

HANDBOOK

LEGAL **FRAMEWORK** AND GOOD **PRACTICES**

Curated by

Giulia Alonzo and Oliviero Ponte di Pino



In the framework of AHOS AllHandsOnStage -
Theatre as a tool for professionalisation of inmate.
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(Germany), Kolektyw Kobietostan (Poland),
CRI – Institut za performativne umetnosti
i socijalni rad (Serbia), Sommerblut
Kulturfestival e.V. (Germany), Fabrica Athens
– Athens (Greece)



TEATRO DEI VENTI



**Kobieto
stan.**



**Sommerblut
Kulturfestival**



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INTRODUCTION

This volume presents the methodologies, findings, and critical reflections of the “All Hands On Stage” (AHOS) project – an ambitious, transnational initiative exploring the intersection between the prison system, theatrical practice, and pathways to professional reintegration across Europe¹. Operating across five partner countries, the project investigates the extent to which theatre, as both a cultural and vocational tool, can support the rehabilitation and employability of inmates and former detainees. Through a comprehensive study of legal frameworks and the identification of Good Practices, AHOS aims to contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive justice, the right to cultural participation, and the role of the arts in social transformation.

The AHOS project is structured around three foundational pillars: the training of inmates in the different theatre professions and jobs within prison settings; the professionalisation of theatrical practice in these contexts; and the creation of viable employment pathways for inmates and ex-inmates, both during detention and following release. While these themes are united by shared European values – rooted in human dignity, rehabilitation, and cultural rights – the legal and institutional responses across the countries involved in the project reveal considerable divergence. These differences stem from varying national histories, judicial systems, and prison regulations, highlighting the necessity for a nuanced and context-sensitive approach to policy development and implementation.

This volume serves as both a scholarly resource and a practical guide for policymakers, cultural professionals, prison administrators, NGOs, and researchers. Drawing on in-depth qualitative research, including case studies, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires, the publication offers a critical overview of the legal and operational environments in which prison theatre operates. It simultaneously identifies gaps, limitations, and opportunities within existing legal structures and proposes potential in-

1. This report has been curated and edited in collaboration with Giulia Alonzo and Oliviero Ponte di Pino, Associazione Culturale Ateatro ETS (Italy).

novations in practice and policy. Particular emphasis is placed on issues such as the formal recognition of prison theatre as a professional activity, access to funding, and the broader accessibility of cultural and educational initiatives for incarcerated populations.

The content of this publication is primarily drawn from two key project deliverables: Deliverable 4.1, Research and Analysis on Each Country's Legal Framework and Conditions for Rehabilitation and Job Placement of Inmates, and Deliverable 4.5, Finalisation of the "Support Scheme Towards Theatre Professions" Manual. The former provides a strategic framework co-developed by all project partners, offering an adaptable reference model for different national and institutional contexts. It focuses on mapping and critically analysing the legal systems that shape how theatre may be introduced, managed, and sustained within prisons. The latter analyses the preliminary collection of Good Practices developed and implemented during the initial stages of the AHOS project, reflecting on their effectiveness and potential scalability.

In order to preserve the distinct contributions of these two areas of analysis, the volume is structured into two main sections, each addressing a different but complementary aspect of the project's scope. Following an initial chapter on the shared methodological framework, the first section focuses on the legal frameworks relevant to the project. This part specifically addresses the legislative context at both the national and European levels, and assesses the degree to which existing policies facilitate the social integration of inmates through theatre.

The legal framework chapter is organised into three core sections, reflecting the project's thematic pillars: (1) Theatre Training in Prison; (2) Theatre Professionalisation; and (3) On-the-Job Placement of Inmates and Ex-Inmates. Each of these chapters considers three dimensions: the legal landscape (including relevant laws and institutional rules), existing practices (case studies and successful models), and forward-looking proposals (recommendations for pilot projects or policy reform). While the focus of the analysis is on national legislation, it also takes into account regional, provincial, or local regulations that may significantly impact the implementation of theatre programmes in prison environments.

To facilitate the reader's understanding, this section begins with two introductory parts: the first outlines the methodological approach used in the legal analysis, and the second provides a comparative overview to

contextualise the findings and establish thematic continuity throughout the chapter. The structure is as follows:

- **Methodology;**
- **Introduction to the Legal Frameworks;**
- **Analysis of the Legal Frameworks.**

The second section of the volume is devoted to the analysis of Good Practices, offering a practical and experience-based complement to the more theoretical legal framework. This section seeks not only to catalogue successful approaches from past and ongoing AHOS activities, but also to identify processes that can be tested, refined, and scaled during the remaining phases of the project and beyond.

Structured into five chapters, this section begins with a methodological explanation of how Good Practices were collected, validated, and evaluated. It then presents three central chapters aligned with the temporal phases of project implementation:

- **Preliminary Steps:** This chapter presents foundational Good Practices intended to establish a general operational and conceptual framework. These practices are designed to support the development of the project and offer valuable insights to other organisations working in prison or rehabilitation contexts.
- **During the Project:** The focus shifts to the implementation phase, presenting practices that were tested or are being tested during the training programmes by AHOS partners. These practices are examined for their effectiveness, adaptability, and potential for sustainability.
- **After the End of the Project:** This chapter outlines Good Practices aimed at long-term impact. It addresses both the reintegration of ex-inmates into the labour market outside the prison and the creation of work opportunities within the prison system. These practices are considered essential to ensuring the project's legacy and long-term relevance.

The final chapter of this section summarises the insights gained during the first year of implementation and poses key research questions to guide the next phase of project development. It marks a crucial transition from descriptive analysis to prospective planning, aiming to further deepen the

understanding of how theatre can act as a transformative tool for incarcerated individuals and for the institutions that house them.

In bringing together legal analysis and practical experience, this volume underscores the transformative potential of theatre within correctional environments. By examining both the structural constraints and the innovative strategies employed across diverse European contexts, it becomes evident that theatre is not merely a recreational or cultural activity, but a powerful vehicle for personal growth, skills development, and social reintegration.

Prison theatre initiatives provide inmates with opportunities to engage in meaningful collaboration, express individual and collective narratives, and develop soft and technical skills that are essential for life beyond incarceration. When supported by coherent legal frameworks and institutional commitment, these initiatives can shift the cultural paradigm of incarceration – from one centred on punishment and exclusion to one grounded in education, responsibility, and civic re-engagement.

Moreover, the volume advocates for a redefinition of prison spaces as potential sites of cultural production and professional learning. It challenges policymakers, cultural institutions, and justice systems to recognise artistic engagement as a fundamental right, in line with European human rights principles, and to establish sustainable infrastructures that enable its implementation. Theatre in prison should not remain contingent upon temporary projects or the goodwill of individual institutions, but should instead be integrated into long-term strategies for rehabilitation and social equity.

To achieve this, the report highlights the importance of intersectoral collaboration between cultural operators, prison authorities, educational bodies, and social services. Only through shared responsibility and mutual recognition can systemic change be realised. This entails not only legislative reform, but also a shift in cultural perceptions of inmates and the role of the arts in the penal system.

Ultimately, this volume invites its readers to envision a justice system where creativity is not a privilege but a right, where rehabilitation is not an exception but a standard, and where theatre is not a marginal activity but a recognised and essential part of the social reintegration process. It is hoped that the insights and frameworks presented herein will serve as a catalyst for continued dialogue, experimentation, and institutional innovation across Europe and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

The question of how to collect data and information on theatre activities within European prison systems emerged in the first stages as a critical issue within the AHOS (All Hands On Stage) research team. This was due, in part, to the complex and emotionally charged nature of re-educational and rehabilitative initiatives in detention facilities. On one hand, such activities often evoke a profound sense of human connection and altruism among the facilitators, while simultaneously generating a multitude of emotional responses among inmate participants. These range from a genuine desire for social reintegration and redemption to emotional reactions stemming from isolation, boredom, or in some cases a desire for resistance or self-assertion.

On the other hand, any effort to study prison theatre must engage with the legislative and institutional frameworks in which these activities take place. These systems often contain significant gaps, inconsistencies, or limitations, which inevitably affect both the design and the outcome of cultural and rehabilitative efforts. In order to account for these complexities and to capture the richness of the phenomena under study, the research team adopted a qualitative methodology. This approach comprises a combination of immersive, interpretive, and dialogical methods designed to illuminate the lived experiences, behaviours, and perceptions of the various stakeholders involved.

Although the analysis of Legal Frameworks and Good Practices within AHOS proceeded on parallel tracks, their methodological foundations intersected at multiple points. This shared approach was essential for ensuring coherence and comparability across the different strands of the project.

Defining “Good Practice”

A critical first step in analysing the Good Practices of the AHOS project involved arriving at a working definition of the term itself. There is no universally agreed-upon definition of “Good Practice,” as the term can vary depending on the context and intended application.

Nevertheless, several common characteristics emerged as essential:

- A. A Good Practice must be situated within a framework of continuous quality improvement, ideally informed by scientific evidence or validated fieldwork.
- B. It must be replicable and scalable across different institutional and geographical contexts.
- C. It must be adaptable, allowing for contextual modifications without losing its core effectiveness or value.

Applying this concept within the context of prison theatre proved especially complex. The absence of standardised legislation on cultural activities in prisons, the autonomy of prison administrations, and the variability of institutional rules presented considerable challenges to categorising any practice as a “Good Practice.” Despite this, the longstanding experience and commitment of the AHOS partners to theatre in prison offered a solid foundation from which to work.

The team therefore structured its investigation around three distinct temporalities:

- 1. Good Practices implemented by the partner organisations prior to the launch of AHOS.
- 2. Good Practices that the partners intended to implement as part of the AHOS project.
- 3. Good Practices that were actually realised during the project and could be assessed through observation.

The GP chapter is divided into two sections. The first section identifies Good Practices used by multiple partners and considered transferable to others. The second section describes practices introduced by individual partners, and in some cases, includes suggestions of practices not yet tested but deemed potentially valuable.

Given the professional expertise of the AHOS partners in theatre-based prison interventions, the report focuses specifically on practices aligned with the AHOS objectives – namely, the professionalisation of inmates and ex-inmates through theatre. Practices unrelated to this focus, even if valuable in broader terms, were excluded from the analysis.

Methodological Tools

Desk Research

The project began with a desk-based analysis of the theatre companies involved. This involved both external documentation gathered by the research team and internal materials provided directly by the companies. These included descriptions of previously adopted Good Practices, evaluations, and project outcomes. The desk research phase was complemented by two expert interviews – with Raffaele Maisto (Ombudsman for detainees in Lombardy) and Mauro Palma (former National Ombudsman) – who offered critical insights into the legislative and policy dimensions of the project.

Case Study Immersion

Researchers engaged in immersive fieldwork, maintaining reflective journals to document non-verbal cues, behaviours, and interactions. This ethnographic technique, inspired by Corbetta (2012), allowed for deeper contextual understanding and a richer interpretation of each case study.

In-Depth Interviews

A series of non-standardised, in-depth interviews was conducted with project managers from the six AHOS partner organisations: Teatro dei Venti (Modena), aufBruch (Berlin), Sommerblut Kulturfestival e.V. (Cologne), Fabrica Athens (Greece), Kolektyw Kobietostan (Wroclaw), and CRI - Institut za performativne umetnosti i socijalni rad (Belgrade). Conducted between 12 June and 21 September 2023, the interviews lasted between 70 and 120 minutes. Each was recorded with participant consent, transcribed, and returned for validation and possible amendment. Structured around 55 open-ended questions, the interviews were adapted to each respondent's context. The goal was to uncover the methodologies, operational realities, and reflections of each organisation regarding their past and current practices.

Open-Ended Questionnaires

To complement the interviews, open-ended questionnaires were developed and administered. These allowed respondents to express their views in their own terms, without the limitations of closed formats. The question-

naire comprised three sections: 1) Theatre Training in Prison (9 questions); 2) Theatre Professionalisation (6 questions); 3) On-the-Job Placement (5 questions). The first round of questionnaires was distributed in spring–summer 2023, with follow-up versions in autumn after further interviews. Legislative updates gathered by January 2025 were also incorporated.

Field Observation

Arguably the most critical phase for identifying effective Good Practices was direct field observation. Conducted between February 2023 and June 2024, this method enabled researchers to witness live implementation and to record both the practicalities and outcomes of various practices, in the different contexts. During the visit, we also had the opportunity – within the limits imposed by the prison context – to observe the environments in which our partners operate and to engage in informal conversations both with inmates and with members of the prison staff. Reflective diaries and field notes enriched the data set and ensured consistency in observational analysis².

Midterm Meeting: Berlin, June 2024

A key moment in the research process was the midterm meeting held in June 2024 at the Tegel prison in Berlin. This event brought together AHOS project partners and members of the prison staff (list of participants to be confirmed). The meeting was structured into two parts:

Morning Session: A guided tour of the Tegel facility allowed participants to gain a grounded understanding of the prison's physical, social, and operational dynamics.

2. Between February 2023 and February 2024, Ateatro had the opportunity to visit: **Modena (Italy), 1-2 February 2023**

The kickoff meeting in Modena was an opportunity for the Ateatro team to meet the AHOS Project partners – with the exception of the Greek partner, that was added later – and to understand the work that the team has to carry out. Specifically, the Handbook (the artistic report of the project which includes in-depth interviews with individual partners)

Afternoon Session: A focused discussion among project partners (with representatives of the prison personnel from different countries), centred on the theatrical activities implemented in each partner's context. Key themes included methodologies, objectives, professionalisation pathways, and common challenges. The meeting also provided space for reflection on how artistic work in prisons involves not only inmates but all staff members who contribute to the institution's operation. Theatre in prison was framed as a co-constructed process rooted in human relationships.

Informal exchanges before and after the official meeting deepened interpersonal connections among participants and reinforced the collab-

and the Scheme of support (the administrative report of the project).

During the two-day meeting, together with the Teatro dei Venti, we observed the work in the Castelfranco prison, on the first day of work on Shakespeare's Hamlet with the inmates. In the Modena prison we had the opportunity to see the rehearsal of Julius Caesar.

Krzywaniec (Poland), 29-30 October 2023

We were in Krzywaniec for the presentation of the "Inmate Art Festival", organised by the Kobietostan Collective with the inmates. During the first day, the workshop participants showed their works: the first show was by the women group and other by the men group, (because they can't work together). During the second day, we met experts, guards and professors on the topic of theatre practice in prison. During this meeting the AHOS Project was also presented.

Cologne (Germany), 28-30 November 2023

During the visit to Cologne we had the opportunity to attend the first rehearsals of the show which opened during the Sommerblut Festival, in May 2024. The show features 19 inmates, men and women together, from the Cologne prison, starting from the texts written by the actors in the emotional awareness workshop.

Berlin (Germany), 6 December 2023

The Berlin stop was quick but it gave us the opportunity to see the debut of Gefangenentheater's new production in the JVA Plötzensee, Einer Flog Über Das Kuckucksnest, a theatre adaptation of the Ken Kesey novel/Milos Forman movie. The work carried out by Aufbruch is intensive and lasts approximately 3 months in each prison.

Athens (Greece), 29 June 2023 / 16-19 January 2024

To get to know the Greek partner, who joined the project after the kickoff in Modena, we decided to visit Athens to interview the director on 29 June 2023.

We then returned to Athens to take part in the second kickoff meeting of the AHOS Project, one year after the Modena meeting. During the meeting, we shared the progress of our work on the Handbook and on the Scheme of support. We agreed with the leader for an intermediate delivery of a first draft, in view of a definitive delivery in January 2025. During the visit to Athens, we attended the rehearsals of a show that will debut in September 2024, starring an ex-inmate who interprets his poems. We also visited the women's prison in Thebes, where we had the opportunity for a long dialogue with the teachers.

orative ethos of the project. This shared experience created a space for mutual understanding and laid the groundwork for future cooperation.

The meeting reaffirmed many of the themes analysed in the report, generated new proposals for collaborative experimentation, and inspired a sense of collective responsibility. It concluded with a live performance of *The Threepenny Opera*, offering further insight into the artistic and rehabilitative potential of prison theatre.

End-of-Project Feedback

In December 2024, an additional open-ended questionnaire was distributed to all project participants. This survey aimed to assess how engagement with the AHOS project had influenced their professional attitudes, methodologies, and institutional practices. Respondents were also asked to identify Good Practices they believed should be shared or scaled across the partnership.

The responses, collected in January and February 2025, have been fully integrated into this report, adding a final layer of validation and reflective insight. These contributions have not only enriched the documentation of Good Practices but also reinforced the collective learning dimension of the AHOS initiative.

This methodological framework reflects the comprehensive and collaborative spirit of the AHOS project. Through qualitative rigour, shared expertise, and continuous feedback loops, it has sought not only to analyse but also to co-construct a vision of theatre in prison as a legitimate, effective, and humanising pathway toward reintegration and professional growth.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 1

~ *Introduction to the Legal Framework*

The judiciary systems of the European countries, even if they are inspired by the same basic principles (inspired from the Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme, and from Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and the consequent recommendations of the European Community), are in many aspects quite diversified, for historical and cultural reasons.

