



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR  
POLICE

**FIRST LINE**  
**STOP**  
Radicalization

# FIRST LINE

**Practitioners Dealing with Radicalization Issues –  
Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building  
in the Western Balkan Region**

## COMPENDIUM



Co-funded by the Internal Security Fund of the European Union



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## **COMPENDIUM**

Ljubljana, June 2018

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b>	5
<b>FOREWORD</b>	7
<b>FIRST LINE PROJECT</b>	11
<b>FIRST LINE KICK OFF CONFERENCE</b>	15
FIRST LINE Kick-off Confrence	17
FIRST LINE Kick-off Conference report	19
<b>FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISITS AND QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	27
FIRST LINE Preliminary visits	29
FIRST LINE Questionnaire	30
FIRST LINE Questionnaire template	31
FIRST LINE Preliminary visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina	36
FIRST LINE Preliminary visit to Montenegro	42
FIRST LINE Preliminary visit to Serbia	44
FIRST LINE Preliminary visit to Albania	47
FIRST LINE Preliminary visit to Kosovo	51
FIRST LINE Preliminary visit to Macedonia	54
FIRST LINE Preliminary visits report	57
Key findings from the preliminary visits to WB project partners/beneficiaries	65
State of play - February 2017	68
<b>FIRST LINE WORKSHOPS</b>	71
FIRST LINE Workshops	73
FIRST LINE Workshop in Kosovo	74
FIRST LINE Workshop in Albania	81
FIRST LINE Workshop in Bosnia and Herzegovina	93
FIRST LINE Workshop in Macedonia	102
FIRST LINE Workshop in Serbia	112
FIRST LINE Workshop in Montenegro	117
<b>FIRST LINE CLOSING CONFERENCE</b>	127



## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

4Cs	– Communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration
AL	– Albania
AT	– Austria
BA	– Bosnia and Herzegovina
BE	– Belgium
BMASK	– Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
BMB	– Austrian Federal Ministry of Education
BMEIA	– Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs
BMFJ	– Austrian Federal Ministry for Women and Youth
BMGF	– Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs
BMI	– Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior
BMJ	– Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice
COE	– Centre of Excellence
CTI	– Counter Terrorism Initiative
CT	– Counter Terrorism
CZ	– Czech Republic
DCAF	– Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
EC	– European Commission
EEAS	– European External Action Service
EMPACT	– European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats
ESCN	– European Strategic Communications Network
EUFOR	– European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina
EU	– European Union
FDFA	– Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FTF	– Foreign Terrorist Fighter
EULEX	– European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
G-CERF	– Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
GO	– Governmental Organisation
HR	– Croatia
ICITAP	– International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
IC	– International community
IISG	– Integrated Internal Security Governance
IOM	– International Organization for Migration
IPA	– Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JHA	– Justice and Home Affairs
KCSS	– Kosovar Centre for Security Studies
KS	– Kosovo
LEA	– Law Enforcement Authority
LE	– Law Enforcement
ME	– Montenegro
MK	– Macedonia

MoU	– Memorandum of Understanding
MS	– Member State
NGO	– Non-Governmental Organisation
OSA	– Intelligence Security Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
OSCE	– Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
P-R-A	– Prevent - Refer - Address Mechanism
P/CVE	– Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PCC SEE CTNet	– Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe Counterterrorism Network
PoA	– Plan of Action
RAN	– EU Radicalisation Awareness Network
RAN C&N	– RAN Communication and Narratives working group
RAN EDU	– RAN Education working group
RAN EXIT	– RAN Exit working group
RAN H&SC	– RAN Health and Social Care working group
RAN LOCAL	– RAN Local Authorities working group
RAN P&P	– RAN Prison and Probation working group
RAN POL	– RAN Police and Law Enforcement working group
RAN RVT	– RAN Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism working group
RAN YF&C	– RAN Youth, Families and Communities working group
RCC	– Regional Cooperation Council
RS	– Serbia
SEE	– South Eastern Europe
SIENA	– Secure Information Exchange Network Application
SIPA	– State Investigation and Protection Agency
SI	– Slovenia
SMT	– Social Media Team
SOP	– Standard Operating Procedure
SSCAT	– EU Strategic Communications Advisory Team Network
TAIEX	– Technical Assistance Information Exchange Instrument
TE-SAT	– Terrorism Situation & Trend Report
UK	– United Kingdom
UN	– United Nations
UNDP	– United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	– Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (the UN Refugee Agency)
US	– United States
USA	– United States of America
USAID	– United States Agency for International Development
VE	– Violent extremism
WB	– Western Balkan
YAG	– Youth Advisory Group

# FOREWORD

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## FOREWORD

As recent terrorist attacks in Europe and many other parts of the world have shown, terrorism causes the most serious forms of fear, and endangers democratic values and the rule of law. Modern counter-terrorism doctrine focuses in particular on prevention of radicalisation which can lead to violent extremism and terrorism even at an early stage. In this regard, the role of law enforcement and intelligence agencies remains important in P/CVE, but they should remain last in the chain responsible for early detection and prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism.

Taking into consideration modern approaches in counter-terrorism, which call for good multiagency and multistakeholder cooperation and cooperation with the non-governmental, research and private sectors, the Slovenian Police began to stress the importance of regular cooperation of different actors and awareness of competent stakeholders at the national level.

Modelled on the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network<sup>3</sup> (RAN) Slovenia established a national RAN platform in January 2015. The network brings together experts from the public, private and non-governmental sectors, from research and academia at the strategic and systemic level in order to detect at an early stage and prevent radicalisation. The aim of the platform is to:

- set up an appropriate level of awareness and communication;
- include all relevant stakeholders and define their relations and responsibilities;
- ensure the transfer of knowledge and best practices to officials and senior policy makers in different public and private fields of expertise (such as police, prison guards, intelligence, health services, education, social services, NGOs, local and religious communities) to recognize the behaviour of radicalised persons. The target groups are what are called **first line officers**, i.e. experts who on a daily basis come directly into contact with individuals who could already be in the process of radicalisation, in their local environment at the operational level.

At the operational level, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, indicators for early detection of radicalisation which could lead to violent extremism and terrorism, and detection of recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, were established. The relevance of these indicators has been proven by many cases, in which we have successfully discovered individuals on their way to crisis areas. Moreover, after setting up the system at the highest level, we have started to train at the local level officers who are among the first to encounter the radicalisation process. The added value is greater capacity of understanding for such social phenomena, timely recognition of and appropriate response to new forms of radicalisation.

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<sup>3</sup> RAN is structured around thematic working groups, driven by a Steering Committee chaired by the Commission. There are nine RAN Working Groups: Communication and Narratives working group (RAN C&N), Education working group (RAN EDU), Exit working group (RAN EXIT), Youth, Families and Communities working group (RAN YF&C), Local Authorities working group (RAN LOCAL), Prison and Probation working group (RAN P&P), Police and Law Enforcement working group (RAN POL), Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism working group (RAN RVT), Health and Social Care working group (RAN H&SC). For more see [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/index_en.htm)

The positive outcomes of setting up the national RAN platform, as well as the conclusions of the informal meeting of the Brdo Process ministers of the interior (June 2014), who called for further development of cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism, led us to consider the need for establishing links between the EU RAN platform and equivalent actors in the Western Balkans. Bearing in mind the need to effectively combat new risks and threats to security in the Western Balkans, which also affect the security of the EU, the project **"First Line Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region (FIRST LINE)"** was submitted. The project directly addressed the need to establish links between the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network and equivalent Western Balkan actors and focused on enhancing the awareness and understanding necessary for the setting-up of national RAN platforms in the Western Balkan countries.



# FIRST LINE PROJECT



## FIRST LINE PROJECT

The project's aim was to raise awareness of the first line practitioners, who encounter radicalised persons in their day-to-day work, by transferring knowledge, experience and good practices collected in the EU RAN network. The project used the RAN model to support the Western Balkan countries in creating appropriate conditions for autonomous recognition of the main threats, challenges, influences as well as opportunities and will serve as a basis for enhanced cooperation and inclusion of relevant national authorities and structures.

In carrying out the FIRST LINE project, the project partners followed these specific objectives:

- to enhance relevant beneficiary stakeholders' capability (i.e. police, other LEAs, prison & probation authorities, healthcare & education sector, NGOs, etc.) to recognize main threats and aspects which stimulate the growth of radicalisation which can lead to violent extremism and terrorism incl. foreign fighters;
- to assist in understanding of international, EU legal standards and policies aimed at radicalisation and recruitment;
- to raise certain awareness at the strategic and systemic level enabling beneficiary stakeholders easier and more effective use of measures for identification of trigger factors which contribute to radicalisation;
- to assist beneficiaries in recognizing own potentials, relevant stakeholders and their role;
- to transfer good practices developed within the EU collection of approaches, lessons learned and practices, where appropriate for beneficiaries;
- to enable regular information exchange via SIENA, case analyses, MOs and best practices at operational police level via CTI Network.

The following activities were carried out in the framework of the FIRST LINE project:

- kick-off conference in Slovenia;
- preparation, distribution and analysis of a questionnaire on the state of play in beneficiaries;
- 2-day study visits to beneficiaries to discuss the questionnaire (preliminary visits);
- 6 interactive workshops in Slovenia and beneficiaries to initiate awareness raising in accordance with the RAN model;
- 4 meetings of the Counter Terrorism Initiative, to discuss operational issues and trends, and to prepare and adopt a CTI SIENA communication protocol.

These Activities (a) stimulated discussions on the risks of radicalisation, the need for a multi-agency and horizontal approach to such risks and led to the identification of weaknesses, gaps as well as opportunities for effectively preventing radicalisation, (b) suggested the creation of conditions for establishing national platforms to address the problem of radicalisation properly and (c) encouraged beneficiaries to recognize primary risks, vulnerabilities and triggers leading to terrorism and address them in a comprehensive and coordinated form.

Additionally, such an approach involved all responsible stakeholders at national level, including the private sector, NGOs, civil society, academic and research institutions. This approach should serve as a foundation for the transmission of measures adopted at horizontal level to local first line practitioners (top-down approach).

In addition to the project's implementing consortium (AT, BE, CZ, HR, SI) the beneficiaries of the project are first line practitioners from 6 SEE beneficiaries, the CTI Network as well as other EU MS.



# FIRST LINE KICK OFF CONFERENCE





## FIRST LINE KICK-OFF CONFERENCE

In gathering support from the top management of the WB beneficiaries the high level Kick-off Conference was a very important milestone. Furthermore this opportunity was seized in order to raise awareness at political/ministerial and professional level, represented by police chiefs and relevant representatives of stakeholder ministries. At this level the proposed project implementation approach and activities received the necessary support.

Key findings of the project's opening high level Kick-off Conference, which took place on April 2016 in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia:

- A number of high-level representatives representing the governmental as well as non-governmental sector were present.
- During the Conference the importance of correct understanding, highest commitment and support for the project were significantly expressed.
- Beneficiary countries recognized the project as real added value.
- Project goals in particular were recognized as added value and essential as such especially for non-governmental representatives.
- An important factor for the project's future actions is that in the WB region, from the time of launching the project until today, certain progress has already been achieved. Of course, it varies from country to the country, from sector to sector. In the past there was almost no action taken regarding radicalization prevention.
- National presentations and further discussion showed that the absence of a comprehensive and goal-targeted approach has been recognized.
- At the moment, national approaches and activities depend on projects being led by international stakeholders such as OSCE and the UN, and depend on enthusiasm, capacities and threats .
- One of the main challenges will be how to bring together so many different stakeholders at the national level in beneficiary countries.
- There is more than awareness raising; beneficiary countries are aware of the threat presented by radicalisation and the need to take action against it, and are more than willing to cooperate.
- The project as such has been recognized as a benefit for the security, peace and stability of the entire region.
- The concept "Radicalisation prevention is the responsibility of the entire community" is increasingly prevalent among beneficiary countries.

It was particularly highlighted that great progress had already been achieved in certain WB countries. Presentations from national representatives and their discussion points showed that risks are recognised as a serious security issue on the national level, that support of the EU is required at this stage and that they recognise the EU's efforts for early detection, containment and prevention of radicalisation.

WB countries also understand that properly addressing the terrorist threat and radicalisation calls for the participation of all stakeholders. There is a number of mutually uncoordinated projects on the national and regional level led by visible regional partners such as the OSCE, UN, USA, etc., fo-

cusing on various areas of violent radicalisation, already in place. Certain progress has been made, however the majority of issues remain unsolved.

Participants considered the event itself an important contribution to appropriate understanding of the project's aims, goals, and concept itself, as well as its role in fostering the cooperation of different stakeholders at the national and regional level.

## FIRST LINE KICK-OFF CONFERENCE REPORT

The Director General of the Slovenian Police, Mr Marjan Fank, began by emphasising that the project addresses a global problem which requires all stakeholders to cooperate at the national and international level. He also pointed out that, based on practical experience, the operation of the police in the area of combating terrorism is gradually being redirected from repressive to preventive activities. The purpose is the timely detection of factors and triggers promoting and creating a favourable environment for radicalisation to develop and to identify its first signs. It is also important to recognise that combating radicalisation goes beyond the operation of national institutions and thus requires the cooperation of as many national and international entities as possible. Due to various factors, radicalisation today spreads to left and right radicalism.

The development of the national Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) was a very demanding process, from including national stakeholders in the network to planning their active cooperation. Its purpose of operation is, inter alia, to identify vulnerable groups and to protect them. It is common knowledge that the radicalisation process cannot be completely controlled. However, it is possible to reduce it, and this is one of the primary objectives of countries in this field. Mr Fank commended the Western Balkan countries for activities conducted within the framework of confronting this phenomenon, knowing in particular that some of them were faced with this problem on a larger scale than in Slovenia.

Mr Zoran Stančič, representative of the European Commission in the Republic of Slovenia, acknowledged the work of all who helped to prepare the conference. He went on to emphasise that the terrorism threat to the EU is greater than ever, which is also evident from the most recent events. The emergence of FTF (Foreign Terrorist Fighters) leaving for Syria and Iraq to establish a caliphate and radicalise and train along the way, and then select soft targets, points to a lengthy period of expecting new attacks. We must therefore strive to be prepared to act together to provide safe borders, prevent trafficking in human beings and other deviant acts closely related to terrorism.

Mr Stančič emphasised the importance of establishing the RAN network, which is primarily intended to provide cooperation between “first-line practitioners” who deal with radicalised individuals in their daily work, and expressed support for the RAN Centre of Excellence (CoE).

In her speech, Mrs Marije Meines, representative of the RAN CoE, initially thanked Slovenia for preparing the project. She then presented the RAN CoE organisation and its activities, emphasising that first-line practitioners are the key and “tailor-made intervention”.

This was followed by a presentation of the origin or development of the Slovenian national RAN network by Miran Ozebek, who stressed that the role of the police within the network is changing, specifically shifting from managing it to active participation.

Mr Peter Debeljak stressed the problem of victimisation and noted that this affects young people who seek answers to issues they are confronted with. In particular, this refers to the unemployed, who feel excluded and are thus potential targets of groups of people such as religious extremists, who exploit the given situation to achieve their goals. This must be prevented, or we must find appro-

priate solutions to tackle these problems. A network or platform must be established at the national level which will be capable and designed to detect small- and large-scale problems at the general level, locate potential stakeholders (national, non-governmental and other) and join them into an operating network. Mr Debeljak presented the example of the good practice of the city of Amsterdam, where, in combating radicalisation, the city authorities involved young people of different social environments, knowledge and working environments who were then trained to operate in the field of prevention. The project is designed on the basis of advantages of young people living and working in an environment where deviant conduct occurs, and who know the victims and can thus approach them more easily and offer them assistance. He also pointed out that this kind of programme cannot be copied and that they must be designed according to the specifics of the respective environment and then transferred to the operational level accordingly. In this regard, we must understand the advantages of young people and establish early detection of the radicalisation phenomenon.

Mrs Biserka Simčič, representative of the Ministry of Health, presented the phase of introducing health care into the national RAN network, which took place in complete ignorance of the issue and with great help from the Slovenian police. This was followed by a presentation of specific activities which were mostly conducted in RAN-POL cooperation. Mrs Simčič concluded that a strategic document with an appropriate action plan is needed in the area of combating radicalisation, in which the roles and tasks of ministries and other stakeholders would be defined. She emphasised that the management of a national network within government departments is required, in particular to clearly define the respective roles.

Mr Jasmin Mušič, representative of the Ministry of Justice and head of security in prisons, presented the Slovenian prison system and the method of preventing radicalisation in the respective institutions. The presentation included details.

This was followed by presentations of countries based on the “Discussion paper” questions. To ensure that in implementing the FIRST LINE project our efforts were focused on areas that are of particular interest to beneficiaries, the countries addressed the following in their interventions:

- What is the current situation in the field of counter-terrorism? Does radicalisation present a serious security issue?
- Which activities are already taking place in order to prevent and tackle the issue of radicalisation that could lead to violent extremism and terrorism? Which areas receive the most attention in this context? Do you already cooperate with other ministries/sectors at the national level to prevent radicalisation at an early stage?
- What are your expectations of the FIRST LINE project and which areas would you like to see addressed as a matter of priority?

## ALBANIA

Albania addresses the phenomenon of terrorism as a globally spread problem, whereby the possibility of terrorism being an epiphenomenon is excluded. Some individuals were identified who had gone to battlefields and some who returned from them, as well as the trend of taking part in terrorist groups. The Albanian authorities also see the problem in individuals who act in support of jihad supported by some religious leaders through a jihadist ideology.

Based on the available information, they found that extremists act with the purpose of destroying religious tolerance in Albania and establishing an extremist ideology. Through internationally operating extremist groups, Albania has detected an attempt to create a centre to provide conditions and factors to influence vulnerable groups, e.g. debates, public discussions, workshops, religious lectures, Salafist literature.

Also, Albanian-speaking individuals were detected who planned terrorist attacks in the region and present a major problem to other countries attempting to establish control.

The impact of factors on developing extremism in Albania:

- An institutionalised approach to religious teachings from Arabic countries with the purpose of giving religious lectures with a questionable background.
- Poverty in Albania has contributed to radicalisation being fully and uncontrollably ongoing.
- Albania as a point between east and west could not cope with certain processes, and lacked experience to effectively deal with the expansion of jihadist ideology.

The state authorities are well aware of the importance of taking measures against radicalisation which lead to violent extremism and terrorism; the initiative of the Albanian government was to introduce measures to detect factors of radicalisation. A project run by the Ministry of Education is under way to raise awareness of the importance and purpose of religion, identification of radicalisation, and to implement deradicalisation measures and radicalisation prevention in prisons.

The Albanian representatives concluded by appreciating the introduction of the FIRST LINE project, to which they attribute great significance and for which they express strong support. In particular, they are interested in recently developed best practices and lessons learned that could be integrated into their environment.

## AUSTRIA

The Austrian representatives presented their actions in the field of preventing radicalisation using a strategy with three pillars:

1. Efficient use of legislation;
2. Preventive action;
3. Provision of cooperation of stakeholders at all levels.

The basic principle of their operations is the fact that, in addition to effective laws, there are also medium-term aspects of combating radicalisation, and that prevention should not only be in the domain of police and security authorities, but also the responsibility of society as a whole. Therefore, aside from police investigations and repressive measures, there remains a grey area which a group of other stakeholders in society must address through ministries, non-governmental organisations and civil society. Austria has established a cross-sectorial committee which is convened twice a year; its tasks include promoting cooperation with civil society, cooperating with RAN and intelligence services, and an internationally recognised universal and national project "first in line".

Measures implemented in the field of prevention and early detection of radicalisation are as follows: raising awareness of police officers to recognise the phenomenon, and implementing further activities in combating terrorism. Austria also prepared a set of documents such as manuals, SOPs, instructions, guidelines etc. to be used in working with young people to include them in a new model comprising acquaintances and partners who must be aware and capable of reacting to radicalisation. An important segment of prevention is work in prisons, for which a specially designed handbook was prepared. Austria has detected several individuals who were additionally radicalised when serving their prison sentence.

Among other relevant subjects, awareness-raising of parents was pointed out, while Austria is also developing a pool of information which is obtained at several levels (anonymous line to report events) and related to the extremism phenomenon. Lessons learned have been used throughout the training and education of first-line practitioner programmes. Training has been implemented within a number of carefully tailored workshops and seminars.

### THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr Lukač pointed out two categories of young people that could be addressed within the scope of the project:

- a) young people who could be radicalised, and
- b) other groups of young people who form a category of individuals who pose a real threat of carrying out the most extreme forms of terrorism.

He stressed that Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA) is the leader with regard to the number of people departing to battlefields. The country has approximately 200 people registered in connection with the FTF phenomenon, of whom some 120 are still on the battlefield, approx. 80 have died and 40 returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a Criminal Code which incriminates departure for battlefields, and on this legal basis 20 people have already been convicted.

In terms of police work, Bosnian representatives regarded the cooperation of police forces of neighbouring countries in the region and beyond as very important. Cooperation is still not at the requisite level and will have to be upgraded, particularly in the field of data exchange, which should be two-way and should include feedback. Such cooperation should be facilitated within a suitable cooperation mechanism.

The Bosnian representative stressed that the criminal police department had prepared a list of dangerous individuals related to terrorism and that the authorities are aware that the list is not useful if it is not available to all who could use it in their operational work.

Mr Perica Stanić, a representative of BA, commended the design of the project, and pointed out that, although it is very difficult to find measures to effectively prevent and detect radicalisation, Bosnia and Herzegovina takes this issue very seriously due to their difficulties in this area. The complex structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a fact; nevertheless, its ethnic groups work together to combat terrorism in order to limit and prevent radicalisation. One of the major problems is the large volume of illegal weapons originating from the period of war.

Groups of people targeted in the area of combating radicalisation are closed and hard to penetrate operationally. Mr Stanić also added that police measures such as house searches, arrests, etc. are the least successful. The police should be more focused on prevention, in close cooperation with local partners and this should result in better crime and general prevention.

The BA representatives expressed their willingness to share their list of suspects related to terrorism, based on bilateral agreement. Mr Stanić stressed their good cooperation with neighbouring countries, Turkey in particular, with which BA has excellent cooperation especially regarding returnees. It has been pointed out that there are no limitations on exchanging information between police forces or intelligence services within a specific country or between different countries.

## CROATIA

Mr Pemper focused on the project's value, which is reflected in the inclusion of all possible stakeholders in the field of prevention.

The Republic of Croatia revised its strategy for combating terrorism, and cooperation with the civil society is to be implemented. Other ministries focus on integrating young people and other target groups, which could prevent the development of unwanted deviant activities.

In terms of national RAN, Croatia wishes a strong platform to be built that will help field police officers and will clearly indicate the direction of measures in preventing and detecting radicalisation. Croatia sees the advantages of the project, but points out that we must be aware that this will not solve the problem of radicalisation. Mr Pemper believes it is necessary to precisely foresee in which phase a certain national stakeholder enters the project and what its role and tasks are. In this phase, the important role of the RAN centre was recognised. The inclusion of new practices and solutions in preventing radicalisation was highlighted.

## MACEDONIA

Macedonia has faced direct challenges of international terrorism and is willing to confront them in future. The representative of Macedonia pointed out that Macedonia is witnessing the current migrant crisis, which is still very much present and poses a threat to the country and the entire region. He therefore invited the whole region to cooperate on the police level, in particular to prevent the emergence of conditions for terrorist operations. Macedonia is faced with the phenomenon of radicalisation and FTF. To reduce the danger and targeted actions, they adopted a strategy for combating terrorism for the 2012-2016 period, as well as a new Criminal Code which incriminates departure for battlefields and terrorist financing.

Two security-related events were also mentioned, namely in the city of Kumanovo, where a terrorist group from Tirana tried to carry out a terrorist attack and cause a general feeling of danger in the country by targeting national and other vital buildings. The other instance was in 2015, where evidence showed that Macedonian citizens of the Islamic faith had prepared to spread or interpret radical Salafi ideas at several locations in Macedonia.



Currently, the major threat is jihadists returning from battlefields where they have acquired military experience and could present a real threat in the near future for Macedonia and Europe as such. Macedonia has adopted a new strategy to combat terrorism for which a new action plan is being prepared, including some elements that are very difficult to implement. It also prepared a handbook for detecting radicalism and extremism in society, which has been already presented at the EU level. Macedonia recognises radicalisation as a serious challenge. They understand the need to cooperate with other stakeholders at the national level, in particular health care, social services, education and youth centres. Together with the respective stakeholders, Macedonia wishes to ensure cooperation at a level that would yield good results in the field of preventing radicalisation.

### SERBIA

In the area of preventing radicalisation, Serbia is at the very beginning, with no relevant experience. For this reason, their representatives expressed support for the project. In terms of preventing radicalisation their National Strategy for Preventing Terrorism includes many measures and allocates substantial means for their implementation. Serbia already has a pilot project within the OSCE, which currently covers four municipalities and is planned to be extended. They convened several meetings with partner services in the region, the most recent with the SIPA BA agency on the topic of FTF.

They pointed out that Serbia is at the very beginning of combating cyber terrorism, which is one of the most important segments of terrorism. Given the difficult area of work, they wish to exchange knowledge and experience. Serbian police carry out control of individuals fighting on battlefields abroad, try to monitor their return and conduct interviews with all respective individuals immediately upon return. After they return, the police exercise control over the respective individuals. In future, they would like to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in the region and beyond.

### MONTENEGRO

The representative of Montenegro initially thanked Slovenia for its active approach in the region, using all incentives and bilateral treaties that lead to better regional cooperation. He also said that the belief that individuals outside the EU are to blame for terrorist attacks is no longer true. The current situation in the EU and the region causes Montenegro to pay great attention to the area of terrorism. The country has drawn up a strategic document which comprises a series of activities in the area of combating terrorism. Montenegro has defined strategic goals in the field of prevention, and outlined mechanisms for the cooperation of institutions and other stakeholders in the respective field.

The country supports interinstitutional exchange of experience, best practices and information at the national, regional and international level. Currently, records indicate that 14 people departed for battlefields based on their religious belief. Four of them died on the battlefield and four have returned. The trend of departing for battlefields in 2015 indicates fewer departures, which is a result of the Criminal Code which incriminates cooperation with foreign armies and terrorist financing. Montenegro recognises the FIRST LINE project as very important in the field of preventing radicalisation and the integration of all stakeholders at national and regional level.

Prof. Nedžah of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security said that he was glad to be participating in such a high-quality conference, that he had heard some good ideas and that the project could be used to improve the field of security culture, which must be understood even in primary schools, where young people would learn about security challenges.

He also pointed out the issues of communication noise, which this project could overcome through effective cooperation. He proposed the inclusion of media that are in a safe environment, and that they should be invited to cooperate by presenting correct or realistic reports on specific events related to terrorism. He also pointed out that press releases in the 24 hours after an event are crucial for presenting the situation and forming opinions. The Faculty is also prepared to offer its services, from lecture rooms to personnel, to find reasons for the radicalisation of young people. He stressed that the causes of radicalisation are often not examined in depth, and thus the phenomenon cannot be effectively prevented.

Mr Rajko Kozmelj explained that, within the scope of the WBCTi plan, cooperation with SSCAT is foreseen which will offer a model to Western Balkan countries of how to include the media, and at the national level by developing strategic communication with the aim of providing objective reporting. The representative of the civil initiative association of BA presented a prevention project implemented in BA to prevent radicalisation. The project, under the auspices of the OSCE, lasted 6 months, and many workshops dealing with awareness-raising activities on radicalisation were conducted. The lecturers are from civil society and religious associations, while the content was targeted at a group which had no previous experience, i.e. from basic signs to violent radicalisation. The aim of the lectures was to provide full awareness of the problem, and implement a test to learn whether participants see their role in preventing radicalisation. The results will be used to plan preventive actions against radicalisation.

A representative of the Ministry of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina said that the signing of the EU declaration on combating radicalisation is under way at the ministerial level. She stressed that schools must create an environment that offers security and where human rights and freedoms are respected.

