

# Prison education in Italy and Hungary – a special field of adult education and vocational training

Márta Miklósi Ph.D. – Francesca Torlone Ph. D.

University of Debrecen – University of Siena

What kind of specific features appear concerning the education and training of detainees in two countries, Hungary and Italy?

## Turning point in the prison system:

Italian and Hungarian Executive Penal Code (1975 Italy, 1979 Hungary) were established. In these acts social rehabilitation issues were emphasized along with the purposes of prison sentences.

In 1989 a turning point took place with the change of regime in Hungary:

- **Tendencies:** to treat convicts in a humanitarian way, to respect human rights.
- Search for **new, more efficient methods and forms** of social rehabilitation.

## Hungary:

- **Law Enforcement Codex (2013, CCXL. law)**

„The convict – according to the duration of the penalty – has to be supplied with **semi-skilled worker training, skilled worker training** or with **vocational training** and it can be supported that he/she starts or continues his/her higher education studies” (2013. CCXL. law 164.§ (1)).

- Lawmakers regarded it desirable to have a system where **official and social organizations supplement one another’s activity for the sake of society and the inmates**. Owing to this there is a law prescribing, under the detailed rules of the obligation to cooperate and provide information and assistance, that the penitentiary institution “shall cooperate with the prison missions and associations established to observe the conditions of detention, facilitate reintegration in society after release, to perform charitable activity, and to assist in other penitentiary tasks, as well as religious communities, foundations, educational institutions, and persons performing such activities” (§13 (1) of Act No. CVII of 1995).
- For the sake of promoting the reintegration of inmates, **education in prisons is a top priority**. In Hungary law dictates and guarantees the rights of inmates in relation to the options of learning.

## Italy:

- **Law no. 354 of 26 July 1975**

“Norms on penitentiary regulations and the implementation of measures preventing and restricting freedom” – and its subsequent amendments - is the first organic reform of penitentiary institutions.

- After the Stati Generali dell’esecuzione penale (an open public consultation about the reform of Law no. 354), launched by the Ministry of Justice in 2015-2016, **Law n°103 of the 23th of June 2017 was enacted delegating Italian Government to reform the penitentiary system of 1975 within one year (Gentiloni Government)**. Only three decrees have been approved so far.
- **Education is an essential part of the individualized prison treatment** (article 15 of Law no. 354/1975). In addition to compulsory education, which is offered in prison, penitentiary institutions can establish secondary schools, with the obligation to transfer detainees who have shown an intention to continue their studies to institutions at which these courses are offered.
- Article 19 also provides that “**access to university courses** and the equivalent is to be facilitated and correspondence, radio and television courses are to be favoured”.
- **Treatment is also made of religion, cultural, recreational and sporting activities**, as well as the facilitation of “appropriate contacts with the outside world and relationships with the family”.

	Hungary	Italy
Prison population total (including pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners)	14 829	57 846
Prison population rate (per 100,000 of national population)	167	96
Pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners (percentage of prison population)	16,6	31,5%
Female prisoners (percentage of prison population)	7.5%	4,4%
Juveniles / minors / young prisoners incl. definition (percentage of prison population)	0.4%	0,8 %
Foreign prisoners (percentage of prison population)	4.8%	33,3%
Number of establishments / institutions	33 (29 prisons, 2 educational institutions, 2 hospitals)	189
Occupancy level (based on official capacity)	110%	114 %



**Hungary:** the Act of the Executive Criminal Code 2013. CCXL.

## 3 main types of detention centres:

1. **light security prisons:** so-called “fogház” the detainees can move free, the cells are usually open and they can do shopping.
2. **medium security prisons** are called “börtön”
3. **high security prisons:** are called “fegyház”. In these institutes free movement of the detainees is very limited.

In Hungary different prisons are established for **juveniles**, but there is no differentiation for inmates who have been punished for the first time or are recidivists, or serve their sentences under military arrest.



**Italy:** Main type of detention centres in Italy are organized into:

1. **casa circondariale (district jail):** the most widespread institutions, present in every city where there is a court, detaining persons awaiting trial and those with sentences of under five years’ imprisonment
  2. **casa di reclusione (prison):** institutions for serving sentences
  3. **case di lavoro (work house) and colonie agricole (agricultural colonies):** persons declared to be “delinquents by habit, profession, or tendency” are assigned once they have served their sentence.
- juveniles:**  
Juveniles are accommodated in special areas and places.



## Prison education system in Hungary

### Primary school education

- The Law Enforcement Codex provides convicts with the right deriving from the fact of enforcement to **self-education** and participation in **primary school education**

### Secondary education

- undergoes **different criteria** compared to primary education and the continuation of higher education studies as well
- Participation in higher education is **not a general right for the convict**, its realisation is **restricted only to justified cases**
- if the continuation of the studies started can be conformed to the circumstances of the penal institution.

### Vocational training

- If somebody has finished their primary school, the prison gives him/her a **possibility to learn a trade**
- Vocational education is **officially recognised by penal institutions** besides primary education.
- There are a lot of trades which can **„easily” be taken into the institutions**, for example a gardener, a cook.

### Local schools:

- Penitentiary institutions have contractual relationships with educational institutions on geographical basis.

## Prison education system in Italy

### Primary school education

- The main aim of prison school in Italy is to teach **literacy, numeracy, ICT to Italian and foreigner prisoners**.
- Courses including compulsory education are carried out by the **Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA)**

### Secondary education

- Second Level courses (secondary school) are those provided by **technical institutes, professional institutes and artistic high schools**. They are provided by the same educational institutions that provide these courses outside prison.

### Vocational training

- Vocational training is wide in prison thanks to the strong cooperation of the third sector organisations (cooperatives, consortia) and volunteers. Offer is wide and refers to gardening, cooking, cleaning, etc.

### State schools:

- Schools operating within penitentiary institutions are state schools and follow the rules set down by the Ministry of Education (MIUR).
- They operate in accordance with the MIUR rules, Acts and Regulations. MIUR and Ministry of Justice can agree on specific conditions for educational purposes in prison.
- They follow the same curricula and education programmes as schools for youth/young adults.

## Conclusions:

- Both in Italy and in Hungary, the system of punishment, rehabilitation and education of convicts evolved, underwent changes adapted to the conditions of reality.
- The functioning of the system is governed by the law, which sets out the scope of activities, the entities responsible for them, the structure.
- Convict education significantly contributes to the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts.
- The convicts are mainly trained in the practical preparation for work they should undertake after leaving prison.
- They acquire or improve their skills in areas and occupations that are in demand on the labor market.
- Through education, prisoners have the chance to gain formal education, supplement and enhance their qualifications, and make up for deficits in this area.
- It is also a chance to spend valuable time, cope with boredom, fill in excess of free time with useful activity.
- They will be prepared to work in the labor market and possess qualifications acquired in prison can help to prevent a return to the crime.

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