



Dear Annet Bakker  
chair@epea.org

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SUA REFERÊNCIA EMAIL	SUA COMUNICAÇÃO DE 06-04-2020	NOSSA REFERÊNCIA Nº: 1552/2020 ENT.: 1096/2020 PROC. Nº: 11.11/20.178	DATA 05-08-2020
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**ASSUNTO:** PLEA FOR MAINTAINING THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION IN DETENTION

Let me start this letter by telling you how important is for us this strong and friendly relation with the European Prison Education Association and how we respect your work and consider, in Portugal, the high importance of prison education issue.

As all of you must know, Portugal shut down all the schools on 16 march due to SARS-COV2 pandemia declaration and only the older students, with 16 and 17 years started physical classes during the end of May.

This is to say that the pandemic context forced most of the schools to close but teachers didn't stop to make what they are determined to do: to teach. And students continue to learn, in all the forms we could, with synchronous or asynchronous classes, as most of the rest of the world did. In the cases that was not possible to contact online with the students, we established proximity teams in the field that went to students' homes taking and bringing back to school exercises in paper format, by any way we could.

We also started a school channel in open source public TV, called #estudoemcasa, that was a precious teaching tool, specially to 6 to 14-year-old children, from 20 April until the end of classes on 26 June.

So, students in prisons were also in our minds and, as soon as we could, schools related to prisons started, in any way they could too, with classes and teaching. The most important is that the quarantine won't stop the educational process.

Since April, students in prisons had synchronous or asynchronous classes too. Schools sent, by electronic or traditional mail, exercises every week to prisons and we even had a prisoner that concluded secondary teaching with an online jury evaluation in the south of Portugal.

At the end of May, the Portuguese Association for Education in Prisons started a questionnaire in order to know how this all worked out. They had answers from 21 out of the 44 schools in this process and the conclusions, in a SWOT analysis, are very encouraging.



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ADJUNTO E DA EDUCAÇÃO

For instance, all of the participants concluded that teachers were quite involved in the process and always in strong relation with delegates inside prisons. Sometimes obsolete informatic material and cybersecurity issues didn't aloud online classes but schools still continue to teach, delivering material in paper support on a weekly basis, changing information between teachers and prison staff on a daily basis in most of the cases.

In some prisons they create platforms for answering frequently asked questions of students and school libraries sent books, which is quite important in this process. Students in prison also could watch classes on TV as all the other students in the country.

The weakness stays for the need to update informatic material and the need to update digital competences of students and teachers too in this process.

So, as you can see, Portugal is quite determined in standing by the recommendations of the Council of Europe regarding education in prisons, in spite of the difficult times we all are living that posed extraordinary challenges worldwide. Health security is a priority for us all, but we are making as great effort so that this virus won't control our lives.

Best regards,

Chief of Staff



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(Jorge Sarmiento Morais)

**João Oliveira**

**De:** Annet Bakker <bakkerannet@kpnmail.nl>  
**Enviado:** 6 de abril de 2020 20:53  
**Para:** sc@epea.org  
**Assunto:** plea for maintaining the delivery of education in detention  
**Anexos:** 2020 April Letter Ministries.pdf

*pedido do  
manutenção do  
educação em  
detenção*

Honorable Minister,

Dear representative of your country's Prison Service,

*Dr Annet.  
20.4.2020  
fb*

The European Prison Education Association has kindly taken the liberty of approaching you in these times of hardship and struggle.

We are more than convinced that this brings along many decisions to be made and priorities to be determined.

Please find in the attachment a plea on behalf of our members (all professionals in prison education throughout Europe) to support them in any possible way to deliver education activity from a safe distance in your penitentiary facilities.

It is well possible that this already part of your strategy, in which case we applaud you for having found a way to relieve both the prisoners and your staff from boredom and uselessness in this period of solitary confinement.