Mr Vidić, representative of the Ministry of Justice, presented a system for enforcing sentences in Serbia, and explained that eight persons convicted of the criminal offence of terrorism had already served their prison sentence. As a result, in serving their sentence, they were treated pursuant to the rules and procedures for extremely dangerous persons. In accordance with the respective rules, special experts must be trained to work with extremely dangerous persons. The respective dangerous persons are under special supervision, technical and physical, and based on a special regime, they are prevented from contacting other prisoners who could carry out radicalisation activities in prison. Practice shows that these individuals do not change their view of society after serving their sentence. They remain socially deviant.

Mrs Jovanović, representative of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, expressed her thanks for the invitation, and initially said that she had no knowledge about radicalisation. She therefore appreciated the possibility of learning about different practices and certain findings and how countries approach prevention. Serbia will use some findings and try to transfer the acquired knowledge of countries based on established contacts to the national level.

Mr Albin Slabe presented the activities planned for the future.

Mr Černigoj presented the operation and plans of the Counter Terrorism Initiative - CTi Network for combating terrorism of counter-terrorism intelligence, which is currently unique, providing not just the forum of SEE national beneficiaries agencies but also provides cooperation between LEA and Security Agencies. This network proves that such cooperation is possible.

Mr Kozmelj dealt with major levels of positioning the FIRST LINE project in WBCTi and provided comprehensive information about how this project actually fulfils the goals of WBCTi.

Mr Hank Visser, representative of the European Commission, said that it is important for the project to be successfully coordinated, which in particular requires the smooth exchange of information and conscientious implementation of foreseen activities. He sees problems in cases where a certain idea seems attractive to the participants, but there is no real desire to do anything or learn new practices in the process. He also stated that young people have an opportunity to participate in combating radicalisation within the scope of the project, e.g. within the ERASMUS plus project, where some countries already actively cooperate.

He stressed that it is good to know who organises what and what the event signifies; effective organisation also means that it enables willing stakeholders to participate.

Mr Albin Slabe concluded by summarising the conference, thanked participants for the support expressed for the project, and in particular acknowledged the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders in preventing radicalisation and combating terrorism. The final objective is to help, or if needed, establish coordinating bodies to harmonise the work of all participating stakeholders. After establishing national RAN networks, the goal is to integrate regional platforms and link them to the EU RAN network. Prevention should be the responsibility of society as a whole.



# FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISITS AND QUESTIONNAIRE



## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISITS

Preliminary visits to beneficiaries started in September 2016 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and continued in October 2016 in Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. The objective of the visits was to establish the respective state of play of P/CVE in each beneficiary.

Special focus was placed on the actual stage of the establishing of national platforms for the radicalisation awareness network. Beforehand a structured questionnaire for gathering of information was developed, translated into local languages and distributed. The actual replies (varying from very detailed to very brief) received were a good foundation for the actual preliminary visits preparation.

During these preliminary visits the project's implementing team met competent experts from relevant national authorities who are responsible for coordination and/or development of national responses at strategic level and have adequate knowledge of countering violent extremism and prevention or are involved in projects with similar topics. At that stage it was already possible to conclude that the decision to have different ministry representatives at the same discussion table talking about prevention of violent extremism was the proper way to start project activities.

The outcomes of preliminary visits meet the expected results in terms of in situ establishing and clarifying of the actual state of play. It was established that some countries have implemented many activities for coordination at the national level but little or none at the local level. Some countries have prepared and adopted their national strategy for countering terrorism, which includes some activities for CVE but is mainly focused on law enforcement activities. Furthermore some of the beneficiaries have already developed a national strategy for CVE which also includes an action plan. Moreover, some of them have already set up a working body with representatives from different ministries, religious communities and NGOs for the strategic document's preparation. In addition, in some cases the respective working body chair or coordinator was appointed as national coordinator.

## FIRST LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of the FIRST LINE Questionnaire was not assessment as such and it was not a kind of peer evaluation. Its added value was to identify additional best practices developed in WB countries, which were encouraged to share their experiences, best practices and any other lessons learned in the process of taking action to prevent radicalisation at the national, strategic or operational level. Identified best practices should in that way be further shared among interested EU/regional communities and stakeholders.

The questionnaire was designed mainly for two reasons:

### **First package - general**

- to obtain an insight into the understanding of certain aspects of Countering Violent Extremism in beneficiaries;
- to exchange experiences with those countries;
- to identify best practices, gaps and challenges and
- to provide policy makers with additional feedback.

### **Second package – preparation phase**

- to prepare answers that will help countries to identify all the national relevant partners which should take part in the project as well as later on for the purpose of implementing policies, best practices etc.;
- to help them to develop coordination;
- to help them better understand the project objectives;
- to help them better understand the scope of violent extremism prevention;
- to provide us with a kind of “starting grid” to precisely define and plan priorities which must be performed first;
- to provide us with a clear state of play.

Even though terrorism today is notably marked by religion-inspired violent extremism, the questionnaire is aimed at all other forms of political terrorism, such as right-wing, left-wing, ethno nationalism, separatism and other forms.

Questions were formed on the basis of recently developed best practices and lessons learned by relevant partners, especially EU RAN CoE.

What makes it unique is the structure and the nature of the questionnaire, taking into account certain specifics relevant for regional and national security challenges.

The plan was to deliver the questionnaire to targeted countries with an additional explanation. Each country was supported by a particular EU expert so as to rationalize their efforts for preparing answers and speed up their contributions as much as possible. In phase two, the questionnaire was further/additionally discussed within preliminary expert visits.

Based on final national contributions project, further FIRST LINE activities were planned in a more rationalized and appropriate way. This enabled the prioritizing of activities as such and was focused on priority needs of a particular country.

The added value of the FIRST LINE Questionnaire was that answers and result were delivered to other relevant EU or regional partners responsible for developing future security policies.

## FIRST LINE QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATE

### I. Capacity building, communication and coordination

Q1: Has a national strategy to prevent radicalization and recruitment to terrorism been developed in your country or is a part of some other national strategy (i.e. CT or other policy document)? If so, has the strategy taken into account aspects such as:

Aspects	Yes	No
communication and narratives		
probation and rehabilitation		
health and social care		
local preventive approach		
education		
youth, women, families		
local communities		
proximity policing		
victims		

**If such a document has been developed, please provide a copy.**

If yes, would you assess your approach in developing the national strategy as more multidisciplinary, vertical or horizontal? (Explanation of terms used for the purpose of this questionnaire: Multidimensional approach relies on specifying numbers and gathering evaluation data at multiple levels to assess programmatic and broader impacts. Vertical approach is focused on initial evaluation activities on their specific prevention interventions. Horizontal approach involves examining efforts across a range of government agencies and programmes in support of the objective of terrorism prevention.

Answer 1:

Q2: Has your country put in place national coordination arrangements to ensure strong inter-agency cooperation? How is this placed at the national, regional, local level in your country?

Answer 2:

Q 3: Do national coordination arrangements include cooperation with civil society, religious and other interested groups, communities, NGOs, research and industry? Please provide examples.

Answer 3:

Q 4: Do these civil society representatives in your country have any opportunities for further capacity building? (Explanation of opportunities: ...funding, political...)

Answer 4:



Q 5: Are there established national mechanisms in your country to identify and handle illegal online content (promoting radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism)? If yes, in what form (i.e. Internet Referral Unit and other actors)
Answer 5:
Q 6: Is there cooperation with relevant private-sector partners in countering illegal online content (promoting radicalisation and recruitment) in your country?
Answer 6:
Q 7: Have any national level expert networks, linking all competent experts at the national level, been established to address RAN issues?
Answer 7:
Q 8: Has any training for first-line workers and officers been provided at national or at local level? Explanation: Front line workers do not always have a sufficient understanding of the process of radicalisation or they do not know how to respond to it. Training is therefore needed to help them to recognize and interpret signs of radicalisation as well as to chose appropriate action. These front line workers include social workers, educators, healthcare workers, police, prison staff and probation staff.
Answer 8:
Q 9: Have any national disengagement and exit strategies been developed in your country? Have any specific prevent and exit programmes been implemented?
Answer 9:
Q 10: Have any needs and requirements (including financial) been identified in your country for the creation or further development of national disengagement and exit strategies?
Answer 10:
<b>II. Assessments, evaluations and practices In the following section we ask you to evaluate the situation in your country. Answers will help us to define and assess the current situation in your country and detect any specifics and already formed good practices. The findings that will arise from the analysis of answers will serve also as guidance for the preparation of future activities within the project.</b>
Q 11: What is your assessment of the situation in your country in the area of:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radicalisation of youth/women; Engaging with and empowering youth, communities and families to support the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism.</li> <li>• Imprisonment radicalisation; Do you have a system in place to identify and to fight against</li> </ul>

radicalisation in prisons, and if you do, how do you confront violent radicalisation in prisons? Do you offer support to practitioners in the prison and probation sector who have a role in preventing radicalisation? Have trainings for first-line prison professionals for the detection of radicalisation and radicalised inmates been improved?

- Radicalisation in schools and religious communities/schools; Is it within schools' practice that they provide a safe and respectful environment for their students? Is it part of the school programme to teach democratic and social values, and to help students form their positive identity? Do you have in place a system of cooperation with the management of universities and colleges and national institutions combating violent radicalism and terrorism, with the objective of promoting non-violent forms of expression of their beliefs and attitudes and to recognize shapes and passivity phenomena that constitute violent radicalization and promoting terrorism among young people?
- Delivery of both online and offline communication that offers alternatives or that counters extremist propaganda and/or challenges extremist ideas? Do you have established cooperation and partnership of the public and private sector against violent radicalisation, when it comes to issues related to the misuse of the Internet and electronic media with the aim of violent radicalisation or encouragement of terrorism (for example, preventing the publication of such content and promoting those that promote tolerance).
- Deradicalisation; Is there in practice any activity or process which deals with moving from a radicalised and violent mindset and/or environment towards mainstream society? Do you have a specific programme for deradicalisation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and returnees?
- Involving local authorities in preventing radicalisation or implementing any programmes, for example: to take the role of coordinating practitioners at their local level?
- Supporting police and other law enforcement officials who are responsible for community related police work?
- Supporting police and other officials that work with (youth) subculture groups and ethnic minorities that are (could become) light targets for (violent) radicalisation. This includes police, social workers, and others that work with subculture groups such as neo-Nazi, hooligans, violent groups, etc.
- Victims of terrorism (both targets of attacks and those who have lost a relative)?
- Health and social care sector whose task is also to interpret signs of radicalisation and help those individuals who might be at risk of being radicalised?

Answer 11:

Q 12: What is your expert opinion on the level of radicalisation and violent extremism threat in your country?

Answer 12:

Q 13: Is there a mechanism in place for a national threat assessment on radicalisation and violent extremism. If yes, is the assessment provided periodically or on the basis of need?

Answer 13:

Q 14: Do such assessments provide you with numeric data or also with an interpretation, new moduses, trends and insights into the problem?
Answer 14:
Q 15: Have you identified any particular specificity of the radicalisation phenomenon unique for your country? (such as local/national specifics, number of radicalised persons, forms of radicalisation, converts, role of women, youth, etc.)
Answer 15:
<b>III. Practices and on-going efforts</b>
Q 16: What are the measures in place to be applied where there is a need to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prevent and reduce ideologies that feed and support violent extremism and terrorism</li> <li>• diminish triggers which lead individuals to radicalise on the way towards violent extremism</li> <li>• enhance the ability of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies to monitor and control the actions of those individuals and groups in the state which pose a threat</li> <li>• disrupt the ability of people who travel abroad in order to fight as foreign terrorist fighters and to control them after their return</li> </ul>
Answer 16:
Q 17: In the fight against radicalisation and violent extremism and promoting terrorism have you included other entities in coordination and implementation, such as NGOs, religious organizations, associations, private sector, universities and schools? Please elaborate.
Answer 17:
Q 18: Have you recorded any case of prosecution or other criminal proceedings in the field of radicalisation or violent extremism in recent years, for example:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• against the authors of content spreading material with radicalisation, violent extremism messages or encouraging terrorism via electronic or other media?</li> <li>• blocking of a specific online website or other media?</li> <li>• recruitment?</li> <li>• facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters?</li> <li>• financing in connection with the aforementioned offenses?</li> <li>• other ... please elaborate;</li> </ul>
Answer 18:

Q 19: Do you have any examples of best practice/obstacles in detecting, addressing and/or banning access to illegal online content (promoting radicalisation, violent extremism and recruitment) in your country? If so, please describe them briefly.

Answer 19:

Q 20: Do you have in progress any projects at the moment or have you been conducting any projects regarding ongoing prevention of violent radicalisation.

If yes,

- which and who is the promoter (UN, EU, OSCE, etc.) of the project
- which ministries, sectors, partners are involved
- who is responsible on your side for coordinating activities (please identify a contact)

Answer 20:

## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISIT TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, Sarajevo, September 2016

In accordance with the plan for implementing the project FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region, HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX, a study visit to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA) took place from 5 to 7 September 2016. The aim of the visit was to identify the current situation in the field of countering violent extremism and the progress BA has made so far, any good practices that have been formed, as well as challenges and needs that BA has at the moment in order to improve the situation in this area. The study visit was carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely from Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Belgium and Slovenia. The study visit was organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The visit was based on the concept of interviews with experts. BA was represented by both the governmental<sup>3</sup> and non-governmental sector<sup>2</sup>.

Interviews were based on a questionnaire prepared by a special group of experts from the EU. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire gave rise to a set of additional questions that required additional explanation.

In the introductory part, the concept of the study visit was presented to BA representatives. This was not an evaluation but rather an exchange of experience and a discussion, with both sides attempting to identify BA priorities and needs.

Based on analysis of the questionnaire, those who prepared the answers to the questionnaire, the structure of the BA delegation and explanations provided by BA representatives, the following was established:

- in 2015 BA adopted a special Strategy for the Fight against Terrorism, which defines the goals for effective and systematic detection, prevention and curbing of violent extremism. It is a comprehensive document, as for the first time the area of prevention was included in the strategy. Together with the OSCE they started a project of integrating civil society and education into preventive activities. So far, 300 participants have been trained.
- Before the strategy was drawn up, an analysis had been made in the field to identify problems as regards radicalisation in the country.
- The goals of the strategy are operationalised through a special action plan<sup>3</sup>, which sets out implementing activities, deadlines and operators.
- The Minister's proposal is that the head office of the regional RAN network be located in Sarajevo.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Security of BA, Brčko District Police, Republika Srpska Police, Federal Police, representatives of the State Investigation and Protection Agency, representatives of Border Police, and representatives of the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies, Intelligence – Security Agency.

<sup>2</sup> Representatives of the Atlantic Initiative, representatives of the Institute of Criminology.

<sup>3</sup> Despite the single Strategy for the Fight against Terrorism and the action plan adopted at the national level, each entity has also adopted its own action plan.

- BA does not have a platform at the national level which would unite all the agencies responsible for curbing violent extremism.
- The strategy is a key instrument, which when devised already incorporated the goals of the FIRST LINE project. The setting-up of a national platform without external help will be much more difficult, especially since there is a shortage of funds for the setting-up and operation of the platform. The concept itself is not yet fully formed due to the unique national organisation and competence. Expert and financial support is needed to create the national RAN platform and to implement the strategy. Assistance through IPA funds is expected.
- The current concept for the RAN platform envisages the platform bringing together individual key experts (up to 10); the same model would be applied at the level of entities, while at the local level there would be security panels, which would include all relevant individuals.
- BA is aware of the threat and risk represented by violent extremism and its significance.
- In BA there have been a number of projects and activities conducted by relevant regional partners; however, these activities and projects were not mutually coordinated or planned so that they would complement each other, which caused some duplication.
- At the national level there is no regular mutual information exchange on planned activities and projects which would contribute to the effectiveness and success of individual projects.
- The main coordinator is still the police but greater participation from other agencies is desired<sup>4</sup>. The non-governmental sector is an important partner, as is the Islamic community, which has condemned all the activities of parallel structures that incite religious hatred and religious intolerance which can lead to violence; this was hailed as a good practice and an opportunity by both government representatives and NGO representatives.
- BA is planning to set up a special coordination structure at the national level, which will take care of coordinated formation of policies of curbing violent extremism and which will include all the stakeholders competent at the national level.
- The national coordination structure will be structured in a way that will enable integration into the international arena.
- While conscientiously implementing international obligations, BA has created its own unique legislative solutions, the adequacy of which is manifested in a number of successfully concluded cases.
- Thirty people have been charged with taking part in fighting abroad. The strategy is a good document, incorporating different players. Cooperation with the police and intelligence service is good as is information exchange. Recently, a number of FTF returned and some have been sentenced. For this reason they have started the process of de-radicalisation and in such cases strong support of the IC is expected/needed.
- The majority of those charged will be imprisoned, hence cooperation with prisons is also very important. This year, no departures to Syria have been recorded. A lot of returnees decide to cooperate with the authorities and testify against others.

<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Security has sent a special questionnaire to 30 different addresses but has received no response.

- On the basis of the strategy, which requires the preparation of de-radicalisation programmes, the programme is being prepared. Returnees will be included in the process. Sometimes an agreement with returnees is a better idea than conviction.
- Individual de-radicalisation programmes have started and great support of the Islamic community is expected. Violent extremism is on the decrease. Departures of FTF have almost entirely stopped for various reasons. What is extremely important is the position of official religious structures, which is very clear in its condemnation of violent extremism. On the other hand, activities of the Salafist movement are on the increase.
- There is strong awareness that civil initiatives need to be included in the system to a larger extent, and most importantly as soon as possible.
- There is also strong awareness of the significant role the media have. What is important is how to balance this aspect, to inform correctly yet not to cause negative effects that could contribute to negative promotion of terrorism-related activities; there were no reports of progress in this area.
- BA has begun activities to raise general awareness. A lot has been done here, especially as regards society being able to recognise the indicators sooner and know how to react. A 30-page manual on suspicious behaviour indicators has been prepared for the local police. Understaffing and lacking capacities are a problem. There is insufficient “expert support” on the part of health services, social services, schools, etc. Additional opportunities need to be sought and responsible conduct and cooperation of local communities is expected. It is problematic that radical communities are more assertive in their approach to young people than society at large. Responsibility needs to be passed to the local communities as soon as possible or else a great opportunity will be lost.
- Prevention is key, even though there are a number of dilemmas. The police, as the authority most active in the scope of prevention, perform a series of activities that are not part of basic police tasks. And as the police are regarded as a repressive authority this is a problem rather than advantage in their carrying out preventive activities.
- Incomprehension and non-recognition of own role by some agencies is a problem.
- Health, education and other areas urgently need to receive adequate training. Any assistance in that would be greatly appreciated.
- As for prevention, individual entities reported that they were planning special campaigns, including the media, leaflets, etc. Public-private cooperation must be stepped up.
- During the summer of 2016 Brčko District organised a summer school for young people, which focused on the unacceptability of hatred, discrimination, etc., with the participation of the Red Cross, religious community, etc. Experts warned that these were very challenging topics for young people. At the same time, this is a great challenge as the police often do not have the necessary know-how yet are expected to carry out these activities.
- BA also mentioned the project VERD, which was carried out in 2012 – 2013. The project was supposed to result in a final state of play and provide additional carefully tailored future prevention activities, but has not been implemented to its whole extent.
- Unfortunately, no one can quite match the efforts of the police at the systemic level. Besides, certain specifics have to be taken into account since some individuals live in special economic

circumstances, some do not have any health or social insurance and as such do not come under the radar of the services which could identify any deviations.

- Some findings of a study prepared by the NGO Atlantic Initiative highlight the health aspect. There quite a few individuals who have mental health issues or personality disorders or other problems that alienate them from society.
- The establishment of parallel structures and social services that the state fails to provide should not be overlooked (health, kindergartens, schools, etc.)
- It is also problematic that even when an individual returns from Syria willing to be re-socialised, the state does not have de-radicalisation and re-socialisation programmes in place. Separate records for men, women and children are being set up so that services such as social work centres can be provided information on individuals who were in Syria, since at the moment this is not yet possible because of data confidentiality.
- It also should not be neglected that prisons are becoming the so-called third “hub” of violent extremism.

### Ministry of the Interior of the Republika Srpska

A reorganisation is being prepared and will include prevention. One unit is responsible for prevention and is in charge of coordinating cooperation with other ministries. The strategy is a good basis for activities and continuation of work. The action plan was adopted by the government. The coordinating body convenes with representatives of all institutions (18) every three months and is led by a representative of the police. They would like to carry out training for all participants in the coordination but lack the funds.

### Brčko District Police

They have prepared an action plan for implementation of the national strategy and implemented the project of school police officer. They would also like to see training organized for representatives of other agencies to raise awareness and recognize the signs of radicalisation and to be able to respond appropriately.

They mentioned a specific case where a mother reported a radicalisation attempt to the police and they had to act in a number of areas. There is no mechanism of communication between the police and civil society.

### Intelligence – Security Agency (OSA)

They too have drawn up an action plan based on the strategy. OSA could also participate and help with the project, especially in information exchange.

### Federal Police

What to do with returnees, especially with wives and children who cannot be put in custody. Who to include to keep radicalisation in check – religious communities, social institutions, academic institutions, the media. It is important that they do not have a negative influence. Another problem is re-socialisation of foreign nationals who return to BA.



In cases when only a wife and children return, do ministries cooperate and embark on de-radicalisation, and who has the monitoring duty? Lately, the role of social work centres has been stepped up. Monitoring is also carried out by the Islamic community. Workshops must include social workers and precisely define the profile of participants who can make decisions.

The Communication Regulatory Agency has declared itself not competent to act in cases of inappropriate web content. A counter-narrative would be very useful for them.

#### State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA)

BA does not have the right answers or solutions when it comes to individuals wishing to become de-radicalised.

### ANNEX:

#### Countering Violent Extremism – OSCE Mission to BA – way forward

Building on its 2015 and 2016 programme activities on countering violent extremism, the Mission has developed a comprehensive plan to effectively support BA in tackling violent extremism by fostering communication and building partnerships between different actors at the local and micro levels, as well as at the State level. The BA Ministry of Security and various agencies from across the country have approached the Mission requesting the continuation of collaboration on implementation of the BA Strategy for the Fight against.

Terrorism 2015-2020 and its corresponding Action Plan. This assistance is especially important considering the insufficient resources of BA for realizing the activities of these strategic documents, particularly with regard to the prevention segment. Representatives of civil society organizations, religious communities and education and media professionals have also strongly articulated the need to extend dialogue on CVE amongst all sectors of society and further strengthen channels of communication and cooperation between different actors. This pioneering approach has been recognized as a best practice by other OSCE field operations in the region, OSCE executive structures and the international community more widely.

To achieve this, the Mission is utilizing its internal programme and co-ordination capacities in order to ensure that effective interventions are devised and implemented with the experience and expertise of its Security Cooperation Unit, Human Dimension Department, Policy and Planning Section, Press and Public Information Unit and Gender Focal Point. Throughout 2016, the Mission has undertaken comprehensive training efforts to develop the capacities of its programme and administrative staff in contributing to the Mission's CVE activities in 2017 and beyond.

As of 2017, the Mission will focus on the following areas:

- Strengthening local multi-stakeholder networks. This long-term activity will ensure the effectiveness of efforts in preventing violent extremism and radicalisation that leads to terrorism. This will also include support to the development of mechanisms for the performance of early interven-

tions and the reintegration of radicalised individuals and their families into society. Religious communities, the education, social protection and health care sectors, civil society, and the security sector will all play a key role in these activities. The Mission's work with local-level security fora and other mechanisms, including those in the areas of domestic violence, trafficking in human beings, juvenile justice, etc. will also be built on;

- Follow-up activities with the Islamic Community of BA after the completion of initial training activities in 2016. These seminars were attended by more than 1000 imams from across BA. Given their central role in local communities, imams play a critical role in preventing and countering violent extremism;
- Engaging all religious communities through the BA Inter-Religious Council in order to map their needs and provide training in support of inter-religious dialogue, counter-messaging activities and youth outreach;
- Engaging young people in strengthening youth resilience to violent extremism, working through the Mission's existing structures such as the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and Social Media Team (SMT) to support youth-specific activities.
- Supporting civil society in the production and dissemination of positive and counter-narratives which oppose violent extremist messaging on social media by using innovative methods and working through the Coalitions against Hate and the Social Media Team;
- Facilitating expert debate and analysis to support policy changes which address the issue of on-line incitement to violence and terrorism, whilst respecting the right to freedom of expression and other human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Supporting the education sector in incorporating CVE into regular teaching in elementary and secondary schools.
- Supporting academic research on the drivers of radicalisation to violence in BA by partnering with universities and research centres.
- Supporting the professional development of the judiciary in CVE-related matters in co-operation with Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centres.

## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISIT TO MONTENEGRO, Podgorica, October 2016

In accordance with the implementation plan of the project: **FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region, HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX**, a preliminary visit to Montenegro took place between 3 and 5 October in Podgorica, Montenegro. The aim of the visit was to identify the current situation in the field of countering violent extremism and the progress Montenegro has made so far, any good practices that have been formed, as well as challenges and needs that Montenegro has at the moment in order to improve the situation in this area. The preliminary visit was carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely from Austria, Czech Republic and Slovenia. The study visit was organised under the auspices of the Police Administration, Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro.

The preliminary visit was based on the concept of interviews, exchange of positions, views and good practices between EU experts and Montenegrin experts. Montenegro was represented by the government sector.

Interviews were based on the questionnaire prepared by a special group of experts from the EU. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire gave rise to a set of additional questions that required additional explanation.

In the introductory part, the concept of the preliminary visit was presented to Montenegrin representatives. This was not an evaluation but rather an exchange of experience and a discussion, with both sides attempting to identify Montenegrin priorities and needs.

In the introductory part, the national representative responsible for coordination in Chapter 24, emphasized their willingness to cooperate as well as their awareness of the risk posed by violent extremism in all its forms for modern society.

Given the risks, the first ministry to be included in the project should be the Ministry of Infrastructure, followed by the Ministry of Justice. Action in one area requires the co-responsibility and cooperation of other partners.

ME has in place a special cyber strategy. In 2017 a new strategy will be adopted, which will envisage setting up a new Cert unit. The legal framework is established and makes possible further development of a systemic approach in the prevention of internet abuse or abuse of electronic communications.

The Ministry of Justice highlighted the problem of overcrowded prisons and understaffing. In such conditions it is much more difficult to carry out de-radicalisation projects, while on the other hand it is easier to spread extremist ideas and radicalise individuals. Currently Montenegro does not have any major problems in this area as only one person is imprisoned for having been a foreign fighter in Ukraine, while one person who fought in Syria is in pre-trial custody. Both of them are separated from other prison inmates and are not part of any special programmes. The representative of the Ministry of Justice also said that they are interested in an international exchange of practices as regards treatment and are open to any constructive proposals. According to his statement, Montenegro does not have a probation service, which might, in my opinion, present a problem in cases

when deradicalisation or disengagement programmes were used and they could not be continued after the end of the prison sentence. Training of judicial police is centralized; however, it does not include any training on how to identify the first signs of radicalisation.

The Ministry of Health would like to know if there are any specific programmes that could be simply transferred at the national level, or at least some good examples which could support them in defining their responsibilities and raise awareness among health practitioners.

In addition, there was a presentation of the CVE strategy and its Action Plan, which precisely defines the goals and activities to achieve the primary goals. The participating bodies in the national platform are included in the Action Plan and are as such responsible for operationalization. In the discussion it was pointed out that Montenegro expects a response of the expert team or the EU Member States participating in the project to recognize priorities or activities.

The representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare summarized the competences of the ministry. Two aspects are especially important. The first one is to provide financial and other support to lessen the risk of individuals going to Syria for social reasons. The second important aspect is the aspect of control, especially over asylum seekers, where it is important that employees are enabled to identify the early signs of violent extremism. At the local level there are special teams of representatives of social work centres and police to address individual cases of violence. This format could be transposed to the area of violent radicalisation, especially when taking place within the family.

The Ministry of Health highlighted the problem of health workers being bound by patient confidentiality. In cases of criminal offences they have an obligation to report, while this is problematic in the early stages. The expert group explained the role of health in preventing violent extremism. The role of health practitioners should be recognized in broader general prevention and not just in crime prevention. Radicalisation is a very complex area. The health sector can contribute in the first place in researching, studies, programmes for mentally disturbed people etc.