The research of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) shows that the Council of Europe recommendations and the instruments for the organisation of justice are applied to a different extent in the various countries.

These differences in the judiciary systems – and the peculiarities of each national and local context – have of course an impact on the penitentiary systems. Indicators on the demography of the prison population vary significantly: see the distribution of age, sex, strangers in the various countries, but also of length of the sentence, and the percentage of inmates on probation or on conditional release. There are also strong differences in the number and percentage of detainees awaiting trial.

Moreover, in each system you have some categories of inmates that receive special treatment: for instance, there are prisons (or special branches/buildings) for minors, for mothers with infants, for drug addicts, or (not in every country) for inmates with psychiatric problems.

The demography of the prison population is of course a key element for any kind of any projects in prison, in the fields of education, job training, culture, and also theatre.

There are of course strong differences in prison regimes, from minimum to maximum security, and in the activities inmates are allowed practice, inside or outside the prison, according to these regimes.

There are strong differences in indicators on the prison personnel (i. e. number of inmates per employee), and also on the various professional figures working in prisons, apart from the prison guards (key figures as social workers, educators, psychologists, etc.). Other elements are not

taken into account by statistics: for instance the frequency of transfers from one prison to another, the number of inmates engaged in work or training activities (that can be compulsory or voluntary), the number of hours per day/week in which the inmates are engaged in these activities during the day, the possibility of work or internships/training outside the prison... Of course all these elements affect the possibilities and methods of any theatrical activity, and training.

As for the prison premises, we can see a big difference in the statistics on crowding, and on the number of detainees per cell: this also reflects deep cultural differences between Northern Europe (where privacy is more valued, and inmates live in single cells) and Southern Europe (with 2–5 people in the same cell, and detention in isolation cells used as a harsh form of punishment).

These different accommodations have of course an impact on the way the inmates approach the activities that give the possibility to get out of the cells, and the way they approach the activities they are practising.

The support that ex detainees can receive is also quite different from country to country, and this of course affects the opportunities for reintegration (or integration) into work.

This very complex and layered set of laws, rules, and special situations, and the gaps in the legislation, implies that many decisions (and the responsibility) are delegated to the prison director and his assistants.

Theatre in prison can be used for different objectives. It can be used to entertain and distract inmates, or to share a valuable cultural experience. We also know that theatre in prison can give an important contribution in the rehabilitation, reintegration, resocialization, and process of detainees.

But we also know that rehabilitation is only one among the four pillars of sentencing, with retribution, deterrence, and incapacitation. When the policies stress the need and the importance of repressive measures, rather than rehabilitation, in the absence of a clear and shared legislation, the space for theatre in prison will decrease, or it will be reduced to a pleasant pastime for people living in an unpleasant condition.

CHAPTER 2

~ Analysis of the Legal Framework

PART 1 – PRISON THEATRE TRAINING OF INMATES

1.1 Does your Country or Region have a specific legislation addressing theatre activities in prison? Do the prisons where you work have a regulation/set of rules for theatre activities?

Among the 5 countries analysed, the only 2 countries with a law about theatre activities, as a form of recreational-cultural activity, in prison are Italy and Greece.

Specifically, in **Italian law** the reference is constitutional. In fact the 3rd paragraph of Article 27 of the Constitution establishes that the purpose of the punishment is understood as re-education and re-socialization of the inmate. From this assumption, law 354 of 26 July 1975 was born (with execution regulations, referred to in Presidential Decree no. 230 of 30 June 2000), and provides that:

ART. 27 “Cultural, recreational and sporting activities”

“Cultural, sporting and recreational activities and any other activity aimed at realising the personality of inmates and internees must be promoted and organised in the institutions, also within the framework of re-educational treatment. A commission composed of the director of the institute, educators and social workers and representatives of inmates and internees takes care of the organisation of the activities referred to in the previous paragraph, also maintaining contacts with the outside world useful for social reintegration.”

In Emilia-Romagna, the Italian region in which the Teatro dei Venti works, in June 2020, a **Memorandum of Understanding** was drawn up “On the activity of Teatro in Carcere, for minors subjected to criminal measures and subjects in alternative measures and sanctions of Community” to enhance, encourage and regulate prison theatre activities.

This Memorandum follows in the footsteps of the one drawn up in 2013 between the Higher Institute of Penitentiary Studies and the National Coordination of Theaters in Prison which has among its objectives “expanding the opportunities for carrying out cultural interventions, also providing for reintegration” and “ensure the activation of initiatives both of a purely theatrical nature and of a training nature, in the context of professional training in the professions linked to the production of shows”.

But it must be specified that a Memorandum of Understanding is not a law, but an agreement between entities.

The **Greek law** (Article 38 paragraph 2 of penal code N.2776 which is active since 1999), clearly states that during their recreation / free time, inmates are entitled to be involved in individual or group activities. This includes forming a theatre ensemble, choir, art exhibitions and art and crafts exhibitions, cinema and other video projections.

The law provides that:

ART. 38 “Entertainment - Free time”

1. The entertainment of the inmates takes place in an appropriately designed outdoor or indoor area of the store.
2. Prisoners participate in individual or group artistic events, in the organisation of troupes, choirs, painting and handicraft exhibitions, cinematographic and other screenings. Where possible, an in-store cinema operates.
3. The organisation and implementation of the above events is undertaken by the Prison Council, following a recommendation from the competent body with the assistance of local cultural bodies and in cooperation with the inmates who show a relevant initiative. These events do not take place, only if the Prison Council invokes justified special reasons referring to the order and security of the store.
4. The active participation of inmates in these programs and in general the creative use of free time are considered positively for the granting of beneficial measures or privileges provided for in this Code.

In Serbia, there is no specific national legislation that explicitly refers to theatre activities in prisons. Nevertheless, the Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions supports rehabilitation through educational and cultural programs. Although theatre is not specifically named, the law enables

such activities under the broader category of “cultural and educational engagement”. This means that theatre companies may operate in prisons through agreements with individual institutions, depending on the willingness of the prison staff and administration. Therefore, the response that “the legislation does support companies that make theatre in prison, to a certain degree” refers to this general framework that indirectly allows for such initiatives, albeit without formal recognition or standardisation across the prison system.

In addition to these two legislative cases, explicit textual references are also found in international sources on the subject of cultural activities.

On the one hand, the **European Penitentiary Rules**, referred to in ART. 27.6 provides that “Recreational activities must be offered to inmates – which include in particular sports, games, cultural activities, pastimes – and the latter must, as far as possible, be authorised to organise them” and 27.7 “Prisoners must be authorised to meet in the framework of physical activities and recreational activities”.

The second international basis is Article 27 of the **UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights** states that “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”.

Likewise, artistic work should be recognized as a fundamental right in our society as part of a comprehensive concept of culture and education and should also be valid for inmates.

Starting from this assumption, Aufbruch has introduced the amendment to the **Correctional Services Act** (Berlin Prison Act – StVollzG Bln, from April 4, 2016):

ART. 60 “Leisure time”

1. In order to organise leisure time, the institution must, in particular, provide sporting and cultural activities, educational opportunities and creative development opportunities. The institution provides an appropriately equipped library.
2. Prisoners must be motivated and instructed to participate and participate in leisure activities.

In all the cases mentioned, there is no precise regulation of theatrical activities in prison, but we speak generically of “Entertainment, recreation and cultural activities”.

The lack of clear and restrictive regulations implies that the individual penitentiary institutions directly regulate themselves, determining the way the education programs and other activities such as theatre operate. More than often it is determined by the persons working in the prison responsible for programs such as the social services office, and by the availability of prison staff, by prison programming and by inmate participation.

The companies that work in prison carrying out theatre activities must therefore stipulate agreements directly with the managements of the prisons in which they operate.

1.2 Which are the main functions and goals of theatre activities in prison? Social, rehabilitation and relational goals? Are theatre workshops also considered a form of professional training?

1.3 Legal framework and regulatory characteristics for theatre activities (workshops, training, courses, rehearsals...) in prison: a general overview.

- Does the legislation effectively recognise, differentiates, and supports companies that make theatre in prison?
- Does the legislation set out the activities that theatre professionals can pursue in prisons? Does the legislation define activities and other characteristics (e.g.: the governance and decision-making process) that companies that make theatre in prison must perform in order to be recognized as “professional”?
- Does the legislation or the prison authorities define the professional qualifications of the members of the working group? Can theatre in prison operate through volunteers?
- Does the definition of activities to be performed limits their development and growth?

From what has been analysed from the provisions of the law, it emerges

that cultural activities in prison, and specifically theatrical activities, have different functions, which can be summarised as follows:

1) FREE TIME ACTIVITIES

Greece (1999): “The active participation of inmates in these programs and in general the creative use of free time are considered positively for the granting of beneficial measures or privileges”.

Berlin (2016): “In order to organise leisure time, the institution must, in particular, provide sporting and cultural activities, educational opportunities and creative development opportunities. The institution provides an appropriately equipped library”.

2) CULTURAL

Universal Human Rights: “participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts”.

3) RE-EDUCATIONAL FOR THE MODIFICATION OF PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES THROUGH ARTS

Italy (1975): “The re-educational treatment of convicted and interned persons is also aimed at promoting a process of modification of personal conditions and attitudes, as well as family and social relationships that are an obstacle to constructive social participation”.

Italy (1975): “The treatment of offenders and internees is carried out mainly through education, vocational training, employment, participation in projects of public utility, religion, cultural, recreational and sports activities and facilitating appropriate contacts with the outside world and relations with the family”.

This is reinforced by Article 15 and Article 27 of the Italian Penitentiary Law (Law no. 354/1975), which explicitly include cultural and recreational activities as integral parts of the rehabilitative treatment.

Berlin (2016): “Prisoners must be motivated and instructed to participate and participate in leisure activities”.

Poland (Order n.2/04 of the Director General of the Prison Service): “The

aim of cultural and educational classes, physical culture and sports classes conducted in prison is to emphasise the role of culture in human life, and thus deepen the humanistic motivation of behaviour, help in choosing values and responsibly bearing the consequences of one's own actions, as well as caring for health and proper psychophysical development".

In no provision except the Memorandum of Understanding (where it is specified that: "promote social inclusion paths, not excluding the creation of job opportunities for those serving sentences, for their re-entry into legality through the promotion of the acquisition of new skills") there is a mention of theatre practice as a professionalising activity.

Based on the legislative objectives, it is natural that theatre companies operating within prisons pursue the same objectives. Only the Teatro dei Venti specifies that "our approach does not have therapeutic or rehabilitation aims but maintains an artistic and professionalisation approach, where the positive consequences on the improvement of sociality and the acquisition of social and relational skills are direct consequences contemplated, but not objectives of the art project".

Based on what has been analysed, prison theatre projects generally take place in the leisure sector. Prison theatre projects are not vocational training, but they teach numerous professional and social skills. The main functions of theatre activities include:

- increasing the participation of socially excluded people in culture;
- increasing the sense of agency and independence;
- creating relationships between inmates based on mutual support and understanding;
- improving soft skills (communication skills, language skills, reading skills, expression, cultural education);
- development of different skills and interests (depending on which program the person participates in);
- including inmates in deciding on the shape of activities related to rehabilitation through art;
- working in a group environment and forming a theatre ensemble: the ensemble becomes a 'model group' within the facility and beyond educating and entertaining the other inmates, they become ambassadors for the incarcerated when a public audience enters the prison

- for a performance they have prepared;
- the work will help form a bond between the members of the group thus strengthening the solidarity they have;
- raising self-esteem, self-awareness and coping with stress and difficult emotions;
- social rehabilitation and reintegration;
- therapeutic programs.

The legislation does not define the activities that theatre professionals can carry out in prisons. Therefore every request is usually examined and accepted or rejected according to the feasibility under current law in the different prisons. Regarding the workshops, the groups are free to conduct them as they see fit.

1.4 Legal framework and regulatory characteristics for performances inside and outside prisons: a general overview

- Which are the rules for a performance in prison?
- Who can enter the prison to see the performance? (e.g.: relatives of the inmates, theatre professionals, social workers, general audience...)
- Which objects, props and material can be taken inside prison by – the theatre group and by visitors?
- Inmates can exit the prison to perform outside the prison? Which are the rules?
- Visitors and inmates can talk/touch each other at the end of the performance?

Starting from the fact that there is no specific legislation regarding theatre and performance in the various countries analysed, every action and event organised with the involvement of inmates is agreed on a case-by-case basis with the institutes' management, who give the guidelines of the procedures.

Based on what has been analysed from the data collected, it emerges that as regards shows in prison, relating to the experiences of the project partners, the issues can be catalogued as follows:

1) REHEARSAL AND SCENE MATERIALS

In all the prisons involved, the partners have declared that they can bring into the structures all the materials needed to carry out the workshops and the staging of shows, such as props, writing materials, instruments, technical equipment and also a laptop... Every entry of external material must be authorised from the competent personnel, which varies from country to country (educator in charge of the free time, the director, the chief of the guards...). Usually the procedure consists of making a list of what you intend to bring inside, give it to the staff and wait for permission. Once the list has been authorised, in most cases it is difficult to make additions. Although almost every kind of object and material is usually allowed in the structures, there are obvious limitations: some items are explicitly forbidden, such as weapons or drugs, and all electronic equipment (laptops, cameras, voice recorders, lights etc.) must be listed, checked upon entering, and cannot have wifi connections or SIM card inside.

In some structures, there are already basic theatrical elements, such as sound and lighting equipment. If something doesn't work or breaks, a specific and official request must be made to the competent office.

Food and drink are also usually permitted, again by pre-authorization. As with props, there are also limitations for food, for example you cannot bring alcohol, only packaged and closed food.

2) PROFESSIONAL ACTORS

The presence of professionals on scene, who support the inmates in the final restitutions, is reported only by the Italian partner.

3) AUDIENCE

In the analysis of who is admitted to performances in prison, three types of audience emerged.

- **External visitors**

In all the prisons involved where the partners work, external visitors are allowed to enter to attend the inmates' performances. As the performances are usually held in small venues, the number of external visitors is usually limited to a number established by the prison. Everyone can

access except ex-inmates (for example in Germany they can access after 5 years since their release) and obviously the prison keeps the right to exclude some spectators for security reasons (e.g. ex-inmates, fellow offenders).

With the idea of avoiding the “eventization of prison”, in some countries a motivation is required that pushes one to attend the show, and the privileged audience is made up of people who collaborate with the prison, NGO’s who work in the prison sector or the theatre sector, or the local municipality around the facility.

Usually the procedure is that:

- the company collects the names of those who want to assist and related documents (name, date of birth, address and if necessary also a photocopy of the identity card);
- the company sends the list of the members of the audience to the prison for the relevant checks by a pre-established date, before the date of the shows;
- the competent authority (which varies from country to country and can be the ministry, a judge, or prison guards) gives authorization, confirmation or otherwise of the list presented;
- when entering prison, visitors are not allowed to bring any items into the prison and they are checked by the institution’s security staff.

- **Family members**

In all the prisons involved where the partners work, the relatives of the inmates are admitted, obviously subject to check. Indeed, the presence of family members is highly recommended, allowing them to take pride in seeing their family members perform and share that experience, so the performance has a positive impact.

The minimum age for attending the show also depends on the content of the play.

- **Other inmates**

In all the prisons involved in the AHOS projects, other inmates who are not part of the working groups are admitted, even if some types of inmates are excluded. They must apply and the staff in charge decides on admission. The Berlin partner also reports that members of prison

theatre groups from other prisons can sometimes attend performances in other prisons. However, this is only possible with the support of the staff who accompanies the transfers.

4) SHOW ACCESS

As we have seen, the performances are open to the external public, subject to registration and authorization by the competent authorities. Access is free, with the exception of Germany.

The two German partners said that in order to access the performances the external public must pay for a ticket, purchased in advance via an online bookshop or affiliated ticket offices. Even in this case, however, visitors must register by giving name, address, date of birth.

5) RELATION INMATES / AUDIENCE

In all the prisons involved where the partners work, the inmates can touch each other, have interactions with family members, with the public and with other inmates at the end of the performance, under the control of the guards.

In various structures the presence of Q&A moments with the audience, individual or collective, previously agreed and authorised is reported.

Only the Cologne partner reports that visitors and inmates can't talk/touch each other at the end of the performance.

6) SHOWS OUTSIDE THE PRISON

Among the countries involved in the project, although there is no specific legislation on theatrical performances, the only partners that declare that inmates can leave prison for theatrical purposes are **Italy** and **Poland**, but under certain conditions. Since there is no legislation on the matter, each case is analysed individually and depends on the state of the inmate, the behaviour, the sentence (some offences do not allow release before a certain number of years), on a decision of the management and on the direct judgement of the magistrate who analyses individual cases and authorises them. Prisoners' departures from the unit are regulated by law. The permits, requested by the theatre company, are not given to the theatre group as a whole, but to individual prisoners. It's not the judge who decides upon the matter, but the prison authorities, in accordance with the current regulations.

