



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Second-Chance Education: Prison, Release and After

On 8 April 2026 the Council of Europe replaced its 1989 rules on education in prison. This week is built on what the new text asks providers to do.

DURATION 5 days · 25 hours	LANGUAGE English (B1+)	GROUP SIZE Max 20 participants
DAILY SCHEDULE 09:30–15:00 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch	CERTIFICATE Attendance + Europass Mobility	
AUDIENCE All school levels — including prison and probation educators, adult education and VET staff, counsellors and social workers supporting reintegration No specific prerequisites. The week assumes you already teach or support adult learners somewhere — inside a custodial setting or after release — but not that you currently work in one.		
COURSE CENTRES Antalya · İstanbul · İzmir · Mersin · Budapest · Bremen · Rome Dates and cities of the scheduled sessions are listed on the course page.		

01 Overview

Education in prison has run on a 1989 document for thirty-seven years. In April 2026 that document was formally replaced — and the new one is written for the learners and the technology you actually have in front of you.

- **Monday** — read the new rules against your own provision and write down, section by section, where it falls short.
- **Tuesday** — build one vocational pathway end to end, with the recognition route decided at the start rather than improvised at the end.
- **Wednesday** — rebuild a single session three ways, for the three groups the 2026 text names by their needs.
- **Thursday** — design digital-literacy teaching that works inside a secure network instead of waiting for an open one.
- **Friday** — audit each other's lists, then work through what carries across the gate: post-release learning, the outside community, and what keeps qualified staff in a job this demanding.

You go home with a gap list for your own service, one pathway built end to end, one session written three ways, and the rule numbers to quote when someone asks why any of it should change. Nothing has to be prepared beforehand, and no data from your institution is needed — examples are supplied for anyone who would rather not use their own.

02 Course description

A certificate that states where it was earned can end a job application before anyone reads the rest of it. One sentence in the Council of Europe's new recommendation deals with that, and it is one of thirty that replaced the 1989 text in April 2026.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)5, adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers on 8 April 2026, states in its first operative line that it "replaces, by the text of this Recommendation, Recommendation Rec(89)12". The Council's own explanation of why is a fair summary of what has changed on the ground since 1989: digital teaching and learning, a far better understanding of the things that decide whether an adult can learn at all — neurodiversity, addiction, mental health — and the need for prison education to be reviewed for quality like any other provision.

The new text runs to thirty numbered rules, and the ones that surprise people are rarely the philosophical ones. Rule 7 says a certificate or qualification earned inside "should not specify that they were delivered in a prison" — a single sentence that decides whether the qualification survives a job application. Rule 8 says education should have "no less a status than work" in the prison regime, and that no one should lose out financially by choosing it, which is the honest answer to why a workshop pays and a classroom does not. Rule 2 on parity with adult education in the community, and Rule 28 on reviewing provision against the same criteria, frame the rest of the week.

Those rules are the week's spine, taken in the order the recommendation itself sets them out, so the framework introduced on Monday is still the thing being worked on Friday afternoon. Around it sits the part of the job that happens after release: the European Union's own design for adults with few qualifications, the 2016 Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, which asks that a pathway be built on three steps — "skills assessment; provision of a tailored, flexible and quality learning offer; and validation and recognition of skills acquired". Tuesday is spent building one such pathway for a realistic learner profile (supplied, or sketched without identifying details), including the conversation with an employer that has to survive a release date.

Wednesday belongs to the strand the 1989 text had no language for. Rule 23 names three groups whose learning needs particular support: adults who need work on literacies, learners identified as neurodivergent or experiencing mental health difficulties, and foreign prisoners who need communication and comprehension before they need content. The session is about teaching design, not diagnosis — participants rebuild one of their own sessions three ways and mark what has to stay identical in all three.

What this week does not do is teach adult education from first principles. Learning theory, group dynamics and method selection belong to Basic Competencies for Adult Educators, and the sessions here assume you already teach or support adult learners; what they add is the specific weight of doing it inside a secure institution, or in the weeks after someone leaves one.