The representative of the Directorate of Justice Administration of the Ministry of Justice presented his views on the issue. He outlined different forms of radicalisation and stressed the importance of working with radicalised persons after they have stopped posing a danger to society and are incarcerated, presenting a danger to prisoners as well as a challenge as regards resocialisation and reintegration. Here they see a great opportunity but also a great responsibility; however, they simply lack resources. Very important is adequate training of employees, who are the first to encounter radicalised persons. Prisons are a very sensitive area, with a lot of challenges, in two segments: as regards detection and identification of signs of radicalisation and later, when such persons come to serve their sentence and are subject to resocialisation, reintegration and de-radicalisation.

Furthermore, the importance of the communication strategy was underlined. Target-oriented and well-formulated information or messages addressed to individual groups are very important.

## ANNEX:

According to the information provided by national authorities, there were no projects performed regarding CVE in the last two years.

## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISIT TO SERBIA, Belgrade, October 2016

In accordance with the implementation plan of the project **FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region, HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX**, a study visit to Serbia took place between 6 and 7 October 2016. The aim of the visit was to identify the current situation in the field of countering violent extremism and the progress Serbia has made so far, any good practices that have been formed, as well as challenges and needs that Serbia has at the moment in order to improve the situation in this area. The study visit was carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely from Austria, Czech Republic and Slovenia. The study visit was organised under the auspices of the Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia.

The study visit was based on the concept of interviews, exchange of positions, views and good practices between EU experts and Serbian experts. The Republic of Serbia was represented by over twenty representatives of the government sector.

Interviews were based on the questionnaire prepared by a special group of experts from the EU. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire gave rise to a set of additional questions that required additional explanation.

In the introductory part, the concept of the study visit was presented to the Serbian representatives. This was not an evaluation but rather an exchange of experience and a discussion, with both sides attempting to identify Serbian priorities and needs.

The participants agreed that it was health where signs of violent extremism can be first recognised. This presents a clear opportunity for society to curb the development of violent extremism of individuals at the very start.

Several participants had also attended the opening FIRST LINE conference at Brdo in 2016. Both micro and macro aspects were presented. Caution is required when it comes to police involvement as these are very vulnerable groups, and an unprofessional approach may additionally stigmatise individuals or groups, which can lead to further rejection and a conflict with society and the system.

CZ pointed out the importance of cooperation and communication between the police and health sector. While there are a number of restrictions preventing health practitioners from acting, there are also plenty of opportunities. The health sector can be a credible partner in providing an insight into the causes of violent extremism, with clinical psychology and other branches contributing to better understanding. The health sector is also among key partners in the prevention context. Co-operation with the police as a source of information is a secondary goal. The health sector has a much more important role in providing a psychosocial climate, understanding and interpretation of the causes that drive individuals to radicalisation.

A representative of the Ministry of Justice stressed the added value of the project as well as the quality and value of the opening conference at Brdo. Following the conference, a series of activities have been set up at the national level. The service of the Ministry of Justice responsible for working with prisoners expected that someone in the EU, the region or at the national level would

assume responsibility for the systemic implementation of the policy of curbing violent extremism. The question is though who at the national level should have this role and who within the ministry. Given the risk of violent extremism in prisons, early identification, cooperation and information are very important. A series of preventive programmes are in the making. Special emphasis is dedicated to training and know-how. Where necessary, considerable emphasis is given to cooperation with religious communities.

The Ministry of Justice also said that vertical awareness was relative good, which is not the case with horizontal awareness. An increase in security culture was sorely needed. There is an absence of links at the local level. The Ministry proposed that the city warden service should be included due to their high presence in the local environment. A national coordination body definitely has to be established.

The Ministry of Education agrees that they are among those who encounter violent extremism early on. It is a very sensitive area as it concerns dealing with vulnerable groups. There are a number of projects and programmes aimed at preventing violence among young people as well as a systemic framework and different agreements with external partners, such as social work centres, which could serve as an example for setting up a model of violent extremism prevention among young people. The Ministry has a prevention programme (Grupa za prevenciju, which was set up with the support of UNCHR), and special attention is devoted to minorities. Cooperation and communication were not exactly easy, especially when we talk about young people and vulnerable groups.

It was stated in the discussion that prevention was “very expensive”, and the programme of its implementation must be realised as part of the budget, which does not take into account additional needs, and this is frequently just another in the series of obstacles in developing new systemic solutions.

According to representatives of the health sector, the number one priority is adequate awareness level. It could be achieved relatively quickly through the activities of various chambers. It is very important that the activities are not limited to the level of decision-makers but reach all the way to the local level – close links with other sectors are required. To summarise, the potential exists, as do cooperation formats, which would simply need to be transferred to the area of violent extremism prevention.

Despite the absence of a systemic solution, being aware of the vulnerability of young people, in June 2016 Serbia adopted a special decree on the use of the internet by young people as, according to the UNCHR, over 90% of them use the internet. “It’s an addiction.” Is it really an addiction or is it simply a change in communication, which we are not prepared for?! The decree envisages the involvement of health practitioners.

The police pointed out the deeply rooted misconception that the police must be the leading partner in prevention and assume the main part of responsibility. The police are very much involved in preventing specific deviant phenomena and not so much in general prevention, although they have a certain role in this area as well. The police have an established prevention system, as part of which they take part in numerous projects, together with external partners. Such format could also be used for the prevention of violent extremism.

Coordination is essential and an appropriate format needs to be set up. The education sector has a very important role here, both as regards early identification of causes and their elimination, for education practitioners are among the first to come across signs of violent extremism.

A large part of the discussion focused on the role of the internet, social media and media in general. They have to recognise their role in critical reporting and general awareness.



## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISIT TO ALBANIA, Tirana, October 2016

In accordance with the implementation plan of the project: **FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region, HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX**, a study visit to Albania took place between 17 and 18 October 2016. The aim of the visit was to identify the current situation in the field of counter-ing violent extremism and the progress Albania has made so far, any good practices that have been formed, as well as challenges and needs that Albania has at the moment in order to improve the situation in this area. The study visit was carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely from Belgium, Czech Republic and Slovenia. The study visit was organised under the auspices of the Police Administration, Ministry of the Interior.

The study visit was based on the concept of interviews, exchange of positions, views and best practices between EU experts and Albanian experts. The Albanian delegation was represented by 34 representatives of the government sector, non-government sector, religious institutions, media and academia, which shows that Albania has a correct understanding of the extent and nature of the threat posed by violent extremism.

Interviews were based on the questionnaire prepared by a special group of experts from the EU. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire gave rise to a set of additional questions that required additional explanation.

In the introductory part, the concept of the study visit was presented to the Albanian representatives. This was not an evaluation but rather an exchange of experience and a discussion, with both sides attempting to identify Albanian priorities and needs.

After the initial presentation of the purpose, goals and methodology of the EU project, the participants were given an opportunity to summarise and present their progress in curbing and preventing violent extremism.

Albania has been a member of the regional counter-terrorism coalition right from the start. Special attention has been devoted to violent extremism. Aware of the risks presented by its geographic position, unstable economic conditions and some other social issues that need to be resolved, they are working on a framework that would address all aspects of violent extremism in a coordinated and targeted way. They are also aware of the importance of cooperation and coordination, which is evident from their previous activities, which involved various players, including the non-governmental sector, academia and religious institutions.

In 2015 the national strategy for the prevention of extreme violence was adopted, with special emphasis on preventive efforts.

In the discussion there was a general consensus that the security environment had changed considerably. Historical aspects reaching all the way back to 1915 or even further back have to be taken into account. Some practices established many years ago should not be forgotten. In 1921 official Islamic authorities in Albania set up the first platform which promoted the concept of cohabitation in the local community.



Coordinated cooperation of different partners in the local community was pointed out as being an opportunity. The police play a significant role, especially in cooperation with education. On the other hand, care has to be taken to make sure that such an approach, especially the role of the police, does not lead to opposition or misconception of the role of the state in regulating such a sensitive area.

It was also emphasised how important it is to train religious experts. This should not be left to the non-governmental or private sector, as some international practices have shown that such an approach is not acceptable.

The community-based approach would include all partners responsible at the local level and the local police would have a special role. Care should be taken not to confuse policing and community policing.

Police training, both at the primary and follow-up levels, has to continue. Curricula have to be expanded to include more content, in order to ensure appropriate understanding of risks and manifestations.

This should not stop with police practitioners, who are the first to encounter the phenomenon of violent extremism. An important aspect is permanent, planned and targeted training of practitioners in other areas who also come across manifestations of this phenomenon, i.e. health, education, social welfare, etc.

At the local level, the police remain the most important factor. Regarding the role of the police in the context of community policing, the State Police intend to set up a special unit responsible for coordination and provision of cooperation.

The OSCE stressed the importance of community policing. Albania proved that they are fully aware of this, as they intend to further train 800 police officers. It remains unclear who will train these officers and whether they need any help. OSCE also pointed out that the new CVE strategy would clearly indicate the need to better integrate all practitioners, not just the police.

The importance of prevention rather than repression, of being proactive instead of reactive, is becoming better understood.

A representative of IDM described an example of best practice – pilot projects at the local level, where “mini action plans” were drawn up and which involved educators, cultural workers and other players.

It is obvious that certain activities are being carried out at the local level; however, there is no coordination. The implementation of planned activities is under threat as there is a shortage of resources. Dealing with violent extremism is a very complex issue, where there are no right/wrong answers. The fundamental question is how society should respond to avoid creating the conditions for violent extremism. Partial solutions are not good, as for example foreign terrorist fighters only represent a small part of the whole context. The full, historical context is important.

## OSCE

How does the Islamic community respond to deviant conduct; does it have a response system in place; is there a system in place at the local level, what should transfer of information be like and how should action be taken? A lot has been said of the reaction of the Islamic community and not so much about responding to other kinds of conduct. No distinction should be made between more or less important kinds of deviant conduct. Different kinds of violent extremism should not be dealt with separately. The OSCE explained that this is emphasised in their police training. A lot of emphasis was also put on what are called initial acts – hate speech, vandalism etc., which may precede violent extremism.

The police said that they felt relatively isolated. They want to cooperate with other areas; the question is how to achieve it. The preventive part covered by the police is relatively clear; other areas need to join in. The OSCE supports this view. Police preventive work should remain at the centre but others have to take part as well – education, social welfare, culture, etc.

A representative of the religious community said that manifestations of violent extremism are very different from one case to another. There are no disagreements between different religions in Albania.

An important aspect is countering violent extremism in prisons. There is a certain cooperation between the prison administration and Islamic community. There are some issues, particularly of a technical or formalistic nature. At present in Albania all those convicted of terrorism serve their sentence in the same prison. The personnel have been specially trained and trustworthy representatives of religious institutions take part in the programme. The programme is aimed at several basic aspects, from what is called internal infection, escalation of violence, to attempts at de-radicalisation, which include certain activities/programmes that convicted persons have to attend after their release. A special working group has been established, which takes care of training judicial personnel. The problem is that external partners are not included in the de-radicalisation process.

IDM reiterated the importance of cooperation between civil society and government. Separate attempts by both sides will not bring the desired results.

In defining the role of the media caution has to be exercised, especially when we talk about freedom of speech and thought. It is not easy to find the right balance without encroaching upon freedom of speech or thought. The representative of the Islamic community praised good cooperation with the police and said that no major problems could be expected.

The representative of a non-governmental organisation said that the non-governmental sector had undertaken a number of activities in this area, such as the project of consolidation of democratic principles, funded by the USA; there are a number of pilot projects under way as well as social events empowering young people and reducing intolerance and tension.

The representative of a religious organisation said that it was important that they were recognised as an equal partner, which also brings a certain responsibility.

The national coordinator for the prevention of violent extremism said that there was a need for more coordination and more trust. Activities of individual players have to be better coordinated and this coordination also has to be transferred to the operational level.

- In 2015 Albania adopted a special counter-terrorist strategy, which precisely defines the goals for effective, systematic detection and prevention of violent extremism; it is a comprehensive document;
- the goals of the strategy are operationalised through a special action plan which determines the activities, deadlines and players;
- Albania is aware of the risk to national security and security in the region posed by violent extremism, whose trends have changed considerably;
- the main player is the police, but other sectors and authorities need to become more involved;
- there is firm awareness that civil initiatives have to be included in the system to a larger extent and most importantly sooner.

When planning future activities it has to be taken into account that a number of important regional partners are helping Albania. Especially involved is the USA , with the following projects: the US DOS funded project "Promoting Democratic Values and Active Citizenship Among Muslim Youth", implemented by the Islamic Community, US Support to IDM to work in 7 madrassas to teach a democratic citizenship course focusing on radicalisation awareness, US ICITAP/OPDAT support on CT issues, policing and regional prosecution. The role of the OSCE, UNDP, IOM and EU EV focal point should not be overlooked either.

## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISIT TO KOSOVO, Prishtina, October 2016

In accordance with the implementation plan of the project: **FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region, HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX**, a study visit to Kosovo took place 19 October 2016. The aim of the visit was to identify the current situation in the field of countering violent extremism and the progress Kosovo has made so far, any good practices that have been formed, as well as challenges and needs that Kosovo has at the moment in order to improve the situation in this area. The study visit was carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely from Belgium, Czech Republic and Slovenia. The study visit was organised under the auspices of the Police Administration, Ministry of the Interior.

First the EU and Kosovo delegations were introduced; Kosovo was represented by 11 representatives of the government, NGOs, religious authorities, academia, research institutions, OSCE and EuLex.

After the introductory presentation of the purpose, goals and methodology of the EU project, the participants were given an opportunity to summarise and present their progress in curbing and preventing violent extremism. The representative of the police prevention unit presented the organisational structure of the police, which confirms the correct understanding of the role of the police in preventing violent extremism. Its preventive activities are directed towards the local community through community policing. Kosovo is taking part in a special project (Mechanism of Reference), which focuses on radicalisation, recruitment and returning foreign fighters, and brings together different practitioners in the fields of health, education, religion, etc.

As in other Western Balkan countries, poor social status and weak economic situation are the main factors behind the growth of violent extremism. Ethnic division still represents an unsurmountable obstacle in introducing uniform approaches and consistency.

Since June 2016 the EU has offered support in establishing certain national capacities for the prevention of violent extremism; however, there is no concrete information on what kind of support this is and who will provide it.

With the help of different partners the police have invested a lot in training, especially community policing training. More needs to be done concerning coordination with local players, which is reflected in improved communication and response of the local community. This was confirmed by various studies, overviews of the situation and reports prepared by non-police organisations. All efforts have to be directed towards correct understanding of responsibility of individual players. The results are tangible.

National Security Council – In November the implementation of the Strategy will be evaluated; international players will participate. With the changed security situation in Syria, which has implications for the Western Balkans, the challenges as regards violent extremism have also changed. There are no people going to Syria; now we have people returning from there. What were the challenges at first? It was certainly a challenge to draw up a policy to correctly address the risk and define activities for the implementation of which competent players have to be attracted.

The horizontal component is very important, as are communication and coordination, especially when it comes to the vertical placement of demands to be operationalised at the local level. We must not forget that in parallel there are a number of important projects and initiatives led by individual countries or important regional partners. It is important to avoid duplication as it is counter-productive and uneconomical. It always needs to be checked what has been done already, what is in progress and what is planned. In this way all activities can be coordinated as much as possible and made to complement each other.

Kosovo is aware that in addition to young people, families and schools, prisons are one of the key areas that are particularly exposed to violent extremism. Despite the fact that Kosovo understands the role of prisons in the prevention of recruitment and de-radicalisation, there are no clear policies in this area.

The religious community pointed out the importance of religious communities and authorities. These are very much exposed, both at the national and especially at the local level. They have a great responsibility and a great opportunity. The religious community is trying very hard to make any hateful behaviour unacceptable. Cooperation with the police is at an enviable level, especially as regards recruitment for foreign fighters and terrorism. There are several projects under way. Kosovo attended two conferences on the role of the religious community in de-radicalisation in prisons and in the family. It is very important that these efforts be continued as they give a clear message to the public.

Local community: in local communities the police still have the competence and responsibility for organising and leading security committees and this should not be overlooked. This is the way the role of the police is defined at the moment.

The OSCE is an important regional partner and as such supports Kosovo in its endeavours in preventing violent extremism systematically. The OSCE is a key partner in setting up security committees at the local level. Assistance in devising the strategy and other institutional frameworks is of primary importance. Education and training are very important and key areas for OSCE support at the local level.

GO AGORA: in their opinion we should focus on individual activities and be more concrete. We have to act sooner against certain risks.

**Security Study:** we need a kind of “fusion centre”, which will be able to bring different players together. It must be of a permanent nature, duplication needs to be avoided and a lot of attention needs to be devoted to communication strategy. Given the sensitive nature of the area, giving any less than credible information to the media just increases the risk (Note: this is something that nobody is aware of and is rarely mentioned). A lot of opportunities have been missed. Such a mistake must not be repeated. More energy needs to be dedicated to awareness-raising.

Kosovo, like Albania, has a lot of important regional partners active there. Checks of available public resources have clearly shown that a number of players carry out, in a decidedly uncoordinated manner, a lot of activities, which are often too extensive for Kosovo’s capabilities. Activities are mismatched and do not complement each other. We were told by the Kosovo representatives that

there is no overview of all activities at the national level, which only proves that coordination needs to be enhanced. Organisations which carry out activities and provide assistance to Kosovo should do so through a single national “entry” point.

Besides the activities of the RCC, which has a RCC CVE contact point, there are activities under the auspices of EU/Taalex, UNDP, Swiss Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund G-CERF, KCSS and IOM. The OSCE also has some plans. Activities and projects are mostly aimed at working with young people and strengthening the role of the local community. The common denominator is awareness-raising.

## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISIT TO MACEDONIA, Skopje, October 2016

In accordance with the implementation plan of the project **FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region**, HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX, a study visit to Macedonia took place between 17 and 18 October 2016. The aim of the visit was to identify the current situation in the field of countering violent extremism and the progress Macedonia has made so far, any good practices that have been formed, as well as challenges and needs that Macedonia has at the moment in order to improve the situation in this area. The study visit was carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely from Belgium, Czech Republic and Slovenia. The study visit was organised under the auspices of the Police Administration, Ministry of the Interior.

The study visit was based on the concept of interviews, exchange of positions, views and good practices between EU experts and Macedonian experts. Macedonia was represented by almost 30 representatives of the government sector, non-government sector, research sector, civilian initiatives, religious organizations and university.

Interviews were based on the questionnaire prepared by a special group of experts from the EU. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire gave rise to a set of additional questions that required additional explanation.

In the introductory part, the concept of the study visit was presented to the Macedonian representatives. This was not an evaluation but rather an exchange of experience and a discussion, with both sides attempting to identify Macedonian priorities and needs as well as those of the Western Balkans as a whole.

After the initial presentation of the purpose, goals and methodology of the EU project, the participants were given an opportunity to summarise and present their progress in curbing and preventing violent extremism.

During the introductory discussion the participants agreed that the concept of dealing with violent extremism must not rely on repression. It must be prevention that is of key importance. As it is a very complex, horizontal area, carefully measured coordination is crucial. There is no special structure for coordination in this area and the role is assumed by the special terrorism coordinator. The national security system is undergoing a transformation. A DCAF-sponsored project Intelligence is under way and its aim is to upgrade the transparency of the intelligence system. Its added value is that it is carried out in close cooperation with the civil sector. It has two phases; taking stock of the situation, which will show to what extent working operations crucial for the functioning of modern intelligence structure are carried out; phase II will require a consolidation of police and intelligence structures. In the final phase the restructuring should result in a modern structure compatible with comparable partner services at the international level. Prevention needs have to be taken into account in the restructuring. The intelligence sector must contribute its share. This was all confirmed by the first migration wave. Strategic partnership is very important. School, family, sport and the health sector are key players in early prevention. The non-governmental sector needs to assume more responsibility.

It is important that prevention is well defined in the national counter-terrorist strategy. Its goals will be operationalised in the imminent action plan, which besides concrete activities will also determine the stakeholders that have to take part in curbing violent extremism at the national level. In this way, responsibility will be placed on specific stakeholders that will be in charge of setting up systemic solutions. It is still not entirely clear who will be responsible for implementing the strategy.

Responsibility is frequently blurred when competences at the national level are defined. A clear distinction needs to be made between policing and community policing. The discussion showed that there was correct understanding of the concept underlying community policing, where the police can play an important role in the local community but must not be too exposed. A distinction is also needed between general prevention and prevention of criminal activity, which are too often confused. The participants also agreed that correct understanding and addressing of the risk of violent extremism is more important than the number of detected cases. In setting up 38 police stations, right from the start a lot of effort was invested in the development of community policing. This should be made better use of in order to bring closer together the local partners crucial for early detection and prevention of violent extremism.

A special role should be devoted to the external political aspect. The creation of policies and reaching consensus at the regional level as regards the goals and ways of fighting terrorism is where prevention at the national level may be improved.

Representatives of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration stressed that they were the ones responsible for supervising the implementation of two very important laws governing the sensitive area of the media and audio-visual information media. The media and internet are a very important aspect. A large part of violent extremism unfolds on the web. How to fight this and who will take part in the fight remains an unanswered question.

The discussion focused on the acceptability of the concept of removing and blocking contentious websites, which can quickly clash with the concept of media freedom, freedom of thought and religious freedom. The private-public partnership ought to be taken better advantage of and the role of NGOs must not be neglected as they can play an important role in providing the public with better balanced information and raising awareness.

The university, academic and research sectors are of key importance for appropriate comprehension of the context and concept of violent extremism. Just like other (non) governmental players have to take responsibility, so do the academic and research sectors. The question of (de)radicalisation should not be a police issue. It is a much broader context, defined by social, economic, cultural, religious and political aspects. How violent it is depends on the level of dissent. The dissent has to be studied more in detail, at the micro and macro level, starting with the instigators and continuing with the actors of violent extremism. Unilateral treatment of extremism should be avoided as particular forms are interconnected.

Representatives of NGOs presented a study of institutional capacities, which takes into account some regional aspects. Cooperation with six think tanks (analytical NGOs) active at the regional level has been established. There are still some open issues and a lot of work still to do. "Women With-



out Borders”, an Austrian project aimed at what the family can do to recognise radicalisation signs before it is too late, was pointed out as a best practice. For NGOs to do their duty they need more capacities, as the present ones are simply not enough. A link to EU RAN capacities needs to be found as the risk posed by the Western Balkans in the context of ensuring international security must not be neglected. The option of establishing a regional RAN platform was mentioned.

NGOs have recognized a number of shortcomings as far as institutionalization is concerned. They have pointed out inadequate identification of risks and the responsibility each agency or player bears. An absence of prevention has been found. “Disengagement rather than de-radicalisation” seems to be the best opportunity at the moment. Opportunities also lie in better exploitation of capacities and capabilities of security committees and city councils. It is important to address the right target groups, especially vulnerable groups such as young people and families. Given their age bracket, these individuals are most frequently found in schools and within the family. What is wrong is that in an environment that is supposed to be the safest, reasons appear which push such individuals to the process of violent radicalisation.

As in other Western Balkan countries, in Macedonia a series of regional partners, i.e. IOM, RCC, OSCE, USA, are involved in setting up national capacities and capabilities to reduce violent extremism, which – again as elsewhere – is rather uncoordinated. So for instance the Macedonian representatives did not know what activities had been carried out and what activities were planned.

## FIRST LINE PRELIMINARY VISITS REPORT

The FIRST LINE Preliminary Visits Report has been prepared based on preliminary visits to:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 5 and 7 September 2016 carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely AT, CZ HR, BE and SI. The study visit was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Montenegro, from 3 and 5 October 2016, carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely AT, CZ and SI. The study visit was organized under the auspices of the Police Administration, Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro.
- Serbia, from 6 and 7 October 2016, carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States from AT, CZ and SI. The study visit was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, State Police.
- Albania, from 17 and 18 October 2016, carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely BE, CZ and SI. The study visit was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, State Police.
- Kosovo, on 19 October 2016, carried out by a group of experts from EU Member States, namely BE, CZ and SI. The study visit was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, State Police.
- Macedonia, from 20 and 21 October 2016. The study visit was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, State Police.

These study visits have been conducted after each beneficiary completed a specially designed questionnaire, allowing the implementing consortium to analyze, study and get an in-depth overview of the situation in each beneficiary.

The questionnaire took into account best practices and lessons learned at the international level, and reflected approaches already used within different EU settings. The FIRST LINE Preliminary Visits Report also took into account main findings of:

- Initiatives to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism in South East Europe, **A Survey of Regional Issues, Initiatives and Opportunities**, prepared by RCC in 2016, and
- **Novi zov rata u Siriji i Bosanskohercegovački kontingent stranih boraca**, prepared by Atlantic Initiative, financially supported by the Norwegian Embassy and Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, Swiss Confederation.

The FIRST LINE Preliminary Visits Report provided (a) key findings reflecting current state of play, gaps and opportunities in addressing the prevention of all forms of violent radicalisation, (b) main needs and (c) recommendations.

This report contributed to designing future actions in beneficiaries with the purpose of raising awareness and enhancing national capacities and capabilities. Such planning provided experts with knowledge on how to avoid duplication and design workshops which were rather an upgrade of already performed/existing projects in beneficiaries.

Needs which have been identified and recommendations which have been prepared were contained in the report. It should be highlighted that needs recognized and expressed by beneficiaries as well as those reflected and required by existing international standards, best practices and lessons learned in addressing prevention of violent radicalisation have also been taken into account and were included in the report.

### Key findings and main needs

All beneficiaries show very strong awareness of the threats and risks posed by violent extremism and terrorism to security at the national and regional level.

All beneficiaries have (to a certain stage) adopted systemic frameworks for the prevention of terrorism which follow the examples of established international practices. Some of the beneficiaries already have separate strategies and action plans for the prevention of violent extremism.

None of the beneficiaries has yet established a national body for the coordination and implementation of already agreed objectives and activities for the prevention of violent extremism.

In all beneficiaries there is a need for further identification of relevant partners for preventing violent extremism and their coordination and integration.

There is a lack of vertical transmission of horizontal decisions taken at national level to practitioners at the local level which are tasked with actual implementation.

All beneficiaries are facing the challenge of how to raise the level of awareness regarding the complexity of the field of violent extremism prevention. Consequently, sectors, departments and individual stakeholders need to be aware in greater detail of their obligations and responsibilities in the prevention of violent radicalisation.

While acknowledging the risks posed by violent extremism, the level of awareness and competence needs significant improvement among first liners in all beneficiaries.

In all beneficiaries and to a varying extent there are individual projects being carried out under the auspices of regional partners. For varying reasons, implementation of these projects is not coordinated at national level, and in addition projects do not complement each other. Furthermore beneficiaries often do not dispose of sufficient resources and capacity for use of the acquired knowledge and tools.

### Recommendations

Recommendations are designed on the basis of the evaluation of responses to the questionnaire prepared by the implementing consortium experts, based on the discussions held during the preliminary visits and a review of relevant publicly available sources. Such recommendations derived from the need expressed during the preliminary visits by beneficiaries. Individual findings are very specific and provide for a clear prioritization of individual needs to be addressed in a step-by-step approach.

## Specific recommendations

Given the fact that there is a strong political consensus at national level, beneficiaries should continue to improve the threat and risk assessment model, which will provide for more comprehensive and consistent assessment of all forms of violent extremism.

It is recommended that beneficiaries should at the national level set up a national coordination mechanism which will provide responsible stakeholders with coordination and communication and support them. This structure should also have the potential for later regional/international cooperation.

For reasons of a rational and target-oriented approach in defining future actions, a matrix of projects and activities that already have been performed should be prepared. This approach will help avoid overlapping of activities and is fully in line with the WBCTi concept.

Stakeholders responsible at the national level need to fully recognize their role in addressing prevention of violent extremism. Furthermore, there is a strong need for the provision of specially tailored awareness-raising programmes to be implemented in communities as well as among professionals and first liners.

There is a strong need to provide targeted oriented trainings for professionals and first liners, who are faced with violent extremism indicators at the local level.

