departments that have a role to play in reducing offending such as justice, education, health, housing and social work.
- 4.4 In so far as it possible, prisons should empower (ex)-offenders to play more open and constructive roles within their local communities. This is especially true of young offenders where attempts to inculcate new values and attitudes and to involve them in new sports, hobbies or social groupings can help reduce their chances of re-offending.
- 4.5 Issues concerning the social reintegration of offenders should be resolved, in advance of release, by inviting representative of the relevant agencies or skilled advisors who can liaise with such agencies to counsel prisoners.
- 4.6 In addition, greater use should be made of periods of home leave by encouraging prisoners to contact local agencies, such as training, employment, social security and health and addiction services, prior to their release so that their reintegration will be as smooth as possible.

5. *There is an urgent need to promote change in prisons, to foster a culture of innovation and to support cooperation with external agencies and the type of developmental action that is outlined above.*

- 5.1 In complex and very hierarchical structures, such as prisons, any changes can only be sustained on the basis of an holistic approach to quality and change management.
- 5.2 All professional groups employed by, or operating in, prisons should be involved in the development, continuous improvement and maintenance of change projects.
- 5.3 In order to achieve higher levels of quality, prisons should manage and develop their employees by communicating, empowering and recognising their individual contributions, in a way that motivates these members of staff and builds their commitment to using and enhancing their skills and knowledge.
- 5.4 Cultural and organisational change in prisons should be driven by the promotion of leadership competences, knowledge sharing, a customer (stakeholder) focus, transparency and networking.
- 5.5 Prisons have to become more open to society, not merely in terms of visits by relatives. Inmates should have the opportunity to spend some time outside prison on work experience or to seek counselling and advice on matters concerned with their reintegration and social institutions and agencies should have more access to prisons.

Transnational Level

6 *The developments that have been pioneered in, and through, EQUAL should be consolidated.*

- 6.1 There should be continuity of approach with (ex)-offenders being a priority group in ESF Operational Programmes and the emphases on innovation and transnationality should be maintained.
- 6.2 Assistance should be made available through the ESF or programmes operated by DG-Justice, Freedom and Security and DG-Education and Culture to support the national networks of developmental projects working with (ex)-offenders and, in particular, their transnational activities.
- 6.3 Any extension of the work of EQUAL during the next ESF programme and in the context of the new PROGRESS programme needs to be driven by Member States, particularly those that have taken a lead under EQUAL. There should also be moves to involve the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in recognising the achievements of, and furthering the advances made by, EQUAL in the resettlement of (ex)-offenders.
- 6.4 A framework should be established at EU level for debate on policy issues and initiatives related to the reintegration of offenders. In addition to DG-Employment and Social Affairs, the involvement of DG-Justice, Freedom and Security and DG-Education and Culture would ensure that all the aspects - social, vocational, legal and educational - were covered in a concerted attempt to improve European and Member State policies and practices for the Resettlement of (Ex)-offenders.
- 6.5 The developments under EQUAL should be taken further to create a European Community of Practice Network, which could be underpinned by the Knowledge Portal, developed by the BABE DP in Germany and its database of good practice. This Community of Practice should link:
 - The existing National EQUAL Offender Networks (NEONs), which exist in at least six Member States;
 - A range of bodies concerned with (ex)-offenders that already operate at a European level such as the Prison Education Network, the Juvenile Justice Observatory, the European Offender Employment Forum, the European Prison Regime Forum and the Conference Permanente Europeene De La Probation;

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- Directorates General of the European Commission with an interest in the topic of (ex)-offenders such as DG-Employment and Social Affairs, DG-Justice Justice, Freedom and Security, DG-Education and Culture and DG-Health and Consumer Protection.

6.6 The subject of resettlement of offenders should also be brought to the attention of the Council of Europe in order to influence thinking on this aspect of human rights. This might well be done in the context of a demand for the recognition of this Set of Guidelines on the Reintegration of (Ex)-offenders that has emanated from EQUAL.