What should outlast the week is not the folder. It is being able to say, in a meeting where nobody else knows it, that the rules changed in April — and to give the number of the rule that settles the argument.

03 Learning outcomes

- 01 Read an education offer against CM/Rec(2026)5 and write down, section by section, where it falls short.
- 02 Build a vocational pathway on the EU's three-step model — skills assessment, tailored learning offer, validation and recognition — with the recognition route named before teaching starts.
- 03 Rebuild one teaching session three ways: for adult literacies, for neurodivergent learners, and for learners who do not share the language of instruction.
- 04 Plan digital-literacy teaching that works inside a secure technical infrastructure, and say what it teaches that printed material cannot.
- 05 Make the parity case in your own institution — status, pay and what a certificate discloses — with the rule numbers that support it.

- 06 Set out what your service needs in order to keep experienced staff in it — supervision, debriefing, protected development time — and write the request for the piece that is missing.

04 Methodology

Audit before design	Day 1 produces a short written gap list for your own service — or for one of the supplied profiles — taken from the recommendation's own section headings. The workshops after that each work on a line of that list where one applies, so nothing is designed in the abstract.
Numbered, not opinionated	every change proposed during the week is tied to a numbered rule you can quote at home. The argument has to travel without you in the room.
Inside and after	the Tuesday and Wednesday workshops are worked for a secure institution and again for a community or transition setting, because most participants move between the two in the same week.

05 Daily programme

Day 1

What changed in April — and what it asks of you

- **Icebreaker:** "Why This Work" — each participant says in one sentence why they came into work with adults who are in, leaving or at risk of entering the justice system — inside a prison, on probation, in adult education or in a community service, which is also the week's first map of who is in the room
- Introduction and expectation-setting
- **From Rec(89)12 to CM/Rec(2026)5:** what the Council of Europe kept, what it added, and why it was rewritten now
- **The parity principle (Rules 2 and 3):** a curriculum "commensurate in level, breadth, quality and qualifications" to adult education in the community — and what that phrase rules out
- Two rules that decide whether a qualification is ever used: Rule 7 on what a certificate may not say, and Rule 8 on status and pay
- **Access without exceptions (Rules 9 and 10):** regardless of sentence length, remand status, security regime or classification
- **Workshop:** working from the recommendation's own six section headings, each participant writes a short gap list for their own service, or for one of the supplied profiles — the working page for the rest of the week

Day 2

Vocational training that leads somewhere

- **Warm-up:** in pairs, describe a certificate one of your learners earned and whether anyone outside would recognise it; the answers open the day
- **Rule 15 and Rule 20:** employability skills and life skills are not the same thing, and the recommendation separates them for a reason
- **The three-step pathway (Upskilling Pathways, 2016):** skills assessment, a tailored and flexible learning offer, validation and recognition — worked through step by step
- **Where recognition actually comes from:** national qualification systems, units of learning outcomes, and what to do when the learner moves country

- **Employers:** what a partnership needs in order to survive the release date
 - **Workshop:** build one pathway end to end for a realistic learner profile (supplied, or sketched without identifying details), with the validation route named at the start — then rerun the first two steps for the same learner in the weeks after release
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Day 3

The learners the new text names

- **Adult literacies (Rule 23a):** listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and everyday technology — for someone whose schooling stopped early and badly
 - Neurodivergent learners and learners with mental health difficulties (Rule 23b): the teaching-design questions, kept clearly apart from clinical ones
 - **Foreign learners (Rule 23c):** comprehension and communication before content, and what changes when the group shares no language
 - **Workshop:** take one session you already run and rebuild it three ways — then mark what must remain identical in all three, and what changes if the same session runs in a community or transition setting
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Day 4

The rest of the curriculum, including the digital one

- **Rule 19:** digital literacy "within a secure technical infrastructure" — designing for the constraint rather than waiting for it to lift
 - Creative arts, physical education, health and wellbeing, active citizenship (Rules 17, 18, 21, 22): why the recommendation counts these as education and what transfers out of them
 - Library access as a rule, not a courtesy (Rule 25), and what a weekly entitlement means in practice
 - **Workshop:** design a digital-literacy session that works with no open internet, and state plainly what it teaches that a paper handout cannot
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Day 5

