

Preventing Radicalisation in the Western Balkans: The Role of the Police Using a Multi-Stakeholder Approach¹

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Radicalisation and extremism, which can lead to violent extremism, represent a persisting security threat to the Western Balkans. In the past few decades, the Western Balkan countries have been broadly viewed as a breeding ground for religious radicals and violent extremism. Tackling violent extremism was traditionally a task for security sector agencies exclusively. Nowadays, the police have assumed a crucial role in facilitating a preventive multi-stakeholder approach at the local or regional level, particularly in at risk local settings. The paper presents preliminary findings of a study involving a sample of stakeholders (e.g., police, NGOs, local government representatives, civil society members, religious communities) responsible for dealing with the task of (de)radicalisation in different Western Balkan countries. The data were collected during formal training courses carried out under the auspices of the EU-funded project *First Line* on preventing radicalisation in 2017. Survey respondents evaluated the effectiveness of different institutions which have an impact on the (de)radicalisation process.

Keywords: police, radicalisation, multi-stakeholder approach, prevention, Western Balkans

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1 Introduction

In recent years experts and practitioners alike have been taking note of the emergence of security challenges arising from radicalisation, too often leading to extreme violence. As observed by Van Rompuy et al. (2017), Europe finds itself today on the front-line in the fight against terrorism and radicalisation. The vast majority of western countries and international organisations place violent extremism among the top threats to (inter)national security, and have accordingly adopted strategies intended to prevent radicalisation.

For effective prevention, the problems of radicalisation and extremism must be understood as involving an in-

tertwinement of several core elements, the combination of which creates a virtually endless number of possibilities for an individual's radicalisation (Ranstorp, 2016). Prevention programmes must address diverse contributing factors, including different actors such as governmental policy-makers and an array of practitioners (police organisations, intelligence agencies, health care personnel, social services agencies, schools, etc.) and consider the social and cultural characteristic of local environments. In addition, it is also necessary to establish co-operation between these actors and coordinate programmes often beyond local jurisdiction and national borders. Counter radicalisation strategies must address local issues, but at the same time support ongoing regional and international strategies (Butt & Tuck, 2014).

The aim of this paper is to analyse recent efforts undertaken to prevent radicalisation in the Western Balkans, a region in Europe highly affected by extremism and radicalisation. We investigate the perceptions of several types of stakeholders drawn from five Balkan countries concerning the perceived effectiveness of various preventative actions. The goal is to identify key areas for making improvements. The paper is organised as follows; in the next section common terminology is explained, types of extremism are identified, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) is described, and the preventative role of police is presented. In Section 3 and Section 4 we describe the methodology employed and the research undertaken, while in the last section the principal

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results are set forth and their respective implications are discussed.

2 Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Unlike terrorism, the term radicalisation is of relatively recent. In the past the term was mostly used in academia, but it gained general popularity after the dramatic 2001 and 2005 terrorist attacks and with the emergence of terrorism in Western Europe. Most European countries moved to establish counter-radicalisation programmes after 2005 (Sedgwick, 2010). Although radicalisation and extremism today represent common use terminology terms, there is nonetheless a lack of consensus about their proper definition and genuine meaning (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Veldhuis & Staun, 2009).

The principles of terminological consistency require that radicalism should not be understood as or to be replaced with the terms violent extremism or terrorism. As properly noted by Borum (2011), the majority of people proclaiming radical ideas and justifications for use of violence do not engage in terrorism. Moreover, understanding the extreme stance under which radicalisation moves into violent extremism requires more than simply mastering a religion or a political doctrine.

Generally, the term radical is used as a synonym for extreme, which is in opposition to moderate or normal (Sedgwick, 2010), while radicalisation indicates a movement or a change toward a more extreme viewpoint. In the context of preventing radicalisation and subsequent terrorism, The European Commission defines radicalisation as a complex phenomenon of individuals or groups becoming intolerant with regard to basic democratic values such as equality and diversity, as well as a rising propensity to use means of force to reach political goals that negate and/or undermine democracy (European Commission, 2018). Similarly, Wilner and Dubouloz (2010) define radicalisation as a process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence. It is both a mental and emotional process that prepares and motivates an individual to pursue violent behaviour. When explaining home-grown Jihad terrorism, King and Taylor (2011) describe radicalisation as a process of psychological transformations that occur among some Muslims as they increasingly accept the legitimacy of terrorism in support of violent Jihad against Western countries. Drawing from these several definitions of key terms, radicalisation involves a shift in attitudes and beliefs about one's own group, and its relationship to other groups.

