

SPOTLIGHT

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PRISONS



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EDITORIAL

The number of individuals incarcerated in prisons across Europe for violent extremism and terrorist-related offences – including both those convicted of domestic terrorism and returned foreign terrorist fighters – has increased in recent years. The management and rehabilitation of these individuals both during incarceration and after release is therefore one of the biggest P/CVE challenges facing EU Member States today.

This work is both complex, has multiple challenges and requires multi-stakeholder cooperation. The disengagement and rehabilitation of violent extremists within prisons is of primary concern. Meanwhile prisons face a number of related challenges, including the radicalisation of prisoners detained for non-terrorist related offences, even cases of radicalisation of prison staff, and the handling of female prisoners.

The disengagement, rehabilitation and ultimately reintegration of individuals convicted of terrorism-related offences requires the coordination between police, prison and probation services. It involves the participation of a number of individuals and organisations, including intervention providers, psychiatrists, prison chaplains and many more.

Within this context, this edition of the RAN Practitioners Spotlight magazine looks at some of the key issues facing prisons today – such as the management of risk, the training of prison staff, the handling of female prisoners and the need for a prison-exit continuum – and hears from some of the people working in them. Within this Spotlight you can also find links to various publications and products produced by RAN Practitioners on the subject.

As always, we want to hear from you! If you would like to contribute to future editions of Spotlight, or if you have ideas for an article, interview or feature, please get in touch with the RAN Practitioners communications team at ran@radaradvies.nl

RAN Practitioners Staff

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ARTICLE: **THE RADICALISATION CHALLENGE IN PRISON**

**Diletta
BERARDINELLI**

The multi-faceted role that the prison service can play is very important. It can generate discussion about the extent to which radicalisation to terrorism or violence occurs or grows in prisons and the potential threats to the security and safety of the society as a whole. Concerns about the perceived potential for violent radicalisation in prisons seems to guide public debate. But in fact there is a distinct lack of empirical and qualitative data to help thoroughly understand whether an individual's radicalisation started, was accelerated or otherwise reinforced in places for detention...

There is no single profile of a radicalised or violent extremist – the range of people becoming involved in such activities is broad and heterogeneous and the reasons why individuals radicalise vary greatly. The possible drivers of violent radicalisation are various and complex, combining differently in each individual case, such as a personal form of hatred and revenge for a failed process of social inclusion in European cities, or hatred coming from a wider range of geopolitical reasons.

A new situation that has been emerging in many EU Member States is the increased prosecution of women for terrorist activities in Syria and Iraq. The majority of individuals coming back now or who will come back in the future are female, and often travel with children. Therefore, the question of how to deal with imprisoned mothers and their children is increasingly becoming a challenge. Last but not least the parenthood requires a careful approach in order to protect the children's rights to maintain relations with their parents and at the same time not to grow up in a prison facility.

The rising numbers of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) is a challenge in the prison context, as they are not an easy target group to work with. Dealing with their reintegration and rehabilitation puts a lot of pressure on practitioners because in many cases FTFs have burned their family and community ties. This means that rehabilitation and reintegration efforts may be more difficult as family members or peers cannot be included in the process. As a stable social network is key for rehabilitation, this is a major challenge. Moreover, stigmatisation can hinder the reintegration immensely when there is scepticism and polarisation in communities or in media reporting.

The question regarding citizenships or possible deportations for individuals who have dual citizenships is also topical. All these aspects constitute major challenges for prison staff and leadership who have to deal with a large spectrum of issues on a daily basis such as monitoring, risk assessment, educational

and treatment programmes, multi-agency collaboration within prisons and with probation. The highest common denominator of all these challenges lies in an organisation's management, the economic and human resources available and in the trust atmosphere perceived in prisons.

Those who work in prison or probation are aware of the importance of building a relationship, of engaging with prisoners in setting up a committed disengagement process.

One of the current challenges for prison staff is to understand which methodology is the most effective and efficient to tackle violent extremist offenders (VEOs). Beyond the various educational activities that can be more or less productive, but which last only for a period of time, what is the basic ingredient that makes possible a permanent healthy climate – from a P/CVE perspective – within the prison? The sociologist Alison Liebling identified it with the Intelligence Trust, using the concept developed by Onora O'Neill. This concept brings back to the more common prison language but still unclear in the application of Dynamic Security's definition.

The concept of Dynamic Security was first introduced in prison terminology in 1985 by Ian Dunbar, the former Director of the Inmate Administration for the Prison Service in the UK. Dunbar had served in different roles, including that of director, at five challenging prisons. Hence, his approach is not a naïf and theoretical one, but rather fully grounded in his own 35-year experience. He developed such a revolutionary concept as a reaction to the prison riots of the 1970s and 1980s and the problem of overcrowded prisons. He stated: "when relationship and individualism come together in planned (and purposeful) activity, whether in a high or low security setting, the result is a relaxed and better ordered prison."

Nowadays, how is this concept conceived and how is it applied in P/CVE? Is it useful for risk assessment and for monitoring VEO's in order to avoid false or non-compliance? There is a growing awareness that its correct, though complex, application has

positive impacts for both security and treatment purposes. RAN Practitioners in several meetings dealt with such topics and described positive prison experiences in its use.¹

Beyond all these challenges, such as developing a joint multidisciplinary approach, staff training, promoting a healthy prison environment, we shall not overlook the prison staff effort for the construction of tailored disengagement approaches for VEO's. Interactive dialogue with radicalised individuals, engaging with them on their own values and their society vision, has led to success in several European and international P/CVE programmes – through the support of the local communities in countering extreme narratives and promoting coexistence and respect for differences.