Workshops at national level for first line practitioners coming from different sectors are strongly recommended. The focus should be on the case scenarios with the objective of showing them how important cooperation is among different sectors in preventing violent extremism. In addition to this, participants from the strategic level should also take part, so that the national and local level would discuss this issue together and ensure later on proper horizontal and vertical cooperation and transfer of knowledge.

The first step is to get political support and establish coordination between sectors on the top level, preferably to have a national coordinator who could have the power to engage all relevant stakeholders. After achieving this, the approach should be transferred to the local level. For participation it is of the utmost importance that the national CT coordinator or representative on the ministerial level dealing with radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, should appoint participants to the workshops from all levels (strategic, tactical, operational) and all institutions in their country. Participants should be appointed from police/law enforcement services/depts, prisons, labour, education, youth organizations, local authorities, religious communities and academics.

Local universities, research institutions, NGOs examining the violent extremism phenomena, forming a knowledge hub and combining available findings, assessments, lessons learned and best practices, should be linked at the regional level and be tasked with the provision of valuable feedback to beneficiaries and the EU. Beneficiaries should use this information in developing future policies addressing violent radicalisation issues.

## Findings by country

### Albania

Violent radicalisation in Albania has causes typical of its environment, which means that ways of recruitment are also different. This needs to be taken into account in the implementation of best practices adopted at the international level.

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon of violent radicalisation, assistance needs to be provided to continue with research. Only in this way can we understand the nature of the problem better and plan appropriate measure to curb it.

The key challenges and opportunities have to be identified. What to offer vulnerable groups? Those responsible for radicalisation take full advantage of different possibilities to address vulnerable groups. Are we capable of a counter narrative?! Therefore: how to address vulnerable groups.

Besides the national strategy, which adequately defines the goals and activities of prevention, assistance in setting up a national platform needs to be provided, with account being taken of the specifics of the Albanian system.

In addition to young people, prisoners and other vulnerable groups, special attention needs to be devoted to terrorist propaganda and internet abuse. General awareness needs to be raised and the non-governmental and private sectors need to participate.

Everybody who has been included in any programme of addressing violent radicalisation needs to be identified.

A way has to be found of addressing all stakeholders responsible at the national level and invite them to take part. Training of first line practitioners needs to start and/or continue.

It needs to be checked which projects were carried out in Albania in the past, who took part and what were the objectives.

On this basis, the list of key needs can be identified as well as best practices already in place, and they need to be continued and further developed.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

The causes of violent radicalisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina are typical of the environment where it takes place, and hence the ways of recruitment are also different and frequently take place in areas where public services such as health, education, social work and culture cannot reach the vulnerable groups in time. It is a complex issue, which is often a consequence of various factors.

When we talk about prevention and planning future activities we have to bear in mind that it needs to be systematic, as radicalisation does not happen spontaneously and different forms of radicalisations cannot be dealt with separately since they are closely correlated.

Due to the complexity of the violent radicalisation phenomenon, assistance needs to be provided to continue studying it so that they can better understand the nature of the problem and be able to plan measures for its prevention. Systematic gathering of evidence on which to base findings needs to be ensured and all stakeholders need to be included. EU RAN could be instrumental in that.

It needs to be determined what the key challenges and opportunities are and what to offer to vulnerable groups. Recruiters responsible for radicalisation are very good at addressing vulnerable groups. Are we capable of creating a counter narrative? How to reach and address vulnerable groups?

In addition to the already established national strategy, which defines the goals and activities for radicalisation prevention, assistance needs to be provided in setting up a national platform, which will take into account the specifics and competences of the Bosnian institutional system.

Alongside young people, prisoners and other vulnerable socially disadvantaged groups, special attention needs to be devoted to terrorist propaganda and internet abuse. Efforts to raise general awareness are required and non-governmental and private sectors need to be involved.

The willingness of the existing religious authorities to act against any kind of violent radicalisation is a definite opportunity. This should be better communicated to external stakeholders as it is very important for Bosnian Islam to have a positive image, which makes it easier to seek relevant solutions together.

Everyone who has been involved in any programme of violent radicalisation prevention needs to be identified. A way of addressing all stakeholders and involving them needs to be found. The training of first line practitioners needs to begin and/or continue.

NGOs have to become more involved in preventive activities but not in the way in which it was done so far (when foreign governments finance some activities, which are unrelated to the efforts of the Bosnian authorities); there has to be more cooperation, especially in areas identified as critical.

Social, health and education structures need to be provided with more information so they are better equipped to recognise these phenomena and react appropriately.

## Kosovo

There is a clear need for more targeted work in the area of reintegration, with special emphasis on the role of the family, where the cooperation of at least four key ministries needs to be ensured – for family, social work, work with young people, etc.

More needs to be done to raise general awareness. The role of the media should be clearly defined, especially how to effectively implement what is called the communication strategy. Target-oriented counter narratives can represent an appropriate form of addressing especially vulnerable target groups.

More effort needs to be invested in education. Really competent experts need to be involved, as education and work with young people must not be left to unprofessional or incompetent circles, which would cause irreparable consequences.

More needs to be done to strengthen the role of religious authorities, both nationally and locally. It needs to be checked whether there are sufficient systemic levers in place, such as appropriate legislation. There has to be more consistency in the provision of moderate content to counterbalance the factors triggering violent radicalisation.

It is essential to ensure transparency of planning and implementation of projects by regional partners. There has to be some monitoring as to the extent to which the goals are achieved and newly acquired tools used after the completion of such projects.

There has to be more horizontal coordination at the national level. Given the absence of horizontal cooperation it would be a good idea to establish a national RAN platform.

Implementation of activities set out at the national level needs to start immediately. For this purpose it needs to be checked whether appropriate vertical coordination is in place, down to the local level, which is where activities are carried out in practice.

The implementation of adequate national strategies and action plans needs to be enhanced where they are stuck at the level of principle due to a lack of resources, know-how or understanding at the regional/local level.

More training for police officers and other practitioners who are the first to encounter violent radicalisation at the local level is necessary. Beforehand, though, an appropriate context of awareness-raising needs to take place, which will contribute to proper understanding of the phenomenon of violent radicalisation, which is one of the main problems in implementing the goals and activities set out at the systemic level.

### Macedonia

Violent radicalisation in Macedonia has causes characteristic of its environment, which call for an appropriate and specific response.

Due to the complexity of the violent radicalisation phenomenon, assistance has to be provided to continue research so that they can better understand the nature of the problem and plan appropriate measures for its eradication.

In addition to the already established (second in a row) national counter-terrorism strategy, which defines the goals and activities for curbing the problem, assistance needs to be provided in establishing the national platform to enable adequate horizontal and vertical coordination to balance the operationalization of set activities at the local level. The strategy must be operationalized through an action plan to implement the goals. The draft action plan will be submitted to the European Commission for verification.

It needs to be checked what is the best way of addressing all stakeholders at the national level and invite them to participate. Training of first line practitioners should start or continue.

Macedonia itself mentioned the need to set up a national coordination body to include all responsible stakeholders at the national level and to enable their coordinated operation.

In addition to youngsters, prisoners and other vulnerable socially weak groups, special attention also needs to be devoted to terrorist propaganda and internet abuse. General awareness needs to be raised and non-governmental and private sector needs to be invited to participate. The search for an appropriate concept needs to continue as there is no consensus internationally on the best approach.

On this basis, a list of key needs as well as best practices will be identified, and these must be developed further. The results of projects already carried out should be taken into account.

## Montenegro

Violent radicalisation in Montenegro is marked by very specific aspects, and consequently by different methods of recruitment and response of the community to these challenges.

When we talk about prevention and planning future activities, they need to be systemic, as we all know that radicalisation does not happen spontaneously and different forms of radicalisation must not be dealt with separately, for they are closely correlated.

Due to the complexity of the phenomenon of violent radicalisation it is necessary to provide assistance in continuing research in order to better understand the nature of the problem and plan appropriate measures to curb it. It will be necessary to ensure systematic gathering of evidence and all competent stakeholders should be included. EU RAN capabilities would be crucial here.

Key challenges and opportunities need to be identified. What to offer to vulnerable groups? Those involved in radicalisation take good advantage of various possibilities to address vulnerable groups. Are we capable of a counter narrative?! How do we address and reach vulnerable groups?

In addition to the established national strategy which defines the goals and activities to prevent radicalisation, assistance also needs to be provided in the setting up of a national platform that will take into account the specifics of the institutional system in Montenegro. ME has addressed a request to the expert group for additional support in developing a national RAN model, especially regarding the concept and approach.

Alongside young people, families, prisoners and other vulnerable and socially underprivileged groups, special attention needs to be devoted to terrorist propaganda and internet abuse. General awareness needs raising and the non-governmental and private sectors also need to get on board.

There is a strong need for further identification and involving of all responsible stakeholders at the national level. Before that, a political consensus should be provided. In defining the role of a particular partner, it should be provided with a precise understanding and recognition of their role.

A way needs to be found for addressing competent stakeholders at the national level and getting them on board. Bearing in mind that here is a lack of or little progress regarding training of first line practitioners, at the national level the competent authorities should prepare the list of needs.



## Serbia

Vertical awareness is relatively good, horizontal awareness needs to be stepped up; an appropriate coordination format needs to be set up.

The security culture has to be improved.

Searching for partners at the national level needs to continue and mutual trust must be strengthened.

There is an absence of links at the local level. It was suggested that the city warden service should be involved as they are most present in the local environment.

It is a very sensitive area as it concerns dealing with vulnerable groups.

Intensive education and training must continue. More needs to be invested in training. An unprofessional approach can further stigmatise individuals and groups, which makes the rejection and conflict of the individual/group with the local environment and system even worse.

Cooperation with official religious authorities should not be neglected in the process of de-radicalisation. The health sector can be a credible partner in providing an insight into the causes of violent radicalisation, with clinical psychology and other branches contributing to better understanding. Cooperation with the police as a source of information is a secondary goal. The health sector has a much more important role in providing a psychosocial climate.

Some open issues still remain: who will be responsible for further coordination, who will assume responsibility for setting-up national network? At the time of the study visit, no coordinator had yet been appointed so the police took on this responsibility. There is still time to select another coordinator.

Another issue remaining open is how to ensure systematic monitoring of manifestations, which would be of assistance in early identification of new trends as well as better interpretation. National law enforcement has a number of good analytical products which remain isolated.

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PRELIMINARY VISITS TO WB PROJECT PARTNERS/BENEFICIARIES

The findings from preliminary visits to project partners/beneficiaries of the FIRST LINE project can be clustered into general findings, findings concerning national stakeholders, findings in connection with external aspects and cross cutting facts:

### General findings:

- Most project partners/beneficiaries from the WB region have no P/CVE coordination mechanism in place,
- there is a strong need to distinguish between P/CVE and CT, but also to be able to understand / and be aware of their co-relation,
- a clear and common understanding of definitions and terminology describing the process of radicalization needs to be communicated in order to have the necessary recognition and understanding with proper communication on radicalization,
- it is important for that prevention to be well defined in the national counter-terrorist strategy,
- prevention needs to be taken into account in the restructuring of existing national counter-terrorism mechanisms.
- there is a general absence of understanding and recognition of the role in P/CVE, among the so called "non-security" stakeholders,
- a clear distinction needs to be made between policing and community policing,
- general prevention and prevention of criminal activities should be distinguished,
- there is a need for clear division of competencies within each WB project partner/beneficiary national structures,
- there is also a need for proper setting up of communication channels from national level to local level (i.e. by preparation of MoU),
- currently "disengagement rather than de-radicalisation" seems to be the best opportunity or approach,
- identification of risks and responsibility by each agency or player on their own without sharing of information is not an appropriate way or measure.

### Findings concerning respective national stakeholders:

- Sectors for youth, families, health, social care, and prison/probation are key players at state level in the early prevention.
- Strategic partnerships are very important and well-measured coordination is crucial due to the complexity and horizontal perspective of terrorism,
- the private-public partnership ought to be taken better advantage of and the role of NGOs must not be neglected as they can play an important role in providing the public with better balanced information and raising awareness,
- the non-governmental sector needs to assume more responsibility,
- advantage should be taken of the role of religious organizations and authorities, which are of key importance,
- for NGOs to do their duty they need more capacities as the present ones are simply not enough,
- just as like other (non) governmental players have to take responsibility so do the academia and the research sector,

- universities, academia and the research sector are of key importance for appropriate comprehension of the context and the concept of radicalisation leading to violent extremism.

### External political aspect - a special role should be devoted to this aspect, by for example:

- finding and of/or establishing a link to EU RAN capacities, as the risk posed by the Western Balkans in the context of ensuring international security can may not be neglected,
- activities of regional partners, i.e. IOM, RCC, OSCE, USA, involved in setting up national capacities and capabilities to reduce radicalisation need to be more streamlined and coordinated.

### Further cross cutting facts:

- the issue of (de)radicalisation should not be solely be a police issue. It is a much broader context, defined by social, economic, cultural, religious and political aspects,
- opportunities also lie in better exploitation of capacities and capabilities of security committees and city councils,
- it is important to address the right target groups, especially vulnerable groups such as young people and families,
- it also should not be neglected that prisons are becoming the so-called third “hub” of violent radicalisation,
- unilateral treatment of extremism should be avoided as particular forms are interconnected,
- the media and internet are an important aspect. An important portion of radicalisation unfolds on the web,
- the discussion focused on the acceptability of the concept of removing and blocking contentious websites, which can quickly clash with the concept of media freedom, freedom of thought and religious freedom,
- furthermore the option of establishing a regional RAN platform was mentioned.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the current strong political consensus at national level, WB project partners/beneficiaries should continue with improving the threat and risk assessment model, which will provide for more comprehensive and consistent assessment of all forms of violent extremism.

WB project partners/beneficiaries should at the national level set up a national coordination mechanism, which will provide and support responsible stakeholders with coordination and communication. This structure should also have the potential for later regional/international cooperation. It is strongly recommended that P/CVE coordination be recognized as an essential part of the CT coordination mechanism.

It should be considered that **working in** and **working with** the Community is of fundamental importance for the whole-society approach, therefore a multi-stakeholder approach should be applied.

Stakeholders responsible at the national level need to fully recognize their role in addressing prevention of violent extremism. The identified strong need for the provision of specially tailored awareness-raising programmes should be addressed by communities as well as among professionals and

first liners. Furthermore, the strong need to for targeted oriented trainings for professionals and first liners, whowhich are faced with violent extremism indicators at the local level, should be addressed.

Training in the form of workshops at the national level for first line practitioners coming from different sectors should be organized. Within workshops focus should be on the case scenarios with the objective ofto demonstrating the importance of cooperation among different sectors in preventing violent extremism. Workshops should bring together participants from the strategic level, enabling discussions between theamong national and local level contributing to proper horizontal and vertical cooperation and transfer of knowledge later on.

Local universities, research institutions, NGOs examining the violent extremism phenomena, forming a knowledge hub and combining available findings, assessments, lessons learned and good practices, should be linked at the regional level and be tasked with the provision of valuable feedback to WB project partners/beneficiaries and the EU. WB project partners/beneficiaries should use this information when developing future policies addressing violent radicalisation issues.

For the reasons of a rational and target oriented approach in defining future actions, a matrix of projects and activities that already have been implemented should be prepared. This approach will assist into avoiding overlapping of the activities and would be fully in line with the WBCTi concept.

Finally, the Prevent-Refer-Address (P-R-A) concept, which follows the multi-stakeholder approach as a response to radicalisation and violent extremism<sup>1</sup>, should be further developed.

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<sup>1</sup> Prevent-Refer-Address (P-R-A) concept – a policy proposal by the IISG Support Group (June 2017), (concept development by DCAF, UNDP, RCC, IOM - November 2017), was implemented by the First Line project with the support of the IISG SG. The P-R-A concept covers all above aspects and gained support by WB project partners/beneficiaries.

## STATE OF PLAY – February 2017

	Albania	BiH	FYROM	KS	ME	RS
CT Strategy	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	Under implementation
P/CVE Strategy (could be an integral part of CT Strategy or similar strategic document)	YES	Partially	P/CVE is (partially) part of National CT Strategy	YES	YES	P/CVE is taken into account in National CT Strategy
P/CVE Strategy-Action Plan	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
National CT Coordinator or equivalent	YES	YES	YES	YES	partially	NO
P/CVE National Coordinator or equivalent	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
National body/authority responsible for P/CVE (National Security Council)	YES	coordination is partially covered under the Nat CT coordination	NO	YES	NO	NO
National inter-ministerial CT coordination	YES		NO	YES	YES	partially
National inter-ministerial P/CVE coordination mechanism of cooperation and coordination between local partners (local level)	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for health	YES	partially	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for education	YES	partially	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for youth	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for social affairs	YES	partially	NO	YES	NO	NO

Involvement of ministry responsible for justice	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for local community	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for research	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for sport	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for culture	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Involvement of ministry responsible for labour	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO





# FIRST LINE WORKSHOPS





## FIRST LINE WORKSHOPS

With the objective of including recommendations and findings from preliminary visits and meeting the project's expected results, the workshops combined national professionals representing governmental sectors most relevant for effective addressing of P/CVE. In order to contribute to a better understanding of the scope and P/CVE concept, representatives of research, academia, media, NGOs, religious communities and other representatives from the national knowledge hub were also engaged. In each beneficiary such workshops have been an excellent opportunity to confront professionals at the strategic/state level and practitioners/local level contributing to communication, coordination and the desired situation of 'knowing your partner'. Therefore an adequate number of representative of both levels were invited to these 2 to 3-day workshops.

To ensure the participation of relevant and adequate numbers of professionals, we organized a meeting first with national coordinators or the relevant national-based expert in the beneficiaries to present them with the findings of the visits and explain the model for the workshop. Their engagement has been crucial to ensure the proper response and participation. The first workshops were held in Albania and Kosovo, countries where regarding P/CVE most progress has been achieved so far. Both countries had already some kind of national coordination form/mechanism in place and multiagency cooperation developed.

Workshops were composed of three main sections; first a general introduction; second concrete lessons learned within each (9) EU RAN subgroup. Here special attention was given to communication and coordination needed in addressing P/CVE; and third, practical interactive modules, which have stimulated practitioners to recognize and define their own role and to recognize/understand the importance of communication, cooperation, coordination and collaboration.

Such an approach, provided with appropriate/proper understanding of risks related to VE and terrorism, ensures familiarisation with the lessons learned from the 9 EU RAN subgroups, and recognizing the professional's role, while it will also provide for easier understanding of the need for cooperation and its development and setup.

The respective national RAN experts with a strong knowledge of P/CVE prevention who are involved in their respective national RAN coordination were appointed by the implementing consortium and are in charge of the implementation of all three sections.

Workshops implemented in such a way provided the highest quality input due to the fact that the beneficiary country's actual state of play was taken into account. They also served as an event supporting networking and facilitating discussions on issues to be solved in the respective beneficiary.

## FIRST LINE WORKSHOP IN KOSOVO, Prishtina, 4 – 5 July 2017

### Introduction

On 4 and 5 July the first Workshop of the FIRST LINE project took place in Prishtina, Kosovo. The workshop was conducted by various EU experts from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic and Slovenia. A total of 51 national based governmental and non-governmental representatives with different backgrounds and from different services, such as the Police, Ministry of Justice, Situation Centre, Referring Mechanism Independent Media Commission, local community, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Security Council Secretariat, Correctional Service, academia, schools, the Islamic Community and NGOs took part. International partners were represented by EULEX, OSCE and the USA.

The aim of the workshop was:

- to raise awareness among first line practitioners;
- raise awareness among decision/policy makers at the state level;
- to realize the importance of having a suitable national cooperation mechanism or adequate platform, and adequate P/P/CVE policy which should be mirrored at the local level;
- to provide proper training for first line practitioners in a way to be able to recognize the early signs of radicalisation and be able to respond properly;
- to get familiar with and transfer best practices developed within EU RAN CoE and different EU MS and international organisations/agencies;
- to get practitioners familiar with existing exit/disengagement programmes, the role of police and local community and
- to assist Kosovo in further developing the national coordination mechanism for horizontal P/CVE coordination.

The workshop was divided into two parts. It started with a presentation of general subjects, an overview provided to participants about the risks/threats/nature/trends of terrorism in the EU, in the SEE region and also in Kosovo, and also future challenges and opportunities. The process of radicalisation was explained in detailed, where and how it occurs, who could be first in contact with it, what are the main challenges and risks and also the opportunities for (timely) preventing of radicalisation.

At the beginning, the participants were asked to fill out a specially designed Questionnaire on detecting the processes of radicalisation. The aim was to get an insight into their current understanding of terrorism and VE related risks, how they recognize their role, what is their knowledge of the radicalisation process, and where they recognize opportunities for more effective P/CVE.

One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to find out how successful the workshop was. Therefore, part of the questionnaire was repeated at the end of the training.

Managing (de)radicalisation or disengagement processes has recently become an important task, which often (but not only) involves the police. In order to develop a comprehensive P/CVE, it is very important to understand which stakeholders should be involved.

The second part of the workshop was focused on specific topics most important for practitioners so as to be able to recognize and respond properly and in due time to radicalisation-related actions which could lead to violent extremism and terrorism.

In addition, special attention was given to how to recognize their own role, responsibility, mission within the P/CVE, how they can actually contribute as experts at the local level, what are the possible forms/formats of cooperation and basic rules for such cooperation, in a way that avoids the most frequent conflicts.

Adapted to the current situation, the risks and the representation of Kosovo's departments, the content presented in the EU RAN subgroups, RAN Health, RAN Pol, RAN FS & Y, RAN Exit, was primarily presented.

Mandatory content was related to:

- the role of health, social work, youth work, education, family, civil society, religion, etc., which as such at the local level are first to encounter radicalisation indicators;
- way to identify indicators;
- own role and who are their partners;
- whom and in what way to inform/report about this.

Mr. Albert Černigoj presented the Terrorist threat in the EU connected to the Western Balkan region. Terrorism in the EU remains a priority on the global, regional and national levels. It is defined by dynamism, transnationality and complexity. The degree of risk varies from MS to MS. The threat is real and expected. The risk arises from various terrorist organisations, groups, smaller poorly structured groups, lone wolves, loners and individuals inspired by different terrorist organisations. One of the challenges is foreign terrorist fighters-returnees. An important question needs to be raised: What next? And what is the role of women?

In the Western Balkans there are a limited number of low scale attacks -. Religion-supported terrorism is exposed and violent radicalisation is strengthening. Another feature of WB is foreign terrorist fighters or returnees.

The threat of religion-supported terrorism is reflected in the global jihad, with the aim of polarizing European society, and with the correlation between different forms of violent radicalization and new trends of attacks, new predictions are emerging.

Mr Rajko Kozmelj presented the EU integrative approach to the fight against terrorism and countering of violent extremism (Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative - WBCTi), originally developed by Slovenia and supported by Austria, which was endorsed by the home affairs ministers of the Brdo Process. The concept was formally endorsed at the December 2015 JHA Council of Ministers as an EU initiative, pending significant EU/EC financial support. It enables an efficient response to challenges posed to national CT practitioners and operating regional arrangements dealing with CT, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Radicalisation. It has won wide support since – over 50 regional instruments, international actors, state donors, incl. EU agencies and institutions signed up as partners. The WBCTi is the first of the three foreseen pillars of the “Integrated Internal Security Governance–IISG” which holistically addresses internal security challenges in the Western Balkan Region.

In his presentation, he highlighted the fact that there has been increasing awareness of the need to coordinate, streamline and functionally integrate EU policy initiatives, UN actions and a variety of other activities conducted by other international and regional actors in the Western Balkans (WB) targeting internal security, in order to provide an effective response and to reduce considerable overlapping and duplication and to create synergies instead. In this regard, he presented the visualised complexity of different regional scopes and a high number of partners, which makes cooperation and efforts to streamline and to coordinate the actions of all partners a challenge.

Mr Kozmelj, presented how the WBCTi fulfils its objectives and among other things highlighted: the WBCTi methodology of needs identification (bottom-up & top-down); detailed action plan, where partners are invited to take the lead and contribute their expertise and resources; and where the donors are invited to invest in activities which support agreed objectives. He also drew attention to long-term and consistent planning, constant coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the process, which makes a considerable difference with projects limited in their start and end.

The following most important results were presented; Close cooperation and coordination, incl. developed mutual trust, among the WBCTi Partners; Enhanced information exchange via and between three regional platforms at relevant levels of CT authorities; Over 1000 imams across six locations in Bosnia trained and equipped to better respond to cases of VE and radicalisation; Concluded ground-work for the development of inter-ministerial platforms in all beneficiaries.

Mr Kozmelj presented the first draft list of the P/CVE priorities (outcome from the Marshall Center, Slovenian Police and DCAF Ljubljana conference in May 2017) and highlighted the top priority - the establishment of a P/CVE National Coordination mechanism mirrored at local level in each country of the region, to offer sustainable and systematic early prevention, referrals and the ability to address the problem of radicalisation that leads to violent extremism or terrorism. In that regard, he presented at the end of the event draft recommendations to set up such a system using existing capacities (partners responsible for the P/CVE National Strategy at local and national level) and to follow the Referral Mechanism in Gnjilane, taking into account gaps and strengths identified in that pilot project. Recommendations were adjusted according to the outcome of discussions which followed and were disseminated in an agreed version as print-outs at the end of the event.

Next the film Conviction (provided by UK authorities) was presented. The aim is to raise awareness of some of the issues surrounding preventing violent extremism. The main objectives are (a) recognise and understand the need to support and protect vulnerable people, (b) highlight potential opportunities where guidance or intervention may be necessary and (c) help to build trust and confidence within communities and in partnerships. Discussion was based on 3 crucial questions:

- What makes Isa vulnerable?
- Where were the opportunities to intervene / recognise that Isa needed support?
- What were the factors contributing to his radicalisation?

KEY MESSAGES: Vulnerable individuals need support rather than criminalisation, and terrorism actually impacts everyone. Local communities are crucial for effective P/CVE, the Muslim community has a fundamental role to play, we all have responsibility, which is ongoing, so people can feel safe and be safe.

Mr. Mišo Radovančević presented key topics in Roots and triggers of violent extremism, presenting the basic push/pull factors that create a complex combination (individual socio-psychological, social, political, ideological and religious dimensions, role of culture and identity issues, trauma and other trigger mechanisms), and he pointed out the three most important factors: group dynamics, radicalisers and the role of social media.

He went on to present vulnerable groups, pointed out the youth problem with marginalisation and identity crises, and specifically pointed out the current EU phenomenon of returnees – foreign terrorist fighters and families.

Mr Luc Van Der Talen gave an overview of the situation in Western Europe and Belgium and covered: the attacks since 2014 and trends and challenges, emphasizing the new "modus operandi", use of drones, copycat, the difference between activated and inspired individuals, the threat of second blast, women and children, the arson jihad, the categories of FTF in Belgium, facts and figures, the structure in place to ensure follow-up, proper monitoring and exchange of information on all levels, with all actors (police, intel, civil society, municipalities), polarization, us/them and the rise of anarchist/left wing and right wing, the challenges for western societies in terms of security, costs, culture and the balance between security and democratic value principles and fundamental rights.

Eight scenarios were developed and have been discussed in the format of interactive modules, under the supervision of EU experts. Outcomes, key findings and solutions were additionally discussed at the plenary session.

In the second presentation, Mr. Luc Van Der Talen covered definitions (activism, (violent) extremism and terrorism), based on a couple of examples explaining in an easy way the mechanisms and messages behind the waves of modern terrorism and characteristics, the radicalisation process with examples, cases, the process of indoctrination, all ideologies and terrorist organizations, indicators of possible radicalisation (related to ideology, identity, behaviour) and indicators of possible preparation of an attack (residence, transport, values, forged docs, etc.), the importance of proper contextualization (getting the big and right picture) and the importance of partners and exchange of information.

Outcomes of the first day were pointed out by Mr. Albin Slabe.