In **Greece**, ART. 57 of the penal code states that inmates are granted permission to leave the prison usually for court, schooling or hospital. To leave the prison for such a purpose requires special permission and this is granted by the public prosecutor who collaborates with the prison. The evaluation is based on the criminal code which grants permission to leave the prison for education purposes, so the public prosecutor has to sign the permission to send inmates outside if they consider that their involvement in the event may be considered educational.

In **Germany** performances outside of prison are generally not possible. The closed prison system generally has a high security level.

Individual inmates who are relaxed and have permission to leave the prison can then leave the prison as part of exits and take part in rehearsals or performances (case management, this always requires individual coordination).

In open prisons, inmates can leave the institution during the day and work. As part of this, they can also take part in rehearsals and theatre events (case management, which always requires individual coordination).

In **Serbia** inmates can't exit the prison to perform outside the prison.

1.5 Legal forms recognized in your Country concerning theatre in prison

- Is (are) there a specific legal form(s) dedicated to groups practising theatre activities in prison? Or is it just some professional theatre workers entering a prison?
- Companies who want to make theatre in prison can operate through a wide variety of legal forms?

According to what the partners have reported, there is no national law or rule which determines who can enter and perform in prison. Theatre in prison is regulated as a cultural activity, in the "Treatment Area" section, but there is no specification for who can practice these cultural activities. They can be conducted by amateur organisations as well as professional organisations.

For example, in **Germany** those who deal with theatre in prison can be operators of state theatres (**Konstanz**), they can be individual artists or groups of artists, they can be artists who cooperate with transfer companies, they can be social workers, teachers or representatives of church organisations, or theatre companies (**aufBruch**). There are also examples of art therapists or art educators employed by the judiciary (**Saxony, Zeithain JVA**). Some of these organisations and associations can be specialised specifically in cultural education and resocialization of inmates in the penal system, but it's not mandatory to make a request.

In **Italy** the ART. 17 of the penitentiary system allows entry into prison to all those who "have a concrete interest in the work of resocialization of inmates and demonstrate that they can usefully promote the development of contacts between the prison community and free society". The rule is closely related to the ART. 62 of the European minimum rules which suggests "resorting, as far as possible, to the cooperation of community organisations to help the establishment staff in the social rehabilitation of inmates".

The **Greek** partner reports that theatre activities in Greek prisons are mainly conducted by theatre professionals (individuals or organisations), although other theatre activities are run by people working within the prison system eg. part of the school program.

In Greece, there is **no formal legal definition** of "theatre professionals" specific to prison contexts. However, in practice, the **term is generally understood** to refer to individuals or organisations with proven experience or formal education in theatre (e.g. degrees from theatre academies, professional stage experience, membership in artistic unions, etc.). In the prison context, theatre professionals are usually vetted by the Ministry of Culture or Education when projects are supported by public bodies, but no strict certification is required.

The **Serbian** partner reports that there is not a specific law, but those involved in theatre in prison need to be registered and must belong to some kind of citizens' association or organisation dedicated to a specific purpose, typically related to human rights, rights of inmates or a similar cause. In any case, the legal registration of individuals entering prisons for the purpose of engaging in theatre with inmates is a prerequisite, although

companies that want to work in the field of theatre in prison can operate through a variety of legal forms such as artistic organisations, CSOs, NGOs (for profit and non-profitable), but their thorough background check is always performed and their statutory goals have to be in line with their aim to perform theatrical work in prison. If they are volunteering as individuals, they have to prove their connection to and support from a relevant institution (university, educational institution, social service etc.).

The groups that manage theatre activities inside prison must be approved by the prison, even if there is not a recognition of professionalism. The theatre activities can be run by paid people or volunteers (See 1.7).

No limitations are reported.

In all countries, companies and groups that start performing theatre in prison must sign contracts and agreements with the prison: these documents declare the activities that will be carried out, the methods and duration. These agreements can be forms set up by the prison's legal counsellors or set up by the company and subsequently approved by the prison's legal counsellors, based on the agreements between the institutions. For example, in **Italy** the duration of the agreement is 3 years, but there is **no national rule that mandates a specific duration Each prison administration can adopt its own model** of agreement depending on its internal procedures and the local Directorate's preferences.

The Sommerblut Cultural Festival (run by the Sommerblut e.V.), Kobietostan and CRI – Institut za performativne umetnosti i socijalni rad are non-profit associations. AufBruch is a theatre organised under private law, civil law society.

Teatro dei Venti (Italian partner) is an “**Associazione di Promozione Sociale (APS)**”, a legal form under Italian law for **Third Sector Organisations**. APS are **non-profit associations** with a mission of **general interest**, operating in areas such as **culture, education, social inclusion, and civic engagement**. **Fabrica Athens** (Greek partner) is a **non-profit civil company (AMKE)** registered under Greek law, operating in the fields of theatre, education and social innovation.

1.6 Accessibility and relevance of legislation on making theatre in prison

- Is information about theatre in prison easy to access for inmates and prison authorities and personnel?
- Is it easy to understand?
- Was the content of the legislation developed through an inclusive consultation process?

There is no precise and particular legislation on the methods of making theatre in prison, therefore each partner of the AHOS project adopts their own method, obviously approved by the prison in which they work and in continuous close relationship with the prison staff.

The first step is how the different companies engage the inmates. The analysis revealed that the most recurring methods are:

1) OPEN CALL AND CREATION OF PERMANENT CLOSED GROUP

For example, in Italy the Compagnia del Teatro dei Venti in **Italy** says that: "Participation is free, everyone can enter. An announcement is placed on the noticeboard, saying that the tests will start and everyone can show up. At the same time we liaise with the educators and it is they who disseminate the information among the inmates who can access our activities. Before the selection that we make there is an initial selection due to both mental and physical commitment: we push with work, by now the word is getting around and everyone knows that they don't come to spend two hours lightly but that it is work and a commitment huge, requiring motivation. Then there is a second technical selection which concerns artistic research on the one hand, and on the other there is the legal question, that is, if a inmate waits to be judged and then perhaps is moved to another prison, I cannot help but trust and therefore I don't choose it."

Once the group is formed it is no longer changed, there are no inmates who can observe and interact, and once the show debuts the actors do not change, even when it goes on tour or makes new performances.

In **Poland** the Kobietostan says that their projects differ and the recruitment process differs, depending on the conditions. In all of their short-term projects it was the educators who made the selection (especially taking into consideration that the inmates would be touring with the

performances outside of the prison, or that the theatre camp for women with children takes place outside of prison – so they would have to choose people they would trust). In their last project, the Inmates Art Centre, since they got to work with 150 prisoners over the course of 2 years, it was an open recruitment process, which had 3 stages – a questionnaire freely available to all the prisoners, then meetings with the interested participants conducted at their housing departments, then finally the initial workshop sessions.

1) OPEN CALL AND CREATION OF A TEMPORARY CLOSED GROUP

Also in **Berlin** aufBruch makes a call inside the prison, usually involving all the inmates who took part in the last project. After that, they knock on the single houses to present the project and talk with the inmates. After this first recruitment, they ask the inmates to join for five-six casting rehearsals: “We invite everybody and usually almost 30 inmates are coming. We just explain to them a bit more about what we want to do, how the process will go. For us it’s important that they understand that it’s really hard work and a really intensive process and they won’t have a lot of time to realise other things such as their daily needs and so on. They have to understand that this work will be in conflict with other work and that they have to change all their daily routines”.

The group is fixed but only lasts for the time of the performance after the rehearsals. Each **AufBruch** project lasts approximately 3 months: they also use consultations with Social Workers, Teachers and Group leaders from The Prison to choose the participants of a project. They often know the inmates well, and in some cases it’s helpful to get this knowledge.

2) OPEN CALL AND GROUP CREATION BUT EVERYONE CAN STEP IN THE REHEARSALS

The call is open to all inmates, always under the supervision of educators and guards, but the group that is formed is constantly evolving. This is because participating in the recreational activities offered by the prison is part of the inmate’s rights. In fact every inmate has the right to use the relevant legislation regarding their rights during incarceration with the help of the officers and social service employees.

In Greece a publication explaining the rights and responsibilities of inmates was produced in 2016.

As the **Greek** partner tells us:

“At the beginning there is no selection, whoever wants to can attend. If there is a school, the inmates who go to school are the first filter. That means the headmaster suggests some people that show commitment, responsibility and respect – to participate. And if it’s not from school, sometimes the inmates who are in the group bring new participants to the group. The first time in the Avlona prison, 70 applied after the initial call for interest. I spent at least two weeks during the first meetings filtering them. We did a lot of physical work so those who would not put in the effort for the work decided to leave. We wanted the work to be demanding, we wanted them to feel they are working, they are making an effort [...] Some of the participants who have long sentences stay with the group for the period they are in the prison. The group remains open for new members and previous participants”.

Also the Kobietostan partner works in this way:

“In some of the projects – in the Inmates Arts Centre, since the project lasted 2 years, we had a lot of rotation in the groups – including the theatre groups. They remained open to new participants joining the process almost until the end (production phase). In the past, when we would tour our performances, we would also face the challenge of losing an actress during the touring year and substituting her with another inmate”.

3) GROUP SELECTED BY PRISON STAFF

In **Serbia** and in **Cologne** the prison’s culture and education officer (in Germany called Leisure coordinator: “Freizeitkoordination”). There is no general open call or open casting or opportunity to join for everyone. Is the person the inmates can ask about any activities available to them.

In Serbia, however, inmates who do not participate in the workshop or project can still attend the tests and intervene. These observers must also be approved or selected by the guards.

1.7 Funding and benefit for theatre in prison

- Is there any State/Regional funding for making theatre in prison? Do these funds come from prison administration or from cultural institutions?

- Are there benefits for companies that make theatre in prison? (es. tax exemptions, incentives, etc)

As highlighted previously, those who practise theatrical (and cultural activities in general) within a prison can do it on a voluntary basis, therefore without receiving compensation and without having public or private funding.

However, in the case of the partners of this project, the practice of theatrical activities is considered a job and therefore requires funding which can be of a different nature. In particular:

1) EUROPEAN PROJECTS

All partners in this project are funded through Creative Europe.

2) PUBLIC – STATE / LOCAL

The issue of public funding is very delicate. In fact, the precariousness and vulnerability of financing emerges, even though it constitutes the majority of income for many of the partners. Depending on the country, the method of requesting funding changes, via public tender or direct request, or based on the Ministry or department of competence (Education, Culture, Justice).

In **Italy**, the funding depends on the organisation managing the activity. Resources may come from the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Justice, or the Ministry of Education, as well as from regional and municipal authorities. For instance, most of the funding for Teatro dei Venti comes from public institutions such as the Municipality of Modena (which uses resources from the Cassa delle Ammende), the Emilia-Romagna Region, and the Ministry of Culture. These funds are usually awarded through public calls for projects submitted by theatre companies and evaluated by the relevant institutions.

In **Germany** there is state funding that can be applied for and used for cultural, social and cultural education projects in prison.

According to the Basic Law in Germany, the promotion of art and culture is primarily the responsibility of the states and municipalities. The federal government covers 17% of the total expenditure on art and culture with around 2.3 billion euros. It is responsible for cultural institutions and projects of national importance. In doing so, it contributes to preserving our cultural heritage and ensures that art and culture can develop.

There is funding from the judiciary, education, social areas, culture, cultural education and help with work. Funding is available at the federal, state and local levels.

The aim of the Federal Cultural Foundation is to support nationwide innovative projects in all artistic disciplines in an international context. The focus of the funding is in the area of art and culture.

According to ART. 20 of the Basic Law, the Federal Republic of Germany is "a democratic and social federal state". Internal state power lies with the respective federal states. This is the core message of federalism. Accordingly, responsibility for cultural tasks is transferred to the states. The countries therefore have cultural sovereignty. Accordingly, the cultural policy of the individual federal states is very much influenced by the respective country-specific traditions. In this way, each federal state strives to adapt its cultural policy to its needs as far as possible. Individual priorities are set and supported where there is actually a need. The federal states cover around 39% of all public cultural expenditure.

The cultural administration of the **Berlin** Senate promotes art and culture within the scope of the responsibility of the State of Berlin. The focus is on supporting qualitatively outstanding projects by Berlin artists. It is the task of the cultural administration to enable cultural participation and equal access - regardless of nationality, ethical background, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual identity, despite the cuts that Germany and the European Community are facing in this period.

In **Greece**, there is no official government funding for theatre arts projects in prison by the specific ministry. State or regional funding available for community groups may be allocated for prison work depending on the people who are in charge of these funds. These funds may come under community programs in local areas and the municipality allocated money for a workshop in the local prison.

Also in **Serbia** there is no regional or state funding for prison theatre initiatives. The absence of institutional-level funding signifies that the prison administration does not allocate financial resources to support these endeavours. The funding landscape for prison theatre projects remains largely ad-hoc and non-systematized. Rather than being part of a formal, government-funded cultural program, these projects often rely on spo-

radic, project-specific financial support.

In **Poland** as well there is no State/Regional funding supporting the work in prison. The Polish partner applied for a call from the Ministry of Culture through the Theatre Institute. And also there's been another occasion in which the prison engaged the individual artist paying directly her for the theatre activities. They say: "We get our money to work in prison from the Ministry of Culture (3 times for our theatre camp for mothers with children) and from EEA Grants – our 2-year Inmates Arts Centre was fully funded by the Active Citizens Fund. Only at the very beginning was the prison paying the theatre artists directly, we were also funded by various micro-grants like the Feminist Fund." In the future there will be another funding possibility: the Justice Fund programme of the Ministry of Justice will become available to NGOs.

3) PRIVATE (FOUNDATIONS, INSTITUTIONS OR SELF-FINANCING)

There is the possibility of support from private sponsors: there are a number of funds and foundations that can provide financial support to projects in each country.

The problem with this kind of financing, public as well as private ones, is that it is limited. This temporality risks to transform these activities into temporary projects, limited to the financing period.

Furthermore, no benefits such as tax exemptions, incentives, etc. are reported in pursuing these activities.

1.8 Are there, and if yes please describe them, specific legal form and status obstacles (es. restrictions, taxes etc) for making theatre in prison?

The lack of regulations, already reported in these first pages of analysis in the context of theatre activities in prison, is reported by some of the project partners as the possibility of moving with more freedom in detention facilities. The fact that there are no restrictions offer a wider flexibility to conduct theatre activities in prisons.

Only one partner points out that an obstacle to theatre work in prison is the impossibility of bringing all the necessary equipment inside the structures and having to register the various materials in advance, without being able to make last minute changes, thus limiting the activities.

Another problem highlighted is the impossibility in all the countries analysed, except **Italy** and **Poland**, of being able to pay inmates who carry out cultural activities. The people who already have a job in prison are not allowed to have a second income source. It is not an income limit, but this measure is applied to ensure the necessary daily rest.

Aufbruch says that in the case of various art and cultural institutions there is an exemption from sales tax for projects that implement cultural work. That means a simplification of financial and tax processes. Freelancers with low incomes also do not have to pay sales tax on their fees, i.e. H. In these cases, the fee is higher because sales tax does not have to be paid. (Referring to No. 20 letter a sentence 1 Sales Tax Act version 2005)

1.9 Networks and good practices

- Are there any networks of companies/groups that make theatre in prison in your Country?
- Do you know, and if yes please describe them, if these networks have an advocacy role?
- Do you know, and if yes please describe them, some innovative case studies concerning making legal framework for theatre in prison at State, Region or local level in your Country?
- Do you know if these good practices have changed the laws or the rules in prisons?

The development of theatre in prison is very different in different countries.

Italy has a deep-rooted history that has now lasted for over 40 years, and over time there are several dozen companies and organisations that practise theatre in prison. Given this multitude of initiatives, over time

some experiences of networking have also arisen between organisations doing theatre in prison. On a national level there are two networks:

- Coordinamento Nazionale del Teatro in Carcere (National Coordination of Theater in Prison – approx. 55 organisation members);
- Per Aspera (15 organisation members).

The difference between these two organizations are on the legal status (the first one is a Network of which every association can be part of, the second one is a Network of Foundations that reserve a funding for making activities in prison to the organisation they are partner with) and on the approach (Coordinamento Nazionale gather organisations that are different between each other, Per Aspera gather theatre companies). Both the networks organise festivals and meetings, have collaboration with magazines with the goal of spreading the message of the relevance of theatre in prisons.

There are also Regional networks, but not in all the Italian regions: Coordinamento Teatro Carcere Emilia Romagna, Coordinamento Teatro in Carcere della Regione Toscana, Coordinamento Teatro in Carcere della Regione Lazio e il Coordinamento Teatro in Carcere della Regione Campania.