Extremism is understood as a consequence of radicalism, and is described by Neuman (2010) as opposing a society's core values and principles. This in fact could be applied to any ideology that advocates racial or religious supremacy and/or opposes the core principles of democracy and universal human rights. The term can also be used to describe the methods through which political actors attempt to realise their aims—that is, by using means that show disregard for the life, liberty, and human rights of others. Moreover, violent extremism is regarded as including, but not limited to, acts of terrorism (Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, & Caluya, 2011). Violent extremism is regarded as the willingness to use violence, or to support the use of violence, to further particular beliefs of a political, social, economic or ideological nature (De Leede, Hauptfleisch, Korolkova, & Natter, 2017). Thus, radicalisation into violent extremism refers to the processes by which people come to adopt beliefs that not only justify violence, but actually compel it, and how they progress (or not) from extremist thinking to violent action (Borum, 2011).

As Sedgwick (2010) explains, radicalisation is not the same thing as terrorism. The terrorist is presumed to be a radical, but the radical is not presumed to be a terrorist. In this context, terrorism can be seen as a consequence of radical and extreme ideals (Wright & Hankins, 2016), while radicalisation describes “what goes on before the bomb goes off” (Sedgwick, 2010). The criterion used to distinguish between these two concepts (radicalisation and violent extremism) is therefore closely related to the degree of violence employed in support of one's most extreme beliefs.

There are several conceptual models explaining the development of radicalisation, some of them describing it as a linear process composed of different consecutive phases (King & Taylor, 2011). Wiktorowicz (2005) describes radicalisation as a four-step process that leads to a person joining an extremist group. These four processes are denoted as: cognitive opening (personal crisis which makes a person receptive to extreme ideas); religious seeking (accepting extreme religious beliefs), frame alignment (alignment of extreme beliefs and worldviews with personal views), and socialization (developing a group identity with extremist group, joining the group).

Effective prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation requires that we understand them to be intertwinements of several elements, the combination of which creates a great range of possibilities for an individual's radicalisation. Such core elements include an individual's psychological traits, social support, political beliefs, ideological and religious elements, the role of culture and personality-related elements, past psychological trauma events and other psychological triggers (Ranstorp, 2016). Current theorizing highlights situ-

ational factors as the primary and in some cases the exclusive drivers of radicalisation. Sageman (2008) emphasizes the importance of interactions among like-minded people as crucial for radicalisation to occur. This factor, labelled as “mobilization through networks” phenomenon involves validating and confirming one’s ideas and interpretation of events with other radicalised people.

Prevention programs must therefore adequately address the root causes of extremism (situations and factors in local environments that encourage radicalism and could influence a person’s beliefs, ideas, attitudes and actions) through preventive measures (European Commission, 2015). Prevention of violent extremism relates to using non-coercive means that seek to address the main drivers (De Leede, Hauptfleisch, Korolkova, & Natter, 2017), while de-radicalisation can be defined as a combination of social, political, legal, educational and economic measures specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalised) individuals from crossing the thought to action line and becoming terrorists (Butt & Tuck, 2014).

2.1 Types of Radicalisation and Extremism

Several types of radicalisation can be distinguished. The most well-known types include Islamist radicalisation, right-wing radicalisation, left-wing or anarchist radicalisation, secessionist or ethno-nationalist radicalisation, and radicalisation related to the desire to resolve social issues such as environmental or animal rights issues. This categorisation of radicalisation is used by EUROPOL in its annual reports on terrorism in Europe (EUROPOL, 2016). Detailed definitions of this common typology are provided in the following paragraphs.

Religiously inspired radicalisation (e.g., Islamist radicalisation) refers to extremely violent acts committed in the name of religion. It is understood as a process through which strongly motivated individuals or groups adopt religious convictions, feelings and acts to rebel against society and their families (Bramadat & Dawson, 2014). Religious extremists reject all values and people that do not follow their religion principles, and are willing to commit violent acts and sacrifice their lives in the name of their God, in the process showing no mercy to their victims (Zaben, 2013). Islamist radicalisation, which has been one of the most noticeable types of religious extremism of the past decade, has been characterised not only by numerous terrorist attacks but also by intense efforts to recruit individuals to join the Jihad in the current areas of armed conflict (Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Lebanon, etc.). Their actions include the smuggling of recruits to such conflict areas, the facilitation of the return of fighters from

such areas, and the use of communication tools and propaganda justifying violence as a tool for achieving political goals (Kocjančič & Prezelj, 2015).