Mr. Branko Lobnikar in his presentation Police activity in the local environment to prevent radicalisation – the role of the community policing officer, pointed out that dealing with violent extremism was traditionally a subject for intelligence agencies, since they involve national security and classified information. The police have a crucial role to play in facilitating a preventative multi-agency approach at local or regional level. Especially in local settings, the police have strong established networks for a multi-agency problem solving approach. Why multi-agency problem solving approach? Police can receive information from partners and through a multi-agency arrangement make others do work that is not police work. There are various benefits of such an approach to prevent radicalisation that leads to extreme violence, such as a more accurate assessment of risk and needs, more thorough and driven management of cases, better understanding among professionals, and greater efficiencies in processes and resources.

Mr. Peter Debeljak in Preventing youth radicalisation and violent extremism explained that young people are one of the most vulnerable age/social groups in relation to different forms of radicalism and violent extremism. Do to some very objective circumstances/reasons a separate and special approach to the phenomenon needs to be respected and developed. Unfortunately no manuals/“magic wands” / short-cuts can be pursued to address the issue. But we can still learn from both positive and negative experiences and from both best and worst practices in that regard.

We should avoid addressing new phenomenon with existing, old answers. Sticking to “copy-pasting” is often not efficient. Using a “one-size-fits-all approach” is usually not sufficient. Seeking for perfect solutions only is to be avoided. Making extremism/radicalisation a taboo is the wrong way to tackle the problem. We should bear in mind that radical signs are often just a “cry for help”.

In carrying out prevention activities we should use existing/working platforms, gain trust before reacting, know how to read the signs, raise awareness, know the trends, create safe spaces and use a youth-friendly/peer-to-peer approach, create alliances with key figures and stakeholders (i.e. authoritative coalitions), use (local) heroes as role models, establish pools of specialists, and use personal stories. And last but not least: each country should do its home work!

In the role of healthcare in the early identification of violent radicalism, Ms. Biserka Simčič presented RAN Health, pointing out that health workers deal professionally with individuals who have undergone the radicalisation process. It is important and necessary to inform and train the health professionals how to identify and assist vulnerable persons and groups who have been exposed to the violent radicalisation process. It is important to raise awareness and the culture of the importance of early recognition and prevention of violent radicalisation in the field of health. It is necessary to exchange information within professional networks and at the same time maintain the highest possible level of confidentiality, however not to the detriment of the security of society. In Slovenia we realise that the public healthcare systems can contribute to preventing the radicalisation process in society by raising awareness among health workers about the dangers of this phenomenon and exchanging information among different professionals or experts on radicalisation, seeking vulnerable individuals, reorienting individuals who were exposed to initial radicalisation, and cooperating with different partners in tackling radicalisation and extremism in our society.

Mrs. Petra Vejvodova in the RAN EXIT presentation covered these issues with information about the RAN EXIT working group (mission of the group), the basic principles of deradicalisation and disengagement work, which comes from the practice of RAN EXIT practitioners, presentation of the project European Fair Skills as an example of best practice of prevention of extremism for the Czech Republic and as an example of benefit coming from RAN cooperation, and information about the Civil Society Empowerment Programme launched by RAN in March 2017 on countering hate online.

At the end of each module, a practical part followed in which the participants, under the supervision of experts/moderators, followed in advance, for each target group and the stage of the process of radicalization of the prepared scenarios, used the newly acquired knowledge themselves.

These were presented at a plenary session in order for them to identify their own established practices and opportunities. On this basis, some of the opportunities that individual departments in Kosovo already have are exercised or implemented or being developed.

Separate discussion on defining the list of national based stakeholders and possible multi-agency cooperation formats.

According to some , in the course of the two-day discussion of the identified needs, a special, separate discussion on developing the national coordination mechanism was held, with plenary work between EU experts, WBCTI and Kosovo national representatives. During the session experts prepared a list of specific recommendations:

- in establishing national capacities, effectively prevent radicalisation leading to extreme violence or terrorism;
- in addition to the structure and method of mutual cooperation, the recommendations included a list of key sectors / partners / responsible persons, their role and the way of communication / cooperation;
- in addition, they included a list of concrete practical guidelines for the implementation of urgently needed activities.

The recommendations were presented and given for further discussion to national experts at the final session.

## Conclusions

Kosovo has achieved a relatively good awareness and understanding of the scope and nature of preventing radicalisation that leads to violent extremism or terrorism.

The police force is still the main stakeholder in P/CVE. Supported by a number of relevant regional partners, a number of police officers have been trained for community policing especially within the CVE.

The structure of the participants and their engagement in discussions and finding solutions was above expectations. The number of participants could be higher in a way to take advantage provided by experts and the format of workshop .

Great interest was shown in the need to carry out the workshop and acquire new knowledge and experience.

KS is challenged by a number of risks and vulnerabilities, especially regarding capacities and capabilities.

Efforts regarding P/CVE, supported by international partners, are relevant and focused on relevant priorities. There is a strong need for policies endorsed at the state level to be reflected at the local level.

The name of the project “STOP” gives the right connotation.

Human factor, on-time diagnosis and institutionalisation are key for P/CVE.



Finally, Kosovo expresses its expectation for further, future cooperation, and the upgrading of this workshop.

EU support and assistance from different relevant regional partners is expected.

### Recommendations

- Immediate implementation of provided knowledge is of key importance;
- National representatives asked for available and other relevant products such as manuals, SOPs etc. prepared by EU RAN CoE. Translated products should be provided in a timely manner;
- KS expresses a strong need for additional, carefully tailored trainings with special focus (in first place) on reintegration, resocialisation, the role of youth, probation, families;
- Such trainings should not be performed exclusively for one single customer/agency. Such trainings should also engage a number of other relevant stakeholders, ensuring connection, understanding the role of different partners, how to communicate and to whom;
- Respective Islamic Community' representatives will continue to promote strong partnership;
- Pilot projects exercised in Kačanik and Muhađeri should be expanded to additional cities and regions;
- At the local level more focus should be given in the format of education programme/school, etc. Awareness-raising, training and additional skills for social workers and teachers, are needed;
- Public discussion on the positive impact of religious education should also be held.

## FIRST LINE WORKSHOP IN ALBANIA, Tirana, 7 – 8 November 2017

### Introduction

The second workshop of the FIRST LINE project took place in Tirana, Albania, from 7 to 8 of November. It was conducted by experts from Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Slovenia. A total of 52 national based participants with different backgrounds and from different services, such as the Police, Section for Community Policing, Ministry of Justice, Directorate for Border and Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Schools, University, civil society, DAR Korce, USAID, Institution for Democracy and Mediation, Interfaith Cooperation Centre, Defence Ministry and NGOs took part. The international community was represented by representatives from UNDP and IOM.

The aim of the workshop was

- raise awareness among first line practitioners;
- raise awareness among decision/policy makers at the state level;
- realise the importance of having a suitable national cooperation mechanism or adequate platform, and adequate P/CVE policy which should be mirrored at the local level;
- provide proper training for first line practitioners so as to be able to recognize the early signs of radicalisation and be able to respond properly;
- get familiar with and transfer best practices developed within EU RAN CoE and different EU MS and international organisations/agencies and
- assist Albania establish the national coordination mechanism which would enable horizontal P/CVE coordination.

Additional added value of the workshop in Tirana was the presence of the Mr. Luigi Soreca, Director for Internal Security at the European Commission. Mr. Soreca pointed out the importance of P/CVE, with the vital components of narratives and strategic communication, which is one of the top EU priorities, and framed the risk and threat in the EU including the Western Balkan area, this time including Albania. He also indicated the importance of well balanced and coordinated interconnected national and local strategies in Albania.

In the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Soreca emphasized the importance of projects such as FIRST LINE, which is an excellent example of sharing knowledge, raising awareness and the transfer of best practices in the area of violent radicalisation which will help Albanian authorities establish coordination at the national level. Last but not least, projects such as FIRST LINE also build trust between EU countries and the Western Balkan region.

Mr Rajko Kozmelj emphasized the importance of EC support reflected in different formats of support, such as projects and other forms of technical assistance. Such support is urgent and indispensable.

Mr. Agron Sojati, National P/CVE Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office, referred to participants with an emphasis on their own efforts, strongly supported by relevant international stakeholders.

He pointed out that Albania had made significant progress in addressing extremism and terrorism related challenges. Some facts and features pointed out were:

- Albania was among the first to recognize the need for an integrative and comprehensive regional approach;
- Albania was among those contributing to the identification of primary risks and needs. Albania was also among the founders of the CTi Network;
- Albania also expressed an excellent understanding of the modern approach to tackling P/CVE by implementing internationally established practices, developing a National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism and
- Appointing a National Coordinator for Countering Violent Extremism, which provides an excellent way to bring together relevant stakeholders at national level, including the educational and family sectors, social workers, religious community, youth, NGOs, research, academia and others;
- Establishment of the National Centre by a government decision;
- It will have a detailed protocol of cooperation;
- Individual security risks will be addressed in the format of different groups;
- We are dependent on the environment, on the public, because everyone can contribute to the process of preventing radicalisation, but we must act very responsibly.

The representative of Radical Awareness Network Centre of Excellence (RAN CoE), Mr. Maarten Van De Donk, gave a general introduction of RAN. During his presentation the structure of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) was explained.

The core of the EC initiated project is working groups consisting of practitioners who encounter radicalisation and vulnerable groups in their daily work. In these groups there is an exchange of practices and experiences and policy advice is given.

Some important deliverables of RAN that are accessible online for all are RAN collection of practices: general descriptions of actions that can be taken to prevent or counter radicalisation leading to violent extremism, followed by practices that can be found throughout the EU. This database is updated on a regular basis:

- Returnee manual: recently published report on how to deal with people returning from Daesh (foreign fighters, woman and children) both to safeguard society and to work on resocialisation.
- Ex post papers of working groups: these are reports in which the results of working group meetings are made accessible.

They often offer very practice-oriented guidelines on how to deal with radicalisation.

Fighting terrorism and violent extremism involves more than surveillance and security.

It is very horizontal and engages each and every relevant stakeholder. The most effective prevention strategies stop people from getting involved in the process which leads to violent extremism

or acts of terrorism in the first place. RAN brings together practitioners from around Europe working on the prevention of radicalisation. Connecting people. RAN is today a kind of knowledge hub, “network of networks” gathering together over 3000 practitioners and as such provides interested parties with the support needed for effective prevention of violent radicalisation.

The representative from the European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN), Mr. Hugo MacPherson, addressed participants with two questions that are simple but crucial for this event:

- Why am I here?
- Why are you here?

Mr. MacPherson presented the scope of their services and expertise, which include giving advice to EU Member States on the effective use of communications to tackle terrorism and extremism. ESCN is helping 26 EU member states (their clients) to think about old problems in a new way and to introduce innovation into responses to a threat picture which changes almost every week. ESCN’s signature “Communications approach” helps clients to develop concrete ways of addressing the problem by first defining the problem in a way that all partners can understand and agree on. In principle, ESCN works on developing Member States’ capacities for communications for two reasons:

- Communication is critical to how our enemies operate. They use communications to a professional standard to reach and impact our neighbours, colleagues, friends every day and radicalise and recruit them. Moreover, they also use communications deliberately to polarise entire communities, challenging the very cohesion of our societies through hate speech, racism and ethno-religious provocation.
- Communication is also critical to how we operate for two reasons: first, we must track and monitor what our enemies are saying and to whom. Secondly, we must use communications to reach and impact our target audiences before our enemies do.

ESCN cannot tell you about Albania – the experts were told – but we have some idea of how a strategic communications approach can support your efforts. And while ESCN is not yet working directly in the Western Balkans, ESCN hopes to have the capacity to deliver limited support soon, initially through the IISG secretariat.

Which led the participants to the question why they were there. Mr. MacPherson indicated two reasons:

- Albania is making good P/CVE progress already (a national P/CVE strategy has been drafted, a national P/CVE coordinator has been appointed and there is good P/CVE work already beginning across the country).
- The second reason was that Albania has a radicalisation problem and on that issue he pointed out the first step ESCN can suggest. If they are going to use strategic communications, then they should concentrate first on setting a strategic basis by asking simply “What is your shared understanding of the problem?”

The first step would be to define together Albania’s challenge, which leads the participants to identify whether the right people, institutions are gathered at the workshop, who is missing and how often can they meet to make progress. The process of meeting multiple times can bring participants

to the point where together they can persevere through Albania's challenges today, tomorrow and in the long term.

After the presentation of representatives from the EU and experts, the workshop was divided into two parts.

First, the general part provided to participants an overview of the risks of terrorism in the EU, in the SEE region and also in Albania. The process of radicalisation was explained in detail, where and how it occurs, who could be the first to have contact with it, what are the main challenges and risks and also the opportunities for preventing radicalisation.

The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness, in first place among what are called first line practitioners, who could during their daily work at the local level be faced with radicalised persons, but also to raise awareness among decision/policy makers. Special attention was devoted to developing a national coordination mechanism, developing multiagency/multisectorial cooperation, providing sufficient capacities and capabilities, providing sustainable training to first line practitioners so they are properly trained to recognize the early signs of radicalisation and to be able to respond properly. Another aim was to transfer best practices and lessons learned and developed within the EU RAN CoE and different EU MS and to assist them in developing an adequate national coordination mechanism which would enable horizontal coordination of the activities for PVE. Additional added value of the workshop was the preparation of the set of recommendations, which will help Albanian authorities set up multi-agency/multi-sectoral coordination at the national level.

The workshop was divided into two parts. It started with a presentation of general subjects, and provided to participants an overview about the risks/threats/nature/trends of terrorism in the EU, in the SEE region and also in Albania, and also future challenges and opportunities. The process of radicalisation was explained in detail, where and how it occurs, who could be first in contact with it, what are the main challenges and risks and also the opportunities for (timely) preventing of radicalisation.

At the beginning the participants were asked to fill out a specially designed Questionnaire on detecting the processes of radicalisation. The aim was to get an insight into their current understanding of terrorism and VE related risks, how they recognize their role, what is their knowledge of the radicalisation process, and where they recognize opportunities for more effective P/CVE.

One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to find out how successful the workshop was. Therefore, part of the questionnaire was repeated at the end of the training.

The second part of the workshop was focused on concrete topics most important for practitioners so they will be able to recognize and respond properly in due time with actions related to radicalisation which could lead to violent extremism and terrorism.

Adapted to the current situation, the risks and the representation of Albanian departments, the content presented in the EU RAN subgroups, RAN Pol, RAN FS & Y, RAN Health, RAN Exit, was primarily presented. Mandatory content was related to:

- the role of police, health, social work, youth work, education, NGOs etc., which as such in the field first encounter indicators that point to the risk of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism;
- a way to identify radicalisation among residents, youth etc.;
- indicators of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (activism, radicalisation, extremism, terrorism aims and phases);
- own role (role and engagement raising awareness among co-workers dealing with radicalisation and responsibilities of their institutions);
- who are their partners (multi-agency approach in local communities, developing strategies, teams etc.);
- who and in what way to inform/report about this topic or issue.

Mr. Albert Černigoj presented the Terrorist threat in the EU connected to the Western Balkan region. Terrorism in the EU remains a priority on the global, regional and national levels. It is defined by dynamism, transnationality and complexity. The threat level varies from MS to MS. The threat is real and expected. The risk arises from different terrorist organisation, groups, smaller poorly structured groups, lone wolves, loners and individuals inspired by different terrorist organisations. One of challenges is foreign terrorist fighters-returnees. An important question needs to be raised: What next? What is the role of women and families returning from Syria after being exposed to violence, indoctrination etc?

The Western Balkans is facing a limited number of so-called low-scale attacks. As defined in the WB TESAT 2015/16 Report prepared by the Counter Terrorism Initiative and Europol, religion-supported terrorism is exposed and violent radicalisation is strengthening. Another feature of WB is foreign terrorist fighters or returnees.

The threat of religion-supported terrorism is reflected in the global jihad, with the aim of polarizing European society, and with the correlation between different forms of violent radicalisation and new trends of attacks, new predictions are emerging.

Mr Rajko Kozmelj presented the EU integrative approach to the fight against terrorism and countering of violent extremism (Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative - WBCTi).

The concept was formally endorsed at the December 2015 JHA Council of Ministers as an EU initiative, pending significant EU/EC financial support. It enables an efficient response to challenges posed to national CT practitioners and operating regional arrangements dealing with CT, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Radicalisation. It has won wide support since – over 50 regional instruments, international actors, state donors, incl. EU agencies and institutions signed up as partners. The WBCTi is the first of the three foreseen pillars of the “Integrated Internal Security Governance–IISG” which holistically addresses internal security challenges in the Western Balkan Region.

In his presentation, Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the fact of increasing awareness of the need to coordinate, streamline and functionally integrate EU policy initiatives, UN actions and a variety of other ac-

tivities conducted by other international and regional actors in the Western Balkans (WB) targeting internal security, in order to provide an effective response and to reduce considerable overlapping and duplication and to create synergies instead. In this regard, Mr. Kozmelj presented the visualised complexity of different regional scopes and a high number of partners, which makes cooperation and efforts to streamline and to coordinate the actions of all partners a challenge. Mr Kozmelj also presented how the WBCTi fulfils its objectives and among other things highlighted:

- the WBCTi methodology of needs identification (bottom-up & top-down);
- detailed action plan where partners are invited to take the lead and to contribute their expertise and resources; and
- where the donors are invited to invest in activities which support agreed objectives.

He also drew attention to long-term and consistent planning, and constant coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the process, which makes a considerable difference with projects limited in their start and end. The following most important results were presented:

- Close cooperation and coordination, incl. developed mutual trust, among the WBCTi Partners;
- Enhanced information exchange via and between three regional platforms at relevant levels of CT authorities;
- Concluded groundwork for the development of inter-ministerial platforms in all beneficiaries.

Finally Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the role of RAN CoE and the important role of ESCN, which hopefully will be able to be engaged in the WB region like RAN CoE.

Following this, the film Conviction (provided by UK authorities) was presented. Conviction is a powerful and dynamic short film built into an awareness-raising package related to radicalisation and violent extremism. The product is a unique tool designed to give audiences a chance to gain understanding through discussion and debate. The product's aim is to raise awareness of some of the issues regarding prevention of violent extremism. The product objectives are to:

- recognize the need to support and protect vulnerable people;
- highlight the main opportunities where guidance and interventions are needed;
- help build trust and confidence within communities and in partnership.

KEY MESSAGES: Local communities should have more responsibility, the police cannot and should not be alone in P/CVE, a number of responsible stakeholders missed their opportunity to help us, we need better understanding of the nature of terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Mišo Radovančević, in Roots and triggers of violent extremism, presented key topics and the primary factors which create complex factor combinations:

- individual socio-psychological;
- social;
- political;
- ideological and religious dimensions;
- role of culture and identity issues;
- trauma and other trigger mechanisms;

He pointed out the three most important factors:

- group dynamics;
- radicalisers and
- the role of social media.

Mr. Radovančević then presented vulnerable groups (youth problem with marginalisation, identity crises, current EU phenomena of returnees – foreign terrorist fighters and families). Mr. Radovančević at the end of his presentation indicated a few points of radicalisation:

- where it is happening;
- who is faced with it first in the local community, long before the police, and how they can respond.

Mr Luc Van Der Talen in Indicators and practical cases on the topic of radical extremism gave an overview of the situation in Western Europe and Belgium and covered: trends and challenges, use of drones, copycat, the difference between activated and inspired individuals, the arson jihad, the categories of FTF in Belgium, facts and figures, the structure in place to ensure follow-up, proper monitoring and exchange of information on all levels, with all actors (police, intel, civil society, municipalities), polarization, the rise of anarchist/left wing and right wing, the challenges for western societies in terms of security, costs, culture and the balance between security and democratic value principles and fundamental rights.

At the end of first day module, a practical part followed, in which the participants, under the supervision of experts / moderators, followed in advance, for each target group and the stage of the process of radicalisation of the prepared scenarios, used the newly acquired knowledge themselves. Two scenarios were developed and only a couple of them were discussed in working groups (specific or mixed) followed by a plenary presentation.

On the second day, outcomes of the first day were delivered by Mr. Nikolas Grauszler and Mr. Albert Černigoj, in which they pointed out a few main points: insight into some best practices, threats, risks and challenges issues, multi-horizontal approach needed for effective addressing of P/CVE, different systems – different approaches – but yet similar.

In the second presentation, Mr Luc Van Der Talen covered definitions (activism, (violent) extremism and terrorism), based on a couple of examples explaining in an easy way the mechanisms and messages behind the waves of modern terrorism and characteristics, the radicalisation process with examples, cases, the process of indoctrination, all ideologies and terrorist organizations, indicators of possible radicalisation (related to ideology, identity, behaviour) and indicators of possible preparation of an attack (residence, transport, values, forged docs, etc.), the importance of proper contextualisation (getting the big and right picture) and the importance of partners and exchange of information. Dr. Branko Lobnikar in Police activity in the local environment to prevent radicalisation, with special emphasis on the role of the community policing officer, gave a presentation beginning with the statement that in recent years the processes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism have greatly evolved. Extremists are also no longer acting only as part of organised, hierarchical organisations but also within smaller cells and sometimes as lone wolves.



Radicalisation is a process that is largely pre-criminal, so actors other than the police need to intervene. In doing so, the police can receive information from partners and through a multi-agency arrangement make others do work that is not police work. The presentation ended with some tips for successful multi-agency cooperation, such as work on trust, ensure information sharing legislation, make sure everyone understands the steps, get support, start with small cooperation, and organise additional expertise that can help multi-agency cooperation.

Dr. Peter Debeljak in Preventing youth radicalisation and violent extremism indicated that young people are one of the most vulnerable age/social groups in relation to different forms of radicalism and violent extremism. Due to some very objective circumstances/reasons a separate and special approach to the phenomenon needs to be respected and developed. Unfortunately no manuals/“magic wands” / short-cuts can be pursued to address the issue. But we can still learn from both positive and negative experiences and from both best and worst practices in that regard.

We should avoid addressing a new phenomenon with existing, old answers. Sticking to “copy-pasting” is often not efficient. Using a “one-size-fits-all approach” is usually not sufficient. Seeking perfect solutions only is to be avoided. Making extremism/radicalisation a taboo is the wrong way to tackle the problem. Neglecting other forms of extremisms beside religion-driven ones should be avoided and we should certainly not over-react when faced with visible signs. We should bear in mind that radical signs are often just a “cry for help”.

In carrying out prevention activities we should use existing/working platforms, get trust before reacting, know how to read the signs, raise awareness, know the trends, create safe spaces and use youth-friendly/peer-to-peer approach, create alliances with key figures and stakeholders (i.e. authoritative coalitions), use (local) heroes as role models, establish pools of specialists, and use personal stories. And last but not least: each country should do its home work by themselves!

In The role of healthcare in early identification of violent radicalism, Ms. Biserka Simčić noted that health workers deal professionally with individuals who have undergone the radicalisation process. The public healthcare systems can contribute to preventing the radicalisation process in a society by raising awareness among health workers about the dangers of this phenomenon and exchanging information among different professionals or experts on radicalisation, seeking vulnerable individuals, reorienting individuals who were exposed to initial radicalisation, and cooperating with different partners in tackling radicalisation and extremism in our society.

A special issue among health workers is the question of confidentiality. We must deal with especially vulnerable individuals so as to not jeopardise the security of society and also the safety of individuals. It is necessary to exchange information within the professional networks and at the same time maintain the highest possible level of confidentiality, however not to the detriment of the security of society. Since the result of an unprofessional approach, or ignoring the danger, could be an even greater risk it is necessary to introduce a systemic approach which will include a multi-discipline, horizontal as well as orchestrated approach on the national level for establishing enhanced cooperation between relevant institutions. It is particularly important to include interested non-institutionalised individuals and the public-private sector, all supported by further research and risk assessments. Projects and activities should be presented to the widest possible circle of health workers who potentially encounter violence and extremism (general practitioners, paediatricians,

emergency room doctors and employees, psychiatrists, social workers etc.). The project must be presented in as many professional meetings as possible of these expert groups of health workers. It is very important to include the Chamber of Doctors as well as other chambers and associations. The purpose of preventing radicalisation and subsequent criminalisation is to inform and train health workers how to identify and assist vulnerable persons and groups who have been exposed to the violent radicalisation process.

On the topic of Relocators and Returnees FTF (with families) – Soft Targets, Mr. Mišo Radovančević, Mr. Albert Černigoj and Mr. Luc Van Der Taelen indicated some main reasons and motives for FTF returnees from jihadi theatres:

- strong sense of disillusionment - reality of the caliphate model of society;
- remorse - enough of dire living conditions - see no opportunity to remain;
- a lot of them disappointed by what they lived through;
- the deteriorating security situation;
- splits among different terrorist organisations, which hinders recruitment;
- family pressure, intervention and healthcare reasons;
- intention to carry out an attack.

Key judgements and outlook:

- use experience to integrate into radical home-grown networks;
- instructed to conduct attacks or decide independently using acquired skills;
- highly respected in radical Islamist circles - 'citizens of the Caliphate';
- threat could appear years later - following a triggering event;
- minors pose a long-term risk both to security and to society;
- EU facing serious threat in the form of FTFs originating from non-EU countries who decide to move to Europe due to their anonymity.

Mr Nikolas Grauszler, in his presentation of The Austrian Model – PVE/P/CVE Measures, pointed out that in order to counter the respective tendencies, solutions involving society as a whole are required, including as many relevant actors as possible. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) initiated a decision-making process characterized by transparency with the involvement of various actors, in which seven ministries and different experts from civil society participated. In the context of the discussions, two measures were adopted to improve the co-ordination of efforts in the areas of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation on a national level. This thereby offered individuals willing to disengage and distance themselves from the environment of violent extremism a way out. In order to coordinate and to control national measures for extremism prevention, such as e.g. the Exit Programme, a "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" was created. The network is coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and meets every eight weeks.

In order to implement the Exit Programme nationally, the network proactively seeks contact with the federal provinces (Regional Youth Offices and Regional Integration Offices), as well as with regional prevention partners, in order to ensure that national synergies are created in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.

Key tasks of the network are:

- Coordination of national measures for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation;
- Efficient coordination of intervention measures such as e.g. the exit programme or other measures for the detection of and for dealing with radicalisation;
- Knowledge transfer and promotion of the interdisciplinary exchange between science and practice;
- Analysis and exchange in the field of detection of and dealing with radicalisation processes;
- Integration of existing selective bodies for extremism prevention in Austria;
- Organisation of an Annual Prevention Summit for Expert Exchange and Networking.

The Exit Programme is intended to offer individuals willing to disengage themselves from extremism, the opportunity dissociate themselves from their violent extremist environment or their violent extremist ideology and to promote reintegration into a society based on democratic values. The "Federal Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" has the function of strategic guidance and coordination of the Exit Programme.

Mr. Maarten Van De Donk from RAN CoE, on RAN Exit programmes - Deradicalisation presented several ways of deradicalisation, while he pointed out in particular that people who are violent extremists face two challenges when they return to 'normal' society: they show violent behaviour and have very strong thoughts that spur this behaviour. To get people back on the right track is often referred to as deradicalisation.

Mr. Van De Donk pointed out that is actually only half of the process, as disengagement from violence and violent groups is also key. A change of thoughts is hard to accomplish and hard to measure. On top of that there is the question to what extent people should completely refrain from any strong thoughts as these are also present in society. This is why a lot of exit programmes start with disengagement. It takes away a part of the danger for society and on top of that also enables persons to function in non-radicalised social environments again.

Exit work requires intrinsic motivation from the radicalised person. Compulsory treatment is most likely to fail. The role of the exit worker is to help a person to build a new future by working on skills that are needed in society and mental/psychological assistance. These are demanding time-consuming tasks for which expertise is indispensable. Pathways of radicalisations differ from person to person, and so will the resocialisation process.

At the end of the second day module, a practical part followed, in which the participants, under the supervision of experts / moderators, followed in advance, for each target group and the stage of the process of radicalisation of the prepared scenarios, used the newly acquired knowledge themselves.

After the practical part the second part of the questionnaires was distributed among participants.

These were presented at a plenary session in order to identify their own established practices and opportunities. On this basis, some of the opportunities that individual departments in Albania already have are exercised or implemented or being developed.

## Conclusions

The radicalisation process is very dynamic and complex and should be addressed from a very horizontal perspective. That is why it is so challenging. General prevention instead of crime prevention means joint action of all relevant partners including NGOs, research, academia, society and religious representatives.