As Irving Stone states: “Crime was not a cause, but a result; the prisons were the open sores of a diseased social body”. So to sum up, one of the major challenges is to cure this social disease before violent polarisation creates increasingly more clashes and the dominance of a one-size fits all economic and social mindset. Intelligent trust for an intelligent world inside and outside prisons is important for a common sense of universal citizenship and to build upon the respect of all the cultural, religious and economic differences.

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1. For a deeper insight look at: 'Returning to Extremism: An Overview on Terrorist Reoffending and Current Challenges', RAN Practitioners by Susanna Z. Papp, RAN Expert Pool Member, and Robert Örell, RAN REHAB co-leader. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/publications/returning-extremism-overview-terrorist-reoffending-and-current-challenges-october-2021_en

Radicalisation Awareness Network (2020). Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Prison and Probation Interventions. RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/collection-inspiring-practices_en).

RAN PRISONS Working Group Meeting, 10 December 2020, Conclusion Paper “Risk and Needs Assessment Tools”(https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2021-08/ran_prisons_risk_and_needs_assessment_tools_10122020_en.pdf).

“As Irving Stone states: “Crime was not a cause, but a result; the prisons were the open sores of a diseased social body”. So to sum up, one of the major challenges is to cure this social disease before violent polarisation creates increasingly more clashes and the dominance of a one-size fits all economic and social mindset.”

ARTICLE: **RISK ASSESSMENT AND ITS MANAGEMENT IN PRISON**

**Carlos
FERNANDEZ**

Risk assessment, especially in the prison context, seems more relevant now than ever before. It provides deeper knowledge about individuals under observation and important information that can inform the design of targeted interventions. Dynamic Security – as explained in the previous article – and disengagement interventions in particular, may benefit from this practice...



Violent extremism is a current threat for most EU Member States, and risk assessment in structured settings may facilitate the prevention of further radicalisation. Challenges include the validation of such instruments, the use of relevant information and the way we should manage risk as something dynamic and changeable over time.

1. Key ideas about risk assessment

When we talk about risk assessment, specifically in the field of violent extremism (VE), some previous and practical considerations should be made:

- Risk is something changeable due to many reasons. This is why periodical assessments are recommended and static pictures should be avoided.
- Indicators of risk, usually dynamic, should be turned into intervention targets when possible. Models such as Risk Needs-Responsivity support this idea.
- How risk is reported – avoiding oversimplifications and providing concrete pieces of information – is something to have in mind. The more information is not always the better.
- External triggers cannot always be controlled, and they play a key role in most cases. Exploring the social environment of the individual is always necessary, as it is the place where he or she will return after release from prison.
- Mathematical estimations of the risk are not recommended. The interpretation of risk should be done by people – as per the framework of recommended approaches, such as the Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ).

Although some good instruments are in use, something should be clear: not all countries have the same needs or social situation. Besides, the way prison services work also differ, so the “one-size-fits-all” approach needs to be avoided.

Risk assessment, when applied to VE, needs to make a difference among target groups to be evaluated: recruiters, terrorists, vulnerable individuals, radicalised ones and/or radical violent people seem to have differences related to their mindset and behavioural tendencies. Whether to consider protective factors, or not, is also worth discussing.

2. Practical considerations

When delivering risk assessment, some practical considerations can be made in order to make the best of the process.

Firstly, the type of assessment must be decided. There are good tools in use, but most of them require previous training and/or legal licenses. Here, local and particular needs must be analysed: Why do we need a risk assessment instrument? For what purpose? Are we to develop our own assessment tool? In this case, time is needed, and questions about validation and effectiveness will arise.

In most cases, information about risk and variables of concern do not need a validated tool, and prison services may develop their own evaluation protocols. Collecting relevant pieces of information effectively is key.

Secondly, no risk assessment, in any of its forms, should be delivered without a clear understanding of intended goals: Are we to predict behaviour? Is it about getting a more-in-depth understanding of dynamic variables of the individual? Are we to measure levels of radicalisation or is it about exploring different profiles to carry out specific actions at the prison level? We need to decide aims.

Thirdly, who will be in charge of the assessment? Security and rehabilitation departments should go hand in hand, as most indicators may involve not only psychological components, but also security components (content of intercepted communications or result of cell searchings). Also, it seems relevant to select “informative factors” rather than general and

simple ones. In other words, “tendency to isolation”, “sadness”, “vulnerability”, “feelings of grievance” are good factors, but extremely common amongst the prison population. They do not really make a difference. However, others such as “social and external environment related to extremism”, “feelings of indifference towards terror acts” or “the individual wishes to join a particular group” really provide useful information.

Fourthly, observation needs to be considered as an essential source of information. Reluctancy levels are well-known, instruments will never provide all information required and human judgement may lead to false positive or negative cases. Although this may lead to longer periods of assessment, what the individual says needs to be compared to his/her daily and real behaviour.

3. Management of the risk

Finally, how to manage the risk must be addressed. At this point, there are some topics worth discussing:

- Are security measures based on the estimated risk? Classification, replacement, isolation of individuals or avoiding certain contacts amongst them are some examples. Risk should be a guidance for some actions.
- Are disengagement programmes delivered according to targets provided by previous assessments? It seems important to tailor interventions to concrete needs, deciding intensity of such interventions according to the risk.
- How is the risk reported? Who will share information and for what? It is necessary to discuss which pieces of information can or cannot be shared.
- Is any type of information given to the individual? Here, professionals need to balance pros and cons: explaining the nature of the assessment might increase reluctancy and suspicion, but it is also true that sincere and trustful

approaches might be positive, even although not all information needs to be shared.

- Finally, it seems paramount not to label individuals once risk is assessed. Risk is something dynamic and static pictures may lead to unfair labelling.