Right-wing radicalisation refers to using violence for creating a mono-ethnic and mono-confessional state or society (e.g., Blood and Honour, Forza Nuova in Italy, Sturm 34 in Germany, Soldiers of Odin). Radical right-wing organisations tend to attack left-wing institutions and their representatives (particularly on the occasion of larger left-wing events), and attack migrants and refugees. They mostly use physical violence and explosives to express their anger. Right-wing extremists contributed to the rise of Islamophobia, also through violent acts addressed against Muslims and their religious buildings. Radicalised members of right-wing organisations are often trained in various self-defence courses and learn how to handle high powered weapons (EUROPOL, 2008, 2016). Right-wing extremism is linked to fascism, racism, supremacism and ultra-nationalism. It is characterised by a violent defence of racial, ethnic or pseudo-national identities.

Left-wing radicalisation related to violence against the existing capitalist social order (e.g., Secours Rouge in Belgium). It is characterised by a large number of attacks on smaller targets (vehicles, banks, representations of political parties), mainly causing material damage; violent attack events occur particularly on the occasion of larger events, such as the G8 meetings, etc. Experts also observe the participation of left-wing extremist groups at events organised by extremist groups dedicated to a particular issue (the so-called *single-issue terrorism*). This category consists of anarchist, Maoist, Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist groups, all of which use violence on occasion to achieve their goals (Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization, 2016).

Separatist radicalisation uses violence to achieve secession or increase autonomy (e.g., ETA in Spain, IRA in the United Kingdom), and it often relies on video materials contributing to the recruitment of new members. Radical separatist groups carry out occasional attacks on symbols or representatives of the central government. In the EU, the violence caused by such groups has decreased in the past few years, but the potential of violent occurrences continues to exist (e.g., Catalonia) (Kocjančič & Prezelj, 2015).

2.2 Radicalisation in the Western Balkans

Radicalisation is always a consequence of various events. Different factors on the individual-, group- and macro-levels push and pull a person to or from a violent extremist group. Examples can include feelings of estrangement from society,

the pull of the cause, a change in group dynamics, economic deprivation, perceived injustices and even distant geopolitical events. The process of radicalisation can be accelerated by so-called catalysing factors and trigger events, situation factors that affect the thinking and behaviour of an individual (De Leede et al., 2017).

When examining the phenomenon of radicalisation in the Western Balkans (i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the FYR of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia), one ought to consider particularly (albeit not exclusively) the events that took place in this region in recent history. First, we have to mention the post-war trauma and mental health issues, mistrust and prejudice among ethnic groups, and the advent of many broken and dysfunctional families. There are also other political and economic factors, such as corrupt governments, the general lack of economic prospects and high youth unemployment (Ruge, 2017). The combination of these factors resulted in the fact that significant segments of the population lack any positive vision about their future and are highly vulnerable for radicalisation.

As Petrović (2016) reports, more conservative interpretations of Islam (the Salafist movement), as well as the region's militant form (Takfirism) first arrived in the Balkans in the early 1990s, when some 2,000 Arab Mujahedeen fighters came to fight on behalf of Bosnian Muslims during the wars in Yugoslavia. However, according to some authors (Kastrati, 2015), Islamist extremism first arrived in Albania in the late 1980s from the Middle East, along with the first pro-Iranian fundamentalist ideas, and later emerged in Bosnia. Nevertheless, the extreme form of violence used against Muslims during the conflicts of the 1990s, including the campaigns of ethnic cleansing and genocide, have coloured the post-war perceptions of the Muslim population, in some cases creating fertile grounds for recruitment into radical Islamism (Ruge, 2017). It is estimated that five to ten percent of Bosnian Muslims have become indoctrinated in more extreme forms of Islam typical of places such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Arapi, 2016; Bardos, 2014).

In the area of former Yugoslavia, Salafism is a more or less new phenomenon. According to the International Republican Institute's Center for Insights and Survey Research [IRI] data from 2017, about 15% of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina approves of the Salafist movement, while 3% approves of the use of suicide attacks (Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2017). Different intelligence sources also report that there were more than 7,000 members of the Salafist movement in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2013 (Simeunović & Dolnik, 2013).

According to Bulgaria's former chief Mufti, Nedim Gendzhev, militant Islamists in Southeastern Europe are trying to create a „fundamentalist triangle” formed by Bosnia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria's western Rhodope Mountains. Over the past several decades, the militant Islamist movement in Southeastern Europe has created a sophisticated infrastructure consisting of mosques controlled by radical clergy and of local safe havens in isolated villages where extremists live separate lives untroubled by the police, tax-collectors, or any other authorities. Although their chances of succeeding are minimal, they can nevertheless still do tremendous damage to Western security interests in the region, and to the possibilities for creating stable democratic societies in Southeastern Europe (Bardos, 2014). For example, in its report, SEERECON, *a political risk and strategic advisory firm specializing in South-eastern Europe*, estimates that out of the \$800 million of Saudi funds that have entered Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, since the end of the country's conflict, \$100 million are “untraceable”, effectively lost in a labyrinth of charity organisations and possibly used to fund Islamic extremism (Petrović, 2016).

Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania – are generally ranked among the top European “exporters” of foreign fighters to the Middle Eastern battlefields with respect to their population basis (Beslin & Ignjatijević, 2018; Petrović, 2016). According to one estimate, Bosnia has provided more volunteers per capita for the Syrian Jihad than any other country in Europe (Bardos, 2014). Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that this kind of radicalisation refers to a small fraction of the population, since there are approximately 6.4 million Muslims in the Balkans, out of which approximately 1.9 million are in Bosnia, 1.7 million in Kosovo, 1.7 million in Albania, 809,000 in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and approximately 229,000 in Serbia (Ruge, 2017). It is estimated that between 800 – 1,000 individuals from six Balkan states have gone to Syria and Iraq between 2012 and 2016 (Azinović, 2017; Ruge, 2017), mainly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Albania (Petrović, 2016). This represents approximately 0.015% of the total Muslim population of the countries concerned. When looking at the number of foreign fighters as a percentage of the entire Muslim population rather than per capita, the Muslim population in the Balkans produces a smaller percentage of foreign fighters (0.011%–0.018%) than, for example, does France (0.04%) (Azinović, 2017; Ruge, 2017).

There is no official account of how many radicalised individuals are currently present in EU Member States and posing a potential security threat. There are, however, some estimates that approximately one third of departures from the Western Balkans have returned (Azinović & Bećirević, 2017).

2.3 The Role of the Police in Preventing Radicalisation

The EU provides an important framework to help coordinate national policies, share information and determine and exchange good practices in the area of fighting violent extremism. This section provides a brief overview of EU policy in relation to preventing/countering violent extremism (PVE/CVE).

The basis of the EU's prevention work concerning radicalisation and violent extremism is the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism, adopted in 2005 and revised in 2008 and again in 2014 (Council of the European Union, 2014). According to the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating terrorism (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, 2017) prevention of radicalisation, including radicalisation online, requires a long-term, proactive and comprehensive approach. Such an approach should combine measures in the area of criminal justice with policies in the fields of education, social inclusion and integration, as well as the timely provision of effective de-radicalisation or disengagement and exit or rehabilitation programmes, including in the prison and probation context.

The strategy calls for the development of: 1) awareness-raising programmes and sector-specific training modules for first-line practitioners; 2) the involvement of and drawing on resources and expertise within civil society and the private sector to build resilience; 3) the exchange of best practices and experience with a view to developing exit programmes; 4) acquiring know-how and re-integrating former terrorists; 5) steering research to understand the phenomenon of radicalisation in an ever-evolving context; 6) ensuring coordination between academics and various first-line practitioners; and, 7) informing future policy decisions, including in the area of exit strategies and programmes (Council of the European Union, 2014).

Fighting terrorism and violent extremism involves more than surveillance and security, which are properly viewed as traditional response areas. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) brings together practitioners from across Europe working on the prevention of radicalisation (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2018). The RAN was formed as a network of front-line or grassroots practitioners from across Europe whose daily tasks involve working with individuals who have already been radicalised or are vulnerable to radicalisation. Practitioners include the police (RAN

POL working group) and prison authorities, but also those who are not traditionally involved in counter-terrorism activities such as teachers, youth workers, civil society representatives, local authorities' representatives and healthcare professionals. Within the RAN, the Police and law enforcement Working Group (RAN POL, 2018) has an important role, since police forces are a crucial actor in facilitating a preventive approach at the local or regional level. Furthermore, the police are also the leading agent for promoting a preventive multi-agency approach and maintaining cooperation between different stakeholders. This is particularly the case in local environments, where the police as a whole and police officers as individuals have a vast and strong network of contacts. Police officers know individuals in local schools, in youth centres, in healthcare and religious institutions, and are also familiar with individual families, and they are somewhat knowledgeable as well as with extreme and violent groups operating in many local environments (Lenos & Keltjens, 2016a).