Throughout the various workshops we identified key aspects:

- P/CVE is very multidimensional and
- takes the actions and involvement of every single partner that could contribute in that prevention process;
- young people, families, social work, education, media and NGOs should be prime areas.

What has been discussed and presented during the presentations was also reflected in participants' remarks, and it was also exercised in the format of the workshops.

We could agree that we have a very common understanding of the risks, challenges and opportunities.

The CT and P/CVE approach should be precisely distinguished.

Our systems are developed to a different extent. Those who achieved higher progress should serve as a marker as to which action should or should not be taken, which is a good starting grid.

## Recommendations

- all forms of terrorism and violent extremism should be equally addressed; there is no place for any tolerance;
- knowledge provided should be further developed and implemented in practice;
- there is a strong need for a Train-the-Trainers programme;
- future formats of cooperation should engage all relevant stakeholders;
- NGOs expressed regret that the police feel alone in the P/CVE and that there are no participants from other departments;
- there is a strong need to use to the best extent the support of religious communities and authorities;
- the police cannot solve the problems by itself. Providing public order is a key task of the police and frames what the police can/cannot perform when addressing P/CVE related actions;
- participants received a number of examples of best practice and proven practices and find them to be very relevant; additional support for implementation at the local level is needed;
- exercises in the already existing format of pilot projects, performed with the support of relevant regional partners, should be continued;

- such pilot project should provide additional expertise and lessons learned and will be an excellent opportunity for developing a national coordination mechanism reflecting the EU RAN format and priorities;
- future developments should be strongly supported by relevant international partners. Albania expects further support within the WBCTi provided in the format of technical assistance mechanisms;
- Albania should continue to develop the national coordination concept which could be a good potential for further developing of similar models for state/local cooperation.

## FIRST LINE WORKSHOP IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, Sarajevo, 6 – 7 December 2017

### Introduction

The third workshop of the FIRST LINE project took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), from 6 to 7 December. It was conducted by the respective experts from EU RAN CoE, ESCN, the European Commission, Austria, Belgium and Slovenia. A total of 56 participants, representing 4 entities with different backgrounds from different national based services, such as the Ministry of Security, Police, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Schools, Prison and Probation, DoD, took part. A number of relevant regional representatives participated, such as EEAS, OSCE, IOM, UNDP, EUFOR, RCC, Austrian Embassy.

The aim of the workshop was:

- to raise awareness among first line practitioners and decision/policy makers at the state level, entity and cantonal level;
- to realise the importance of having a suitable national/entity cooperation mechanism or adequate platform, and adequate P/CVE policy which should be mirrored at the local level;
- how to identify and engage relevant partners – from addressing to cooperation;
- to provide proper training for first line practitioners so as to be able to recognize the early signs of radicalisation, vulnerabilities of particular groups/individuals and be able to respond properly. Special attention was directed to disengagement, exit programmes and people at risk or those under the radar of the intelligence community;
- to get familiar with and transfer best practices developed within EU RAN CoE and different EU MS and international organisations/agencies and
- to assist BA establish a national coordination mechanism which would enable horizontal P/CVE coordination.

Mr. Mario Janaček, National CVE Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office, addressed participants with an emphasis on their national efforts, strongly supported by relevant international stakeholders.

After the presentation of representatives from the EU and experts, workshop was divided into two parts.

It started with a presentation of general subjects providing participants with an overview of the risks/threats/nature/trends of terrorism in the EU, in the SEE region and also in BA, but also future challenges and opportunities. The process of radicalisation was explained in detail, where and how it occurs, who could be first in contact with it, what are the main challenges and risks and also the opportunities for (timely) prevention of radicalisation.

At the beginning the participants were asked to fill out a specially designed Questionnaire on detecting the processes of radicalisation. The aim was to get an insight into their current understanding of risks related to terrorism and VE, how they recognize their role, what is their knowledge of the radicalisation process, and where they recognize opportunities for more effective P/CVE.

One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to find out how successful the workshop was. Therefore, part of the questionnaire was repeated at the end of the training.

Adapted to the current situation, the risks and the representation of Bosnian departments, the content presented in the EU RAN subgroups, RAN Pol, RAN FS & Y, RAN Health, RAN Exit, was primarily presented. Mandatory content was related to:

- the role of police, health, social work, youth work, education, NGOs etc., which as such in the field first encounter indicators that point to the risk of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism;
- a way to identify radicalisation among residents, youth etc.;
- indicators of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (activism, radicalisation, extremism, terrorism aims and phases);
- own role (role and engagement raising awareness among co-workers, dealing with radicalisation and responsibilities of their institutions);
- who are their partners (multi-agency approach in local communities, developing strategies, teams etc.);
- who to inform about this topic or issue and how.

Mr. Albert Černigoj presented the Terrorist threat in the EU connected to the Western Balkan region.

Terrorism in the EU remains a priority on the global, regional and national levels. It is defined by dynamism, transnationality and complexity. The degree of risk varies from MS to MS. The threat is real and expected. The risk arises from different terrorist organisations, groups, smaller poorly structured groups, lone wolves, loners, and individuals inspired by different terrorist organisations. One of the challenges is foreign terrorist fighters-returnees. An important question needs to be raised: What next? What is the role of women, families, more and more we are focused on individuals under age, born or raised in Syria.

In the Western Balkans there is a limited number of low scale attacks. Religion-supported terrorism is exposed and violent radicalisation is strengthening. Another feature of WB is foreign terrorist fighters or returnees and no-travel individuals.

The threat of religion-supported terrorism is reflected in the global jihad, with the aim of polarizing of European society, and with the correlation between different forms of violent radicalisation and new trends of attacks, new predictions are emerging.

Mr Rajko Kozmelj presented the EU integrative approach to the fight against terrorism and countering of violent extremism (Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative - WBCTi). The concept was formally endorsed at the December 2015 JHA Council of Ministers as an EU initiative, pending significant EU/EC financial support. It enables an efficient response to challenges posed to national CT practitioners and operating regional arrangements dealing with CT, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Radicalisation. It has won wide support since – over 50 regional instruments, international actors, state donors, incl. EU agencies and institutions signed up as partners. The WBCTi is the first of the three foreseen pillars of the “Integrated Internal Security Governance–IISG” which holistically addresses internal security challenges in the Western Balkan Region.

In his presentation, Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the fact of increasing awareness of the need to coordinate, streamline and functionally integrate EU policy initiatives, UN actions and a variety of other activities conducted by other international and regional actors in the Western Balkans (WB) targeting internal security, in order to provide an effective response and to reduce considerable overlapping and duplication and to create synergies instead. In this regard, Mr. Kozmelj presented the visualised complexity of different regional scopes and the high number of partners, which makes cooperation and efforts to streamline and to coordinate actions of all partners a challenge. Mr Kozmelj also presented how the WBCTi fulfils its objectives and among other things highlighted:

- the WBCTi methodology of needs identification (bottom-up & top-down);
- detailed action plan, where partners are invited to take the lead and to contribute their expertise and resources; and
- where the donors are invited to invest in activities which support agreed objectives.

He also drew attention to long-term and consistent planning, constant coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the process, which makes a considerable difference with projects limited in their start and end. The following most important results were presented: Close cooperation and coordination, incl. developed mutual trust, among the WBCTi Partners; Enhanced information exchange via and between three regional platforms at relevant levels of CT authorities; Over 1000 imams across six locations in BA trained and equipped to better respond to cases of VE and radicalisation; Concluded groundwork for the development of inter-ministerial platforms in all beneficiaries.

At the end Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the role of RAN CoE in the important role of ESCN, which it is hoped will be able to be engaged in the WB region like RAN CoE.

Mr. Mišo Radovančević presented key topics in Roots and triggers of violent extremism, presenting basic primary factors which create complex factor combinations (individual socio-psychological, social, political, ideological and religious dimensions, role of culture and identity issues, trauma and other trigger mechanisms), and pointed out the three most important factors: group dynamics, radicalisers and the role of social media.

Mr. Radovančević went on to present vulnerable groups, pointing out the youth problem with marginalisation and identity crises, and specifically pointed out the current EU phenomenon of returnees – foreign terrorist fighters and families. Mr. Radovančević at the end of his presentation indicated a few points of radicalisation:

- where it is happening;
- who is faced with it first in the local community, long before the police, and how they can respond.

Mr Luc Van Der Talen gave an overview of the situation in Western Europe and Belgium and covered: the attacks since 2014 and trends and challenges, emphasizing the new "modus operandi", use of drones, copycat, the difference between activated and inspired individuals, the threat of second blast, women and children, the arson jihad, the categories of FTF in Belgium, facts and figures, the structure in place to ensure follow-up, proper monitoring and exchange of information on all levels, with all actors (police, intel, civil society, municipalities), polarization, us/them and the rise of anarchist/left wing and right wing, the challenges for western societies in terms of security, costs, culture and the balance between security and democratic value principles and fundamental rights.



In the second presentation, Mr Luc Van Der Talen covered definitions (activism, (violent) extremism and terrorism), based on a couple of examples explaining in an easy way the mechanisms and messages behind the waves of modern terrorism and characteristics, the radicalisation process with examples, cases, the process of indoctrination, all ideologies and terrorist organizations, indicators of possible radicalisation (related to ideology, identity, behaviour) and indicators of possible preparation of an attack (residence, transport, values, forged docs, etc.), the importance of proper contextualisation (getting the big and right picture) and the importance of partners and exchange of information.

Following this, the film Conviction was presented and discussed based on two questions:

- What are the indicators of radicalisation?
- Who was able to intervene?

Conviction is a powerful and dynamic short film built into an awareness-raising package related to radicalisation and violent extremism. The product is a unique tool designed to give audiences a chance to gain understanding through discussion and debate. The film is based on the life of Isa Ibrahim who was given a life sentence in July 2009 under the Terrorism Act for planning to commit a terrorist attack in the city of Bristol. The product's aim is to raise awareness of the some of the issues regarding preventing violent extremism. The product has 3 objectives:

- To recognize the need to support and protect vulnerable people;
- To highlight the main opportunities where guidance and interventions are needed;
- To help to build trust and confidence within communities and in partnership.

At this point it is important to highlight that this film is about a young man following the corrupt way of Islam. This type of action could happen regarding any type of violent extremism.

At the end of the first day module, a practical part followed, in which the participants, under the supervision of experts / moderators, followed in advance, for each target group and stage of the process of radicalisation, used the newly acquired knowledge themselves.

On the second day, outcomes of the first day were delivered by Mr. Nikolas Grauszler and Mr Albert Černigoj, in which they pointed out a few main points:

- insight into some best practices;
- threats, risks and challenges issues;
- multi-horizontal approach needed for effective addressing P/CVE;
- different systems – different approaches – but yet similar.

Following this, a talk on Police activity in the local environment to prevent radicalisation, with special emphasis on the role of the community policing officer, was presented by Mr. Branko Lobnikar. The presentation started with the statement that in recent years, the processes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism have greatly evolved. Extremists are also no longer acting only as part of organised, hierarchical organisations but also within smaller cells and sometimes as lone wolves. All forms of extremism have become more globalised, taking full advantage of the opportunities of the interconnected world. This was followed by a discussion on how dealing with terrorism, violent extremism and the process of radicalisation were traditionally subjects for intelligence agencies or secret services, but nowadays, the police have a crucial role to play in facilitating a preventative

multi-agency approach at local or regional level. Especially in local settings, the police have strong established networks for a multi-agency problem solving approach.

Radicalisation is a process that is largely pre-criminal, so actors other than the police need to intervene. In doing so, police can receive information from partners and through multi-agency arrangements make others do work that is not police work. The presentation ended with some tips for successful multi-agency cooperation, such as work on trust, ensure information sharing legislation, make sure everyone understands the steps, get support, start with small cooperation, and organise additional expertise that can help multi-agency cooperation.

Mr. Peter Debeljak in Preventing youth radicalisation and violent extremism, pointed out that young people are one of the most vulnerable age/social groups in relation to different forms of radicalism and violent extremism. Due to some very objective circumstances/reasons a separate and special approach to the phenomenon needs to be respected and developed. Unfortunately no manuals/“magic wansa” / short-cuts can be pursued to address the issue. But we can still learn from both positive and negative experiences and from both best and worst practices in that regard.

We should avoid addressing a new phenomenon with existing, old answers. Sticking to “copy-pasting” is often not efficient. Using a “one-size-fits-all approach” is usually not sufficient. Seeking for perfect solutions only is to be avoided. Making extremism/radicalisation a taboo is the wrong way to tackle the problem. Neglecting other forms of extremisms beside religious-driven ones should be avoided and we should certainly not over-react when faced with visible signs. We should bear in mind that radical signs are often just a “cry for help”.

In pursuing prevention activities we should use existing/working platforms, get trust before reacting, know how to read the signs, raise awareness, know the trends, create safe spaces and use a youth-friendly/peer-to-peer approach, create alliances with key figures and stakeholders (i.e. authoritative coalitions), use (local) heroes as role models, establish pools of specialists, and use personal stories. And last but not least: each country should do its home work by themselves!

In The role of healthcare in an early identification of violent Radicalism, Mrs. Biserka Simčić talked about how health workers deal professionally with individuals who have undergone the radicalisation process. The public healthcare systems can contribute to preventing the radicalisation process in a society by raising awareness among health workers about the dangers of this phenomenon and exchanging information among different professionals or experts on radicalisation, seeking vulnerable individuals, reorienting individuals who were exposed to initial radicalisation, and cooperating with different partners in tackling radicalisation and extremism in our society.

A special issue among health workers is the question of confidentiality. We must deal with especially vulnerable individuals so as to not jeopardize the security of society and also the safety of individuals. It is necessary to exchange information within the professional networks and at the same time maintain the highest possible level of confidentiality, however not to the detriment of the security of society. Since the result of an unprofessional approach, or ignoring the danger, could be an even greater risk it is necessary to introduce a systemic approach which will include a multi-discipline, horizontal as well as an orchestrated approach on the national level for establishing enhanced cooperation between relevant institutions. It is particularly important to include interested non-institutionalised individuals and the public-private sector, all supported by further research

and risk assessments. Projects and activities should be presented to the widest possible circle of health workers who potentially encounter violence and extremism (general practitioners, pediatricians, emergency room doctors and employees, psychiatrists, social workers etc.). Projects must be presented in as many professional meetings as possible of these expert groups of health workers. It is very important to include the Chamber of Doctors as well as other chambers and associations). The purpose of preventing radicalisation and subsequent criminalisation is to inform and train health workers how to identify and assist vulnerable persons and groups who have been exposed to the violent radicalisation process.

On the topic of Relocators and Returnees FTF (with families) – Soft Targets, Mr. Mišo Radovančević, Mr. Albert Černigoj and Mr. Luc Van Der Taelen indicated some main reasons and motives for FTF returnees from jihadi theatres:

- a strong sense of disillusionment - reality of the caliphate model of society;
- remorse - enough of dire living conditions - see no opportunity to remain;
- a lot of them disappointed by what they lived through;
- the deteriorating security situation;
- splits among different terrorist organisations, which hinders recruitment;
- no interest in armed conflict areas and commitment to terrorism-related activities;
- family pressure and intervention;
- health-care reasons (injuries or childbirth);
- the intention to carry out an attack.

Key judgements and outlook:

- use experience to integrate into radical home-grown networks;
- instructed to conduct attacks or decide independently using acquired skills;
- highly respected in radical Islamist circles - 'citizens of the Caliphate';
- threat could appear years later - following a triggering event;
- minors pose a long-term risk both to security and to society;
- EU facing serious threat in the form of FTFs originating from non-EU countries who decide to move to Europe due to their anonymity.

Mr Nikolas Grauszler, in his presentation of The Austrian Model – PVE/CVE Measures, pointed out that in order to counter the respective tendencies, solutions involving society as a whole are required, including as many relevant actors as possible. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) initiated a decision-making process characterized by transparency with the involvement of various actors, in which seven ministries and different experts from civil society participated. In the context of the discussions, two measures were adopted to improve the coordination of efforts in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation on a national level. This thereby offers individuals willing to disengage and distance themselves from the environment of violent extremism, a way out. In order to coordinate and to control national measures for extremism prevention, such as e.g. the Exit Programme, a "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" was created. The network is coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and meets every eight weeks.

The "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" consists of several ministries (the Federal Ministry of the Interior, BMI, the Federal Ministry of Justice, BMJ, the Federal

Ministry for Women and Youth, BMFJ, the Federal Ministry of Education, BMB, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, BMEIA, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, BMASK, BMGF, Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs), civil society organizations dealing with extremism prevention (DERAD association, NEUSTART association, bOJA - Extremism Information Centre, Verein Frauen ohne Grenzen - Women without Borders Association) and the Wiener Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft - Vienna Children and Youth Ombuds-Office) (Wiener Netzwerk De-radikalisierung und Prävention - Vienna Network for De-radicalisation and Prevention) and the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW).

Key tasks of the network are:

- Coordination of national measures for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation;
- Efficient coordination of intervention measures such as e.g. the exit programme or other measures for the detection of and for dealing with radicalisation;
- Knowledge transfer and promotion of the interdisciplinary exchange between science and practice;
- Analysis and exchange in the field of detection of and dealing with radicalisation processes;
- Integration of existing selective bodies for extremism prevention in Austria;
- Organisation of an Annual Prevention Summit for Expert Exchange and Networking.

The exit programme is intended to offer individuals willing to disengage themselves from extremism the opportunity to dissociate themselves from their violent extremist environment or their violent extremist ideology and to promote reintegration into a society based on democratic values. The "Federal Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" has the function of strategic guidance and coordination of the exit programme.

At the end of the second day module, a practical part followed in which the participants, under the supervision of experts / moderators, followed in advance, for each target group and the stage of the process of radicalisation of the prepared scenarios, used the newly acquired knowledge themselves.

After the practical part the second part of the questionnaires was delivered among participants. These were presented at a plenary session in order to identify their own established practices and opportunities. On this basis, some of the opportunities that individual departments in BA already have exercised or implemented or being developed.

## Conclusions

In recent years BA, with strong international support, has invested huge efforts in countering terrorism, especially P/CVE, and is recognized as a very relevant and credible regional partner. For many years BA has been a relevant partner when we try to understand the root causes and triggers. On the other hand BA provides the international community with strong support in forming best practices regarding addressing P/CVE.

In addition, there is a strong understanding of the need for not just multi-agency but multi-stakeholder cooperation, which includes the state sector, NGOs, civil society, local communities etc. Basic questions are:

- how to identify them;
- where to find them;
- how to engage them;
- how to facilitate their coordination.

Even more important is how to explain to them their role and responsibility, and how to raise awareness among them.

The radicalisation process is very dynamic and complex and should be addressed from a very horizontal perspective. That is why it is so challenging.

On the subject of prevention, we came to the conclusion that crime prevention is becoming increasingly replaced with general prevention, of course the police and intel remain crucial, but should be the last in the chain. General prevention means joint action of all relevant partners including NGOs, research, academia, society and religious representatives.

Throughout the various workshops we identified key aspects:

- P/CVE is very multidimensional and takes the actions and involvement of every single partner that could contribute to that prevention process;
- Young people, families, social work, education, media, prison and probation, NGOs should be prime areas.

The 4Cs (communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration) are crucial, in the first place among the first liners, those who are facing the early signs first, but also top-down so that policies defined at the strategic level are fully operationalised at the local level.

What was discussed and presented during the presentations was also reflected in participants' remarks, and it was also evident in the format of the workshops.

We could agree that we have a very common understanding of the risks, challenges and opportunities. Our systems are developed to a different extent. Those who achieved higher progress should serve as a marker as to which action should or should not be taken, which is a good starting grid.

- BA has its own characteristics and will be challenged to overcome the decentralised concept at the entity/cantonal level;
- BA achieved certain progress, reflected in the National CT Strategy and will implement this in 4 entities through separate action plans;
- Participants who are first liners have the responsibility of how to best to implement provided knowledge at the local level;
- P-R-A is relevant, appropriate; legislative amendments will be needed for its implementation;
- at the local level certain formats are available which could be a temporary solution for cooperation among relevant local practitioners;

- When developing a comprehensive coordination mechanism, we should take into account already existing forums such as local security councils etc. IOM already took certain actions regarding the “refer” branch.

## Recommendations

- Bosnian representatives expressed their request for additional support in implementing good practices at the national level. The enthusiasm of certain individuals should be translated into comprehensive coordination at the local level;
- There is a need to support BA in further developing the P/CVE mechanism. At the state level they have a certain number of partners already identified – for example members in the CVE national coordination body;
- The fear and distrust on the part of non-governmental or non-security based stakeholders should be overcome;
- BA already achieved a certain awareness and has (limited and very fragmented) capacities, which should be used to the best extent;
- Presented best practices are relevant; we need to avoid risks posed with direct translation of international best practices to the national level;
- Returnees should be addressed in a comprehensive way. Beside the criminal justice aspect, disengagement and reintegration is of key importance;
- Within effective P/CVE there is a need to focus on the most vulnerable groups such as youth, the underprivileged, socially weak societies, etc.;
- Before you act all relevant partners should be identified and coordinated. Each partner should be aware of its own and the other partners’ role;
- The presented and discussed PRA model/concept is a kind of “backbone” which has 3 branches, interrelated, so it should be addressed together. The PRA model could be tailored in the form of a “group of friends”;
- There is a need for comprehensive state-local communication;
- Recognized and discussed priorities are: Raise Awareness, Mapping, Research, Setting-up the mechanism as a pilot project, Setting-up of adequate mechanisms in the WB region in line with the mapping exercise;
- Future challenges and priorities identified at the national level should be addressed in a timely manner. International partners, in line with WBCTi should provide strong support and a different format of technical assistance mechanisms;
- The respective authorities in BA expect further instruction needed for developing the coordination mechanism.

## FIRST LINE WORKSHOP IN MACEDONIA, Skopje, 27 – 28 March 2018

### Introduction

The fourth workshop of the FIRST LINE project took place in Skopje, Macedonia, from 27 to 28 March. It was conducted by experts from Austria, Czech Republic, Belgium and Slovenia. A total of 53 national based participants with different backgrounds and from different services, such as the Police, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Sector for Cooperation with Religious Communities, Ministry of Health and Schools, different NGOs and representatives of the civil community, took part. The international community was represented by EU RAN CoE, DCAF, IISG/WBCTI Ljubljana, RCC, IOM and the British Embassy,

The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness among first line practitioners who encounter radicalisation first at the local level, and policy makers responsible for developing of P/CVE policies at the national level.

The aim was to:

- raise awareness among decision makers and first line practitioners;
- to provide specially tailored training for national participants who are first line practitioners;
- to provide a new concept of tackling terrorism, with special attention on P/CVE, general prevention and the role of the police and intelligence/security agencies in such concept;
- be able to recognize the early signs of radicalisation, vulnerabilities, groups and individuals at risk and to be able to properly respond;
- to familiarise participants with good practices and lessons learned and developed within EU RAN CoE and EU MS, and
- to assist Macedonia in developing a national mechanism which will enable horizontal P/CVE coordination.

Additional added value of the workshop in Skopje lay in developing the framework for the coordination mechanism, the Prevent – Refer – Address Mechanism (P-R-A). After the presentation of representatives from the EU and experts, the workshop was divided into two main parts.

First, the general part provided participants with an overview of the risks of terrorism in the EU, in the SEE region and also in Macedonia.

The process of radicalisation was explained in detail, where and how it occurs, who could be first in contact with it, what are the main challenges and risks and also the opportunities for preventing radicalisation.

At the beginning the participants were asked to fill out a specially designed Questionnaire on detecting the processes of radicalisation. The aim was to get an insight into their current understanding of terrorism and VE related risks, how they recognize their own role, what is their knowledge of the radicalisation process, and where they recognize opportunities for more effective P/CVE.

One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to find out how successful the workshop was. Therefore, part of the questionnaire was repeated at the end of the training.

The second part of the workshop was focused on concrete subjects important for practitioners to be able to recognize and take proper actions so as to prevent radicalisation that could lead to violent extremism and terrorism. Furthermore, to understand the radicalisation process as such, special focus was placed on identifying their own role and the importance of mutual cooperation, especially first line officers and practitioners.

National based representatives have become familiar with best practices developed by experts at the EU RAN CoE (9) subgroups, RAN Pol, RAN FS & Y, RAN Health, RAN Exit. Having in mind the state of play and prioritized needs, special attention was focused on:

- the role of the police, health, prison/probation, strategic communication, social media, social work, youth work, education, NGOs, religious communities etc., which as such in the field first encounter indicators that point to the risk of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism;
- detecting/recognizing early signs of radicalisation among the most vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, youth, the marginalised, underprivileged etc.;
- indicators of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (activism, radicalisation, extremism, terrorism aims and phases, roots and triggers, vulnerable groups, cases etc.);
- own role (role and engagement raising awareness among co-workers, dealing with radicalisation and responsibilities of their institutions);
- who are their partners (multiagency approach in local communities, developing strategies, teams etc.);
- who to inform about this topic or issue and how, as well as how to deal with the problem in future.

Mr. Albert Černigoj presented the Terrorist threat in the EU connected to the Western Balkan region. Terrorism in the EU remains a priority on the global, regional and national levels. It is marked by dynamism, transnationality and complexity. The degree of risk varies from EU MS to MS. The threat is real and expected. The risk arises from the part of foreign terrorist fighters, individuals and smaller poorly structured unrelated groups. An important question needs to be raised is what are the future challenges, apart from returnees.

In the Western Balkans there is a limited number of low-scale attacks. Religion-supported terrorism is exposed and violent radicalisation is strengthening. The threat of religion-supported terrorism is reflected in the global jihad, with the aim of polarizing European society, and with the correlation between different forms of violent radicalisation and new trends of attacks, new predictions are emerging.

Mr Rajko Kozmelj presented the EU integrative approach to the fight against terrorism and countering of violent extremism (Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative - WBCTI). The concept was formally endorsed at the December 2015 JHA Council of Ministers as an EU initiative, pending significant EU/EC financial support. It enables an efficient response to challenges posed to national CT practitioners and operating regional arrangements dealing with CT, Preventing and Countering



Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Radicalisation. It has won wide support since – over 50 regional instruments, international actors, state donors, incl. EU agencies and institutions signed up as partners. The WBCTi is the first of the three foreseen pillars of the “Integrated Internal Security Governance–IISG” which holistically addresses internal security challenges in the Western Balkan Region.

In his presentation, Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the fact of increasing awareness of the need to coordinate, streamline and functionally integrate EU policy initiatives, UN actions and a variety of other activities conducted by other international and regional actors in the Western Balkans (WB) targeting internal security, in order to provide an effective response and to reduce considerable overlapping and duplication and to create synergies instead. In this regard, Mr. Kozmelj presented the visualised complexity of different regional scopes and the high number of partners, which makes cooperation and efforts to streamline and to coordinate actions of all partners a challenge. Mr Kozmelj also presented how the WBCTi fulfils its objectives and among other things highlighted:

- the WBCTi methodology of needs identification (bottom-up & top-down);
- detailed action plan, where partners are invited to take the lead and to contribute their expertise and resources; and
- where the donors are invited to invest in activities which support agreed objectives.

He also drew attention to long-term and consistent planning, constant coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the process, which makes a considerable difference with projects limited in their start and end. The following most important results were presented: Close cooperation and coordination, incl. developed mutual trust, among the WBCTi Partners; Enhanced information exchange via and between three regional platforms at relevant levels of CT authorities; Over 1000 imams across six locations in BA trained and equipped to better respond to cases of VE and radicalisation; Concluded groundwork for the development of inter-ministerial platforms in all beneficiaries.

At the end Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the role of RAN CoE in the important role of ESCN, which it is hoped will be able to be engaged in the WB region, like RAN CoE.

Mr. Maarten Van De Donk, Radical Awareness Network Centre of Excellence RAN CoE, gave a brief overview of RAN CoE activities, expertise and published materials on RAN CoE websites.

Mr. Mišo Radovančević presented key topics in Roots and triggers of violent extremism, noting basic primary factors which create complex factor combinations (individual socio-psychological, social, political, ideological and religious dimensions, the role of culture and identity issues, trauma and other trigger mechanisms), and pointed out the three most important factors: group dynamics, radicalisers and the role of social media.