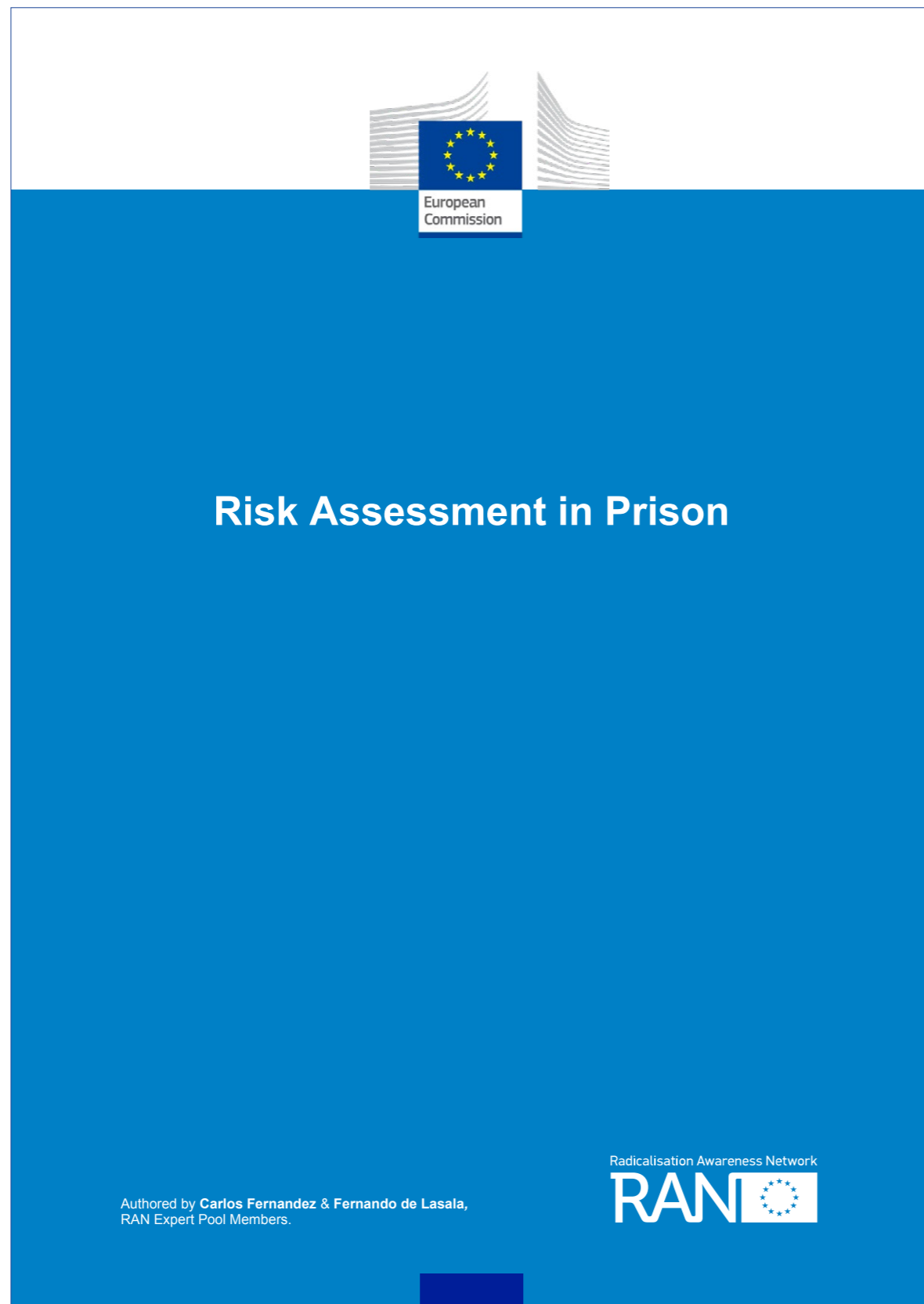
4. Challenges for the future

The outlook for the future and some of the challenges we face concerning risk assessment can be briefly mentioned:

- The validation of tools and instruments, if only to know what we measure, is something worth exploring.
- The cooperation with external researchers and academics in order to get accurate and reliable instruments is absolutely recommended.
- Training of prison staff is paramount. They are the first to detect behaviors of concern: what is or not relevant and how to report it are topics of interest.
- Efforts aimed at developing a European risk assessment instrument, with adaptations to particular national needs, is something well worth discussing, since all EU Member States face similar problems concerning extremism.
- Disengagement programmes should benefit from previous risk assessments: risk levels and criminogenic needs are elements to be considered when an intervention is carried out.

Carlos Fernández Gómez is a Spanish prison psychologist and member of the RAN Pool of Experts.

A paper produced by RAN Practitioners in 2021, provides a picture of risk assessment tools used in EU Member States both in the prison and security contexts. It focuses on existing instruments, their content and how they are used at the moment. The goals of such assessment and the challenges for the future in this field are also mentioned. You can read the paper in full [here](#).



Risk Assessment in Prison

European Commission

Radicalisation Awareness Network
RAN

Authored by Carlos Fernandez & Fernando de Lasala,
RAN Expert Pool Members.

RISK ASSESSMENT IN PRISON

Aims of the tool

The Dutch Police describes the IR46 as an early warning method for professionals within the security field, aimed at recognising signs of Islamist extremism in individuals and determining to what extent someone is “ready” to exert violence (the degree of radicalisation) ⁽⁵⁸⁾. Thus, the goal of this tool is not to predict but to assess the current risk. For that purpose, the IR46 provides a general outlook of the information available about an individual ⁽⁵⁹⁾, from which professionals can estimate if there is actual cause for concern and, if so, take proper action ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

Target population

The IR46 is used pre-crime, focuses on individuals (from 12 years and older) in the general population, and is specific to Islamist radicalisation only ^(61, 62).