As we have seen, two different Memorandum of Understanding were drawn up, one in 2013 between the Higher Institute of Penitentiary Studies and the National Coordination of Theaters

In Prison, and the second one in 2020 between the Coordinamento Teatro Carcere Emilia-Romagna and the Region (among other different public entities), both with the goal to encourage the involvement of the entities associated with its organisational circuit.

In **Germany** there is only a loose network in which projects and interested artists and social workers are active. In 2022, a specialist conference “Theatre in Prison” took place in Konstanz, in which the possibilities and opportunities of a network were discussed.

However, no consensus could be found that managed to get continuous networking work going. The next specialist conference to continue the

discussions is planned for July 2025 in **Konstanz**, and will focus specifically on **cultural and educational opportunities for young people in prison**, particularly within the juvenile justice system.

The right to art as a basic human right – especially in prison – was successfully introduced by aufBruch in the amendment to the Correctional Services Act.

The theatre projects have been part of everyday prison life in Berlin for a long time now, so they have become a little more normal.

The current regulations are continually negotiated with the institutions. Changes in personnel can always lead to new problems and things that were considered normal are called into question again.

Different prison departments can view the issues surrounding theatre work very differently. The security department often has different policies than the social work department.

Theatre work is generally viewed as positive and valuable. In individual cases, for example, a participant was banned (in 2023, by the group leader and psychologist) in order to combat his narcissism.

In Berlin, support associations were founded to support cultural activities (Association of Friends and Supporters of Prison Theatre e.V., Support Association JSA Berlin e.V.).

In **Poland** there are no networks of theatre in prison, as there is only one professional theatre company operating in prison on a regular basis, Kobietostan. There are some individual artists conducting workshops in prisons or directing performances but these are rather one-time events. In the past there was the National Competition of Prison Theatre Art organised by the Penitentiary in Poznan and the Eighth Day Theatre. It ran for six editions, the last one took place in 2019. It served the purpose of networking theatre groups and increasing the visibility of prison theatre.

In 2018 the Polish Academy of Sciences organised the conference entitled Theater and Drama in Prison. Prison in Theater and Drama with guests from both Poland and abroad. It served the purpose of exchanging perspectives and good practices and establishing new connections and collaborations.

In **Serbia** and **Greece** there are no networks of theatre in prison.

PART 2 – THEATRE PROFESSIONALISATION

2.1 Inmates internship: a general overview

- Does your Country (or the prison/prisons where you are working) have a specific legislation addressing internships for inmates or ex inmates?
- Are inmates allowed to go outside the prison for an internship?
- Who is the person in charge to decide if an inmate can do an internship inside or outside prison?
- Are there forms to fill to give the permission to inmates to have an internship outside the prison? And after the internship, is there a report to do? To whom?
- Can the inmates be paid for the internship? If so, is there a national contract establishing the fee?
- Who pays the inmates? (Prison Authority, Cultural Institutions, Private Contributions, the theatre company...)
- Does the legislation effectively recognise, differentiates, and supports inmates who want to make cultural internships?

The only states that provide the possibility of internships are **Italy** and **Germany**. Trying to answer point by point, what emerges is that:

1) INTERNSHIP LEGISLATION FOR INMATES / EX INMATES

In **Italy**, internship arrangements are formalized through agreements with the prison administrations responsible for job placement and rehabilitation. The legislation recognizes the cultural sector as a valid field for internships. Following the amendments introduced by Legislative Decree No. 124/2018 to Article 20 of the Penitentiary Law, the current legal framework emphasizes the importance of promoting inmate employment “by all possible means”. Internships and work activities can now be organized both inside and outside the prison, with the involvement of public and private entities. Moreover, prison labor is no longer mandatory, marking a significant shift towards voluntary participation in professional and rehabilitative activities.

In **Germany**, both in Berlin and in Nordrhein-Westfalen (where Cologne is), there are specific guidelines for internships/job training for inmates, but not for ex-inmates: once they have served their sentence, inmates

are no longer a liability. The legislation recognises the cultural sector as a field for internship.

2) GOING OUTSIDE THE PRISON FOR AN INTERNSHIP

In **Italy** there is the opportunity to have permits for going outside to take an internship, previously agreed and authorised by the authorities.

In **Germany** the possibility of external internships depend on the typology of the prison.

In open prisons, inmates are usually allowed to leave the institution for an internship.

In closed prisons, there may be exceptions that allow inmates to leave the institution as part of rehabilitation measures that are in accordance with the prison plan. The effort to enable an inmate to go out every day is connected with a considerable administrative effort. In a specific case, this can be well justified, but it cannot be offered to the masses.

3) THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE INTERNSHIP

In **Italy** there are people inside the prison in charge of managing the internship and job placements. The organisation requesting to start an internship must therefore get in touch with the Prison representatives to verify the feasibility. Only after the checks is it possible to start the procedures to start the internship.

In **Germany** the decision about participation in an internship can be managed by different figures inside a prison: social worker, group leader, psychological service, if necessary, institution management. It is always a case-by-case decision, depending on the inmate and the typology of internship requested.

4) PERMISSIONS AND REPORTS

In **Italy**, organisations wishing to offer internships to inmates must collaborate with a certified vocational training provider accredited by the relevant Region or Autonomous Province. Not all organisations are authorised to implement certified internships; only those recognised as Certified Training Centres can do so. Typically, these are social cooperatives.

Internships are formally activated through the certified training provid-

er, which handles the administrative and bureaucratic procedures. The organisation hosting the inmate provides the necessary information, and the training provider prepares the official documentation, including the agreement with the prison administration.

At the end of the internship, the host organisation submits a final report to both the training provider and the prison administration. This process is subject to regional regulations and potential legislative updates, so the feasibility and procedures must be verified on a case-by-case basis.

In **Germany**, the regulations and agreements governing internships for inmates in German correctional facilities are normally made in cooperation between the correctional authority, the organisations or cultural institutions concerned, and the inmates themselves. However, there is no specific legal form that is exclusively intended to regulate internships in the penal system. In Germany the internship must be documented in every step. The internship provider must confirm the interns' participation and a report must be created.

5) PAYING THE INMATES

In **Italy**, traineeships are governed by specific legislation that is subject to frequent updates, and they can only be managed by certified entities accredited at the regional level. When an inmate participates in a paid traineeship, the employer is responsible for providing a copy of the pay slip and transferring the salary to the prison administration. The administration then ensures that the compensation is delivered to the inmate according to the applicable internal procedures.

In **Germany**, according to N. 5, inmates who make an internship are not legally entitled to intern remuneration. An internship allowance can be granted. In principle, interns must be paid appropriately. All the details are in the guidelines provided.

In open prison, inmates who do an internship can be remunerated externally via the institution or the office where they are doing the internship.

The prisoners receive an average of 14.21 euros per day. Low-skilled work in Bavaria is paid 1.33 euros per hour. The best-paid jobs, for example in carpentry, bring in 2.22 euros per hour. The sentences are set out in the prison laws of the federal states. They are set at nine percent of the

average earnings of regular employees outside prison walls. One speaks of the so-called corner wage.

Collective wages, minimum wages, industry minimum wages – these do not apply to prisoners. Work in prison is not considered work in the classic sense. Politicians and courts regularly argue that work is a means of resocialization. But this is not stipulated in law anywhere; Only the amount of remuneration is regulated.

Several professional associations also criticise the current system of remuneration for prisoners because the prisoners are not taken into account in all branches of social insurance. The prisoners are included in unemployment insurance. In a way that is advantageous for them, as the Bavarian Ministry of Justice emphasises. The prison pays the employer's and the employee's share. The amount of the contribution is not based on the actual wage, but rather on an average wage.

But prisoners are not included in the pension insurance. According to a statement from the "Federal Association of Prison Managers", this means that prisoners are at risk of being dependent on social assistance when they reach retirement age.

In some German federal states, prisoners are obliged to work, for example in Hamburg or North Rhine-Westphalia. If needy prisoners cannot work or there is no suitable job for them, they are entitled to pocket money (currently 33.40 euros per month. Those in security custody receive €102 per month).

Inmates are not immediately entitled to their full wages. Three sevenths of the amount are saved for the day of their release, the rest can be spent on shopping in the prison. Crime victims can seek compensation from working inmates by garnishing their wages.

Inmates with their own income must pay a contribution to prison costs for their accommodation. The amount varies depending on the federal state.

In **Greece, Serbia and Poland** there is no legislation addressing internships for inmates or ex inmates for theatre. And there are also no cultural institutions or specific legal forms and organisations regulating internships for inmates.

In **Greece** the legislation that refers to theatre activities is under the

recreation/free time allocated in the prison program.

Generally, inmates are not allowed to go outside the prison for an internship in the theatre industry. Inside the prison, an internship in the theatre may take the form of participation in a workshop. In this case, the rules are the same as when inmates participate in workshops, as being monitored by the facilitator, there is an attendance list, made known to the social services office and wardens' office. And also, inmates cannot be paid for their attendance to these recreational and 'free time' activities.

Ex inmates have no legal restrictions or regulations to abide by if they decide to work in the theatre industry.

In **Serbia**, there are only individual organisations and individuals dedicated to providing support, both during and after serving the sentences. Prisons are open to offering inmates opportunities, such as workshops in high-demand trades, leading to certification.

In **Poland**, vocational courses are organised inside prisons, but they do not currently include theatrical professions, and they typically do not lead to internships outside prison. However, the legal framework does allow for certain unpaid work arrangements that may resemble internships. According to Article 123 of the Penal Code, inmates may perform unpaid auxiliary work – up to 90 hours per month – for specific public entities, including local governments and institutions founded by municipal, county, or voivodeship bodies. If a theatre falls under one of these categories, an inmate could legally participate in such unpaid work. Paid internships, treated as employment, are also legally regulated, so in principle possible, depending on the type of theatre and legal arrangement. Therefore, the feasibility of internships depends greatly on the type and status of the hosting institution.

2.2 Legal forms recognized in your Country concerning internship for inmates

- Is (are) there or cultural institutions a specific legal form(s) for organisations and inmates regulating internships for inmates?

As far as we know, the only states that provide the possibility of internships are Italy and Germany, and are therefore the only ones that require specific legal forms to start internship paths.

In Italy, in order to initiate internships with inmates, the organisations must be certified training providers accredited by the relevant regional authorities. Not all organisations are authorised to design and implement certified internships that can lead to valid certification. Typically, certified training centres are cooperatives with specific accreditation to manage vocational pathways within the prison system.

Moreover, Article 25-bis of the Italian Penitentiary Law introduced the establishment of Regional Commissions for Prison Work. These commissions play a key role in the organisation and coordination of work-related activities in the penitentiary system, including the planning and implementation of internships and other professionalising experiences.

In **Germany**, the regulations and agreements governing internships for inmates in German correctional facilities are normally made in cooperation between the correctional authority, the organisations or cultural institutions concerned, and the inmates themselves. However, there is no specific legal form that is exclusively intended to regulate internships in the penal system. Most inmate internships are based on existing legal frameworks and agreements. These include:

- **Cooperation agreements:** Cooperation agreements are often established between the correctional institution and organisations or cultural institutions that define the framework, objectives, and responsibilities for internships.
- **Legal foundations:** internships for inmates can be based on existing legal foundations that regulate the work of inmates in prison and their participation in educational and work programs.
- **Security Aspects:** Inmate safety and control are top priorities. Therefore, cooperative agreements and legal frameworks often have provisions for security to protect both inmates and organisations.
- **Employment Contracts:** Inmates who complete internships in prison may enter into employment contracts or internship agreements that govern terms and conditions and compensation, if applicable.

In **Greece, Serbia and Poland** there are no cultural institutions or specific legal forms and organisations regulating internships for inmates.

2.3 Accessibility and relevance of legislation on making internship in a theatre or in a cultural institution

- Is the information for establishing an internship in the cultural system easy to access for inmates and prison authorities and personnel?
- Is it easy to understand?
- Was the content of the legislation developed through an inclusive consultation process?
- Are theatres, festivals, and cultural institutions recognised as partners for an internship?

In none of the countries that have legislation regarding internships for inmates, such as **Italy** and **Germany**, there is a specific legislation for internships in the cultural field or specifically in the theatre field.

However, the Italian partner Teatro dei Venti declares that over the years of activity there have been problems-free possibilities. Aufbruch, the Berlin partner, recalls how theatres, festivals and cultural institutions are recognized as partners for internships. They underline as well that complete vocational training paths always take priority over a temporary internship without direct career prospects.

Differently from Berlin, in **Cologne** Sommerblut reminds that setting up an internship in the cultural system is not easily accessible to inmates, prison authorities and staff, for the reason that “theatre professions” are still considered “exotic” in prisons and the inmates, staff, etc. do not have much contact with this professional field. Moreover, in the prison training in more “traditional” professions are offered.

In **Greece, Serbia and Poland**, just as there is no legislation on internship possibilities for inmates, there are no regulations on internships in the cultural field. Center for Rehabilitation through Imagination, the Serbian partner, underlines how theatres are not recognized as partners

for traditional internships, but they do grant permission for work and performances of inmates on the stages of theatre and cultural institutions.

The Poland partners say they organised a first internship at the Lubuski Theatre in Zielona Gora for one of the inmates participating in the technical course. Due to the distance between the prison and the theatre, it has been only a 1- day internship, as part of the Inmate Arts Centre.

2.4 Funding and benefit for an internship in a theatre or in a cultural institution

- Is there any State/Regional funding for an internship in a theatre or in a cultural institution?
- Are there benefits for theatre or cultural institutions that take inmates for internships? (es. tax exemptions, incentives, etc)
- Are there benefits for prisons that support these internships in theatre or cultural institutions? (es. tax exemptions, incentives, etc)

In none of the countries that have legislation regarding internships for inmates, such as **Italy** and **Germany**, there is a specific funding and benefits for internships in a theatre or in a cultural institution.

In **Italy** the funds to finance these projects are not constant and recurring, but depend on specific regional or national calls for proposals. Depending on the case, funds can be accessed by organisations working in prisons, by prison institutions themselves or by Certified Training Centres.

In **Germany** the funds to support internships vary from state to state and from prison to prison. Usually for internships there is no distinction between those who are incarcerated and those who are not. If you do a pre-internship, i.e. a compulsory internship before starting a course of study, you can receive BAföG. To do this, there must be proof that the internship is mandatory in the respective study regulations. If you do compulsory internships during your studies, your BAföG entitlement simply continues. However, if you do a paid internship, this remuneration will be

offset against your BAföG rate, so you will receive less BAföG during the internship.

This also applies if you want to do a voluntary internship during the semester break to gain more practical experience. However, the remuneration up to 450 euros will not be counted towards your BAföG. If you earn over 450 euros during your internship, the state support will be reduced proportionately.

However, if you do voluntary internships before studying, you will not receive any BAföG funding from the state.

There is no specific funding for culture or theatre internships.

In **Greece, Serbia, and Poland**, as we have seen, there are no laws relating to internships, in all fields other than theatrical and cultural ones. Additionally, there are no specific benefits or tax incentives in place for theatre or cultural institutions that offer internships to inmates.

However, in **Greece** if an internship (for general work other than theatre) for an inmate has been facilitated by the state unemployment office (or equivalent local body), there may be subsidies paid by the government to the employer. These programs are not run on an ongoing basis.

2.5 Are there, and if yes please describe them, specific obstacles in legal form and status (es. restrictions, taxes etc) for an internship in a theatre or cultural institutions?

Only **Italy** and **Germany** have regulations on internships. However, this regulation is generalised to all types of internships, not specifically highlighting cultural activities. This lack of clarification could lead to a lack of awareness among the staff who must authorise a specific internship. So, legally there are no restrictions compared to other internships, but the prisons decide for themselves to what extent the educational path seems sensible and promising for an inmate.

In **Greece, Serbia** and **Poland** the main obstacle is that there is no regulation on internships, managed as workshops inside prison. In Greece

and Serbia inmates do not have the possibility to leave prison to follow professional courses.

2.6 Networks and good practices

- Are there any networks at the State/Regional level to support inmates during their internship?
- Do you know, and if yes please describe them, if there are examples of internships in performing arts or cultural professions?

In **Italy, Greece, Serbia, and Poland** there are no specific state or regional networks that support inmates during their internships in theatre.

In **Germany** there are networks and initiatives at state and regional level to support inmates during their internships. These networks aim to promote vocational qualification and resocialization of prison inmates. The Federal Employment Agency is the main provider of internships from inside to outside. As a direct partner of the institution, the work and qualification department is responsible for arranging further job offers.

In particular, the providers of independent (non-official) criminal assistance represent a link to life outside the institution with their work inside and outside of prison. This bridging function is extremely helpful not only during imprisonment, but also when managing the transition from prison. The chances of inmates integrating into society after their release from prison are significantly improved by this type of support and aftercare.