In the context of extremism and terrorism prevention activities conducted in the pre-criminal stage of the radicalisation process, police initiatives are of utmost importance, especially from the perspective of modern approaches to policing (Lenos & Keltjens, 2016b). Lenos and Keltjens (2017) summarise the following tasks of the police in preventing radicalisation at the local level:

- the police possess information and data not accessible or known to other institutions;
- the police can represent a source of expertise for partners working in the local environment;
- the police are authorized to use unique measures and procedures;
- the police have a highly developed local network;
- the police are a trustworthy partner in the field of providing the security and protection of people and property, preventing crime and maintaining law and order in the community;
- the police can act as a link to other local security units and intelligence agencies; and
- the police can cooperate effectively with local authorities (municipalities).

Although the local police represent a key organisation with the great leverage for combating radicalisation and violent extremism, national prevention strategies cannot be effective without active involvement of other stakeholders. With a purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of different institutions directly involved in the current (de)radicalisation process aimed at preventing extremism/radicalisation we present preliminary findings of a study conducted on a sample of stakeholders (e.g., police, NGOs, local government

representatives) responsible for tackling (de)radicalisation in different Western Balkan countries. The data were collected during training courses carried out within the context of the EU-funded project FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalization Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region.

3 Methodology

In 2017, questionnaires were distributed to participants of various workshops carried out in five Western Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and Albania) in the framework of the *First Line* project dedicated to the training of different stakeholders (e.g., representatives from police, local governments, NGOs, education, and health) in the field of radicalisation and the strengthening of the deradicalisation/disengagement processes in the Western Balkans. Questionnaires were filled in during the first day of the training. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and participants were guaranteed anonymity.

The questionnaire was composed of several sets of questions. Respondents were asked to share information about the extent of their knowledge in the field of radicalisation and to assess the presence of various types of radicalisation in their local environments. Respondents also assessed the extent to which various stakeholders could successfully prevent radicalisation through adequate and professional conduct, and their actual likely impact on prevention. Responses to all questions were provided on a five-point scale, where 1 corresponded to the lowest possible degree (of occurrence or agreement) and 5 denoted the highest possible degree (of occurrence or agreement). Respondents also provided information regarding their work experience (length of service) and work area (local, regional or national level).

There were 205 respondents included in the analysis; 52 respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 49 from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), 35 from Serbia, 27 from Kosovo, and 42 respondents from Albania.

4 Results

Respondents were first asked about the extent of their self-assessed knowledge about extremism, violent extremism, and the process of radicalisation. They provided their responses on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 meant that they knew nothing about these phenomena and 5 meant that they had extensive knowledge about these issues. The table

below presents the results of mean values and share of those, who responded with a 4 and 5 (extensive knowledge) about the aforementioned phenomena.

Table 1: The perceived extent of respondents' knowledge in the field of extremism

Country	M/SD	% of extensive knowledge (4+5)
Bosna and Herzegovina	3.02/0.84	26.50
Serbia	3.14/1.00	37.20
FYROM	3.21/1.00	41.00
Kosovo	3.52/0.93	44.40
Albania	3.31/0.74	34.40

Table 1 clearly shows that participants believe they have relatively sound knowledge, since the mean value was higher than 3 in all countries included in the analysis. However, diverging results were observed in the area of knowledge about extreme violence; the lowest share of such respondents was from Bosnia and Herzegovina (slightly more than a quarter of respondents), while the highest share came from Kosovo (almost 45%).

Respondents were also asked about their opinion regarding the extent of presence of individual types of extremism/radicalisation in their respective countries. Respondents provided their answers on a scale ranging from 1 (not present at all) to 5 (heavily present). Results presented in Table 2 indicate that respondents from the five Balkan countries perceive about the same type of radicalism or extreme violence to be taking place, but not to the same extent in each country. Respondents in Albania stated that they were most frequently faced with religiously-inspired radicalisation; the majority of them emphasised the role of Islam (46.9% of respondents believe that Islamist radicalism is a frequent occurrence in Albania), as well as with right-wing radicalisation (18.5% of respondents selected right-wing extremism as a heavily present phenomenon). Similarly, respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that religiously-inspired radicalisation was the most frequent phenomenon (66.7% stated that religious extremism was heavily present). Apart from religious extremism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was interesting to note that respondents stated that extremism associated with nationality or ethnic origin was also very frequent, since 61.2% of respondents believed that nationalism represented a source of extreme violence.