Main characteristics and structure

This tool adopts an SPJ approach and consists of four phases (Preliminary; Social estrangement; Jihadisation; Jihad/Extremism) with 46 indicators connected to two axes: “Ideology” and the “Social context” of the examined person ⁽⁶³⁾. These two axes operate in parallel and, depending on each case, “ideology-related indicators” are more pronounced than “social context indicators”, or the other way round ⁽⁶⁴⁾.

Table 1: IR46 output outcome

	Ideology	Social context
Phases	Jihad/Extremism	
	Jihadisation	
	Social estrangement	
	Preliminary phase	

The model comprises unlimited protective indicators ⁽⁶⁵⁾ and the assessor can also add case-specific factors to the evaluation when considered appropriate ⁽⁶⁶⁾.

The IR46 does not rely exclusively on objective data; information based on the “gut feeling” of a police officer can also be incorporated ⁽⁶⁷⁾. It must be noted that this instrument does not require a minimum level of information ⁽⁶⁸⁾; more information might result in scoring more factors, but more factors do not necessarily represent a higher level of extremism. The factors correlate either to phase or degree of radicalisation ⁽⁶⁹⁾.

All indicators are considered dynamic and changeable over time; in fact, the validity of this instrument depends, amongst other factors, on how frequently reassessment takes place ⁽⁷⁰⁾. In that sense, it is

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Politie Nederland, *Islamitisch*.
⁽⁵⁹⁾ Lloyd, *Extremist Risk Assessment*, p. 19.
⁽⁶⁰⁾ Heide et al., *The Practitioner’s Guide*, p. 16, p. 18.
⁽⁶¹⁾ Politie Nederland, *Islamitisch*.
⁽⁶²⁾ Heide et al., *The Practitioner’s Guide*, p. 16.
⁽⁶³⁾ Lloyd, *Extremist Risk Assessment*, p. 15.
⁽⁶⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
⁽⁶⁵⁾ *Ibid.*
⁽⁶⁶⁾ Heide et al., *The Practitioner’s Guide*, p. 15.
⁽⁶⁷⁾ Heide et al., *The Practitioner’s Guide*, p. 15.
⁽⁶⁸⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
⁽⁶⁹⁾ Lloyd, *Extremist Risk Assessment*, p. 20.
⁽⁷⁰⁾ Heide et al., *The Practitioner’s Guide*, p. 21.

ARTICLE: TRAINING OF PRISON STAFF: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Nadya
RADKOVSKA

With the growing diversity of European society, sensitivity and understanding of cultural and religious norms, values and expressions is increasingly important for good prison management...

At the moment, there is great disparity in the levels of training of such professionals, both in quality and quantity, between EU Member States. . For example, the duration of induction training for trainees to become correctional officers ranges from several weeks in some EU Member States to three years in others.

We can also observe different understanding and recognition about the importance of staff training, especially regarding topics which do not represent major problem or challenge. The challenge posed by Violent Extremist Organisations (VEO's) and radicalisation is uneven among EU Member States, but it is clear that their number is rising rapidly across the EU as a whole. Due to the great threat posed by radicalisation and its ever-changing and dynamic processes of in prisons, the need for ongoing training for prison staff is crucial, both for the security of prisoners, staff and society itself.

Training allows prison staff and their partners to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitude to perform their duties well and with respect for the rights and dignity of detainees and to feel safer.

Training helps to work not only with those inmates already radicalised (specifically violent extremist and terrorist offenders and foreign terrorist fighters), but also to be able to detect early signs of radicalisation in vulnerable inmates, and be able to respond in a preventive way. For this reason, a recent RAN PRISONS Working Group meeting addressed the key skills and knowledge required for prison staff and their cooperation partners to be well equipped for successfully engaging in P/CVE work in prisons.²

The necessary knowledge and skills of staff involved in tasks related to preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation include: the ability to challenge problematic thinking in a constructive, rather than confrontational manner. This in order to develop a collaborative relationship with prisoners and to demonstrate resilience, empathy and sensitivity

2. RAN PRISONS Working Group meeting (2020). Conclusions paper, 'How to effectively train prison staff and partners for P/CVE' https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/publications/ran-prisons-how-effectively-train-prison-staff-and-partners-pcve-online-meeting-04-05-november-2021_en

to prisoners' values, beliefs and backgrounds. It should also include at least a general awareness or, where required, more advanced training on the phenomenon and dynamics of radicalisation leading to terrorism or violence, the conditions conducive to it in prisons, the human rights implications and general education measures. It is essential - when designing the training - to select the relevant practice and methodology inspired by the specific needs of staff involved. Some key elements should be taken into consideration when planning the training agenda: geographical scope, methodology used, target audience, transferability, sustainability and commitment from relevant partners.

Prison staff may, in turn, benefit from training delivered by external actors on many different topics. Examples are: how to confront and address manifestations of intolerance, including racial discrimination, supremacist and ethno-nationalist views, and how to promote intercultural and interfaith mediation, as well as language and other relevant training. Training should also enable staff to develop resilience to potential pressure leading to radicalisation (Council of Europe Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism).

Nadya Radkovska is the co-lead of the RAN Prison Working and Head of the International Cooperation and Training of Staff Department, General Directorate "Execution of Sentences", Bulgaria.

A recent paper provides RAN practitioners with insights about the key skills and knowledge required for prison staff and their partners to be well equipped for successfully engaging in P/CVE work in prisons. The paper provides a guide for how to design training and makes a series of recommendations about how to deliver it. You can read the paper in full [here](#).