Mr. Radovančević then presented vulnerable groups, pointing out the youth problem with marginalisation and identity crises, and specifically pointed out the current EU phenomenon of returnees – foreign terrorist fighters and families. Mr. Radovančević closed his presentation by indicating a few points of radicalisation:

- where it is happening;
- who faces it first in the local community, long before the police, and how they can respond.

Mr Luc Van Der Talen gave an overview of the situation in Western Europe and Belgium and covered: the attacks since 2014 and trends and challenges, emphasizing the new "modus operandi", use of drones, copycat, the difference between activated and inspired individuals, the threat of second blast, women and children, the arson jihad, the categories of FTF in Belgium, facts and figures, the structure in place to ensure follow-up, proper monitoring and exchange of information on all levels, with all actors (police, intel, civil society, municipalities), polarization, us/them and the rise of anarchist/left wing and right wing, the challenges for western societies in terms of security, costs, culture and the balance between security and democratic value principles and fundamental rights.

In the second presentation, Mr. Luc Van Der Talen covered definitions (activism, (violent) extremism and terrorism), based on a couple of examples explaining in an easy way the mechanisms and messages behind the waves of modern terrorism and characteristics, the radicalisation process with examples, cases, the process of indoctrination, all ideologies and terrorist organizations, indicators of possible radicalisation (related to ideology, identity, behaviour) and indicators of possible preparation of an attack (residence, transport, values, forged docs, etc.), the importance of proper contextualisation (getting the big and right picture) and the importance of partners and exchange of information.

The general presentation was followed by a short, 20-minute film, Conviction. The film is a powerful and dynamic short story built into an awareness-raising package related to radicalisation and violent extremism. The product is a unique tool designed to give audiences a chance to gain understanding through discussion and debate. The film is based on the life of Isa Ibrahim who was given a life sentence in July 2009 under the Terrorism Act for planning to commit a terrorist attack in the city of Bristol. The product's aim is to raise awareness of the some of the issues regarding preventing violent extremism. The product has 3 objectives:

- to recognize the need to support and protect vulnerable groups and people;
- to highlight the main opportunities where guidance and interventions are needed;
- to help build trust and confidence within communities and in partnership.

At the end of day one a practical module followed where participants, under the supervision of experts/moderators, had an excellent chance to discuss opportunities and challenges in addressing radicalisation at the local level. The discussion was followed by a plenary presentation where each group presented their findings, solutions and recommendations.

On the second day, outcomes of the first day were delivered by Mr. Albin Slabe and Mr. Albert Černigoj. The following main points were flagged:

- insight into some best practices;
- threats, risks and challenges issues;
- multi-horizontal approach needed for effective addressing;
- P/CVE versus CT;
- different systems – different approaches.

In his presentation on early warning signs of radicalisation, based on case studies, Mr. Miroslav Mareš presented recently developed best practices and solutions in recognizing the signs of radicalisation and extremism at a very early stage.

Following this, Mr. Branko Lobnikar in his presentation of Police activity in the local environment to prevent radicalisation, with special emphasis on the role of the community policing officer, started with the statement that in recent years, the processes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism have greatly evolved.

Extremists are also no longer acting only as part of organized, hierarchical organizations but also within smaller cells and sometimes as lone wolves. All forms of extremism have become more globalised, taking full advantage of the opportunities of the interconnected world. Following this, it was discussed that dealing with terrorism, violent extremism and the process of radicalisation were traditionally subjects for intelligence agencies or secret services, but nowadays, the police have a crucial role to play in facilitating a preventive multi-agency approach at local or regional level. Especially in local settings, the police have strong established networks for a multi-agency problem solving approach.

Radicalisation is a process that is largely pre-criminal, so actors other than the police need to intervene. In doing so, police can receive information from partners and through multi-agency arrangements make others do work that is not police work. The presentation ended with some tips for successful multi-agency cooperation, such as work on trust, take care of information sharing legislation, make sure everyone understands the steps, get support, start with small cooperation, and organize additional expertise that can help multi-agency cooperation.

Mr. Peter Debeljak continued with Preventing youth radicalisation and violent extremism, and pointed out that young people are one of the most vulnerable age/social groups in relation to different forms of radicalism and violent extremism. Due to some very objective circumstances/reasons a separate and special approach to the phenomenon needs to be respected and developed. Unfortunately no manuals/ "magic wands" / short-cuts can be pursued to address the issue. But we can still learn from both positive and negative experiences and from both best and worst practices in that regard.

We should avoid addressing a new phenomenon with existing, old answers. Sticking to "copy-pasting" is often not efficient. Using a "one-size-fits-all approach" is usually not sufficient. Seeking perfect solutions only is to be avoided. Making extremism/radicalisation a taboo is the wrong way to tackle the problem. Neglecting other forms of extremisms beside religion-driven ones should be avoided and we should certainly not over-react when faced with visible signs. We should bear in mind that radical signs are often just a "cry for help".

In pursuing prevention activities we should use existing/working platforms, get trust before reacting, know how to read the signs, raise awareness, know the trends, create safe spaces and use a youth-friendly/peer-to-peer approach, create alliances with key figures and stakeholders (i.e. authoritative coalitions), use (local) heroes as role models, establish pools of specialists, and use personal stories. And last but not least: each country should do its home work by themselves!

In The role of healthcare in an early identification of violent Radicalism, Mrs. Biserka Simčić talked about how health workers deal professionally with individuals who have undergone the radicalisation process. The public healthcare systems can contribute to preventing the radicalisation process in society by raising awareness among health workers about the dangers of this phenomenon and exchanging information among different professionals or experts on radicalisation, seeking vulnerable

individuals, reorienting individuals who were exposed to initial radicalisation, and cooperating with different partners in tackling radicalisation and extremism in society.

A special issue among health workers is the question of confidentiality. We must deal with especially vulnerable individuals so as to not jeopardize the security of society and also the safety of individuals. It is necessary to exchange information within the professional networks and at the same time maintain the highest possible level of confidentiality, however not to the detriment of the security of society. Since the result of an unprofessional approach, or ignoring the danger, could be an even greater risk it is necessary to introduce a systemic approach which will include a multi-discipline, horizontal as well as orchestrated approach on the national level for establishing enhanced cooperation between relevant institutions. It is particularly important to include interested non-institutionalised individuals and the public-private sector, all supported by further research and risk assessments. Projects and activities should be presented to the widest possible circle of health workers who potentially encounter violence and extremism (general practitioners, pediatricians, emergency room doctors and employees, psychiatrists, social workers etc.). Projects must be presented in as many professional meetings as possible of these expert groups of health workers. It is very important to include the Chamber of Doctors as well as other chambers and associations). The purpose of preventing radicalisation and subsequent criminalisation is to inform and train health workers how to identify and assist vulnerable persons and groups who have been exposed to the violent radicalisation process.

Ms. Judith Raffelseder in the presentation of The Austrian Model – PVE/CVE Measures, pointed out that in order to counter the respective tendencies, solutions involving society as a whole are required, including as many relevant actors as possible. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) initiated a decision-making process characterized by transparency with the involvement of various actors, in which seven ministries and different experts from civil society participated. In the context of the discussions, two measures were adopted to improve the co-ordination of efforts in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation on a national level. This thereby offered individuals willing to disengage and distance themselves from the environment of violent extremism a way out. In order to coordinate and control national measures for extremism prevention, such as e.g. the Exit Programme, a "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" was created. The network is coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and meets every eight weeks.

The "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" consists of several ministries (the Federal Ministry of the Interior, BMI, the Federal Ministry of Justice, BMJ, the Federal Ministry for Women and Youth, BMFJ, the Federal Ministry of Education, BMB, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, BMEIA, the Federal Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, BMASK, BMGF, Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs), civil society organizations dealing with extremism prevention (DERAD association, NEUSTART association, BOJA - Extremism Information Centre, Verein Frauen ohne Grenzen - Women without Borders Association) and the Wiener Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft - Vienna Children and Youth Ombuds-Office) (Wiener Netzwerk De-radikalisierung und Prävention - Vienna Network for De-radicalisation and Prevention) and the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW).

In order to implement the exit programme nationally, the network proactively seeks contact with the federal provinces (Regional Youth Offices and Regional Integration Offices), as well as with re-

gional prevention partners, in order to ensure that national synergies are created in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.

Key tasks of the network are:

- Coordination of national measures for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation;
- Efficient coordination of intervention measures such as the exit programme or other measures for the detection of and for dealing with radicalisation;
- Knowledge transfer and promotion of interdisciplinary exchange between science and practice;
- Analysis and exchange in the field of detection of and dealing with radicalisation processes;
- Integration of existing selective bodies for extremism prevention in Austria;
- Organization of an Annual Prevention Summit for Expert Exchange and Networking.

The exit programme is intended to offer individuals willing to disengage themselves from extremism the opportunity to dissociate themselves from their violent extremist environment or their violent extremist ideology and to promote reintegration into a society based on democratic values. The "Federal Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" has the function of strategic guidance and coordination of the exit programme.

At the end of the second day, a practical module followed where participants, under the supervision of EU experts and based on provided knowledge, discussed different scenarios.

On the topic of Relocators and Returnees FTF (with families) – Soft Targets, Mr. Mišo Radovančević, Mr. Albert Černigoj, Mr. Luc Van Der Taelen indicated some main reasons and motives for FTF returnees from jihadi theatres:

- a strong sense of disillusionment - reality of the caliphate model of society;
- remorse - enough of dire living conditions - see no opportunity to remain;
- a lot of them disappointed by what they lived through;
- the deteriorating security situation;
- splits among different terrorist organizations, which hinders recruitment;
- no interest in armed conflict areas and commitment to terrorism-related activities;
- family pressure and intervention;
- health-care reasons (injuries or childbirth);
- the intention to carry out an attack.

A strong point was made on FTF returnees from Western Balkan Region:

- actively involved in radicalisation of local Muslim communities in the WB;
- participated in the organization of terrorist attacks;
- combat experience primarily poses a threat to international forces and organizations;
- online space remains a safe haven for Islamist extremists.

WB countries are also highly vulnerable to the penetration of radical Islamism due to:

- influence of local radical imams & mosques - outside control of official local Muslim community - para-jamaats;

- suspicious NGOs financed by foreign countries, play active role in radicalisation of social groups;
- spreading of radical ideology using FTFs' own networks.

Key judgements and outlook:

- use experience to integrate into radical home-grown networks;
- instructed to conduct attacks or decide independently using acquired skills;
- highly respected in radical Islamist circles - 'citizens of the Caliphate';
- threat could appear years later - following a triggering event;
- minors pose a long-term risk both to security and to society;
- EU facing serious threat in the form of FTFs originating from non-EU countries who decide to move to Europe due to their anonymity.

After the practical part the second part of the questionnaires was delivered to the participants. These were presented at a plenary session in order to identify their own established practices and opportunities. On that basis, some of the opportunities that individual departments in Macedonia already have are exercised or implemented or being developed.

## Conclusions

Macedonian representatives are aware of the risks and threats posed by different forms of violent extremism and terrorism at the national and regional level. Based on lessons learned it was concluded the P/CVE should be performed in close cooperation between government and non-government stakeholders. There is a strong need to include and engage each and every stakeholder at the state level but also and in first place at the local level.

The challenge remains how to identify relevant partners, how to engage them and how to facilitate efficient coordination. Each stakeholder should be aware of its own role and responsibility. To achieve the expected level of cooperation it is important to have a common and proper understanding of risks and vulnerabilities. Stakeholders should be properly trained and should have sufficient knowledge of their partners' role.

The radicalisation process is very dynamic and complex and should be addressed from a very horizontal perspective.

General prevention is increasingly replacing traditional crime prevention. General prevention means joint action of all relevant partners including NGOs, research, academia, society, religious representatives etc..

Throughout the various workshops we identified key aspects:

- P/CVE is very multidimensional and takes the actions and involvement of every single partner that could contribute to that prevention process;
- Young people, families, social work, education, social media, prison/probation, NGOs should be prime areas;

- The 4Cs (communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration) are crucial, in the first place among the first liners, those who are facing the early signs first, but also top-down so that policies defined at the strategic level are fully operationalised at the local level.

All participants established that we have a very common understanding of the risks, challenges and opportunities. Those who achieved higher progress should serve as a marker as to which action should or should not be taken, which is a good starting grid.

Conclusions from the participants were presented in a few points:

- National representatives clearly flagged that their awareness/knowledge has been improved significantly;
- A crucial role at the local level for the moment is still played by the police because they are constantly present in the local community, they know who their partners are, they know who has to be engaged and they have capacities and capabilities needed for coordination and communication;
- Police and intelligence should communicate to non-security based stakeholders especially regarding the nature and extent of risks;
- At the workshop participants received a number of good practices and lessons learned;
- It is important that certain future challenges have been identified and will be addressed with the support of international partners in the format of technical assistance mechanisms.

## Recommendations

- Engagement with – and empowerment of – youth, communities and families is critical in the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. National representatives flagged the importance of reasons and factors for radicalisation – this subject should be discussed more openly among practitioners;
- The key challenge is to properly interpret early signs and certain triggers;
- An important question for Macedonia is why individuals decided to join ISIS. This is a crucial question to be able to develop effective prevention;
- Macedonia endorsed the CT Strategy and recently appointed a National P/CVE Coordinator; Macedonia addressed a request for additional support.
- The National Police also endorsed a special action plan for prevention; after one year results are not yet recognized. There is a strong need to elaborate how to overcome the current situation and frustrations.
- There is a strong need to implement the modern community policing model; the old one not bring results. “Back to the communities” is recognised by the police as challenging but also as an excellent opportunity. This will not be an easy task;
- It is basically about “how we can help”. It is about thinking about “the future”. But before you start actually think about the future you have to deal with pre-preparation, in a way to “prepare” individuals to become part of the programme. It is very time and resource consuming;

- De-radicalisation is not feasible; instead the focus should be on developing disengagement programmes;
- Prison/probation representatives clearly expressed the need for additional trainings;
- There is a strong need to develop a clear top-down communication which will provide practitioners with a set of prevention action and a mandate;
- EU and regional partners should deliver a solution how to address islamophobia in a way to avoid further polarisation.
- Macedonian representatives expressed their request for additional trainings, especially in the field of community policing, radicalisation, polarization, dealing with returnees and deradicalisation - exit programmes



## FIRST LINE WORKSHOP IN SERBIA, Belgrade, 24 – 25 April 2018

### Introduction

On 24 and 25 April 2018, Belgrade (Serbia) hosted the fifth workshop as part of the FIRST LINE project. The workshop, which was headed by Slovenia and implemented by experts from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, was attended by 35 national based participants, representing various government sectors such as the Ministry of Culture and Technological Development, Representatives from the Pedagogic Board, Correctional Service, representatives of different urban municipalities, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Police and civil society, including a number of different religious communities. The international community was represented by OSCE and DCAF, and IISG/WBCTi Ljubljana.

The purpose of the workshop was threefold:

- to raise awareness among local practitioners and also senior policy makers;
- to share best practices and lessons learned;
- to assist in building the national capacity that supports effective cooperation at horizontal level.

The added value of the workshop was the presentation of the P-R-A mechanism to assist Serbia in starting up cooperation at the national level.

The workshop consisted of two modules:

- the general module providing information on terrorism risks in the EU, the SEE region and Serbia; detailed information on the radicalisation process (root causes, communities where it occurs and persons who are likely to be the first to face radicalisation); main risks, challenges and opportunities for prevention;
- the interactive module focusing on individual topics and the setting up of the P-R-A mechanisms.

To stimulate the cognitive processes during the introductory part, EU-developed didactic tools and aids were used. Following the introduction, the participants completed a specially designed questionnaire on how they identify radicalisation processes and how they understand them. The participants were requested to complete another similar survey at the end of the workshop with a view to assessing the difference in the way they understand radicalisation and their role after the workshop.

The second part of the workshop focused on well-defined topics of detection and prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, which every expert/practitioner should know. At the heart of the workshop was not only the understanding of the radicalisation process but also the proper understanding of the role of experts and the importance of cooperation.

Having taken into consideration the current situation and the risks encountered in Serbia as well as the volume of participants from individual government sectors, the following topics under the EU RAN sub-groups were explored: RAN Health, RAN Pol, RAN FS&Y, RAN Exit. Additionally, discussion was focused on the role of religious communities and social media.

General subjects, topics and content:

- radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism in the Western Balkans in comparison with Western Europe; the risk of foreign terrorist fighters/returnees, loners and no-travel FTFs;
- Conviction – a film featuring radicalisation issues followed by workshops and discussions;
- surveys on radicalisation;
- radicalisation – origins and triggers of violent radicalisation and vulnerable groups; indicators – the importance of proper understanding of the radicalisation process;
- the importance of policing activities in local communities aimed at prevention of radicalisation (identification of the local community's partners – multi-agency approach, ways of identification, indicators, the role of the police);
- activities aimed at preventing the radicalisation of youth, the roles of education and the health care sectors (health care workers, social care workers, professionals working with young people, educators, etc., who are the first persons in the field with the potential to identify indicators pointing to radicalisation that may become violent extremism and terrorism; defining the network that these practitioners can rely on and the channels of communication);
- a presentation of the existing EU models for preventing the radicalisation process and EXIT programmes;
- interactive modules and top-table-exercises;
- discussion on developing a national coordination mechanism such as Prevent – Refer – Address Mechanism (P-R-A).

Each module ended with a practical session offering participants an opportunity to use the skills and resolve a prearranged radicalisation scenario steered by an expert/moderator.

The conclusions, which reflected the established practical approaches and pointed to new ones that are yet to be explored, were presented and additionally discussed at the plenary session. As a result, we also identified further opportunities to implement and develop such models in Kosovo and Albania.

The details of the Prevent – Refer – Address Mechanism, also known as the P-R-A mechanism, were presented within the context of the national strategy and action plans. The P-R-A concept consists of three interrelated national strategic branches that already participate in the national coordination body. Serbia has a great deal of diversity to handle in terms of multiple nationalities and religions, which is why it needs to improve awareness and set up a pilot project, i.e. a P-R-A mechanism that will focus on the mapping of the Western Balkan Region and then connect the strategic and operational levels.

Radicalisation is a dynamic and complex process that needs to be addressed horizontally. Early (general) prevention means that all partners, including NGOs, research institutions, academia, the civil society and religious representatives, focus on the factors that propel extremist ideas at a very early stage. In the outcome of these workshops the main perspective was outlined: the P/CVE is multidimensional and welcomes measures and cooperation proposed by any partner that can contribute to the prevention process. Young people, families, the social work sector, the education sector, the media and NGOs are the main focus of attention when it comes to radicalisation and related vulnerable groups.

The main emphasis was on general prevention and the 4C concept (communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration), which is crucial for first liners whose task is to implement and transfer systemic national policies to the local operational level.

Also important is the fact that all participants got familiar with the P-R-A mechanisms, which were developed in close cooperation between Serbian law enforcement and the international community.

The following common standards, best practices and experiences (all available in multiple formats) were presented:

- EU RAN database;
- translation products / publications available on the IISG web platform;
- other documents exploring radicalisation, extremism and terrorism;
- transfer of translated texts from the RAN handbook collections and best practices into the Serbian language.

## Conclusions

The workshop as such was the first one of this kind and it was recognized as an excellent opportunity to combine a number of different stakeholders, which was recognized on the part of participants as a special added value.

Terrorism remains the priority for all of us. The threat is permanent.

At the national level, i.e. strategically, Serbia has demonstrated certain efforts to reach a sufficient level of awareness and understanding of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism.

Serbia has combined both best EU practice and its own experience in handling the radicalisation problem in its territory, where FTF/returnees remain a national security concern that affects children and young people as the most vulnerable groups.

The broad diversity of participants was intentional. They came from multiple agencies and from various levels and were highly diverse in terms of ethnic origin and religious beliefs. All of them were genuinely involved in discussions and the search for solutions. On several occasions, the participants expressed their interest in further cooperation with and support from the EU, and cooperation at the national level.

Lessons learned confirm that in addition to crime prevention, general prevention is recognized increasingly as an important approach. Working in and with communities is therefore the core.

General prevention which takes into account each and every stakeholder which can contribute to preventing/countering different forms of violent extremism.

The police and intelligence community remain highly important when we talk about prevention, but should be the last link in the chain.

Lessons learned prove that apart from the governmental sector, the key players within the multi-dimensional approach include civil society, the religious community, private sector, media, research and academia.

This is a challenge for all of us and it is not that related to religion. We are not sure in which direction future risks might be further developed.

When we address roots and triggers we are expected to name/define the most important factors: poverty, social marginalisation, being underprivileged etc. Serbia has in place a special project focused on preventing youth from being involved in radicalisation.

## Recommendations

- Effective P/CVE should be based on strong cooperation between policy makers and practitioners dealing with radicalisation at the local level. It should be based on strong cooperation of practitioners who face the first signs of radicalisation at the local level;
- As proposed by the respective religious representatives, more focus should be given to local communities;
- Practitioners should be equipped with relevant and proper knowledge and should be properly skilled. Lack of knowledge and experience should be overcome in the first place, before we take the first action;
- National representatives clearly expressed the need and expectations for further support regarding awareness-raising, etc.;
- Vulnerable groups such as youth, families, prisoners etc. should be addressed as key priorities;
- NGOs dealing with missionary should be invited and engaged as credible partners. Under the same understanding of the scope and nature of risk/challenge and supported by moderate Islamic communities should contribute to overall benefit ;
- Further investigation of the roots/triggers is needed to understand the reasons for departures and also returns; this ensures proper addressing of the risk;
- De-radicalisation/disengagement process should be launched by the Police; this subject is part of the criminal justice procedure;
- The role of the media should be additionally explored. In this regard additional opportunities are recognized within what is called the communication strategy;
- Information flow in all directions – bottom-up, top-down, between practitioners – should be provided;
- For the successful implementation of preventive activities we need the coordination of relevant partners, first at the national and then at the local level. It is also very important that the relevant actors can recognize their role in prevention of radicalisation and be aware of their responsibility;
- There is a strong need to develop a comprehensive cooperation mechanism, where the P-R-A concept could be a suitable solution;

- Within the already existing multi-agency cooperation, such as the local security council, cooperation between key players (teachers, school workers, health practitioners and social workers) should be strengthened;
- There is a strong need to have in place relevant communication/coordination protocols, and a legal basis;
- The organizer was asked to provide participants with the list of participants for future cooperation among them;
- The organizer was asked to promptly and properly inform competent national authorities of outcomes, recommendations and identified needs;
- National based participants expressed expectations to organize future workshops or similar forums in the format of policy makers and practitioners.

## FIRST LINE WORKSHOP IN MONTENEGRO, Budva, 15 – 16 May 2018

### Introduction

The sixth workshop of the FIRST LINE project took place in Budva, Montenegro from 15th to 16th of May. It was conducted by experts from Austria, Belgium and Slovenia. A total of 39 national-based participants with different background and from different services, such as the Police, Ministry of Justice, Correctional Service, Defence Ministry, Ministry of Human Rights and Minorities, FIU, Supreme Court, Local Community, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Schools, different NGOs and civil society representatives took part. The international community was represented by respective representatives of the UNDP, DCAF Ljubljana, IISG/WBCTi and the OSCE, represented by Her Excellency, Ambassador Ms. Maryse Daviet.

The aim was to:

- raise awareness among decision-makers and practitioners;
- realise the importance of proper training of first line practitioners;
- recognize the early signs of radicalisation and to be able to respond;
- transfer best practices and to assist in establishment of a national mechanism which would enable horizontal coordination of the activities for PVE.

An additional value of the workshop in ME was developing the Prevent – Refer – Address Mechanism (P-R-A).

The main challenge during the workshop was:

- to achieve better and proper understanding of roots and triggers;
- to understand who are actually relevant partners at the local and national level, what kind of responsibilities they have and also what is their role;
- to discuss how to enhance better communication among those relevant partners;
- and how to take advantage of best practices and lessons learned provided by practitioners, academia, researchers and practitioners within the EU RAN CoE.

After the presentation of representatives from the EU and experts, the workshop was divided into two parts. Based on the fact that Montenegro, based on its own efforts and supported by international stakeholders, had already achieved certain level of development in terms of understanding the risk and the need for a more preventive approach, the format of the workshop was adjusted. Montenegro recently endorsed a new CT Strategy and Action Plan, with strong focus on P/CVE.

During the first panel general subjects were provided and discussed. Participants were provided with an overview of current and future risks of terrorism in the EU, in the SEE region and also at the national level.

The process of radicalisation was explained in detail, where and how it occurs, who could be first in contact with it, what are the main challenges and risks and also the opportunities for preventing radicalisation.

At the beginning the participants were asked to fill out a specially designed Questionnaire on detecting the processes of radicalisation. The aim was to get an insight on their current understanding of terrorism and VE related risks, how they recognize their role, what their knowledge is of the radicalisation process, and where they recognize opportunities for more effective P/CVE.

One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to find out how successful the workshop was. Therefore, part of the questionnaire was repeated at the end of the training.

The second part of the workshop was focused on concrete subjects important to practitioners for recognizing and preventing radicalisation which could lead to violent extremism and terrorism. In addition to understanding the process, special and careful emphasis was placed on identifying their own role and the importance of mutual cooperation.

Adapted to the current situation, the risks and the representation of Albanian departments, the content presented in the EU RAN subgroups, RAN Pol, RAN FS & Y, RAN Health, RAN Exit, was primarily presented. Mandatory content was related to:

- the role of police, health, social work, youth work, education, NGOs etc., which as such in the field first encounter indicators that point to the risk of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism;
- the way to identify radicalisation among residents, youth etc.;
- indicators of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (activism, radicalisation, extremism, terrorism aims and phases, roots and triggers, vulnerable groups, cases etc.);
- own role (role and engagement raising awareness among co-workers, dealing with radicalisation and responsibilities of their institutions);
- Who are their partners (multiagency approach in local communities, developing strategies, teams etc.);
- Who and in what way to inform them about this topic or issue and how to deal with the problem in future.

Mr. Albert Černigoj presented the Terrorist Threat in the EU connected to the Western Balkan region. Terrorism in the EU remains a priority on the global, regional and national levels. It is defined by dynamism, transnationality and complexity. The degree of risk varies from EU MS to MS. The threat is real and expected. The risk arises from the side of foreign terrorist fighters, individuals and smaller unrelated groups. An important question needs to be raised: What next?

In the Western Balkans there are a limited number of low-scale attacks. Religion-supported terrorism is exposed and violent radicalisation is strengthening. Another feature of WB is foreign terrorist fighters or returnees. Other forms of violent extremism should not be neglected.

The threat of religion-supported terrorism is reflected in the global jihad, with the aim of polarizing European society, and with the correlation between different forms of violent radicalisation and new trends of attacks, new predictions are emerging.

There are a number of different forms of radicalisation, extremism and violent extremism: for that reason terrorism-related forms should be addressed in a very comprehensive way.

Mr. Rajko Kozmelj presented the EU integrative approach to the fight against terrorism and countering of violent extremism (Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative - WBCTi). The concept was formally endorsed at the December 2015 JHA Council of Ministers as an EU initiative, pending significant EU/EC financial support. It enables an efficient response to challenges posed to national CT practitioners and operating regional arrangements dealing with CT, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Radicalisation. It has won wide support since – over 50 regional instruments, international actors, state donors, incl. EU agencies and institutions signed up as partners. The WBCTi is the first of the three foreseen pillars of the “Integrated Internal Security Governance–IISG” which holistically addresses internal security challenges in the Western Balkan Region.

In his presentation, Mr. Kozmelj highlighted the fact of increasing awareness of the need to coordinate, streamline and functionally integrate EU policy initiatives, UN actions and a variety of other activities conducted by other international and regional actors in the Western Balkans (WB) targeting internal security, in order to provide an effective response and to reduce considerable overlapping and duplication and to create synergies instead. In this regard, Mr. Kozmelj presented the visualised complexity of different regional scopes and a high number of partners, which makes cooperation and efforts to streamline and to coordinate the actions of all partners a challenge. Mr. Kozmelj also presented how the WBCTi fulfils its objectives and among other things highlighted:

- the WBCTi methodology of needs identification (bottom-up & top-down);
- detailed action plan, where partners are invited to take the lead and to contribute their expertise and resources; and
- where the donors are invited to invest in activities which support agreed objectives.