Across the gate

- **Cross-review:** groups audit each other's Day 1 gap lists against Rule 28 — the same review criteria used for adult and further education in the community
- **Continuity after release (Rules 12, 26 and 27):** post-release learning, education outside the institution, and bringing the outside community in
- **Staying in this work:** supervision, peer debriefing and protected development time — the course's proposals for meeting Rule 24 (trained and qualified professionals), not the recommendation's wording
- **Workshop:** name what your own service already has, what it lacks, and write the request you would put to a manager for one missing piece
- **Rule 30 and this room:** transnational projects, partnerships and networks, and what each participant will take back to their own service
- Certification and closing

PLEASE NOTE

Sessions run from 09:30 to 15:00, Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch. Timings can shift a little to suit the venue and the group.

Course activities and content may vary depending on participants' needs and the trainer leading the session; any changes are at the trainer's discretion. If there is a specific topic you would like included, please let us know — content-related requests must reach us at least 3 weeks before the course start date so we can confirm them in time.

06 Materials

- The full text of CM/Rec(2026)5 — freely published by the Council of Europe; a copy is provided on Day 1, printed or digital, and used all week
- Your own gap list, written on Day 1 straight from the recommendation's six section headings — a single working page you keep, not a form we hand out
- The 2016 Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, used directly for the Day 2 pathway build
- A pathway template carrying one learner profile through assessment, learning offer and validation, with the employer conversation attached
- Each participant's own service, described on Day 1 and used as the test case for every workshop that follows — or one of the supplied profiles

07 How to prepare

- Nothing needs preparing on paper, and nothing needs to be brought from your institution — no figures, no case files, no learner records. It helps to arrive with one part of your own provision in mind, even roughly: a course you run, a workshop that never fills, a handover that keeps failing. That is what the week's workshops will be applied to. If you would rather not use your own service, you can work from the profiles provided; nobody is left without material.
- If you have a laptop or tablet, bring it — Thursday is easier with one, though we have spares. And if any part of the week would be difficult for you for a reason we should plan around, tell us when you book; it changes how a session is run, not whether you take part.

08 After the course

- Participants will receive their Certificate of Attendance and the co-signed Europass Mobility document.
- Participants will complete a general course evaluation and event survey.
- Participants will receive course materials, videos, photos, and PDF documents in both digital and print formats.
- Follow-up support: self-evaluation materials are provided. Depending on the group, an email group may be set up so that participants can keep exchanging ideas.

09 Why this is Erasmus+ eligible

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026 names inclusion and diversity as a horizontal priority and lists the barriers it means to address. One of them describes this course's learners directly: "Social adjustment difficulties, such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours; (former) offenders, (former) drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier" (Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026, Part A — Inclusion and diversity). A second names their educational history: "early school-leavers, NEETs... and low-skilled adults may face barriers."

10 What the course fee covers

INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE

- 25 hours of training and course materials
- Certificate of Attendance + Europass support
- On-site local support throughout the week

ARRANGED SEPARATELY BY THE PARTICIPANT

- Travel to the host city — invitation letter on request
- Accommodation — we share recommended options
- Travel & health insurance

ISSUED BY

Erasmus Mobility Academy

OID E10304561

Cumhuriyet Mah. 1637 Sk. Yaşar Şahin Apt. No:3/2
Yenişehir/MERSİN

info@erasmusmobilityacademy.com

+90 530 319 40 65

COURSE PAGE

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ABOUT ERASMUS MOBILITY ACADEMY

Erasmus Mobility Academy (OID: E10304561) is an Erasmus+ training provider offering professional development courses for educators, school staff and youth workers across Europe. Our courses are designed for international mobility — open to participants travelling from a country other than the host country — and support schools in building lasting institutional capacity. We provide structured learning, logistical guidance and certification with Europass.