Radicalisation Awareness Network



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29/11/2021

CONCLUSION PAPER

RAN PRISONS Meeting

04-05 November 2021, Digital Meeting

How to effectively train prison staff and partners for P/CVE

Key outcomes

Training prison staff and their partners (such as probation officers, health and social workers, law enforcement, CSOs, local administration, and religious counsellors) on preventing and countering violent extremism is essential. Not just to be equipped to work with those inmates already radicalised (specifically VETOs and FTFs), but also to be able to detect early signs of radicalisation in vulnerable inmates and be able to respond in a preventive way. For this reason, the RAN PRISONS Working Group meeting addressed the key skills and knowledge required for prison staff and their partners to be well equipped for successfully engaging in P/CVE work in prisons. The digital meeting gathered 22 practitioners working in or with prisons who have either designed, delivered or participated in P/CVE training over the past three years. The target audience of this paper includes this same group, as well as administrators, researchers, and policymakers who want to create more effective P/CVE trainings for the prison environment. Several of the most important outcomes of the meeting to be considered are listed below.

- Every prison is different. Thus, **P/CVE training for prison staff and partners needs to be customised** to the specific context the recipients are working in. Not just with regards to the given national P/CVE context, but also considering regional differences and even specificities of individual prisons and characteristics of inmates.
- P/CVE training for the prison environment **cannot easily be differentiated** along the lines of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention but should always cover both the relevant personal skills and knowledge of both the phenomenon and the institutional structures set up to deal with P/CVE.
- **General P/CVE awareness training** should be provided to all staff in prisons so that everyone involved *speaks the same language*. More specialised P/CVE trainings for different professions within the prison environment should build on this.
- **P/CVE training should not be considered a one-time event**. A pre-assessment, as well as the chance for the recipients to reflect on the training later, should be considered from the outset (including supervision). This also includes the consideration that oftentimes when funding from institutions ends, training ends. This means that investing in long-term processes should therefore be considered.
- The **potential radicalisation of staff members who are dealing with VETOs** is a topic that should not be neglected and considered in the context of designing P/CVE training.

Radicalisation Awareness Network
RAN
Practitioners

CONCLUSION PAPER
How to effectively train prison staff and partners for P/CVE
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Relevant practices

1. **Legato Prevention – Competence Centre for religiously justified radicalisation in the judicial sector (Germany)** is a project offering various types of P/CVE trainings for the judicial sector. Target groups include general law enforcement services, prison staff and probation officers. Each group may receive specialised and/or intensive training.
2. **R2Pris (Belgium)** is a project co-financed by the ERASMUS+ programme. It offers a multi-level radicalisation prevention certification and RRAP, a Radicalisation Risk-Assessment in Prisons toolset as well as online training solutions.
3. **R4JUST (Portugal)** is a radicalisation prevention competences development programme for justice professionals.
4. The **INTEGRA project (France)** focuses on the prevention of radicalisation within probation settings.

Follow up

An overview paper with an inventory of existing training programmes, including case studies and evaluations would be a helpful product. This could be drafted in collaboration with EPTA / Europris.

One suggestion by practitioners was to investigate the possibility of developing a curriculum for a basic but customisable Pan-European P/CVE training, as well as to gather effective training materials that could be used by colleagues in other countries.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK



Violence
Prevention Network

FEATURE

Ariane WOLF

Founded in 2004 in Berlin, Violence Prevention Network (VPN) is one of the largest civil society organisations engaged in preventing and countering violent extremism in Germany, with over 120 practitioners, researchers and advisers in 10 regional offices across Germany and abroad...

VPN has worked with over 1,800 individual cases of radicalised people with an Islamist extremist and right-wing extremist background within prisons - and many more outside prison - to change violent behaviour and extremist mindsets.

Specifically, VPN works with, supports and trains public authorities, prison and probation services, police and security actors and civil society practitioners to facilitate effective prevention work. Its case management process facilitates targeted cooperation between security and non-security stakeholders on a daily basis, based on joint needs and risk assessments, security protocols, and effective communication and decision-making for tailored interventions.

In prisons, VPN supports and facilitates joint case conferences, assesses rehabilitation needs and evaluates risks of recidivism among Violent Extremist and Terrorist Organisations along the prison-exit continuum. It provides training for prison and probation staff and other first-line practitioners on issues of good prison management, including human rights and rule of law evaluation.

VPN's 'deradicalisation programme' in prisons aims to trigger disassociation from violence-affirming and extremist attitudes and violent behaviour. Specifically, it seeks to teach participants to recognise the dignity and integrity of others, use non-violent ways of resolving conflict, take responsibility for their actions and future planning, and distance themselves from extremist and anti-democratic ideologies.

An essential pre-requisite for the success of the programme is the relationship work with the participants. The programme is designed to place all participants on an equal footing. Intercultural competence, empathy for life stories and experiences of the participants, along with absolute transparency with regard to the dissemination of information are important for building trust.

Deradicalisation is only possible through trust and mutual appreciation. Therefore, participants in training are not reduced to their crime, but treated as individuals, with unique strengths and weaknesses. The trainers speak at eye-level but never shy away from taboo topics. They allow conflict-laden discourse, so they can reflect on it together and generate new perspectives.

Participation in the programme is based on a voluntary principle. Although participation in the programme is often mandated in the correctional plan, the willingness to participate is strongly promoted by the level of awareness and the positive ratings of former participants. In correctional facilities where VPN has been operating for a number of years, the inmates know that participating in the programme has a positive impact on their personal development as well as their life after prison.

The programme is delivered in three phases: 1. Training; 2. Transition management; and, 3. Stabilisation coaching. The training phase, which consists of over 23 sessions across four to six months in prison, is the core of the programme. The training aims to help participants to understand one's own history, develop an independent identity and develop a safety plan.

You can find out more information on VPN's deradicalisation programme [here](#).

Interview: 10 questions with Lotta Carlsson



We spoke with Lotta Carlsson, from the Deaconess Foundation in Finland, and asked her ten quick questions about her organisation and the work it does in supporting practitioners prisons.

1. What does it mean to be an exit worker? Well, exit work supports individuals to deradicalise and disengage from violent organisations, movements and ideologies. So practically speaking, the main role of an exit worker is to talk with clients, deliver intervention activities and help individuals to leave extremist groups.