He also raised attention to long-term and consistent planning, constant coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the process, which makes a considerable difference with projects limited in their start and end. The following most important results were presented: Close cooperation and coordination, incl. developed mutual trust, among the WBCTi Partners; Enhanced information exchange via and between three regional platforms at relevant levels of CT authorities; Over 1000 imams across six locations in Bosnia trained and equipped to better respond to cases of VE and radicalisation; Concluded groundwork for the development of inter-ministerial platforms in all beneficiaries.

The representative of the Radical Awareness Network Centre of Excellence (RAN CoE), Mr. Maarten Van De Donk, gave a general introduction of RAN. His presentation detailed the structure of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (EU RAN CoE) and best practices recently developed at the EU level.

The core of the EC initiated project is the working groups consisting of practitioners who encounter radicalisation and vulnerable groups in their daily work. In these groups there is exchange of practices and experiences and policy advice is given.

Some important deliverables of RAN that are accessible online for all are the RAN collection of practices: general descriptions of actions that can be taken to prevent or counter radicalisation leading to violent extremism, followed by practices that can be found throughout the EU. This database is updated on a regular basis:

- Returnee manual: recently published report on how to deal with people returning from Daesh (foreign fighters, women and children) both to safeguard society and to work on resocialisation;



- Ex post papers of working groups: these are reports in which the results of working group meetings are made accessible.

They often offer very practically oriented guidelines on how to deal with radicalisation.

Fighting terrorism and violent extremism involves more than surveillance and security. It is very horizontal and engages all relevant stakeholders. The most effective prevention strategies stop people from getting involved in the process which leads to violent extremism or acts of terrorism in the first place. The RAN brings together practitioners from around Europe working on the prevention of radicalisation. Connecting people, RAN is today a kind of knowledge hub, “network of networks” gathering together over 3000 practitioners, and as such provides interested parties with support needed for effective prevention of violent radicalisation.

Mr. Mišo Radovančević presented key topics in Roots and triggers of violent extremism, and then Mr. Radovančević went on to present Vulnerable groups.

Mr. Luc Van Der Talen gave an overview of the situation in Western Europe and Belgium and covered: trends and challenges, the difference between activated and inspired individuals, the threat of second blast, women and children, the arson jihad, the categories of FTF in Belgium, facts and figures, the structure in place to ensure follow-up, proper monitoring and exchange of information on all levels, with all actors (police, intel, civil society, municipalities), polarization, rise of anarchist/ left wing and right wing, the challenges for western societies in terms of security, costs, culture and the balance between security and democratic value principles and fundamental rights.

In the second presentation, Mr. Luc Van Der Talen covered definitions (activism, (violent) extremism and terrorism), based on a couple of examples explaining in an easy way the mechanisms and messages behind the waves of modern terrorism and characteristics, the radicalisation process with examples, cases, the process of indoctrination, all ideologies and terrorist organizations, indicators of possible radicalisation (related to ideology, identity, behaviour) and indicators of possible preparation of an attack (residence, transport, values, forged docs, etc.), the importance of proper contextualisation (getting the big and right picture) and the importance of partners and exchange of information.

General presentations were followed by a short, 20-minute film Conviction (delivered by the UK). The film is a powerful and dynamic short story built into an awareness-raising package related to radicalisation and violent extremism. The product is a unique tool designed to give audiences a chance to gain understanding through discussion and debate. The film is based on the life of Isa Ibrahim, who was given a life sentence in July 2009 under the Terrorism Act for planning to commit a terrorist attack in the city of Bristol. The product’s aim is to raise awareness of some of the issues regarding preventing violent extremism. The product has 3 objectives:

- To recognize the need to support and protect vulnerable groups and people;
- To highlight the main opportunities where guidance and interventions are needed;
- To help build trust and confidence within communities and in partnership.

Conviction is a powerful and dynamic short film built into an awareness-raising package related to radicalisation and violent extremism. The product is a unique tool designed to give audiences a chance to gain understanding through discussion and debate.

Day one was summarized with a short discussion where key points were flagged.

On the second day, outcomes of the first day were delivered by Mr. Albin Slabe and Mr. Albert Černigoj, in which the main points were noted:

- how to best extend implementation at the international level of developed best practices; simple transfer of such practices is not feasible;
- there is a need to have a proper understanding of different national and regional risks which are interrelated;
- a multi horizontal, multiagency and multistakeholder approach is needed for effective addressing of P/CVE.

The morning introduction was followed by a number of relevant presentations.

Mr. Branko Lobnikar gave a presentation of Police activity in the local environment to prevent radicalisation, with special emphasis on the role of the community policing officer. He began with the statement that in recent years, the processes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism have greatly evolved. Extremists are also no longer acting only as part of organized, hierarchical organizations but also within smaller cells and sometimes as lone wolves. All forms of extremism have become more globalised, taking full advantage of the opportunities of the interconnected world. Following this, it was discussed that dealing with terrorism, violent extremism and the process of radicalisation were traditionally subjects for intelligence agencies or secret services, but nowadays, the police have a crucial role to play in facilitating a preventive multi-agency approach at local or regional level. Especially in local settings, the police have strong established networks for a multi-agency problem-solving approach.

The presentation ended with some tips for successful multiagency cooperation, such as work on trust, taking care of information sharing legislation, making sure everyone understands the steps, gets support, starts with small cooperation, and organizes additional expertise that can help multi-agency cooperation.

Mr. Peter Debeljak continued with preventing youth radicalisation and violent extremism, and pointed out that young people are one of the most vulnerable age/social groups in relation to different forms of radicalism and violent extremism. Due to some very objective circumstances/reasons, a separate and special approach to the phenomenon needs to be observed and developed. Unfortunately no manuals or “magic wand” short-cuts can be pursued to address the issue. But we can still learn from both positive and negative experiences and from both best and worst practices in that regard.

We should avoid addressing new phenomenon with existing, old answers. Sticking to “copy-pasting” is often not efficient. Using a “one-size-fits-all approach” is usually not sufficient. Seeking perfect solutions only is to be avoided. Making extremism/radicalisation a taboo is the wrong way to tackle the problem. Neglecting other forms of extremisms apart from Islamic-driven ones should be avoid-

ed and we should certainly not over-react when faced with visible signs. We should bear in mind that radical signs are often just a "cry for help".

In pursuing prevention activities we should use existing/working platforms, get trust before reacting, know how to read the signs, raise awareness, know the trends, create safe spaces and use a youth-friendly/peer-to-peer approach, create alliances with key figures and stakeholders (i.e. authoritative coalitions), use (local) heroes as role models, establish pools of specialists, and use personal stories. And last but not least: each country should do its homework by themselves!

In The role of healthcare in an early identification of violent radicalism, Mrs. Biserka Simčić talked about how health workers deal professionally with individuals who have undergone the radicalisation process. The public healthcare systems can contribute to preventing the radicalisation process in a society by raising awareness among health workers about the dangers of this phenomenon and exchanging information among different professionals or experts on radicalisation, seeking vulnerable individuals, reorienting individuals who were exposed to initial radicalisation, and cooperating with different partners in tackling radicalisation and extremism in our society.

A special issue among health workers is the question of confidentiality. We must deal with especially vulnerable individuals so as to not jeopardize the security of society and also the safety of individuals. It is necessary to exchange information within the professional networks and at the same time maintain the highest possible level of confidentiality, however not to the detriment of the security of society. Since the result of an unprofessional approach, or ignoring the danger, could be an even greater risk it is necessary to introduce a systemic approach which will include a multi-discipline, horizontal as well as orchestrated approach on the national level for establishing enhanced cooperation between relevant institutions. It is particularly important to include interested non-institutionalised individuals and public-private sector, all supported by further research and risk assessments. The purpose of preventing radicalisation and subsequent criminalisation is to inform and train health workers how to identify and assist vulnerable persons and groups who have been exposed to the violent radicalisation process.

Mr. Nikolaus Grauszer and Ms. Judith Raffelseder, in the presentation The Austrian Model – PVE/CVE Measures, pointed out that in order to counter the relevant tendencies, solutions involving society as a whole are required, including as many relevant actors as possible. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) initiated a decision-making process characterized by transparency, with the involvement of various actors, in which seven ministries and different experts from civil society participated. In the context of the discussions, two measures were adopted to improve the coordination of efforts in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation on a national level, thereby offering individuals willing to disengage and distance themselves from the environment of violent extremism, a way out. In order to coordinate and control national measures for extremism prevention, such as e.g. the Exit Programme, a "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" was created. The network is coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and meets every eight weeks.

The "National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" consists of several ministries and of civil society organizations dealing with extremism prevention.

In order to implement the exit programme nationally, the network proactively seeks contact with the federal provinces (Regional Youth Offices and Regional Integration Offices), as well as with regional prevention partners, in order to ensure that national synergies are created in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.

Key tasks of the network are:

- Coordination of national measures for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation;
- Efficient coordination of intervention measures such as the exit programme or other measures for the detection of and dealing with radicalisation;
- Knowledge transfer and promotion of the interdisciplinary exchange between science and practice;
- Analysis and exchange in the field of detection of and in dealing with radicalisation processes;
- Integration of existing selective bodies for extremism prevention in Austria;
- Organization of an Annual Prevention Summit for Expert Exchange and Networking.

The exit programme is intended to offer individuals willing to disengage themselves from extremism the opportunity to dissociate themselves from their violent extremist environment or their violent extremist ideology and to promote reintegration into a society based on democratic values. The "Federal Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation" has the function of strategic guidance and coordination of the exit programme.

At the end of the second day module, a practical part followed in which the participants, under the supervision of experts / moderators, followed in advance, for each target group and the stage of the process of radicalisation of the prepared scenarios, used the newly acquired knowledge themselves.

Mr. Rajko Kozmelj presented the P-R-A concept, which is intended to enable the WBCTi beneficiary authorities to prevent, refer and address individuals vulnerable to radicalisation with the potential of leading to violent extremism. In each beneficiary, it involves the setting up of an efficient and sustainable inter-agency solution involving multiple levels – at least the state level and the local community (municipality) level, both consisting of relevant governmental and non-governmental civil society partners and experts needed in specific cases. The purpose of multiple levels is indicated in the list of potential tasks at various levels.

The WBCTi partners – actors of the international community – should work towards full awareness on the part of national governments (those of their member states) of the needs of the Western Balkan countries as depicted in this concept paper, in order to encourage funding and political support (incl. via high-level visits or other established processes).

On the topic of Relocators and Returnee FTF (with families) – Soft Targets, Mr. Mišo Radovančević indicated some main reasons and motives for FTF returnees from jihadi theatres:

- a strong sense of disillusionment - reality of the caliphate model of society;
- remorse - enough of dire living conditions - see no opportunity to remain;
- a lot of them disappointed by what they lived through;
- the deteriorating security situation;
- splits among different terrorist organizations, which hinders recruitment;

- no interest in armed conflict areas and commitment to terrorism-related activities;
- family pressure and intervention;
- healthcare reasons (injuries or childbirth);
- intention to carry out an attack.

A strong point was made on FTF returnees from the Western Balkan Region:

- actively involved in radicalisation of local Muslim communities in the WB;
- participated in the organization of terrorist attacks;
- combat experience primarily posing a threat to international forces and organizations;
- online space remains a haven for Islamic extremists.

WB countries are also highly vulnerable to the penetration of radical Islamism due to:

- influence of local radical imams and mosques - outside of control of official local Muslim community;
- NGOs financed by foreign countries play an active role in radicalisation of social groups;
- spreading of radical ideology using FTFs' own networks.

Key judgements and outlook:

- use experience to integrate into radical home-grown networks;
- instructed to conduct attacks or decide independently using acquired skills;
- highly respected in radical Islamist circles - 'citizens of the Caliphate';
- threat could appear years later - following a triggering event;
- minors pose a long-term risk both to security & to society;
- EU facing serious threat in the form of FTFs originating from non-EU countries who decide to move to Europe due to their anonymity.

After the practical part the second part of the questionnaires was delivered to participants. These were presented at a plenary session in order to identify their own established practices and opportunities. On this basis, some of the opportunities that individual departments in Montenegro have, are exercised or implemented or being developed.

## Conclusions

There are a number of different forms of radicalisation, extremism and violent extremism. Prevention is a key in this regard. A whole-society approach and multiagency approach seems appropriate and most effective.

The FIRST LINE project speaks for itself and directs participants directly to the core of the problem of radicalisation, aiming at first line practitioners who deal with it.

The radicalisation process is very dynamic and complex and should be addressed from a very horizontal and multidimensional perspective. That is why it is so challenging. Montenegro clearly expresses the need for additional support in implementing a comprehensive coordination mechanism. Conclusions from the participants were presented in several points:

- The workshops' goals have been achieved successfully; an important achievement of this event is that ME has an opportunity to bring together such a number of different practitioners;
- The workshop provided the first communication between different stakeholders and should be a good starting grid to develop a broad network;
- There is a strong need for the next events to be organized in the format of practitioners-policy-makers;
- The threat is permanent;
- The criminal justice aspect also has "a preventive effect" and should be presented in future events especially regarding FTF, recruiting, public provocation, etc.;
- Awareness, understanding and provided tools/lessons learned/best practices need to be further developed and implemented in practice;
- NGOs expressed regret that the police feel lonely in the fight against violent radicalisation and that there are no participants in other departments;
- In two days we received a number of examples of best practices;
- The protection of public order is a fundamental task of the police, which clearly shows what the role of police is in P/CVE. Because of capacities and capabilities the police can play the role of mediator at the local level, at the beginning; the knowledge acquired will be transferred forward;
- Institute - to focus on triggers, which requires the integration of different profiles and mutual participation, expect more support in this area.

## Recommendations

- National P/CVE Strategy and Action Plan should be implemented in a step-by-step approach;
- Implementation should start with engaging the most relevant partners first, which should be defined based on threat assessment. The most suitable organization/partner should serve as a cornerstone;
- Communities should be strongly supported by state authorities;
- The most relevant stakeholders should be engaged immediately in cooperation developed at the national level; actions and plans should be delivered to first line practitioners at the local level;
- Based on discussion regarding the P-R-A concept, Montenegro, under the IISG/WBCTi platform, should continue developing a national coordination mechanism;
- To effectively address radicalisation in prisons, Montenegro should continue bringing together relevant practitioners from the prison/probation sector, health practitioners such as psychiatrists, religious representatives etc.;
- Montenegrin representatives expressed their request for additional trainings, especially in the field of community policing, radicalisation, polarization, dealing with returnees and deradicalisation - exit programmes;
- It is important that certain future challenges have been identified and will be addressed with the support of international partners in the format of technical assistance mechanisms.



# FIRST LINE CLOSING CONFERENCE

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## FIRST LINE CLOSING CONFERENCE IN SLOVENIA, Brdo, 5 – 6 June 2018

On 5 and 6 June 2018, the Closing Conference of the FIRST LINE project was held in Brdo, Slovenia, with the purpose of bringing together the directors general of the police forces of the Western Balkan countries, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Belgium, Slovenia and the European Commission, EU RAN CoE and PCC SEE CTNet in order to present the results of the project and establish the need to continue the activities started in the framework of the project.

The general assessment of the introductory speakers, the Director General of the Slovenian Police and the high representative of the EC, was that the objectives had been adequately formulated and aimed at relevant problems. Although the objectives were ambitious, they were exceeded by far, both in the systemic area focused on awareness-raising and assistance in establishing national co-ordination mechanisms, and in the operational area where, in addition to strengthening operational cross-border cooperation, we focused on concrete regional terrorism-related threats.

The EU RAN CoE pointed out once more the opportunities we have in radicalisation prevention, opportunities that enable us to avoid the most severe consequences. The project was a remarkable achievement, particularly because it opened the door to various stakeholders that are not typical for the region such as the civil society, NGOs and religious communities. The project was an excellent attempt to identify, connect and elevate understanding among the relevant stakeholders. A uniform and correct understanding of the radicalisation phenomenon is of key importance, as even greater damage can be done by inadequately addressing and responding to this phenomenon. The EU RAN CoE was pleased that the FIRST LINE project had the same DNA as the EU RAN CoE, which means that the project was adequately planned and fully in line with EU policies.

The representative of the IISG support group underlined the incorporation of the EU FIRST LINE project into the concept of the WBCTi, which was created through cooperation by all relevant regional stakeholders. The project itself efficiently contributed to the implementation of the IPA WBCTi 2005-2017 and 2018-2020. The WB is a priority and was defined as such by the EU RAN at the beginning of its activities in 2011 in the area of radicalisation prevention. The results of the project are outstanding, both at the systemic and at the operational level, particularly due to the fact that they offer very good starting points for the future. Within the scope of the project, objectives and achievements were reached that the largest regional partners would not be ashamed of. What is important here is the fact that the region has finally realised that the police force is not the only body responsible for preventing radicalisation. We must move beyond this mentality. It is imperative that, together with the WB and assisted by regional partners, we ensure the continuation of this project under the auspices of the WBCTi, and we must ensure more sustainability.

After the presentation of the project, the heads of delegations were asked to respond to the next questions:

- In your opinion, did FIRST LINE project activities help in raising awareness among first line practitioners? Did these activities contribute to the understanding that law enforcement authorities are not the only ones responsible for the prevention of radicalisation that could lead to violent extremism and terrorism?

- Operational cooperation is of key importance. If so, what could/should be the next steps in strengthening operational cooperation within the CTI Network in WB, especially in cross-border cooperation and implementation of Intelligence Led Policing in CT? In your opinion, is there a need for intensified consultation on strengthening of operational cooperation, promotion of more efficient information exchange, facilitation of cross-border actions and the joint approach to new threats and cross-border crime phenomena?
- One of the proposals generated within the project is the development of the Prevent-Refer-Address concept (PRA), which follows a multi-stakeholder approach as a response to radicalisation and violent extremism within the P/CVE activities. Do you support this concept, and if so, what could/should be the next steps in its further development?

Albania emphasized that in the action plans they included other stakeholders, who should also take part of the responsibility in prevention.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA) expressed the need for the continuation of activities started with the project. At the national level it is very important to have proper communication and cooperation. They agreed that there are three important aspects: early detection of radicalisation, prevention of attacks by radicalised persons and deradicalisation of returnees. Special attention should be devoted to family members of returnees, especially children who were born in Syria and have no documents and citizenship. A lot still needs to be done for the inclusion of civil society in preventive activities.

Serbia has already taken some actions for the development of the network of practitioners, according to the EU RAN model. They pointed out a joint project with OSCE where they use trainers to organize workshops for relevant stakeholders. They also included religious communities and civil society. The CTI network is doing very well and is contributing to the exchange of information in the region. They would only suggest having more operational meetings within the CTI.

Montenegro supported the activities of the project from the beginning, because it is also very important for the EU accession negotiations. They support the PRA concept, but additional activities should be planned. According to the EU RAN model they will form seven groups, but they will need support in shaping the guidelines and for checking their feasibility.

Macedonia also stressed that the workshop organized with different stakeholders was very successful. Their national model also includes all relevant stakeholders and it follows important principles such as a multidisciplinary approach, PVE strategy with action plans and a local approach with local security councils. In 2017 they created the national committee for countering violent extremism which has an important role in the coordination of activities. They also pointed out that the EU has its own databases, but does not share data with the WB countries.

Kosovo has also developed a PVE strategy and has held round tables with partners at the local level. They also mentioned two additional strategies, the first for countering terrorism and second for preventing the financing of terrorism. One of the obstacles for effective cooperation is the fact that they are not a member of some international organizations. Together with UNDP they established a national mechanism for prevention.

In the conclusion the members of the implementing consortium pointed out that we should also speak about mistakes, so that others would not repeat them. Only cooperation and a joint approach can lead to successful prevention.

The representative of the European Commission acknowledged that the closing conference will serve also as a basis for the preparation of the project's evaluation and for the identification of next steps. Regional or transnational cooperation is also very important for them and for this reason they prepared the strategy for the Western Balkan, where one of the flagships is dedicated to security. PRA is a new concept which they were not able to study in detail but they can see that it includes important elements for the prevention of violent extremism. It focuses on first line practitioners and is also important to say that we should not mix the local approach with information gathering because this could jeopardize the PVE efforts. All WB countries also have PVE strategies but now implementation is of crucial importance.

The representative of EU RAN emphasized that good cooperation has been established and also with the inclusion of relevant partners, awareness was raised. They support the idea for continuation of activities as a second phase of the project. They could also support WB with some forms of training.

In the discussion, the regional project partners unanimously confirmed the adequacy of the format and objectives of the project, which came at the right time. Practical results are already apparent and, moreover, all partners suggested that we should continue with the project as a matter of urgency, given that the project has identified relevant challenges as well as offered certain starting points for dealing with them. On this basis, several partners, e.g. AL, KS, ME, RS, have already started implementation. The assistance of regional partners and experts is welcome, since in the transfer of international best practice to the national level, partners often find themselves in trouble due to the absence of their own practice and experience. The assistance of experts is necessary, as it is often difficult or even impossible to simply transfer practice from one environment to another. ME was of the opinion that the project had connected us, both at the national and at the regional level. Many partners were unable to establish such multi-stakeholder cooperation by themselves. In the context of operational cooperation, SRB emphasised the CTI network. This network has brought major progress to the region. In order to follow up on activities, it is imperative that we ensure simple, transparent and long-term financing solutions, following the model of the EMPACT and similar. AL recognised the added value of the project as it involves a concept that will result in benefit to the whole of society. KS and MK underline the added value in the P-R-A concept, with KS pointing out that each of us "must do their own work".

Since the recipients of the report and the participating experts will be well aware of the course of the project, we summarise only the key aspects of the planning, course, implementation, results and future development of the project.

As regards the results achieved in terms of awareness-raising, exchange of best practice, understanding of individual stakeholders' own roles and understanding the need to establish a consistent system of cooperation, we should emphasise that the results were achieved through:

- six workshops, created especially on the basis of a prior needs assessment;
- which were based on a discussion held in the form of interactive workshops, in which the national experts were able to verify the presented content and best practice;

- in this way the experts were able to verify the acquired knowledge in practice as well as try to establish how this knowledge could be transferred to their environment and their practice;
- extra added value was provided by a discussion on how a consistent system of cooperation which is referred to as the P-R-A concept could be established at the national level.

## Results – systemic level - prevention

- Six workshops carried out with the assistance of 14 EU experts and the support of different regional partners were attended by just over 350 participants who were representatives of different sectors, including the representatives of religious communities, NGOs, civil initiatives, etc.
- With the assistance of EU experts and considerable assistance of the EU RAN CoE and ESCN, the established best practices were presented, including practical cases, experience on how to avoid pitfalls and how to establish and provide mutual cooperation.
- At the same time, several manuals and instructions were translated into local languages and they will be delivered in the near future.
- As regards comprehensive cooperation, the participants acquired knowledge on how to recognise relevant partners at the local level and what should be their role, with emphasis on how cooperation between decision-makers at the national level and practitioners at the local level should be carried out..
- Within this discussion, we developed the concept of P-R-A, which is the greatest added value of the project. The draft, drawn up by the support group of IISG and additionally examined by the regional partners, is implemented in the context of workshops as a concept harmonised with national partners.

## Results - operational

- Four operational working meetings, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Europol/Haag and participation in two Jumbo events.
- Adopted PoA 2015-2017 and 2018-2020, which is in compliance with the iPA WBCTi.
- PoA sets out priority activities:
  - ⇒ FTF, repeat offenders, where we were focused on best practice and exchange of experience on detection, investigation and collection of evidence;
  - ⇒ An extra added value is provided by the preparation of national lists of FTF exchanged with Europol; at the same time we started the exchange between the members of CTI, 2/3 of suspects have been entered in the SIS II, while the issue of approximately 300 suspects remains open;
  - ⇒ Prevention of terrorism financing, with focus on the existing tools available within Europol and FATF and the presentation of what is called the “disruptive approach”;
  - ⇒ Weapons and explosive smuggling;
  - ⇒ Discussion on the possibilities for early involvement of the prosecutor’s office or the MJAT (both at the national and international level), which would allow cooperation at an early stage of detection/monitoring of suspects;
  - ⇒ Exchange of experience and promotion of ILP, where preparations are underway, in cooperation with the PCC SEE CT Network, for the Aquila Project, within which the participating coun-

tries will share information on persons of operational interest in an encrypted manner that will not allow the compromising of personal information. Cross exchange of information will improve the regional criminal “picture” of the situation;

- ⇒ The WB TESAT report 2015, 2016, prepared on the basis of the Europol methodology, which identifies primary security threats; it is interesting that it is significantly different from the findings of the special (anonymous) survey carried out within the framework of the six workshops.

## Recommendations

### A: General

- The need to further develop awareness training through the concept of train the trainer, with participants from the same local level (in order to build trust and establish a well performing network).
- Establish a MoU (memorandum of understanding) to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all parties.
- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy including
  - ⇒ a lexicon on the definitions regarding radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism, the different phenomena and ideologies in use in the country (validated in the CT-CVE strategy)
  - ⇒ clear top-down and bottom-up structures.
- Translation of this communication strategy by the CT-CVE coordinator to the local level.

### B: Further Developments

- (1) To **further develop the Prevent-Refer-Address (P-R-A) concept which pursues a multi-stakeholder approach as a response to radicalisation and violent extremism** in the WB (policy proposal by IISG Support Group (June 2017), concept development (DCAF, UNDP, RCC, IOM - November 2017), implemented by the FIRST LINE project supported by the IISG SG)
- (2) To **pursue the basic elements of a Multi-Stakeholder Approach to P/CVE (P-R-A)** in the WB Region:
  - to RAISE AWARENESS of the GENERAL PUBLIC, VULNERABLE and TARGET GROUPS in the local community with special focus on vulnerable groups of individuals. The general public should be aware and capable of referring individual cases of radicalisation, including online.
  - to RAISE AWARENESS of all relevant stakeholders - FIRST LINERS at local level (**P-R-A mechanism partners**) and their CAPABILITY TO REACT in the event of identifying a radicalised individual (i.e. **teachers, social workers, psychologists, religious community representatives, etc.**)
  - to RAISE AWARENESS of all P-R-A Panel representatives at the local level and their CAPABILITY TO use a RISK-BASED APPROACH in radicalised individual cases: To develop a risk assessment for the referred radicalised individual, to develop an action plan, monitoring and evaluation and to be able to provide expert guidance to partners at the local level (i.e. **teachers, social workers, psychologists, religious community reps., etc.**)
  - to RAISE AWARENESS and CAPABILITY of STATE relevant structures to support P-R-A Panels (**in the initial phase a pilot project**) at local level (**politically, with national strategies and**

**action plans, with recommendations from relevant ministries to the local level and their MoUs or other inter-ministerial agreements, etc.)**

- to follow and inform other donors, beneficiaries and implementing partners of potential synergies, duplication, overlapping and inconsistencies – IISG Support Group
- (3) To **avoid deficiencies identified in implementation of a Multi-stakeholder Approach to P/CVE (P-R-A vs Referral Mechanism)**:
- a) **Referral mechanism (pilot) is based on the law enforcement structure**, which hampers trust between local stakeholders (Law Enforcement vs. CSO, fear of misuse of given information) in early stages of prevention.
  - b) **Referral mechanism (pilot) is not connected to the state level** which considerably affects **sustainability**, further development and political/financial support for the Referral / P-R-A mechanism.
  - c) **Referral mechanism is copied from countries (EU MS) where it does not appear as a successful model**, moreover, specifics in respective WB Countries are not taken into account.
- (4) The CTI Network in WB as the network of P/CVE and CT operatives from all WB countries as well as some EU Member states, Europol and Interpol, should continue to be supported.
- (5) The FIRST LINE project should, in close cooperation with the EU CT/P-CVE Advisor in WB and IISG SG, continue its work by further developing the awareness and capacities of P-R-A partners in all WB Countries to support them in setting up their own model of a multi-stakeholder approach in each respective country.

**FIRST LINE**  
**STOP**  
Radicalization

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