The non-profit organisations maintain various offerings. They offer very different types of help. These include, for example:

- counselling (debt counselling, addiction counselling and others);
- discharge preparation/integration planning;
- support with the involvement of volunteers;
- vocational and school qualification measures;
- projects to avoid imprisonment (work instead of punishment);
- violence prevention offers.

PART 3 – ON THE JOB PLACEMENT OF INMATES AND EX-INMATES

3.1 Inmates and ex inmates job placement: a general overview

- Does your Country (or the prison/prisons where you are working) have a specific legislation addressing job placements for inmates or ex inmates?
- Are inmates allowed to go outside the prison for a job?
- Who is the person in charge to decide if an inmate can work inside or outside prison?
- Are there forms to fill to give the permission to inmates to have a job outside the prison? And during and after the work, is there a report to do? To whom?
- Can the inmates be paid for the work? If so, is there a national contract establishing the fee?
- Who pays the inmates? (Prison Authority, Cultural Institutions, Private Contributions, the theatre company...)
- Does the legislation effectively recognise, differentiates, and supports inmates who want to make cultural job? And what about the ex inmates?

3.2 Legal forms recognized in your Country concerning job placement for inmates and ex inmate

- Is (are) there a specific legal form(s) regulating job placement for inmates and ex inmates?

Each country has a very different culture not only on the subject of prisons, but also on the subject of work.

Starting from the **Italian** case, already in the Constitution the world of work is mentioned twice among the first articles. ART. 1 of the Italian Constitution states "Italy is a democratic Republic, founded on work", while ART. 4 in paragraphs 1-2 states "The Republic recognizes the right

to work for all citizens and promotes the conditions that make this right effective. Every citizen has the duty to carry out, according to his own possibilities and choice, an activity or function that contributes to the material or spiritual progress of society". ART.27 reminds us that "Punishments cannot consist of treatments contrary to the sense of humanity and must aim at the re-education of the convicted person", and to achieve this aim one of the ways is undoubtedly work.

Work for inmates in Italy is regulated by ART. 47-50 of D.P.R. 30/06/2000.

In Italy there is some legislation addressing job placements for inmates or ex inmates.

Work is not an obligation, but a possibility that is granted and agreed with the management and the treatment area of the prison. They identify work contexts in which inmates can be inserted and propose to the employer a start of the work placement process for the inmate in question.

They can be companies outside the prison that already have a collaboration with the prison administration, or new opportunities that gradually emerge based on internships carried out by inmates or volunteer experiences that the inmates themselves have carried out in that reality. Therefore inmate work can be of three types:

- **Work for the prison administration**, which can be domestic work (i.e. the daily management of the institution such as cleaning, portering, preparation and distribution of meals, small maintenance interventions on the building); industrial manufacturing (which produces clothing and equipment, furnishings and anything else intended for the needs of all institutions in the national territory); agricultural activities.
- **Work for external organisations**: the law provides for the possibility for businesses and social cooperatives to make use of inmate labour and to organise and manage workshops and laboratories within the institutes. To promote the entry of external activities into prisons, incentives have been provided for entrepreneurs, such as the free loan of premises and equipment already present in the penitentiary.
- **Public utility work**, which is voluntary and unpaid, in favor of public institutions or private entities. This type of work is now specifically regulated by Article 20-ter of the Penitentiary Law.

Prisoners in Italy can carry out work outside prison, as stated in paragraph 1 of ART. 48 of the Presidential Decree of 30 June 2000; "The admission of convicts and internees to work outside is ordered by the management only when the possibility is foreseen in the treatment program and becomes enforceable only when the measure has been approved by the magistrate of surveillance, pursuant to the fourth paragraph of article 21 of the law".

The forms and the total management of the inmates' work experience is in the hands of the Prison Administration. But with regards to external bodies bringing inmates into compliance in the workplace, always ART. 48 of the Presidential Decree of 30 June 2000, paragraph 10 states that "The employers of inmates or internees are required to pay, to the management of the institution, the remuneration, net of withholdings provided for by the laws in force, due to the worker and the amount of any allowances for the family unit, based on the documentation sent to the management. Employers must demonstrate to the same management the fulfilment of obligations relating to insurance and social security protection".

According to the law (Art. 22, l. n. 354/75), in **Italy** the remuneration for inmates who work for the prison administration is established, in relation to the quantity and quality of the work performed, at an amount equal to two thirds of the expected economic treatment by collective agreements for workers outside prison.

On the contrary, the wages of workers employed by external parties are equal to those for workers outside prison. However, the private employer cannot directly pay the inmate employed: the salary must be paid to the management of the institution, net of legal withholdings and the amount of any family allowances. Furthermore, the inmates' salary is subject to a series of deductions and withdrawals: maintenance costs, compensation for damage to the victims of the crime, reimbursement of the costs of the proceedings, and possible compensation for damage caused to the administration's movable property.

Recent jurisprudence has reinforced the legal status of prison work. In particular, Supreme Court ruling no. 19005/2024 confirmed the continuous and unified nature of the prison employment relationship, and ruling no. 396/2024 reaffirmed that intramural work is to be treated as regular

employment for social security purposes.

In **Italy** cultural work is not encouraged, but ART. 51 is specifically dedicated to “Artisanal, intellectual or artistic activities”. Paragraph 3 states: “Convicts and internees who request to carry out artisanal, intellectual or artistic activities during working hours may be authorised and exempted from work ordinary, when they demonstrate that they possess the aptitudes envisaged by the fourteenth paragraph of article 20 of the law and dedicate themselves to them with professional commitment”.

In **Greece** the work of inmates is regulated by law, through articles 41-43 of the penal code. In general, inmates can work after consultation with the employer and the prison management, they cannot leave prison to work, but they can be paid. Specifically, the articles state that:

- Art. 41, paragraph 5 of the penal code states that inmates can work on their behalf inside the prison facility once a proposal has been made from a state or private entity and only after agreement between the “employer” and the prison board has been reached and the rules and regulations of the safety and operation of the prison are not breached.
- Art. 42, paragraph 1 of the penal code states that an inmate may be employed beyond the prison facility in industrial, agricultural, craft industry, farming or businesses which belong to the public or private sector, or Centers for Professional Training. This is organised by the administration of the business in collaboration with the specific department of the ministry and is carried out and overseen by the administration of the prison facility
- Art. 43, paragraph 1 of the penal code, refers to the payment of inmates working beyond the prison facility in the public sector and states that payment is in monetary form and is based on a daily output or specific job completion or unit measure basis by the ministry of justice, depending upon the type of work and the skill level of the employee. For payment in the private sector by the inmate, the general legislation for worker payment is also taken into consideration. One third of the payment for inmates working beyond the prison facility is kept by the state as their contribution for living in the facility and is deposited in an account titled Prisoner Worker Fund. This amount cannot exceed

per day the daily payment of an unskilled worker.

- Art. 43, paragraph 2 of the penal codes, relates to the payment of inmates working within the prison facility and states that the payment amount is decided upon by the two parties, employer and employee. The minister of justice decides the requirements of the work in question and the percentage of the payment which is kept and deposited in the Prisoner Worker Fund. This amount cannot exceed 20% of the payment.

In **Germany** there are regulations and procedures for job placement for inmates and former inmates, as well as for participation in cultural jobs or training. Job placement for inmates or former inmates:

- Work as an inmate: Inmates in German prisons have the opportunity to work in prison businesses or in other work areas within the prison while they are incarcerated. This work can be part of the inmates' resocialization and vocational qualification.
- Work outside prison: Inmates may work outside of prison under certain conditions. This requires authorization and cooperation between correctional authorities and potential employers outside the prison.
- Work Authorization Decision: The decision whether an inmate may work inside or outside of prison is generally the responsibility of correctional authorities, who consider the inmate's individual circumstances and risk factors.
- Forms and Reports: Inmates who wish to work outside of prison are usually required to complete specific applications and forms. During and after the work, there may also be reports that are forwarded to prison authorities or other appropriate agencies.
- Compensation: inmates who work outside of prison can usually be paid for their work. The exact amount of compensation may vary by state and individual agreements. There is no national agreement that sets pay for inmates.
- Payment to Inmates: Payment to inmates is usually made by employers outside the prison, not by correctional authorities. Inmates can use their earnings to cover personal expenses while incarcerated and save money.

In general in **Germany** inmates all have to work: work is mandatory for once the final sentence has been received.

In open prisons, inmates are allowed to leave the prison for work and training purposes.

The work must be applied for and documented by the employer.

The inmates can be paid for their work in order to contribute to prison costs.

Fixed payment rates apply to work within the institution.

Remuneration, inmates' money and contribution to prison costs are set by law.

In Germany, the employment placement of inmates is regulated by the Correctional Services Act. After the federalism reform, the legislative authority for penal enforcement lies with the states; each federal state has its own rules and procedures. Employment services for inmates and former inmates are provided within the framework of the general laws and regulations governing employment services and resocialization.

Employers can only apply for an integration subsidy if they have an above-average effort to train the employee because the employee has no knowledge of the industry. Or if there is another so-called placement barrier because the applicant – and this applies to those on leave – cannot be employed in other cities, as assembly companies would like, for example. However, this has nothing to do with a special status for inmates but can be used by anyone placed.

In **Serbia**, the inmates cannot earn a salary for the work they do inside the prison and the work of the convict is not included in the insurance record. Serbia does not yet have specific legislation addressing job placements for inmates or ex-inmates, rather certain provisions within the Criminal Sanctions Enforcement Law.

Job placements for inmates and ex-inmates are typically facilitated through initiatives by non-governmental organisations, prison authorities, and collaborative efforts with companies or organisations willing to provide employment opportunities.

The enforcement judge, upon the proposal of the institution's director, may approve an offender who is classified in a semi-open or open department of the institution to perform work outside the institution if the

conditions are met, and the criminal offence for which the individual was sentenced is not related to such work.

Along with the proposal from the institution's director, a draft contract between the institution and the employer is submitted to the enforcement judge, determining the conditions under which the offender will perform work outside the institution. The institution is entitled to the market compensation for the labour of inmates working outside the institution. The institution's director may provide a financial reward to the inmate for achievements in their work. The highest amount of compensation and rewards for labour is determined by the Director of the Administration³. Nevertheless, this is hardly ever done in practice.

About cultural activities, in **Serbia** inmates have benefits if they behave well and participate in certain programs, such as theatre performances. They receive better treatment and an additional privilege once a month. The law recognizes and supports inmates who wish to engage in cultural activities as part of social inclusion, allowing them to explore creative reading, writing, and artistic expression on stage through performing arts before the community. The law indeed supports inmates who wish to participate, as every prison can engage in established cultural activities. This includes time spent in libraries, painting workshops, creative writing sessions, theatre workshops, and so on.

In **Poland**, rules concerning employment of inmates are regulated by the Regulation of the Minister of Justice the Penal Enforcement (Code of 6th June 1997 and other regulations related to employment). The Penal Enforcement Code states that it is the responsibility of each inmate to undertake employment while serving their sentence.

Inmates can work both inside or outside the prison. There are two types of outside employment. There are factories/workplaces located within the premises of the prison or right next to it, which follow all the security procedures of normal prisons. There are also employers who take inmates to their workplaces based on agreements with the prisons (the

3. Criminal Sanctions Enforcement Law, Art102a-107

employers are then responsible for the inmates during workdays, including travel to and from the workplace).

The director of the prison makes all employment decisions, taking into consideration recommendations of the prison staff.

Employment is formalised through agreements between the prison and the employers. The employer is responsible for submitting monthly reports and paychecks. The prison carries periodic controls of the workplaces. All employment is realised through employment contracts. Rules concerning employment are regulated by the Labour Code (a document specifying national rules of employment), the Regulation of the Minister of Justice from 9th February 2004 and the Penal Enforcement Code and other regulations related to employment, as well as other acts depending on the legal basis of the employment relationship.

In **Poland**, the employment of inmates can be both paid and unpaid, and the conditions are strictly regulated by law. Since Poland joined the European Union, legislation has required that inmates working under full-time employment contracts must earn no less than the national minimum hourly rate, but they are paid only for the hours actually worked.

From the gross salary, mandatory deductions are applied: 9.76% for pension and 1.5% for disability insurance. Then, 51% is deducted for the Professional Activity of Convicts and the Development of Prison, and 7% goes to the post-penitentiary assistance fund. If no tax relief is applied, a 12% income tax advance is also deducted. The remaining amount is transferred to the inmate's deposit account, from which further deductions (up to 40%) may be made for bailiff enforcement, alimony, or other legal obligations. As a result, despite working a standard 40-hour week, inmates may receive as little as 20% of the national minimum wage.

The Fund for the Professional Activity of Convicts is managed by the Director General of the Prison Service and is used to support reintegration efforts by financing the creation and modernization of prison workplaces, training programs, and professional activation initiatives.

For employers, hiring inmates brings several advantages: they may receive a lump-sum reimbursement equal to 35% of the inmate's wage, they can apply for loans and grants from the Fund, and they benefit from exemptions from certain labor law obligations (excluding working time and occupational health and safety regulations), including the exemption

from paying health insurance contributions.

3.3 Funding and benefit for job placement in theatres or cultural institutions

- Is there any State/Regional funding for a job placement for inmates or ex inmates in a theatre or in a cultural institution?
- Are there benefits for a theatre or a cultural institution that take inmates or ex inmates for internships or in their staff? (es. tax exemptions, incentives, etc)
- Are there benefits for prisons that support these internships in theatre or cultural institutions? (es. tax exemptions, incentives, etc)

Why inmates should do cultural activities and why employers should take inmates or inmates would be a long issue to discuss and this is not the proper place.

The issue of benefits to encourage activities during free hours in prison and that of benefits to encourage the hiring of inmates and ex-inmates is addressed differently in each country.

For example in **Italy**, if the inmate behaves well and shows particular aptitude for work, he can be rewarded through praise, benefits (indicated in articles 47, 47-ter, 50, 52, 53, 54 and 56 of law no. 94 of decree of the President of the Republic 9 October 1990, no. 309), up to the proposal for pardon, of conditional release and of early revocation of the security measures.

Furthermore, in Italy the law provides tax and social security benefits for companies that hire:

- inmates or internees within penitentiary institutions;
- inmates or internees working outside the prison pursuant to art. 21 law 354/1975 (prison system);
- and semi-free inmates or internees.

Companies or institutions employing inmates or former inmates may

benefit from fiscal and financial incentives, including a 95% reduction in social security contributions and a monthly tax credit of up to €520 per worker. The tax credit is reduced to €300 per month for semi-liberty cases. These measures were reinforced by Legislative Decree No. 124/2018, which strengthened the incentive system, introduced new monitoring mechanisms, and simplified administrative procedures.

However, access to these benefits is subject to strict procedural and operational constraints. Applications must be submitted via a dedicated online platform and require specific supporting documentation. Timelines for application submission are well-defined and must be strictly observed. Furthermore, budget limitations apply: funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and employment contracts must meet a minimum duration requirement to be eligible for benefits. The incentives are valid for the duration of incarceration and extend for up to 18 months post-release for inmates in semi-liberty or work-release programs, and up to 24 months in other cases, provided the employment began during incarceration.

In the cultural sector, while these general measures apply, there are also specific incentives for projects with a cultural or artistic focus. These may include targeted funding opportunities that allow for the combination of multiple financial sources (e.g. Ministry of Culture, regional programs, EU funds). Particular attention is given to training pathways that promote artistic development and professional skills in the performing arts. However, these are not part of a structured and permanent funding stream but instead arise through episodic project-based opportunities.

In **Greece** there is no funding and benefits for job placements in theatres or cultural institutions for inmates. There are programs run by the state unemployment office for 'vulnerable social groups', including ex inmates. These programs offer subsidies to the employer who hires an ex inmate. There is no clarification specifically related to the employer being a theatre or cultural institution.

In **Serbia** there is no State/Regional funding for a job placement for inmates or ex inmates in a theatre or in a cultural institution, or benefits for a theatre or a cultural institution that take inmates or ex inmates for internships or in their staff, given that there is no systemic support for such activities. There are no benefits for prisons that support these internships

in theatre or cultural institutions either.

In **Poland** there is no dedicated funding, benefits for institutions or prisons for job placement in theatres or cultural institutions.

In **Germany**, there is a general law for these cases, but not a special one for theatre or cultural institutions. A key aim of basic security for job seekers is to support employable people entitled to benefits to end or reduce their need for assistance. The focus is on using labour to generate your own income.

The principle of supporting and demanding applies.

A variety of different integration services are available to support job seekers in integrating into work. The following benefits, which are taken over from employment promotion, can help:

- Services from the placement budget to promote the initiation or taking up of employment,
- Measures for activation and professional integration,
- Promoting further vocational training including obtaining secondary school qualifications,
- Services to promote participation in working life,
- Benefits to employers (integration subsidies), promotion of further vocational training for employed employees,
- Promoting vocational training for disadvantaged young people.