Table 2: The perceived presence of various types of radicalism by country

		Left extremism	Right extremism	Religious extremism	Environmental extremism	Extremism linked to nationality
Albania	Mean/SD	1.75/1.08	2.07/1.14	3.41/1.07	1.81/1.21	2.20/0.92
	% (4+5)*	14.30	18.50	46.90	7.40	10.00
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Mean/SD	1.96/0.95	2.83/1.13	3.60/1.27	1.59/0.76	3.59/1.19
	% (4+5)	7.70	19.20	66.70	4.10	61.20
Kosovo	Mean/SD	2.25/0.99	2.09/1.16	3.58/0.93	2.39/1.59	2.75/1.42
	% (4+5)	7.40	13.00	45.80	26.10	37.50
FYROM	Mean/SD	2.18/1.02	2.9/1.32	3.58/1.25	1.80/1.03	4.00/0.91
	% (4+5)	7.20	33.30	51.50	6.60	75.60
Serbia	Mean/SD	2.00/0.82	3.30/1.26	3.26/1.12	1.57/0.68	3.67/0.96
	% (4+5)	14.30	46.60	45.20	3.30	57.60

* Key: % (4+5) = heavily present.

Comparable results were defined for other countries as well. In Kosovo, religion-inspired extremism and radicalisation associated with nationality or ethnic origin were believed to be the most common phenomena. Nearly half (45.8%) of the respondents participating at the workshop in Kosovo stated that religious radicalism was very frequent in their country. They also emphasised the extremism associated with nationality or ethnic origin (37.5% of respondents in Kosovo stated that this type of radicalism was extremely frequent). A similar trend can be observed in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), where respondents stated that radicalism associated with nationality or ethnic origin was the most common phenomenon (a total of 75.6%), while more than 50% of respondents in FYROM reported high frequency of religious extremism. However, unlike in the previously analysed Balkan countries, many respondents (one-third) in FYROM also reported on the frequency of right-wing extremism. Similarly, respondents in Serbia reported that right-wing extremism was extremely frequent (46.6%), followed by religion-inspired radicalism (45.2%). A majority also emphasised the presence of radicalism associated to nationality or ethnic origin (57.6%). Therefore, radicalisation inspired by religion (particularly related to Islam and partly also to Orthodox radicalism, whereas Catholicism, Judaism and Protestantism were rarely mentioned) and nationality are the most frequent phenomena occurring in the five Western Balkan countries studied. To some extent this set of findings was to be expected in the Balkans. It is interesting to note, however, that out of all Western Balkan countries, Serbia records the most diverse types of radicalism; in other countries, respondents empha-

sised one or, at most, two prevailing types of radicalisation, while respondents in Serbia reported three were extremely frequent sources of radicalisation.

Respondents were then asked to state which of the stakeholders listed in the questionnaire, and to what extent, could effectively prevent radicalisation processes from occurring in their home country through adequate/professional conduct in their field of competence. Respondents provided their answers on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 meant that the listed stakeholders could do nothing to prevent it and 5 meant that they could do a great deal.

Table 3: Perceived extent to which stakeholders could successfully prevent radicalisation

	Mean	SD	% (4+5)*
Police officers in the local environment	3.88	0.99	65.20
Specialised police departments/units	4.02	1.06	70.60
Intelligence services	4.21	0.99	80.90
State authority - the government	4.18	0.93	78.30
Authority in local communities - municipality	3.88	0.99	69.20
Management of accommodation centres	3.28	1.20	41.40
Social services – SWC	3.64	1.12	56.60
Healthcare services	3.13	1.19	38.00
Politicians, political parties	3.58	1.19	54.80
Non-governmental organisations	3.63	1.09	54.50
Schools	4.06	1.06	73.00
Media	4.33	0.86	83.00
Religious organisations	4.45	0.86	86.10

* % of respondents who strongly believe that stakeholders could do a great deal to prevent Radicalisation.

Table 3 shows that respondents stressed particularly the role of religious organisations and the media; during discussions held at workshops, where the survey was conducted, almost all participants emphasised that religious organisations were the key to success in this field and that the media, particularly the Internet, had a crucial role as well. Nevertheless, participants often stressed that religious organisations and the media can also represent a source of problems and contribute to the strengthening of radicalisation. Apart from religious leaders and the media, respondents believed that intelligence services and specialised police units were also extremely important, which means that they were, in fact, stressing the role of core government institutions. Their responses also show that the police are considered to have an important role, since 65% of respondents opined that the police can have a

significant impact on preventing radicalisation in their local environments, particularly in cooperation with authorities at the local level, as well as with schools. Among 13 listed institutions, respondents evaluated the accommodation centres and healthcare services as the least influential in terms of preventing radicalisation. Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate whether the stakeholders listed above did enough for effectively preventing extremism/radicalisation in their local environment. Respondents' answers are presented in Table 4, where differences between countries tested with ANOVA are also summarized.