Kind regards,

**Annet Bakker**

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Gabinete do Ministro da Educação	
DESPACHO	
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<b>Data:</b> - 8 ABR. 2020	<b>O Chefe do Gabinete</b> <i>Tiago Saleiro</i> <b>Tiago Saleiro</b>



Mrs Annet Bakker  
EPEA Chairperson

**European Prison Education Association**  
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**Cc:** Prison Services Legal Officers and Ministries of  
Education

chair@epea.org  
www.epea.org

**Concerning:** Plea to maintain education delivery in  
detention from a safe distance

0031 (0) 8807 38235

**5 April 2020**

**Letter to the Ministries of Justice and Interior**

*aos ministros da Justiça,  
e do interior*

Honourable Minister,

Please allow me to introduce myself and the organisation I represent. My name is Mrs Annet Bakker and I preside over the European Prison Education Association (EPEA).

The European Prison Education Association is an organisation made up of more than 650 prison educators, administrators, governors, researchers and other professionals whose interests lie in promoting and developing Education and related activities in prisons throughout Europe in accordance with the Recommendations of the Council of Europe [Rec(89)12].

EPEA is recognised by the Council of Europe (with which it has participatory status) as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and is committed to working with prison administrations in Europe to further its aims. However, it is totally free-standing and independent (cf. [www.epea.org](http://www.epea.org)).

In these difficult times we are living, the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) has posed extraordinary challenges, especially for prison institutions and their schools worldwide.

In many countries, prison teachers (and other staff) are sent home to minimize the risk of spreading the disease in the vulnerable prison environment and some prisoners are placed in quarantine.

We have received many messages from colleagues who tell us about what is happening in their countries and how they cope with this difficult situation. If, on the one hand, it is frightening to see how the virus has taken control of our lives, on the other hand, it is also

inspiring to acknowledge how creative solutions are being found to keep the teaching process alive.

EPEA has dedicated a special page on the website inviting prison teachers to tell us about their new Prison Education practices during this Corona pandemic. So, we know that many prison teachers are delivering work packages and exchanging material that is made ready for paper-based instruction or practice for their students to work with for the time being. Education from a safe distance is possible.

Some educators are even able to work from a distance delivering online courses. Nevertheless, these are a minority. In fact, as much as we find it interesting to hear about this, we think it can help others find ways to continue their work.

The EPEA is truly convinced that Education, in whatever form, is a way of maintaining normality in these hard times. More than ever, it will help distract the minds of so many in a positive way and, additionally, will relieve the stress for both *prisoners* and *staff*.

Therefore, and on behalf of the EPEA Steering Committee and all our members, I appeal to you to do everything in your power to ensure that Education programmes in your country's prisons do not stop during this health crisis. Allow me, also, to call on your good offices to ensure that all necessary protective measures do not exclude the provision of study materials for prisoners. And that together we find ways for teachers to communicate with prison learners.

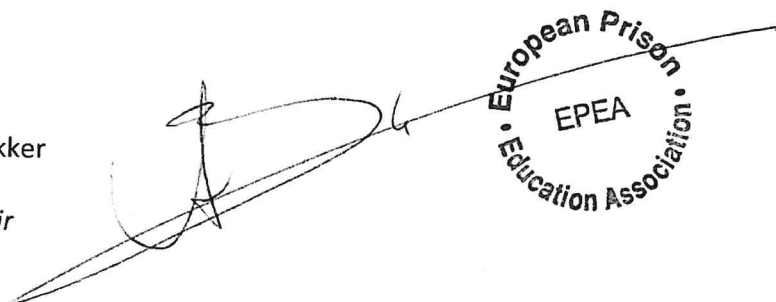
To conclude, and in light of the Council of Europe's recommendations, that no prisoner be left behind, as far as Education matters are concerned, and that the necessary conditions be provided in the best possible way.

Let me express my sincere gratitude for your time and consideration. I wish you and the people in your country to stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely,

Annet Bakker

EPEA Chair



The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Annet Bakker'. To the right of the signature is a circular stamp. The stamp has the text 'European Prison Education Association' around the perimeter and 'EPEA' in the center.