Further information on the individual funding benefits can be found, among other things, in the Joint Declaration of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the state ministries responsible for basic security for job seekers as supervisory bodies in accordance with Sections 47 and 48 SGB II on integration benefits in progress in SGB II according to § 16 SGB II i. V. m. §§ 44 (placement budget), 45 SGB III (measures for activation and professional integration), as well as § 16e SGB II (integration of the long-term unemployed), § 16f SGB II (free funding) and 16 i SGB II (participation on the labour market).

In Germany there are opportunities to end a promotion of employment opportunities:

A job opportunity can be considered for those who are able to work

and are not able to integrate directly into the general labour market.

As part of such work opportunities, work that is additional, competitively neutral and in the public interest is supported.

The generally applicable maximum funding period of 24 months within five years can be extended once for a further twelve months. The regionally responsible job centres decide on the funding based on the individual requirements of the employable recipients.

The work does not constitute an employment relationship within the meaning of labor law; participants in work opportunities receive appropriate compensation for additional expenses in addition to unemployment benefit II. The additional expense compensation is not counted towards unemployment benefit II.

Supporting hard-to-reach young people.

The funding enables targeted additional help for young people who cannot currently be reached by the social benefit systems. The aim is to support young people in a difficult life situation and to get them (back) on the path to educational processes, employment promotion measures, training or work. This integration service supplements the existing range of basic security services for job seekers.

In **Germany** there is also a follow-up care, in order to secure sustainable employment subject to social insurance contributions and to stabilise employment, benefits may be required that help avoid further job loss. For this purpose, follow-up support is made possible by the job centres for employable people entitled to benefits, even after the need for help no longer applies. Depending on the conditions of the individual case, services can be provided in the form of advice and mediation through to measures for activation and professional integration. Possible are e.g. B. also services from the placement budget or services from independent funding. The possible funding period of up to six months after starting employment is based on the probationary period under labour law and the fact that there is a need for stabilisation, especially in the first few months after starting work.

Additional integration services according to other regulations include, for example, pre-vocational training measures including the legal right to obtain a secondary school leaving certificate for young people in accordance with Book Three of the Social Security Code or the integration

and language courses carried out by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

3.4 Are there, and if yes please describe them, specific obstacles in legal form and status (es. restrictions, taxes etc) for job placement in theatres or cultural institutions?

In all countries analysed, with different variations (such as the possibility of being paid, compulsory work, the possibility of leaving prison to work), prison work is recognized and regulated.

Not in all countries cultural or theatrical work is considered work, but it is not specified.

This lack of clarification could lead to a lack of awareness on the part of the staff who must authorise a specific job. But, legally there are no restrictions compared to other types of work.

3.5 Stigma and the right to be forgotten

- Do you think the stigma on ex inmates could be a problem for the job placement path? What do you do to overcome this issue?
- Is there a specific law in your Country for the “right to be forgotten”? If so, for which crime? Can you describe it shortly?

For all partners, stigma is a serious problem for the reintegration of prisoners into society.

Teatro dei Venti, from **Italy**, underlines that: “stigma can actually be a real problem for a person who want to find a renewed place in the society after detention, that’s why we think that the transition from inside to outside must be protected and accompanied, and at the same time advocacy projects must be empowered. In actual fact, a detainee who doesn’t have a social network or family outside has more difficulty to find stability and a balance after the detention”.

The **Greek** partner instead underlines the assumption “takes a very mature and open minded employer, who can see beyond the history of an applicant and one who focuses on his qualifications, skill level and personal character, who may eventually take on an ex inmate for employment.

There are some subsidised programs by the state unemployment offices for such ‘vulnerable social groups’ which the employer can take advantage of and therefore the ex-inmate can be ‘less costly’ to employ over someone else with the same skill level and qualifications. Personally, I know examples of both stigma related difficulties in employment for an ex-inmate and also one example of job placement and a clear career path for another.

To overcome this issue or to at least deal with it, information about prison programs and the positive work done for personal development and furthermore job qualification, can be made known to businesses and prospective employers. Any prison events, such as theatre and positive collaborations with sporting clubs and recycling initiatives etc. can all help make the idea of prisons and the incarcerated less taboo to society and an ex inmate less threatening and more appealing for a job placement.

Society views are very conservative in general when we talk about prisons, the incarcerated and ex inmates. The information that usually comes from the media is all about crimes, riots and who committed them. This news sells more than something positive that is happening on the inside. It is a balance that will not easily be managed or overturned. One may argue that societies need prisons to keep free citizens in order. It all acts as a mechanism which has been in motion for decades and will not change overnight but we must at least attempt to minimise the difference. Inmates in prison belong to society and will (the majority of them) at some stage return.

Whether they themselves are ready to adapt and assimilate back to society depends on a lot of the work done on the inside. Whether society is ready for them to return is a totally different beast.

In **Germany**, both in Berlin and in Cologne, there is a General anti-discrimination law. In Fact in Germany there is the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), which prohibits discrimination based on ethnic origin, gender, age, and other characteristics. This law may also apply to discrimination against former inmates. Other than that, Awareness campaigns and ed-

educational initiatives are very important to fill the gap with the aim to sensitise employers and the public to the challenges and needs of former inmates and to reduce prejudices.

Despite this, in **Germany** the stigmatisation of former inmates is a problem for employment services. Many employers prefer other applicants for jobs.

Our Basic Law demands that all citizens are equal before the law. The Basic Law states: Everyone has the right to the free development of their personality. This applies regardless of a person's gender, skin colour or religion. It doesn't matter whether someone comes from a poor or rich family, whether he or she comes from the north or south or another part of the country.

The social exclusion and stigmatisation of those released from prison, in **Germany**, is omnipresent in modern societies, regardless of modern penal systems. For those affected, this represents a strong source of stress, which can result in reduced opportunities for social participation, changes in social interactions and "damaged" identities, making successful resocialization more difficult.

Studies of "prison subculture" go one step further in explaining recidivism: not only does prison fail to meet the alleged goals of the penal system, but it must also even be seen as a direct cause of further criminal acts by inmates. ...

Former criminals therefore often turn to other criminals or marginalised groups, who, however, reinforce their status as deviants. The attempts of those with previous convictions to defend themselves against the stigmatisation (one expression is, for example, erratic work behaviour) and the contacts with other deviants "make it easier" for the instances of social control to define them again and again, to set the stigmatisation process in motion again and for them thereby further outclassing." (*Helga Cremer-Schäfer*)

Also in **Serbia** stigmatisation is recognized as a significant challenge on inmates' path to reintegration. Hence, when they earn certificates in certain trades or professions they engage in, there is no mention anywhere that they received their education within a correctional facility. This

anonymity is the only measure currently in place to mitigate stigmatisation. They are already stigmatised and underprivileged, simply due to their status as former inmates. Therefore, the certificates they obtain within the framework of correctional institutions are valuable precisely because they do not indicate where they completed their training; instead, they demonstrate the qualifications they have achieved.

In **Poland**, to help prisoners in their reintegration thanks to courses held in prison, the partner tells us that they do not mention that the actual training took place inside the prison.

In order to overcome the stigma we plan to employ theatre staff as experts running our AHOS training programme so that they will be more open to take the inmates on job placements at their theatres/institutions at the end of the course.

Speaking instead of a “right to be forgotten”, in **Italy** there is a law regarding those who have been acquitted, who therefore have the right to request that their data relating to the accusations be deleted from the internet.

In **Germany**, since 2016, the “right to be forgotten” is intended to ensure that digital information with a personal reference is not permanently available. Because the law relates to electronically stored data, it is also referred to as a “digital eraser”. The concept of the right to be forgotten goes back to the legal and political scientist Viktor Mayer-Schönberger. He suggests giving electronically stored information an expiration or expiration date. After this date has passed, the information should be automatically deleted by a program or the computer’s operating system. Currently, the right to be forgotten is not explicitly regulated by law. Data protection laws – for example in Germany – only contain provisions under which conditions personal data must be deleted. In the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), which came into force on May 24, 2016 and is directly applicable in all EU member states from May 25, 2018, the right to deletion is regulated in Article 17. The title of this article contains the parenthesis “Right to be forgotten”. However, the regulation primarily contains deletion rights and obligations. Only with Article 17 paragraph 2 is the idea of the right to be forgotten to prevent or reverse the (further) dissemination of personal data (particularly on the

Internet) being pursued, at least to some extent. The right therefore only exists after a corresponding request from the person concerned.

In **Serbia** there is no specific law for the “right to be forgotten”. This right is only granted to children, specifically those in juvenile correctional facilities. After serving their sentences, their records are no longer visible, representing a form of ‘right to be forgotten’ in a way. Serbia does not have a specific law for the “right to be forgotten” for any particular crime or category of offenders. The “right to be forgotten” is a legal concept primarily related to data protection and online privacy, allowing individuals to request the removal of certain information from online platforms and search engine results. In the context of criminal records, while there may be provisions related to the sealing of records for certain offences, these are typically not referred to as the “right to be forgotten.” The specific criteria and processes for sealing criminal records would depend on the relevant laws and regulations related to criminal justice in Serbia.

In **Poland** and **Greece** no law is reported in this regard.

TO SUMMARISE

In the following table we have tried to summarise some of the central points of this investigation. The **X** in the reference box corresponds to the presence of a law or regulation in this regard. Obviously it is very complex to be able to answer with a yes or no to every question. For further information, please refer to the responses of the various partners in the questionnaire.

	Italy	Germany	Greece	Poland	Serbia
Theatre during working time		partly		partly	
Paying inmates for working (in general)	x	x	x	x	x
Paying the inmates as theatre workers	x			x	
Paying the inmates as actors	x	Only in the outside projects		x	
Work is mandatory		In some countries in Germany yes/ in some not			
Possibility to do internship in cultural field	x	x			
Possibility to work in cultural field	x	x			
Going out for work	x	In open prison		x	x
Going out for internship	x	Case management			
Going out to perform	x	Case management		x	x
Talk/Touch inmates at the end of the performance	x	x	x	x	x
Paying to enter in prison to see the performance		x			

GOOD PRACTICES

CHAPTER 1

~ Preliminary steps

In this section we will suggest some actions that could improve the general environment in which the activities take place, and could help AHOS Project to achieve its goals. Some of these actions involve subjects that are not involved in the project, but could benefit from its success.

As we have seen in the Legal Framework, the situation in the different countries, and in the various European prisons involved in the AHOS Project, is very different. There are differences in the legal systems, in the prison system, in the way inmates can work or can receive professional training, and also differences in the forms of alternative punishments. But there is also a deep cultural variety in the attitude to work, both inside and outside the prison.

And of course the support that an ex inmate can get is very different according to the welfare system of each country, the kind of crime, the social background...

The only common element is the stigma against ex-detainees, and this is of course a great obstacle in any re-socialisation program.

This varied landscape deeply affects any theatre activity in prison, the professional training of detainees, and the prospects of job placements after the end of the prison sentence.

1.1 Raise the awareness of the positive impacts of theatre activities in prison

More and more studies and research projects confirm the benefits of theatre practice in prison, for the inmates, for the quality of life in prisons, and for the entire society.

But in many countries (and even among professionals of the prison system) the awareness of the positive impacts of these activities is not shared at the same level.

Moreover, in many situations theatre activities are seen just as a form of

entertainment and distraction for detainees (an afternoon or an evening attending to a play, or to a concert...), or as a cultural activity (as a part of an educational path).

But several experiences in different countries taught us that theatre practices can have positive effects on a deeper level: their transformative power can promote new patterns of behaviour:

- on a **personal level**, using the body as a tool of expression, theatre practice can raise self awareness and self esteem, can express deep feelings and emotions without using verbal language, can increase the ability to imagine a different self (and a different way of life), can promote and recognize inventiveness and creativity;
- on the **level of personal relationships**, theatre practice can increase the ability to work in a team, to accept mistakes (and the mistakes of the colleagues), develop key social competences such as responsibility, tolerance, discipline, willingness to perform, as well as cultural and linguistic competences. It can also help to prevent radicalization tendencies;
- on the **level of society as a whole**, theatre in prison can give a voice to the voiceless, using participatory theatre as a method, and transforming the theatre into a space of self-advocacy for the people in the danger of social exclusion. For these reasons, theatre in prison is seen as an important tool in the resocialization of inmates, and in fighting recidivism. But also helping to increase the awareness of the citizens of the reality of the social situation and its complexities and contradictions.

This knowledge inspires all the partners of AHOS Project, and their different methodologies and practices, with creative writing workshops and theatre workshops.

But in general performing arts are very rarely seen as a possible professional outlet for ex detainees (both in acting and in technical professions). The only exception is Italy, where a survey of DAP (the Direction of the Italian Penitentiary System) noted that among the 118 theatrical realities active in prison in 2015, the teaching of performing arts professions as

set and costume designer is provided in 21% of cases; and the teaching of professions that as sound engineer and accompanying musician in 18% of cases (AA.VV., *L'impatto del teatro in carcere*, LUISS University Press, p. 62).

Therefore one of the goals of a project like AHOS is to give information about these issues, using every possible dissemination form (publications, meetings, debates...).

"We actively lobbied the importance of theatre in prison, participating in various events and taking meetings at a high level: in the environment of curators, in the local council and directly with the ministry of justice (we had a meeting in March 2024 with the vice-minister). Since the beginning of 2024 our president, Agnieszka Bresler, is a member of the Lower Silesian Local Council for Social Readaptation and Assistance to Convicts (amongst prison directors, high judges and probation officers) which gives her the access and the right to make recommendations and lobby for changes at the regional level." (Kobietostan - Poland)

1.2 Raise the awareness of the positive impacts of theatre activities in prison with the prison personnel

One of the key elements in every project inside a prison is the collaboration of the prison personnel: the direction/management, of course, but also the guards, the educators, and also social workers, psychologists and other experts in the process of rehabilitation and resocialization. In this frame, the "Contact Person" is the essential link between the facilitators, the prison personnel, and the prison group who participate in the program. He/she can be the director or a prison officer, or an educator... The guards are in charge of the security, and activities in prison can give them a further burden in their daily routine, but positive effects in prison life on the long term should be underlined.

The involvement of the prison personnel in the project is a key element in the success of the project: building mutual trust and a good relationship takes a lot of time and attention, and some people might not be interested in this kind of collaboration.

It is important to take care of the relationship with educators from the

beginning, possibly with meetings.

1.3 Recruitment

Anyone can be “re-activated” by theatre activities and benefit of the performing and acting workshops. The methods to recruit the participants to theatre workshops vary greatly, according to the different situations.

In some cases the call is open to all the inmates, in some other the prison personnel selects the participants. Some groups are totally open: an inmate can join the space of the workshop whenever he/she wants, perhaps just watching. Other groups are closed, and after the initial selection no one is allowed to join.

But of course to be involved in a professional training program the candidates must be in a particular condition: young, and probably without other professional qualifications, serving a sentence long enough to follow the training path, and short enough to put it into practice after having regained freedom.

1.4 Establishing a protocol between the theatre group/company working in the prison, the prison authorities and the theatres accepting interns

In the absence of a legal or regulatory framework on prison in theatre activities, it could be useful to establish a protocol with the goals and the methods within the AHOS project, involving the theatre group/company working in the prison, the prison authorities, and the theatres where the inmates (or ex inmates) can have an internship, train, or work. (Update 2025)

“We have been unable to establish partnerships with any of the theaters in Opole. While we are unsure of the exact reasons, we suspect that stereotypes associated with incarcerated individuals may play a role, compounded by the fact that our organisation lacks recognition in that city.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

1.5 Open the prison to external visitors, and taking the inmates outside the prison

One of the effects of theatre activities is to open the premises, in both directions. Allowing the facilitators and the audience to enter the prison, creating partnerships with universities, schools, professional associations and other institutions on the one hand. And on the other hand allowing the inmates to go outside the prison to perform (and in the case of AHOS for professional training).

This dialogue between the two worlds is one of the ways in which prejudices can be broken down. It can happen in different ways, and in different measures, but it is one of the key elements of the AHOS Project,

Therefore this opening cannot be limited just to internships. (Update 2025)

“Involvement of external organisations for performances outside prison. Organising performances outside prison reduces the isolation of inmates, offering them meaningful experiences outside prison walls. In addition, confrontation with a general audience unaffected by prison reality makes it possible to create an authentic dialogue and break down stereotypes.” (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

“In some cases we had some great difficulties.” (Fabrica – Greece)

“This was the common practise in Greece rather than performing outside the prison walls, which beyond some small scale initiatives, remains too difficult.