Table 4: Perceived effectiveness of stakeholders in preventing extremism/radicalisation

	Mean/SD	(1+2) %	(4+5) %	ANOVA	Albania M/SD	B & H M/SD	Kosovo M/SD	FYROM M/SD	Serbia M/SD
Police officers	3.06/1.12	22.60	33.90	F = 8.12; p = 0.00**	3.16/1.17	3.04/0.94	3.96/1.05	2.51/1.14	2.85/0.87
Specialised police	3.27/1.18	24.70	42.20	F = 5.88; p = 0.00**	3.33/1.12	3.23/1.14	4.15/1.05	2.86/1.11	3.00/1.04
Intelligence services	3.20/1.14	26.60	41.10	F = 3.31; p = 0.01*	3.29/0.97	2.92/1.06	3.88/1.09	3.17/1.31	3.06/1.07
The government	2.71/1.09	45.90	23.00	F = 4.19; p = 0.00**	2.72/1.19	2.50/0.92	3.44/1.18	2.52/1.06	2.59/0.92
Municipality	2.51/1.02	49.70	13.50	F = 5.34; p = 0.00**	2.26/0.89	2.44/0.94	3.31/1.08	2.31/0.98	2.48/1.00
Accommod. centres	2.35/0.91	55.00	6.40	F = 0.31; p = 0.87	2.26/0.89	2.37/0.81	2.50/1.25	2.37/0.87	2.27/0.83
Social services – SWC	2.44/1.04	54.00	12.10	F = 4.57; p = 0.00**	2.15/0.98	2.44/0.92	3.16/1.34	2.17/0.89	2.47/0.95
Healthcare services	2.24/1.05	64.80	10.40	F = 1.65; p = 0.16	1.88/1.00	2.40/1.00	2.48/1.29	2.14/0.94	2.27/1.03
Politicians and parties	2.11/1.00	65.30	8.10	F = 0.29; p = 0.93	2.00/0.91	2.09/1.01	2.24/1.05	2.11/1.09	2.15/0.97
NGOs	2.62/1.02	45.10	17.30	F = 0.65; p = 0.62	2.69/0.99	2.55/0.99	2.88/1.10	2.54/1.09	2.52/0.93
Schools	2.59/1.07	46.30	16.00	F = 5.77; p = 0.00**	2.30/1.04	2.50/0.96	3.46/1.14	2.51/0.98	2.42/1.00
Media	2.41/1.27	58.50	5.10	F = 3.48; p = 0.01**	2.38/0.98	2.13/0.91	3.15/2.10	2.50/1.13	2.15/0.97
Religious org.	2.69/1.18	44.80	21.80	F = 4.31; p = 0.00**	2.68/0.90	2.38/0.99	3.54/1.38	2.62/1.45	2.59/0.91

* p<0.05; **p<0.01 ***1 means that they do not do enough and 5 that they do enough.

The results reported here are interesting, and generally show that respondents agree that all stakeholders could have an important impact on preventing radicalisation and that they could do a lot more than they actually do at the time of the survey. However, politicians and local authorities received the lowest score among the stakeholders considered important in the process of preventing radicalisation. In fact, respondents were not particularly pleased with the achievements of any stakeholder with the exception of police officers working in specialised police units and officials of the intelligence services. Police officers in the local environment were likewise seen as efficacies. These three stakeholders are at the same time the only ones that respondents evaluated with a score higher than 3 on a 5-point scale. As can be observed, respondents expect a lot more from national governments, management of accommodation centres, the media and social services.

Results of an ANOVA statistical analysis show that some statistically significant differences were observed regarding the described perceptions across the five countries participating in the survey. The highest mean values were observed in the evaluation of stakeholders in Kosovo, where respondents awarded high scores to quite a few stakeholders; the specialised police unit even received a score higher than 4. In principle, police officers working in local environments were evaluated positively in Albania, Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while they received a slightly lower score in Serbia and FYROM. Specialised police department responsible for tackling extreme violence received the lowest score in FYROM and the highest in Kosovo, while intelligence services were awarded the lowest score by respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Table 4 also shows that there are no differences in the poorly evaluated work of politicians and political parties between the five countries. Furthermore, survey respondents from all five analysed countries also attributed low scores to the healthcare services. Accommodation centres and NGOs also failed to reveal any statistically significant differences. With the exception of Kosovo, the media were evaluated poorly in the remaining four countries, while the same pattern can also be observed with respect to religious organisations.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The research study revealed that stakeholders who participated in EU-founded workshops dedicated to the prevention of radicalisation perceive radicalisation inspired by religion (respondents most often referred to Islam and partly also to Orthodox radicalism, whereas Catholicism, Judaism and Protestantism were rarely mentioned) and by nationality