6.7 Within the European context, consideration should also be given to the resettlement needs of displaced European prisoners to avoid compromising their fundamental rights, as European Citizens, to equality of services. Displaced European Union prisoners are regarded as those serving sentences in a Member State other than their country of residence and such a consideration would require to take due account of the principle of subsidiarity.

ANNEX 5: ESF FUNDING FOR (EX)-PRISONER PROJECTS DURING THE 2007-2013 PROGRAMMING PERIOD²⁰

M S	ESF Funding
Austria	The ESF funding goes directly to the AMS Employment Office, which refunds some training measures for prisoners up to 44 %.
Belgium	The Flemish and Walloon Regions are funding some training measures for prisoners.
Bulgária	
Cyprus	No funding
Czech Republic	
Denmark	No ESF funding, as enough finance is provided by the national government
Estónia	Yes
Finland	No ESF funding as enough finance is provided by the national government
France	ESF funding available at national level and in nine regions
Germany	ESF funding available at national level and in the vast majority of Länder
Greece	ESF funding not available now but is planned to be used from 2010
Hungary	Yes
Ireland	ESF has relatively little money available and while Irish Prison Authorities have applied they have been unsuccessful so far
Italy	ESF funding available in the Regions of Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Lombardia and Toscana.
Latvia	ESF funding available for probation services
Lithuania	No ESF funding
Luxembourg	
Malta	
Netherlands	€ 60 Million of ESF funding available for the complete period
Poland	€ 280 Million of ESF funding available to the Ministry of Justice, including the Prison Service
Portugal	
Romania	€ 20 Million of ESF funding available, plus the Portugal-Romania Transfer-Project worth € 5 Million
Slovakia	
Slovenia	ESF funding will be available through a small programme, based on Slovenia's participation in the ExOCop Learning Network'
Spain	ESF funding available at national level and in some regions
Sweden	No ESF funding as enough finance is provided by the national government
United Kingdom	About 60 Million of ESF funding available for the current year in England and Wales. One large project is beginning funded in Northern Ireland but no funding in Scotland

²⁰ If any ESF Managing Authority can provide additional/up-dated information on the funding of (Ex)-Prisoner projects please send it to allen.mercer@btinternet.com

ANNEX 6: EXOCOP WORKSHOPS AND THE SEMINARS INTO WHICH THEY WILL FEED

IDENT	TOPIC	LOCATION	TIMING
S1	Entrance	England	
W 1	Diagnoses and Profiling	Mainz, Germany	2010
W 2	Assessment and sentence planning	Lisbon, Portugal	2010
W 3	Therapeutic Community	Brussels, Belgium	2010
W 4	Quality Management	Netherlands	2010
S2	Education, Training and Employment (ETE)	Spain	May 2010?
W 5	Training in Prison	Budapest EAC Conference	Feb 2010
W 6	E-learning	Budapest EAC Conference	Feb 2010
W 7	Art in Prison	Budapest EAC Conference	Feb 2010
W 8	Staff training / Train the trainers	Budapest EAC Conference	Feb 2010
S3	Aftercare	The Netherlands	
W 9	Preparation for release	Romania	2010
W 10	Aftercare /resettlement	Greece	2010
W 11	Family relationships and resettlement	Slovenia (to be confirmed) (alt.: Northern Ireland)	2010
W 12	Community Links	Poland	2010
S4	Target Groups	Poland	
W 13	Women	Berlin, Germany	2010
W 14	Youth	Milano, Italy – Regione Lombardia	Jan 2010
W 15	Migrants	UK	2010
S5	Networking of Institutions	Rome, Italy	Oct 2010
W 16	Prison work/prison industry	Berlin, EPRF Conference	Sept 2010
W 17	Work with employers	Belfast, Northern Ireland	2010
W 18	Networking of institutions	Bologna, Italy – Regione Romagna	June 2010