After the initial presentation in November and December of 2024, the **DOG TAGS** performance had a successful repeat season in the Detox Prison in April 2025 and has now been offered a position in the 2025 Athens Epidavros festival. This means it will run for a 3rd 'season' within the prison walls and will be part of the biggest cultural festival Greece hosts every year. This exposure is a step forward to informing the general public of cultural programs within Greek prisons, changing perspectives about inmates etc and gaining the prison a new image regarding prisoner rehabilitation and therapy. There is discussion about performing beyond the prison walls but I am not counting my chickens yet!” (Fabrica – Greece)

1.6 Good Practices already tested by the partners

1.6.1 Creation of National and Regional networks between performing arts groups/organisations working prisons.

In Italy there are several National and Regional Networks of groups working in prisons, and they have been organising in the last years, in different Italian towns, several editions of national festivals of theatre in prison. (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

1.6.2 Signature of a protocol describing the reasons, the goals, and the actions to promote theatre activities in prison between the Ministry of Justice and the Network of the theatre organisations working in prison (and possibly Universities and other research centres)

An example is the protocol signed in Italy between the Ministry of Justice, the Coordinamento Nazionale Teatro in Carcere and Rome University (already mentioned).

The Department of Penitentiary Administration and the Department of Juvenile and Community Justice intend to support and enhance the numerous theatrical experiences already present in prison institutions and proposed to minors and young adults in charge of the Juvenile Services, confirming the specific value – in the area of treatment – of initiatives of an artistic/expressive nature and of theatrical practice in particular, that represent a valuable significant tool to encourage the possibility of knowing and experimenting with alternative behavioral models based on the physical-emotional dimension, able to enhance the uniqueness of the individual, to promote a reshaping of roles and a different awareness of themselves and their emotions, also in relation to the group and towards the external community, in support of a process of social integration and work placement.

From the monitoring carried out in 2018, by the Directorate General for Prisoners and Treatment, 146 theatrical workshops were active and in

addition, in 70 Institutes, the theatrical experience was accompanied by other support activities by treatment operators; in 132 cases the operators reported that the experience of the theatre workshop had a positive impact on the general “climate” of the Institute.

From the data collected it is clear that theatre in prison is a non-traditional educational/formative practice that helps the rediscovery of personal skills and sensitivity but also a mode of positive expression of negative emotions, This last aspect is particularly important in detention situations, where emotional and relational processes are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the context.

Cultural, training and work activities within the theatre, offered to minors and young adults in charge of child services, encourage the expression of the potentialities, interests and attitudes of the same, sharing of positive experiences at the group level and in the external community, the process of social integration and work placement⁴. (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

1.6.3 Collaboration with universities and other research centres and institutions

“Cooperation with universities, schools, professional associations and other institutions in Serbia and abroad which are involved in social rehabilitation.” (CRI – Serbia) (Update 2025)

“Sharing good practices and knowledge: – organising university lectures and prison board presentations sharing the good practices and outcomes of the AHOS project – organising lectures and workshops for theatre artists interested in working in prisons.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

⁴. Protocollo d'intesa tra Ministero della Giustizia-Dipartimento dell'Amministrazione Penitenziaria-Dipartimento per la Giustizia Minorile e di Comunità, Comitato Nazionale Teatro in Carcere e Università degli Studi di Roma Tre-Dipartimento di Filosofia, Comunicazione e Spettacolo, Roma, 5 giugno 2019.

1.6.4 A nationwide theatre course/workshop for educators in prisons, sharing tools of theatrical and development work with inmates

“The blueprint could be the course organised by Kobietostan, first edition in 2023”. (Kobietostan – Poland) (Update 2025)

During the meeting in Tegel (and see point 03_09_03), a common need arose to structure pathways with prison staff, particularly those closest to theatre work, as a way of strengthening their commitment and ensuring deeper institutional involvement in artistic activities within prisons.

1.6.5 The creation of a framework between the cultural organisation working in the prison, the prison authorities, and the theatres where the stages/workshops/internships will take place

The blueprint could be the *Protocollo d'intesa* signed in Modena by Teatro dei Venti, Casa Circondariale di Sant'Anna, Casa di Reclusione di Castelfranco Emilia, Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione, Fondazione Teatro Comunale di Modena. (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

CHAPTER 2

~ During the project

The AHOS Project is working in two levels at the same time:

- 1) the theatre workshops;
- 2) the training process in the different professional fields of performing arts.

Of course these two activities have different common elements. But in identifying the possible Good Practices in the AHOS Project we will not take into consideration the expressive and artistic side of the project, as the partners work in very different conditions, and have different backgrounds and working methods. We will focus mainly on the training process, which is the backbone of the AHOS Project.

2.1 Commitment

The groups involved in AHOS Project work in different situations and follow different methodologies. Some groups prefer a long term commitment, entering the prison once or twice a week, all year long, regardless of the staging of a show. Other groups prefer (or are forced) to concentrate the activities in a short period of time, when it comes to setting up a new show. Both solutions have their pros and cons.

The key element, in both cases, is that the commitment towards the prison administration and the inmates should be clear and strong, with simple and strict rules of participation, both for facilitators and inmates. Always remembering that everyone has a part to play, and everyone contributes.

Of course, as the workshop and the production of the show has to be coordinated with a training program, the planning of the activities becomes more complex, and has to be carefully scheduled. (Update 2025)

“Creating a contract at the beginning of working with the group – a set of rules that the entire group develops in discussion and everyone signs; it provides the basis for safe common work.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

2.2 Artistic teams and professors: a team that values diversity

The production and training teams necessary for the realisation of the AHOS Project are necessarily different, involving different professions and skills (dramaturgy, musical rehearsal, choreography and movement training, costume design, assistance, technology (sound and light) and graphics). Having people of different generations, cultures, and origins, proactively addresses any prejudices and resentments from the part of the inmates and of the prison personnel. This diversity and mix can help to engage teachers, educators, social services, psychologists..., and can be effective in addressing the broad cultural and multinational spectrum of inmates and to flexibly develop innovative working methods, helping to create a more democratic, non-exclusive structure in groups.

(Update 2025)

“Uniting this diversity of personalities and characters from different social backgrounds in one artistic project is novel and unique.” (AufBruch – Berlin)

2.3 Limiting the risks of burnout of artists and professionals working in prison

For artists and professionals, working in prisons is not an easy task, also from a personal and psychological point of view.

To limit the risks of professional burnout, it is recommended to work in tandem (giving a sense of security and support, and the possibility of consultation), and to have regular psychological supervision, following the example of Kobietostan. (Update 2025)

“Incorporated trauma-sensitive methodologies and flexible scheduling to accommodate the emotional and psychological well-being of participants, aligned with prison routines. The training program was adapted to comply with prison regulations, but also to the level of exposure the participants wanted to offer, considering their unique circumstances and limitations within the correctional environment. Some of them were engaged on stage, while others were more comfortable being engaged in the “backstage” tasks, but emphasis was placed on involving the inmates in all stages of the play creation process.” (CRI – Serbia)

2.4 Training process

The training process can involve professionals already working with the team, or teachers especially hired for the professional courses. It should alternate theoretical lessons and laboratory activities for the realisation of the shows.

Each professionalising course, in the different specialisations (scenography, costumes, lighting design...), should have a minimum number of lesson hours and a minimum number of workshop hours. (Update 2025)

“Professional approach. Theatre helps inmates develop discipline, respect for rules and awareness of their actions. The approach of the Theatre of the Winds is strictly professional, and inmates are asked to be equally professional, promoting a serious and rigorous working environment.” (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

“Collaborations with professional artists. The integration of external professionals enriches the artistic pathway and guarantees a high quality level, placing the inmates in a non-amateur context. The involvement of artists and companies also fosters a continuous exchange between the prison and the outside theatre world.” (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

“In the professionalization process, structured guidance and mentorship ensured a balance between learning and applying new skills, resulting in concrete outcomes such as the successful production of performances

and audiovisual materials. Participants gained practical experience that can serve as a foundation for future opportunities, enhancing their reintegration prospects.” (Sommerblut – Germany)

2.5 Internship

When it is possible (keeping in mind the constraints of the prison systems in the different countries and prisons, and the working methods of the various groups), the internship outside the prison, in a professional theatre, is one of the most significant elements of the AHOS Project. It will of course help to increase the skills of the student, but most of all it might change the perspective of the workers of the theatre, on the basis of their cooperation. (Update 2025)

In some countries it is possible (Italy, Germany). In Greece difficulties for visitors to enter prisons and impossible for inmates to attend a performance outside the prison (Fabrica – Greece)

“Only one of the female participants had the capacity to participate in the technical aspects of the performance, which was not part of the training conducted. Charalambia designed the playbill in collaboration with Stathis.” (Fabrica – Greece)

“We took interns to follow, learn and assist us in our work, thus training future operators of theatre in prison: three students of our local drama academy. We also run workshops for artists interested in theatre work in prison, spreading the knowledge, tools and interest in theatre in prison. Both workshops gathered high number of participants and we chose our interns from amongst them.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

2.6 Diploma or certificate

At the end of the training process and internship, each student will receive a diploma or certificate of attendance.

These certificates should not indicate that the training took place in a prison, and this omission is intended to mitigate issues related to stigmatisation. (Update 2025)

“Wherever possible, the project aims to provide inmates with certificates and certifications recognising the skills acquired in the theatre process. This step is crucial to foster work and social reintegration.” (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

“Inmates who successfully completed the photography courses received official certification. Through their engagement in both theater and photography activities, they developed valuable technical skills that enhanced their ability to express themselves creatively and confidently. Receiving certification for these skills not only contributed to their personal growth but gave them the confidence to explore future employment or further training opportunities in artistic fields.” (CRI – Serbia)

“In the facility we are collaborating with, female inmates in open and semi-open units are employed by permanent contractors. On the other hand, male inmates are only in closed units, and the facility does not permit work outside the prison walls. This restriction limits our ability to offer job placement opportunities for both genders.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

“We issue diplomas (certificates of course completion) for all the courses we run under AHOS: acting, scriptwriting, light design and sound design. These diplomas state the content of the course, number of hours and the final grade plus give information on the organisation who run it and names of the teachers/leaders – but they do not say where the course took place (one of the ways in which we try to counteract stigma). At the request of participants we also issue written opinions at the end of the course, for their court/release papers.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

2.7 Pay inmates for their work

As we have seen in the Legal Framework, the norms concerning the forms of remuneration for inmates vary widely.

When possible, and in order to underline the fact that “scenographer”, “costume designer”, “lighting technician” are professions that can offer a real job opportunity, the prisoner's work should be paid. (Update 2025)

In some countries it is possible (Italy, Germany). Greece could make payment in different ways (payment for as playbill, or buffet). In other countries it is impossible.

In Poland it was possible only for men: “female inmates would face the necessity of resigning from their current positions to engage in the internships, which poses significant challenges. This situation highlights the need for a more equitable approach to employment opportunities within the prison system, ensuring that all participants can benefit from vocational training without jeopardizing their existing work arrangements” (Kobietostan – Poland).

In Serbia “They were not paid, but did receive professional cameras, by the Factory of Photographers.” (CRI – Serbia)

2.8 Nurturing the relationships of the inmates with their relatives

The relationship with relatives is a fundamental element for the well-being of inmates, also in view of their reintegration into society.

To facilitate the achievement of this goal, various methodologies can be used. For example:

- invite relatives to attend premieres and shows, and, where appropriate, rehearsals;
- produce, also using the skills acquired during writing and theatre workshops and technical training programs, radio plays (podcasts and radio broadcasts). (Update 2025)

“There were 12 public performances with 150 audience members. External audience members can buy tickets in our online shop or at the box office of the Volksbühne, a large state theatre in Berlin. The show’s duration is between 120 and 130 minutes. Here the participants experience (often for the first time in their lives) recognition and respect for their achievement from their social surroundings (family, friends, group leaders, theatre audience), the successful completion of the result of their work. These experiences strengthen their social competencies and change their perception of their own willingness and ability to achieve things.” (Aufbruch – Germany)

2.9 Good Practices already tested by the partners

2.9.1 Use of mixed artistic and training teams, more democratic, non exclusive structure in groups, co-deciding using a variety of tools and methods

“Men and women, German and foreign artists, professionals and young professionals, in order to proactively address any prejudices and resentments on the part of the inmates from the outset. The diversity and mix of artistic teams has proven to be extremely effective in addressing the broad cultural and multinational spectrum of inmates and in being able to flexibly develop innovative working methods.” (Aufbruch – Germany)

“Striving to create a more democratic, non-exclusive structure in groups:

- working in a circle (equal voices, building a sense of community);
- making rounds at the beginning of each meeting (checking the group's mood and energy level and adjusting the way of conducting the workshop accordingly);
- using non-violent communication methods;
- creating a contract at the beginning of working with the group a set of rules that the entire group develops in discussion and everyone signs; it provides the basis for safe common work.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

“Involving people embedded in creative processes and co-deciding on projects in which they participate:

- using participatory theatre as a method which allows artists to contribute to social change, _ not forgetting the artistic goals and quality of the art created;
- creating original exercises to adapt creative writing methods to teamwork;
- using elements of the Augusto Boals’ method of Theatre of the oppressed;
- creation of an advisory board (composed of inmates, the staff of the criminal unit and people from our association), taking up topics related to the project.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

“The Sommerblut Kulturfestival is actively committed to inclusion and diversity. It provides a platform for artists and cultural practitioners from different backgrounds, including people with disabilities, migrants, LGBTQ+ people and many others. The diversity of the participants is reflected in the festival's programmes and projects. The Sommerblut Kulturfestival also organises all events with as few barriers as possible: This means the performances are translated into Easy Language, there is a live sign language translation and / or subtitles, an audio description and a touch tour before the start of the performance for blind or visually impaired people.” (Sommerblut – Germany) (Update 2025)

“We also introduced a workshop of NVC with elements of drama for “practising” NVC. The women inmates participating found it very useful, interesting and eye-opening – they asked as for a printed NVC script in order to use it in their own lives in the future.” (Kobietostan - Poland)

2.9.2 Sustainability and environmental awareness

“Sommerblut Kulturfestival emphasises sustainability and environmental awareness. It strives for environmentally friendly practices in the organisation of events, such as reducing waste, using renewable energy and

promoting public transport. In this way, the festival helps to protect the environment and raise awareness of environmental issues.” (Sommerblut – Germany)

2.9.3 Caring for other people working in the penitentiary system

“Taking thorough care of our relationship with educators (we want to start taking care of these relationships earlier – in the previous project, we held a meeting with educators in the middle of the project, and at the end of it, now we believe it is crucial to begin with such meetings).” (Kobietostan - Poland)
“Organisation and involvement of social workers, psychologists and other experts in the process of rehabilitation and resocialization of stigmatised groups.” (CRI – Serbia) (Update 2025)

“Despite initial communication hurdles, the project was implemented with institutional support from the prison, mirrored in regular communication and coordination with prison staff. This collaboration facilitated the implementation of training sessions and ensured proper program delivery. As a result, staff members recognized the positive impact of these activities, contributing to a more supportive atmosphere for rehabilitation. Their cooperation not only improved inmate morale but also enhanced the overall environment within the prison.” (CRI – Serbia)

“The Director, the warden and other staff members were invited to see the progress of the performance when they could. This would offer the visitors a good sense of the progress made, and make them part of the creative process with their feedback. It would also help the participants understand how important being in the moment, every moment becomes before an invited audience.” (Fabrica – Greece)

“Caring for other people working in the penitentiary system who support or may support our activities - taking thorough care of our relationship with educators by having regular meetings, inviting them to our other events and including prison representatives in the Berlin meeting and study visit.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

“Many social workers and prison staff visited the performance.”
(AufBruch – Germany)

2.9.4 Being mindful of safety and counteracting the risk of professional burnout of artists working in prisons

“Working in tandem/groups – it gives the leaders/members a sense of security, support, the possibility of consultation, but also allows them to more carefully observe what is happening in the group.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

“Regular psychologist supervision, with regular meetings with the supervisor every month or two.” (Kobietostan - Poland)

“In our previous projects, we encountered a percentage of inmates who, while actively participating in rehearsals, expressed reluctance to be involved in public performances. This hesitation stemmed from various challenges such as shyness, low self-esteem, and the fear of being stigmatised or judged by the audience. As a result, they preferred to remain behind the scenes, comfortable only in the role of substitute actors.

However, recognizing the importance of inclusivity, and seeking alternative ways to involve these individuals in our theatrical endeavours we believe that the professionalisation pathway of this project might be a way. Offering training opportunities in specialised areas such as photography, scenography, costume design and making, we will seek to provide these participants with meaningful roles that align with their interests and strengths. Engaging in these practices could offer a creative outlet but also give them a sense of purpose and belonging within the theatrical community inside the prison.