or ethnic origin as the most frequent types of radicalisation in Balkan countries. Results of the survey show that there is a high degree of awareness of the advisability of an ongoing inter-institutional approach to preventing radicalisation in the Western Balkans. It is interesting to note that respondents placed a great deal of emphasis on the role of religious organisations and the media. Apart from religious leaders and the media, respondents believe that intelligence services and specialised police units were also extremely important, which means that they were, in fact, stressing the role of core government institutions. Their responses also show that the police are considered to occupy an important lead role, since 65% of workshop participants opined that the police can have a significant impact on preventing radicalisation in their local environments, particularly in cooperation with local authorities and schools. Respondents believe that police officers working in specialised police units and officials of intelligence services are the most efficient stakeholders when it comes to the prevention of radicalisation in the analysed countries, followed by police officers in the local environment.

Research results confirm the very premises discussed in the introductory part of this paper-i.e., that the police and similar security-based agencies/services play an important role in preventing radicalisation. Based on the change in overall terrorism tackling doctrine, a move from a very repressive to a very preventive strategy means that police organisations are challenged with new expectations. In addition to traditional crime prevention and general maintenance of public order, the police is becoming an interconnector or facilitator for multi-stakeholder cooperation at the local level. Police officers within community policing have an important role in preventing radicalisation leading to extremist acts and the emergence of terrorism, but they must be adequately trained for such activities. The RAN POL network identified four key elements which must be included in education and training programmes for police officers working in the field of preventing radicalisation:

- understanding and recognising the process of radicalisation, the areas where radical groups develop (locations) and their weaknesses;
- exercising control in the community and community policing, which is based on a network of trust within a community;
- understanding the diversity of multicultural society, guaranteeing equal treatment of all individuals within a community and respecting human rights; and
- understanding that the police are a crucial link in inter-institutional cooperation. Establishing and supporting cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations in charge of the problem (Lenos & Keltjens, 2016b).

Police officers working at the local level should be aware of the important role they play in influencing the perception of radicalisation in the entire population. However, in order to be able to meet the expectations and successfully conduct various preventative activities, police officers must have the necessary competences for recognising different radical and extremist ideologies, groups and processes. At the same time, it must be pointed out that it is not necessarily police officers, but rather individuals from the local environment that are the main source of information and data regarding the development of radicalisation. Individuals living and conducting their day-to-day routines in the local environment are most familiar with the goings-on in that environment.

The results of the survey show that in the Western Balkans there are numerous stakeholders that could do a good deal to prevent radicalisation than they actually do. Due to their previous experience and competence, police forces in the countries of the Western Balkans must help to overcome these shortcomings, facilitate better coordination and should be able to adopt their integrative role and act as coordinators. In fact, inter-institutional cooperation would probably be one of the few effective methods for preventing such security risks, particularly in the Western Balkan countries, which have had to and will continue to have to tackle the issues of violent radicalisation.

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Preprečevanje radikalizacije na Zahodnem Balkanu: vloga policije v večdeležniškem pristopu

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Radikalizacija in ekstremizem, ki lahko vodita v nasilni ekstremizem, predstavljata pomembni varnostni grožnji na Zahodnem Balkanu. V zadnjih desetletjih so bile države Zahodnega Balkana pogosto označene kot območje s pojavi verske radikalizacije in nasilnega ekstremizma. Obvladovanje nasilnega ekstremizma se je v preteklosti tradicionalno umeščalo pod izključno pristojnost nacionalnih varnostnih agencij, medtem ko je v sodobnem času policija prevzela ključno vlogo pri implementaciji preventivnega večdeležniškega pristopa na lokalni in regionalni ravni, zlasti na ogroženih lokalnih območjih. V prispevku predstavljamo preliminarne ugotovitve študije o učinkovitosti preprečevanja radikalizacije, ki temelji na vzorcu deležnikov (npr. policija, nevladne organizacije, predstavniki lokalnih oblasti, člani civilne družbe, verske skupnosti), odgovornih za naslavljanje (de)radikalizacije v različnih državah Zahodnega Balkana. Podatki so bili zbrani v letu 2017 med izvajanjem formalnih tečajev usposabljanja pod okriljem projekta *First Line* za preprečevanje radikalizacije, ki ga financira Evropska unija. Deležniki so ocenjevali učinkovitost različnih institucij, ki imajo vpliv na proces (de)radikalizacije.

Ključne besede: policija, radikalizacija, večdeležniški pristop, prevencija, Zahodni Balkan

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