2. What does the day-to-day of an exit worker look like? The role of an exit worker encompasses a lot. A normal day can include everything from direct client work, consultation work, information gathering and cooperation with other relevant actors, organisations, authorities and communities, to training those working with violent extremists, and having discussions and conducting counselling with the individuals themselves.

3. Can you tell me a bit about Deaconess Foundation and the challenge in Finland? The Deaconess Foundation Finland is funded by the European Commission's Internal Security Fund (ISF), as well as from Finnish Government ministries. The organisation has around 70 projects with different vulnerable groups, including a number of initiatives which provide support to practitioners working in prisons.

4. What work do you do in prisons? We work mostly with the prison exit workers. Our role is to support them and ensure that the work they have started in prison continues outside of prison. So, we have regular meetings with them, we discuss individual cases, and connect work inside and outside of prison to ensure a strong continuum from imprisonment to release.

5. What is the role of an exit worker in prison? An exit worker in prison works directly with radicalised prisoners. They provide support, training and counselling to help them to disengage and deradicalise them from violent extremist ideologies. This is often based on client needs, trauma and identity development. Exit workers also have conversations around their interests and they discuss their trauma in order to build rapport and establish a long term relationship based on trust.

6. And where does the Deaconess Foundation come in? The Deaconess Foundation in Finland works with these exit workers, to provide them with the support and guidance they need to do their work. We also support them to hand over their clients to us upon release, or a bit before, in order to ensure a smooth transition. And thirdly, we help them to prepare the prisoners for release.

7. How do you build trust with clients? It's long term work. It's about meeting the needs of the client, who, of course, are usually quite sensitive, particularly to cultural, historical and gender issues. So you have to be present, you have to find time to meet them, you have to be transparent with them – 'empowerment, voice and choice'. Understanding of the different ideologies, political or religious is vital. You need to pay attention to protective factors which offers opportunities for more effective case management. And you have to ensure that interventions are trauma informed.

8. What are the biggest challenges you face? In terms of exit work, the challenge is often to identify and engage the leader of an extremist movement. If you notice that you get the leader's trust, then you might get the whole group to disengage. It's quite an amazing feeling when you know that this might really help national security.

9. What's the most rewarding part of your work? When you work over a long period of time with a client, you build their trust. By becoming an object of safety for that person, you can work more deeply and have greater impact. It is very rewarding. When this happens then often there is suddenly a change in that person's attitude or behaviour.

10. Any final thoughts? Exit work is very client focused. You need to understand the processes of change that a person goes through. It is necessary to move away from counter narratives, and not directly challenge the ideology, but move to a more holistic approach. If you take a look at prison work in general, you can see how more and more penitentiary institutions talk about trauma informed prison work. So exit work is sort of only following the bigger trends. You cannot just disengage from an ideology without 'feeling' the change.

“We work mostly with the prison exit workers. Our role is to support them and ensure that the work they have started in prison continues outside of prison. So, we have regular meetings with them, we discuss individual cases, and connect work inside and outside of prison to ensure a strong continuum from imprisonment to release.”

RAN FILM
REHABILITATION IN PRISONS

RAN Practitioners met with two practitioners to talk to us about the work they do in rehabilitating offenders convicted of terrorism-related offences in prisons. Drawing from their experiences of working both inside and outside of prison they talk to us about the rehabilitation journey, from detention to preparation for release, giving insight into different approaches taken in France and Croatia respectively. They describe some of the challenges of this work and how to overcome them, the choices that offenders can make and what happens after release. You can watch the film in full [here](#).


SPOTLIGHT
RAN FILM

AUG 2022
PRISONS





036-037



Radicalisation Awareness Network



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STUDY VISIT

06/01/2022
CONCLUSION PAPER
RAN Study Visit to Paris
7 – 8 December 2021, Online

RAN Study Visit to Paris on ‘Effective management of the prison-exit continuum’


Key outcomes

France is among the European Union (EU) Member States confronting challenges posed by a large number of violent and extremist terrorist offenders (VETOs) in custody. As of 2021, records showed 450 prisoners convicted for terrorist offences and 640 prisoners convicted for non-terrorist offences, as well as 670 former offenders released on bail or parole¹. There are also about 120 radicalised and terrorist offenders who were released between 2019 and 2021², while 130 will be released by 2024. With the management needs of the prison-exit process continuing to grow in importance for France, the prison administration has put in place a policy to fight radicalisation. The policy is structured along three axes: detecting, evaluation and preventing. The study visit to Paris provided participants the chance to learn about France’s policy in detail and engage in discussions with both the prison officials and the practitioners who engage with radicalised and terrorist offenders on a daily basis. The main points that emerged over the course of the study visit are listed below.


- **Evaluation and risk assessment in prison are conducted in a holistic manner** by different professionals, to gain understanding of the individual’s needs, resources and vulnerabilities. Based on this assessment, not only the risk is determined, but also the nature of the follow-up support needed.
- This holistic approach to both evaluation and care management is provided by **a multi-disciplinary team**, consisting of prison officers, psychologists, educators and cultural and religious mediators, including external consultants.
- **Religious and intercultural mediation** play a central role in the prison and probation’s deradicalisation approach, as well as within the PAIRS resocialisation programme.
- **Building trust and creating authenticity in the relationship with the inmates** is a key aspect in deradicalisation work but presents a major challenge. Risk assessment tools are helping professionals in the evaluation process, but a significant part of the work is related to creating trust between the inmate and the intervention team.

