

Online Expert Group Meeting on Research

28 November 2025

10.00-13.00 CET (9-12 BST, 11-14 EEST) via Zoom

Participants

1. Gerry McNally (Ireland)
2. Nicola Carr (Ireland)
3. Ioan Durnescu (Romania) - *apologies*
4. Fergus McNeill (Scotland)
5. Marc Ceron (Catalonia, Spain)
6. Ines Sucic (Croatia)
7. Johan Boxstaens (Flanders, Belgium)
8. Ravinderjit Briaah (United Kingdom) – *apologies*
9. Jana Špero Kamenjarin (CEP)
10. Mirka Jakesova (CEP)

Background

On Friday, 28 November 2025, the annual meeting of the Expert Group on Research took place online. The Expert Group gathered to learn about ongoing research activities by its members, discuss strategic priorities, explore practical implementation of the newly developed [Research and Development Strategy](#), and strengthen collaboration among members.

Adopted by the General Assembly in October 2025, the Research and Development Strategy is a key strategic document aimed at improving the scale, effectiveness, and quality of CEP's engagement with research and knowledge exchange activities, in support of CEP's mission—especially in relation to the professionalization and promotion of probation. Following the four strategic priorities, the CEP Board, with the support of the Expert Group on Research, is preparing to implement the actions outlined in the strategy. During its meeting on 28 November, the Expert Group facilitated an in-depth discussion on translating RSD priorities into practical measures.

To coordinate and implement the RSD strategy in practice, a new Research Policy Officer will be hired in 2026. The Expert Group supported the CEP office in drafting the initial framework for the role of this new colleague.



The group then delved into a discussion on the future update of [Probation in Europe](#). A new strategy is being developed to update the chapters with a focus on clear descriptions of national probation systems, addressing both traditional topics and emerging trends.

The next face-to-face meeting will take place on **17 February 2026 in the CEP office (Utrecht, NL)**.

Recent state of play (ongoing research or research-related activities)

- 1) Johan Boxtaens - Belgium (Flanders) – a meeting between the Probation Service and Universities to take place to promote on the work of the Probation Services and encourage mutual links.
- 2) Ines Sucic - Croatia – a) a study related to prisons looking into the social climate, stress and burnout, relationships within prisons, cognitive skills, personality etc., b) Usage of the VR related to alcohol usage and cravings
- 3) Marc Ceron - Spain (Catalonia) – multiple studies on, among others, assessment of programs related with reducing the suicide risk, addiction, units of people with behavior that impact life quality in prisons, use of restorative justice and how it helps etc.
- 4) Fergus McNeill - Scotland – a) Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Europe' (RaRiE) starting in 1/2026 that will, among others, aim to examining and comparing the approach in Scotland, the Netherlands, and Norway, and dig into what the rehabilitative ideal means in each country. b) [Generative Justice beyond Crime and Punishment](#) – to be published in 2/2026.
- 5) Nicola Carr - Ireland – a) [Probation unification research](#) – finished in 2025, b) [Penal Supervision in Comparative context](#) exploring supervision five nations (England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales), c) project on homelessness in prison and probation in Ireland – not launched.
- 6) Gerry McNally – Ireland – a) CoPPER project [research](#) – finished.

Actions:

- 1) To provide a report with summary – Mirka
- 2) To share the updated Recruitment pack for the Research Policy Officer – Mirka
- 3) To develop the work plan as part of the RSD covering the project scheme for project fully funded by CEP, CEP's involvement in the project bids across the year, role and functioning of the Expert Group – draft ready for the February 2026 meeting – Nicola.
- 4) To provide the Probation in Europe update in the next meeting – Ioan and Gerry
- 5) To organize a meeting in the CEP office (invitations, logistics etc) – Mirka

Links: <https://www.cep-probation.org/recap-online-expert-group-meeting-on-research/>