By expanding their involvement beyond traditional acting roles, we will empower these participants to contribute to the production process in unique and valuable ways. Through skill development and hands-on experience, they will be able to gain confidence in their abilities and feel validated in their roles as integral contributors to the artistic endeavour.” (CRI – Serbia) (Update 2025)

“The collaboration with the prison has been notably positive, characterized by a cooperative spirit and a shared commitment to the project's goals. Key personnel, including the director, the legal advisor, and the educator from the Turawa facility, have played a crucial role in fostering this productive partnership. Their active involvement and support have been essential in navigating the complexities of working within a correctional environment. The presence of these individuals at the premiere in Berlin was particularly impactful, as it not only demonstrated their dedication to the project but also provided them with firsthand experience of the transformative power of the theatrical arts. This engagement has significantly enhanced their commitment to the initiative, leading to increased enthusiasm for future collaborations and activities. Moreover, the prison staff has shown a willingness to facilitate the necessary arrangements for our workshops and performances, which has contributed to a smooth operational process. Their proactive approach in addressing any challenges that arise has been commendable, reflecting a genuine interest in the well-being and development of the inmates involved in the project. One of the positive results of this is the staging of our May premiere in an external theatre, which was proposed and decided by the prison directors. The positive response from the prison has also encouraged us to explore further opportunities for collaboration, including the potential for additional workshops and performances that could benefit a wider range of inmates. This openness to new ideas and initiatives is a testament to the prison's recognition of the value that artistic expression can bring to the rehabilitation process.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

2.10 Good Practices suggested by the partners (to be tested in further steps)

2.10.1 Shorter work processes

“As part of the Inmates Arts Centre project, the process of creating a performance lasted a year and a half, now we want to divide it into two three-month processes – one of writing a script and the other – with a different or partially different group – creating a performance based on

this script.” (Kobietostan – Poland) (Update 2025)

“The AHOS study visits have enabled us to streamline our production cycles, reducing the time needed to create a performance from a full year to just three months. This has proven to be an excellent adjustment, as it minimizes participant turnover and allows for more consistent group dynamics and creative progress.” (Kobietostan – Poland)

2.10.2 Longer show runs

“The personal hardship that is overcome shows a conscious effort to move forward. The repeat performances challenge the participants to exhibit respect and discipline to the task at hand and discover new ways of expression and ultimately new identities they never knew they had. The proposal by the Artistic Director of the Athens Epidavros Festival to be included in this year's programme, is definitely a positive sign of the work's value for all involved. In the four performances in April of 2025, in the last scene, 90% of the audience, climb through the windows and follow the group into the fields. Seeing this happen over and over again, reinforces the liberating nature the theatre has to the individual to go beyond boundaries and stereotypes and unite people on an impulse based on the innate human need to belong with one another.” (Fabrika – Greece) (Update 2025)

CHAPTER 3

~ After the end of the project

In this section, we will examine the actions that should be taken to encourage the resocialization and employment of inmates and ex-inmates at the end of the training process, inside and outside the prison.

3.1 Creating a Laboratory inside the prison for the production of scenes, props, costumes...

If the situation of the prison allows it, we recommend setting up a Laboratory for the activities related both to the performance and to the training activities and workshops. In the long term, the Laboratory could provide scenes and costumes for theatre productions outside the prison.

3.2 Creation of job opportunities

One of the prerequisites of the AHOS Project is that in the performing arts sector there is a shortage of qualified personnel in some professions, especially in the technical sector.

Some of the groups involved in the AHOS Project can possibly hire some of the students (in some cases it already happened in the past with the participants of a theatre workshop in prison). But this opportunity is quite limited.

Internships offer an important opportunity to match the availability and the demand of skilled workers both to inmates and ex-inmates and to the theatres that host them.

If the AHOS Project is successful, we can imagine that there will be more possibilities of employability in the future.

3.3 Small scale productions

Another job opportunity, both for performers and technicians, can come from small scale productions, with low production costs. That can generate an income for the participants. (Update 2025)

“In principle, the aim is to get a permanent position in a project, but as this is very difficult, temporary projects are a good interim solution.” (AufBruch – Germany)

“There is a member of the DOG TAGS group which has since been released and is now in the process of finding employment. The AHOS project makes it possible for Fabrica to offer this person job placement as an assistant stage technician for a few months, in order to gain the necessary experience. Ideally, we would like him to be part of the September Recycle Festival Fabrica hosts annually and even assist in the performance with Alexandros and his poems.” (Fabrica – Greece)

3.4 Post penal support

As for many other topics, the situation varies greatly from country to country. But of course when possible it is important to connect with the organisations working in post-penal support, especially with young people and adolescents, and socially disadvantaged people. (Update 2025)

“The prison's reaction was indifferent, as post-penal support is not at all in their focus.” (CRI – Serbia)

3.5 Follow and Report

The partners should first of all report the activities that have been carried out (class hours, laboratory hours) and evaluate the work of teachers, highlighting the strengths and the weaknesses of the training program,

describing the various stages.

And of course, they will have to assess the extent to which the objectives of training and occupational integration of inmates and former inmates have been achieved.

It is also recommended, when possible, to create video recordings of the performances, photographic documentation.

The collaboration with scientists, scholars and academic centres could also be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational training process and its relationship with artistic practice in prison.

3.6 Good Practices already tested by the partners

3.6.1 Advice and support to detainees, especially the young ones, in the final months before the release

“To support inmates’ continued growth and involvement beyond the project lifetime, we are developing plans to provide ongoing assistance. Firstly, we intend to equip them with professional cameras, enabling them to continue practising scene photography independently. This provision not only fosters their artistic development but also offers a potential avenue for future employment or freelance opportunities.

Additionally, we will facilitate internships for participants who are close to release in relevant institutions/organisations within the arts and entertainment industry. These internships will provide hands-on experience, exposure to professional settings, and networking opportunities, further enhancing their skills and expanding their career prospects.” (CRI – Serbia) (Update 2025)

“Collaboration with external theater operators and providing letters of recommendation for participants enabled inmates to begin building a professional network, improving their prospects for employment after release. By supporting their transition into the professional world, the process also instilled a sense of responsibility and better prepared them for reintegration into society.” (CRI – Serbia)

3.6.2 Getting in touch with organisations working on post-penal support

In North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany): "*German Society for Social Psychiatry* (DGSP) promotes the social integration of people with mental illness and those in prison. It works to improve educational and work opportunities for inmates, including internships.

"*Chance 2.0* is a program for vocational qualification of inmates in North Rhine-Westphalia. It works closely with regional employers to offer inmates internships and vocational training in various occupational fields. It offers training, internships and qualification measures.

"*Kulturkonzeption NRW* is a cultural education initiative in North Rhine-Westphalia, that aims to promote culture and the arts in the state's correctional facilities. It offers inmates the opportunity to participate in artistic projects.

"*Project Resocialization through Theater Work* focuses on theatre work and inmate resocialization. It enables inmates to take part in theatre performances and strengthen their social skills".

"*MABIS.NET* (Market-oriented training and employment integration for those released from prison) employees help find training and jobs in a total of eleven prisons in North Rhine-Westphalia. The network thus represents an important link between the prison system and the professional world outside. The development partnership "*ZUBILIS*" was also launched, which is intended to develop visions for the future of education in the prison system. And it should definitely be designed to be more flexible and modular than before. (Sommerblut – Germany)

In Serbia, "there are organisations dedicated to post-penal support. While the system has been partially developed, there is a clear need for its enhancement. Consequently, not every former inmate secures employment after serving their sentence, but a certain number do find opportunities for reintegration and employment." (CRI – Serbia) (Update 2025)

"Close cooperation with the institutions is absolutely necessary in order to provide the best possible opportunities for successful integration into social life and the job market. The public and the press are very interested in the projects. The performances were very well attended.

The cooperation with employees of the city mission was a good support for our work. The cooperation with the press and other partners (ticket sales - Volksbühne) went very well and smoothly.” (Aufbruch – Germany)

“The program also emphasized inter-institutional collaboration, involving external professionals and organizations to provide expertise in the field of free performing arts and technical professions. This integration of external realities enriched the program's quality and ensured a high standard of professionalization.” (Sommerblut – Germany)

3.6.3 Create a laboratory for the production of scenes, props, costumes

“A model could be the Officina set up by Teatro dei Venti in Castelfranco Emilia prison, using the space of a dismissed carpentry workshop; the Officine will be used for training and workshops, but also as a production place for scenes, props, costumes for external production, giving inmates that have been professionalised by AHOS the possibility of work.” (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

3.6.4 Create small scale productions with ex detainees generating an income for the participants

“In January and February of 2023 I directed a performance in Fabrica Athens with an ex inmate who was performing on stage. He was paid from the revenue generated by the ticket sales. This ‘self-maintenance’ model allows Fabrica to present small scale productions with low costs and generate an income for the participants.” (Fabrica – Greece)

3.7 Good Practices NOT already tested by the partners

In Germany:

"Starting point is an offer of advice and support for imprisoned young people and adolescents. The starting point will be, particularly from the youth welfare perspective, in close cooperation with the JSA Berlin, with the involvement and consultation of the case-specific youth welfare offices and youth court assistance, preparing the structured release of the young inmates with them during their prison term (voluntary participation) and We accompany them intensively into a self-determined and legal life from the day of their release or after the court hearing.

In order to open up perspectives for these young people, the "final offenders" are counselled at least three months before their release from prison and are accompanied to offices, authorities, etc. after their release."

"Freie Hilfe Berlin e V. association advises and looks after delinquent, imprisoned, released and socially disadvantaged young people and adults; The content of the work is to provide advice and support to those affected themselves and their relatives in overcoming difficulties, particularly in connection with delinquency. The aim of the work is social (re) integration into society and a life free of punishment in the future.

In order to do justice to this holistic approach, *Freie Hilfe Berlin e V.* offers services in the areas of housing, advice, education, employment, youth, volunteer work and leisure time."

In North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany):

"German Society for Social Psychiatry (DGSP) promotes the social integration of people with mental illness and those in prison. It works to improve educational and work opportunities for inmates, including internships.

"Chance 2.0 is a program for vocational qualification of inmates in North Rhine-Westphalia. It works closely with regional employers to offer inmates internships and vocational training in various occupational fields. It offers training, internships and qualification measures.

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"Project Resocialization through Theater Work focuses on theatre work and inmate resocialization. It enables inmates to take part in theatre performances and strengthen their social skills".

"MABIS.NET (Market-oriented training and employment integration for those released from prison) employees help find training and jobs in a total of eleven prisons in North Rhine-Westphalia. The network thus represents an important link between the prison system and the professional world outside. The development partnership "ZUBILIS" was also launched, which is intended to develop visions for the future of education in the prison system. And it should definitely be designed to be more flexible and modular than before. (Update 2025)

"We took representatives of the staff of our collaborating prison to Berlin study visit, thus strengthening our bond and partnership and also taking into account their voice and needs (also discussing the future of the project). It resulted in the prison being interested in taking such trips on their own in the future (something that never happens in Poland, the Polish penitentiary system has very little knowledge of the penitentiary systems abroad) and even establishing a formal partnership with the prison of Cologne." (Kobietostan – Poland)

"From March 2025 we are opening a social enterprise as a side activity of our Association. Our idea for the enterprise is to employ former prisoners who completed our lights and sound design courses (while serving their sentences) to provide lights and sound service for small local cultural events, using our technical equipment. We put this idea into practice thanks to the AHOS experience." (Kobietostan – Poland)

CHAPTER 4

~ Conclusion and further steps

In this report we identified a number of possible Good Practices, starting from the experience of the partners and from the project guidelines.

We are aware that many of these Good Practices cannot be adopted everywhere, due to the characteristics of the different penitential systems and the specific situation of the different prisons, as well as the working methodologies of the partners.

So, rather than a list of Good Practices, these are suggestions and proposals that should be adapted to the particular contexts.

Other Good Practices (but also other problems and difficulties) will certainly emerge and will be tested when the project will be implemented in the coming months in the different prisons that are involved in this experiment.

Furthermore, this draft will be updated in January 2025, after the second year of AHOS project in which the different companies will put on practise their training process. (Update 2025)

The AHOS Final Report 2025 provides an in-depth examination of the impact of theatre within correctional institutions, emphasizing its multifaceted role in inmates rehabilitation. Theatrical projects not only serve as a tool for personal and artistic development but also act as a bridge between inmates and broader society, fostering a more nuanced perception of individuals in the prison system. As stated in the report: *"Society must further develop its readiness to reintegrate criminals and work against stigmatisation. Resocialisation is always a two-way process"* (AufBruch – Germany).

This highlights the **necessity of societal participation in the reintegration process, rather than placing the entire burden solely on former inmates.**

The report underscores the positive behavioral and psychological effects observed in inmates engaged in theatre. Prison staff noted a significant increase in discipline, motivation, and concentration among

participants: “Prison staff who have supervised the rehearsals too had a positive perception of the high levels of discipline and concentration demanded from participants during rehearsals, and their motivation and commitment” (AufBruch – Germany). Such observations reinforce the argument that creative engagement can be instrumental in reshaping inmate behaviour and improving institutional conditions. As the Leading Partner (Teatro dei Venti – Italy) states:

“The work carried out within the framework of AHOS I clearly highlighted a number of structural and cross-cutting needs that characterise artistic and cultural intervention in prisons. The first and most obvious is the need for continuity: the experiences built up with prisoners require time, stability, institutional recognition and public visibility in order to develop fully and generate real impact. The fragmented and precarious nature of the programmes risks compromising the deep processes of trust, personal transformation and collaboration.

*At the same time, a second, less explored but equally urgent dimension has emerged: the need to actively involve **prison staff** in programmes that are not only educational but also creative and reflective. Educators, officers, health and administrative workers are an essential part of the prison system, but they are too often excluded from any form of cultural participation. Involving them in a structured way means acting on the institutional context itself, creating spaces for mutual listening, recognising complexity and opening up new perspectives for transforming the prison environment.*

*A further need identified concerns the **consolidation of the European dimension**. The comparison between different realities has been one of the most fruitful aspects of the project: it has allowed for the sharing of methodologies, the recognition of common obstacles, but also the discovery of transferable local practices. There is a growing need to strengthen these exchanges, make them more systematic, and shape a shared language between cultural operators, prison institutions and social actors active in the European context.*

*These needs outline the priorities for the future: not simply to expand the cultural offer in prisons, but to **rethink the ways in which culture is produced in that context**. This implies a redefinition of roles, responsibili-*

ties and languages: no longer projects 'for' but processes 'with', which recognise prisons as places traversed by different tensions, skills and desires.

The goal is not to adapt culture to prison, but mutual transformation: **a culture that knows how to question the institution and, at the same time, an artistic practice capable of carving out a critical and generative space within its boundaries.**

Only in this encounter – between people, structures, narratives and visions – can truly transformative action be built.” (Teatro dei Venti – Italy)

However, the document also **acknowledges the persistent challenges facing prison theatre programs. Issues such as security constraints, limited access to rehearsal space, and administrative barriers often hinder project execution.** For instance, *“Limited availability of space within the prison for rehearsals. Time constraints – time for rehearsals wasted on the complicated entrance security procedures”* (CRI – Serbia). Similarly, logistical challenges in organizing public performances inside prison settings can create further obstacles, as seen in Poland: *“The correctional facility has not permitted us to host the event on its premises, creating an unexpected obstacle”* (Kobietostan – Poland).

From an educational standpoint, the program’s comprehensive approach equips inmates with a broad range of skills. The courses covered areas such as dramaturgy, stage production, performance skills, and event technology: *“The program offered inmates a comprehensive introduction to various aspects of theater and performance production”* (Sommerblut – Germany).

This suggests that **beyond artistic expression, these initiatives provide inmates with tangible competencies that could enhance their employability upon release.**

Moreover, the **ethical consideration of including or not including personal inmate stories in dramaturgy is a crucial aspect of the program.** For example, Teatro dei Venti states: *“The decision not to include personal stories in the texts and performances protects the intimacy of the participants and allows for an artistic approach that does not focus on prison identity, but on collective creation and expressive research.”* (Italy) This methodology ensures that theatre serves as a universal artistic medium rather than merely a reflection of personal hardship. But other partners have a different approach: *“The success of the DOG TAGS performance*

was based on the duality of the themes presented. Even though it seems these inmates present their own journey regarding substance abuse and incarceration, they also presented messages regarding human hardships which everyone can relate to. Whether it relates to exile, migration, refugees etc, as we see in the first scene, even understanding the battle I must give on a daily basis with my own personal demons and darkness, and even simply understanding that the people in my life (the DOG TAGS I hold) are the strength I need to keep going.” (Fabrica – Greece)

Finally, **the report reinforces the need for long-term investment in cultural initiatives within correctional facilities:** *“Involvement of external organisations for performances outside prison. Organising performances outside prison reduces the isolation of inmates, offering them meaningful experiences outside prison walls. In addition, confrontation with a general audience unaffected by prison reality makes it possible to create an authentic dialogue and break down stereotypes”* (Teatro dei Venti – Italy). While the benefits of such programs are evident, financial and institutional support remains inconsistent: *“Cuts in public investment in culture”* (AufBruch – Germany). Given the documented rehabilitative effects, a strategic policy shift prioritizing cultural programs within correctional institutions is necessary to sustain their impact and ensure a more humane, effective approach to rehabilitation.

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