



# GOOD PRACTICES

Partner: CEIR

Practice's title: **Chess in Prison Programme**  
**by European Chess Union**



Including **Chess As a Re-education Up-Skilling** tool



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# 1- BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

## 1.1 Background

*Where does the practice come from? What is the context in which the practice was created and experimented first?*

The paraphrase of the infamous slogan of “welcoming” prisoners of concentration camps is deliberately used in the “with chess to freedom”. Pieces made from precious bread were at that time one of the few ways to maintain common sense in an environment beyond human understanding.

Fortunately, concentration camps are a thing of the past, but the magical power of chess is eternal. Not only it gives a man some inner freedom limited by rules, it also develops creativity, a sense of long-term strategy, and immediate tactics. It teaches patience, responsibility for decisions and encourages lessons to be learned from losses. All this is then carried by oneself also outside the chessboard.

## 1.2 Main subject

*What is the main subject at the heart of the practice? What are the themes developed in the practice?*

The 'Chess in Prison' programme supported by European Chess Union aims to use chess as a cognitive rehabilitation tool for prison in-mates along with those currently and formerly incarcerated.

## 1.3 Target

*What's the intended target group of the practice? Are there primary and secondary beneficiaries? (eg.: other teachers as primary beneficiaries and adult learners as secondary beneficiaries, or vice versa).*

The target group of the practice is prison in-mates in the European Union.

## 2- OUTLINE OF THE PRACTICE

### 2.1. Description

*Please describe the activities contained in the practice. If possible, try to divide them in Learning Units. Also, define how long the training practice will last (1 to 4 hours).*

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) project “Chess in Prison” launched in 2019 builds on these positives and adds something extra. The convicts/prisoners receive advice from the most competent – real chess masters. Their help does not only concern the chessboard, but in the transferred sense it is also a help for the next life.

Thanks to cooperation of a special teacher Mgr. Eva Ježková with International Master Petr Pisk, Czech FIDE Delegate, with the help of free time pedagogue Ivan Ohera, who is in charge of chess club for prisoners, the prison in Kuřim joined the project as one of the first.

So far, International Master Petr Pisk has played a simultaneous exhibition in prison on sixteen chessboards. In addition, he supervised the subsequent prisoners' tournament. And in order not to limit himself to specific advice over the table, he spent one afternoon teaching and he demonstrated various tips for openings, defending, attacking and endgames.

The increased interest of prisoners in chess shows the success of the FIDE project in the Kuřim Prison. And because the prison is very well equipped with both the chess literature in the local library and the chessboards on the various sections of the prison, there is nothing to obstruct new chess players from becoming serious about the royal game. Not only they will spare their free time, but it can be assumed that the more chess skills they acquire, the greater their chances are to avoid returning behind the prison walls after release.

The project “Chess in Prison” thus fulfils the motto “With Chess to Freedom” without any irony.

## 2.2. Aim/goal

*Please describe the aim(s) and goal(s) of the practice: what are the objectives that the practice wants to reach?*

Chess is a game that not only allows the inmates to spend a quality time and socialize in a smart and safe way, but also can serve for decreasing such common symptoms like depression, stress, and anxiety. Developing memory and logical thinking, improving concentration skills and imagination may foster their reintegration after liberation. Chess inspires self-motivation, develops the capacity to for-see consequences and demonstrates the success is a reward of hard work.

## 2.3. Training Approach

*What kind of training/teaching methodology is implemented in this practice? Is there a literature/bibliography (not mandatory)?*

Preparation for participation in annual International Online Chess Championship for Prisoners, scheduled for the International Day of Education in Prison. More info: [chessforfreedom.fide.com/tournament/](https://chessforfreedom.fide.com/tournament/)

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## 3- TOOLS

*Which tools and materials are necessary for this practice to be implemented/to be successful?*

The important tools are

- Chess set

- Chess playing as well as
- A good book about chess play.

## 4- OBSERVATIONS

*This space can be used for all comments and observations, including what you couldn't fit in the previous sections of the template.*

Links:

<https://www.europechess.org/with-chess-to-freedom-project-chess-in-prison/>