¹ Numbers provided by the French Ministry of Justice.
² RAN Conclusion paper: Radicalised and Terrorist Reoffenders, 2021 and Fatima Lahnait, [Combating radicalisation in France: from experimentation to professionalisation](#). 2021

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CONCLUSION PAPER
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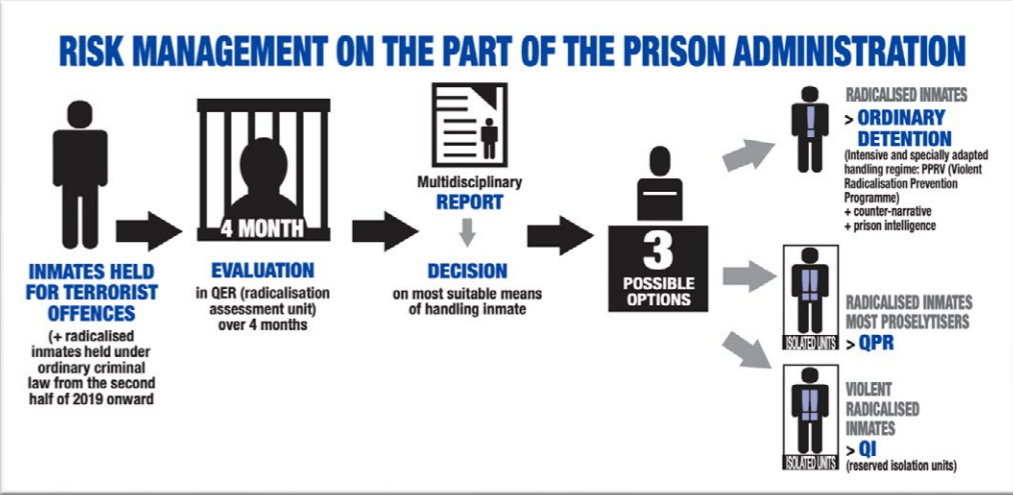
- **Civil society organisations** providing deradicalisation support outside prison, particularly after release (such as the PAIRS programme), are considered partners and **a complementary service** to the prison and probation efforts, working towards the same goal.
- **Gender-sensitive approaches are necessary** when extending the existing offer to detained women, acknowledging their specific needs. Addressing the role of parenthood for both mothers and fathers in custody is crucial.

This paper summarises the main insights gained about the French policy on effectively managing the prison-exit continuum. It presents the approach in detail, highlighting inspiring practice as well as gaps and challenges that emerged during discussions. Finally, recommendations and further reading are presented.

Highlights of the discussion

In 2019, the French prison administration started a new radicalisation risk management process aimed at inmates held for terrorist offences. Since mid-2019, this also includes radicalised inmates held under ordinary criminal law. Inmates held under ordinary criminal law are referred to the evaluation process by the prison intelligence unit. The entire process is depicted in the graphic below.

RISK MANAGEMENT ON THE PART OF THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION




Source: *Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalisation Media Kit 2019, p. 19*. Note: since publication of the Media Kit in 2019, terminology has changed. Detainees located in QPR are referred to by the prison administration as ‘detainees ideologically convinced but accessible to care’, while detainees located in QI are referred to as ‘detainees presenting a high risk of proselytising or taking violent action’.

