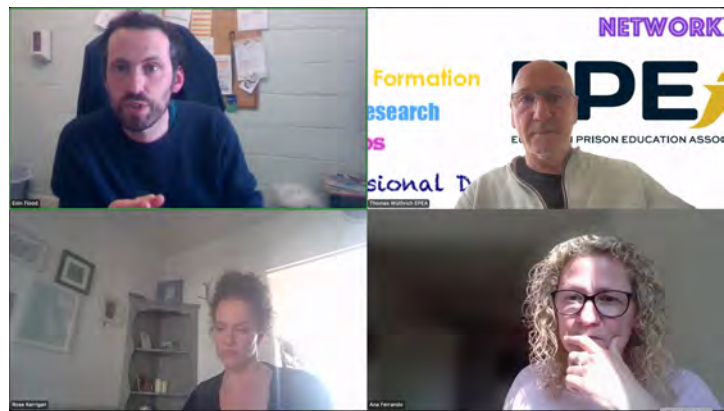


The EPEA – an organisation of its members

In recent weeks, the EPEA Steering Committee has been very active and has met with members in various formats. Firstly, there was the webinar on the new Council of Europe recommendations on prison education with Jim King (SCO), the co-author of the draft of these recommendations. This was followed by the webinars on Foreign Nationals Prisoners with Frans Lemmers (NL) and the edition with Vele Georgiev (NMK) on prison education in North Macedonia. See the recorded webinars on [epeatube](https://epeatube.com).

Steering Committee members Ana Ferrando Benedicto and Thomas Wüthrich then met with Eoin Flood and Rose Kerrigan, the representatives of the newly formed EPEA branch in Ireland, the Irish Prison Education Association IPEA.

At this online meeting, the idea was born to intensify the dialogue between members and to learn and know more about each other. This idea was then realised in May with a webinar for members and branches of the EPEA.



So the meeting purpose was to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among EPEA members through country reports and discussion of shared challenges and opportunities. Reports were shared from Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Portugal, on their respective organisation of prison education, highlighting similarities and differences in approaches. The Common themes: showed the varying levels of internet access, challenges with foreign inmates and a mix of formal/informal education offerings.



There was expressed a strong interest in creating a share point for ongoing resource sharing and collaboration among the members. An idea the Steering Committee already discussed in their meetings before but had not time to realise this due to lacking resources.

The possibility of organising job shadowings (KA1 mobility) supported by Erasmus+ was also considered so that teachers can exchange ideas directly on site. Finally, it was agreed to organise such webinars on a regular basis and prepare collaborative activities for the upcoming EPEA conference in Skopje.



At the end of May, Chair Thomas Wüthrich was invited to the annual conference of the [Federal Association of Prison Teachers](#) (BAG) near Aschaffenburg (GER). The BAG is an organisational member of the EPEA and represents the teaching staff in the prison system in Germany. Apart from the fact that the conference as a whole was very exciting - see the article on the PREP project - Thomas informed about the work on the new recommendations of the Council of Europe regarding education in prison and the EPEA's position on this. Those present appreciated the presence of the EPEA Chair, as this ensures a continuous professional exchange. (Photo: BAG Chair Michael Laubinger with EPEA Chair Thomas Wüthrich, left).

Finally, EPEA had an online with Fabien Lisart, representative of RÉINSERT, the organisation responsible for education in prisons in French-speaking Belgium. Fabien explained RÉINSERT's mission to promote education in detention, focusing on both collective and individual approaches. He detailed how they partner with schools to provide classes in prisons, with schools receiving funding for teacher salaries while prisons cover materials. Fabien outlined four components of their work: collective education programs, individual learning paths, intermediate situations for higher education, and supporting detainees' external activities.

Finally, the meeting focused on the collaboration between EPEA branches in different regions, with Ana highlighting the potential for more connections between Flemish and Wallonia regions despite language barriers. Fabien expressed interest in exploring connections with France. We are looking forward to welcome RÉINSERT as an organisational member of the EPEA.

