



# JUSTITIS MINISTERIET

Minister of Justice

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The Netherlands

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Sent by e-mail to [chair@epea.org](mailto:chair@epea.org)

Dear Annet Bakker,

Thank you for your letter of 5 April 2020 regarding plea for maintaining the delivery of education in detention.

Let me assure you that I fully agree with you on the general importance of education of prisoners as a means of rehabilitation of persons convicted of crime.

I also agree that education is an important aspect of maintaining normality and a means of distraction in prisons during the current covid-19 pandemic.

However, like many other countries, Denmark has been forced to take steps in order to minimize the risk of spreading the disease in our society. Therefore, the Danish Government has decided that all public servants who do not carry out vital functions in the society, must work from home.

Regarding prisons, where there is a specific risk of spreading the disease, the Danish Prison and Probation Service has decided that prison teachers cannot teach in the prisons at the moment.

To compensate for this decision, the prison teachers have produced a number of courses and assignments for prisoners who are already engaged in education. Some of these courses and assignments are also offered to prisoners, who are not enrolled in educational programmes, as a means of 'positive distraction' in this extraordinary situation.

In general, and at this moment of crisis, education along with treatment of addiction, cognitive programmes and work is of high priority in the Danish

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prisons. A reopening of these programmes however has to be safe in terms of health for both prisoners and staff. As soon as this is the case, prison teachers and other staff will resume their work in the prisons.

Sincerely,

Nick Hækkerup