Managing radicalised inmates in custody

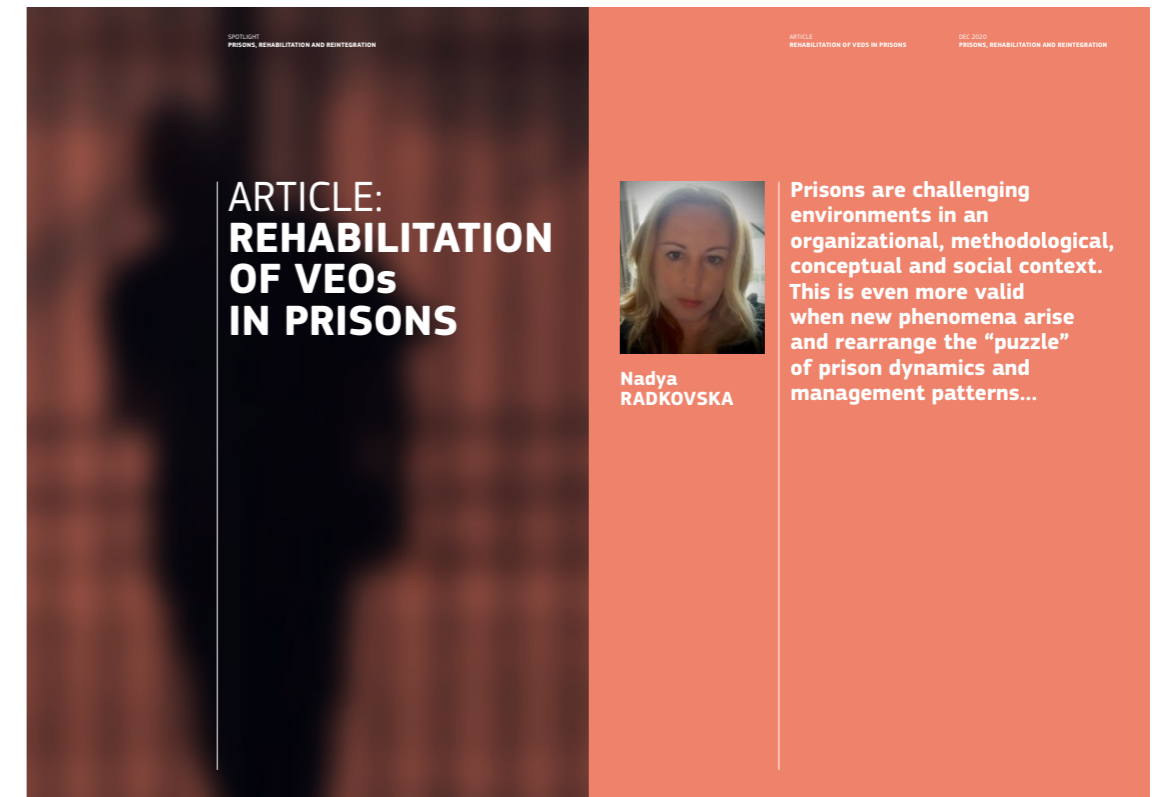
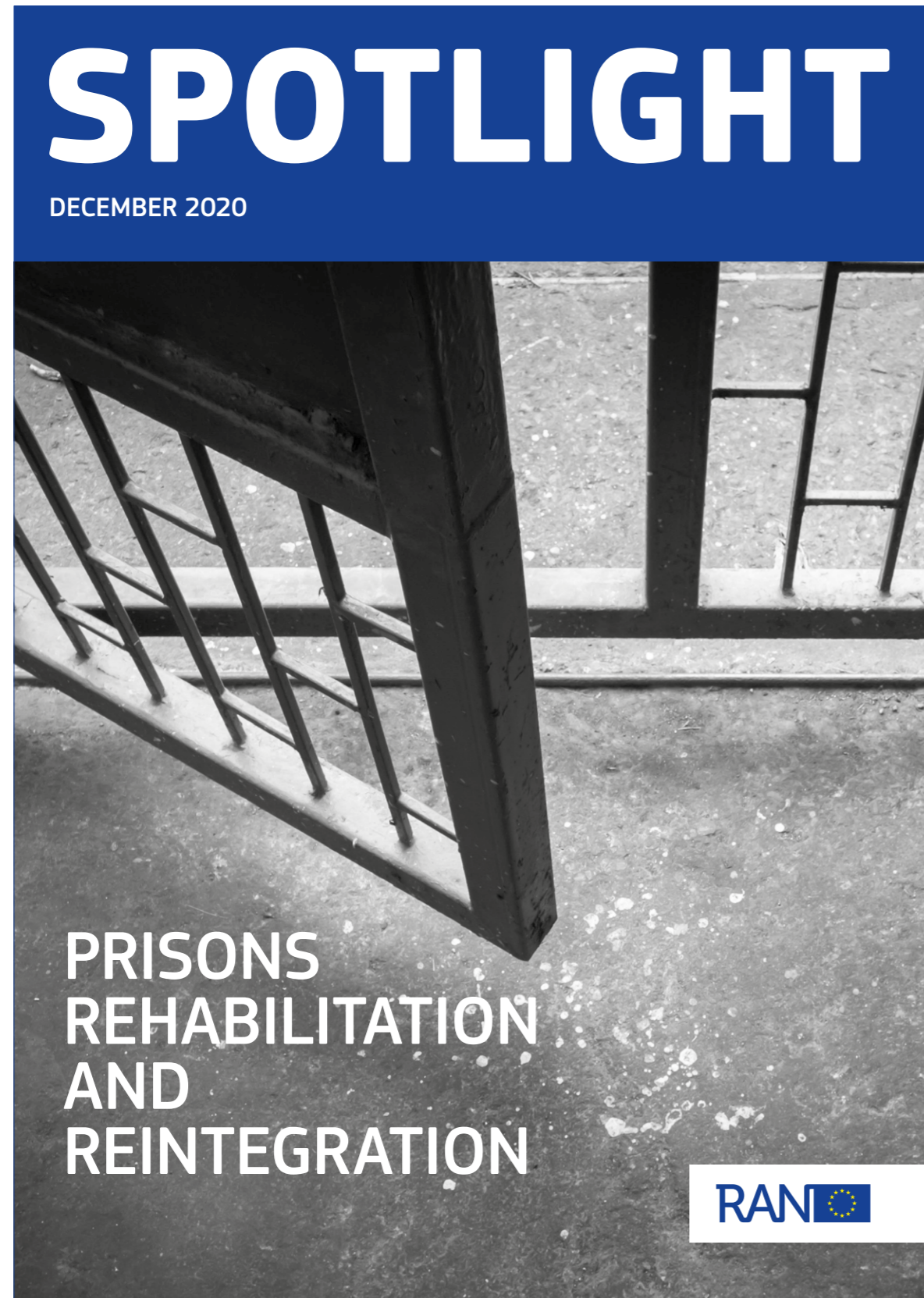
- Over the past three years, six radicalisation assessment units (QER)³ have been established across France. One unit exclusively for women is planned to open in early 2022.

³ *Quartiers d’évaluation de la radicalisation*

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In a Spotlight publication published in 2020, RAN practitioners working in the fields of prisons, rehabilitation and reintegration after release share their insights and experiences on different aspects of the rehabilitation journey and some of the challenges faced, including radicalisation in prisons, gender and families. You can read the Spotlight in full [here](#).



Highlights: **RAN Practitioners activity**

For the latest on RAN Practitioners activity stay tuned for updates in the RAN Practitioners Update and on RAN Practitioners social media channels.

For more information about RAN Practitioners activities please visit the Calendar on the RAN website [here](#).



RAN POL
Working Group meeting
03 – 04 November

‘Police role and contribution in the multi-agency case diagnosis of at-risk individuals’

RAN REHAB
Working Group meeting
10-11 November

‘Evaluation of tertiary prevention’

LIBRARY: DISCOVER MORE

If you would like to discover more about the topic of prisons, rehabilitation and reintegration you can get in touch with the RAN Staff, take a look at the [RAN Collection of Inspiring Practices](#) or read through some of the latest [RAN papers](#). We have included some of these papers in a carefully selected collection of interesting and relevant articles below.

RAN. (2022)
[‘Preventing and countering radicalisation of police, military and prison staff’](#)

RAN. (2021)
[‘Continuity between prison, probation and reintegration’](#)

RAN. (2019)
[‘Current Challenges of Sentenced Extremists for Prison Regimes’](#)

RAN. (2019)
[‘Radicalised and terrorist offenders released from prison: Community and family acceptance’](#)



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