RAN Study visit

Ex-ante paper

22nd and 23rd November 2016, Paris

Introduction

One of the core RAN messages is: Multi agency is key. To be able to prevent radicalisation and to safeguard individuals at risk, multi-agency cooperation is necessary to provide a consistent and reliable network. In this network, expertise and information can be shared, cases can be discussed and there can be agreement and shared ownership on the best course of action.

In order to exchange good practices, develop new approaches and share lessons learnt the RAN CoE organises study visits. This study visit focusses on the French CVE strategy and how multi-agency or interagency cooperation takes place in France.

Participants to the study visit

On 22nd and 23rd November a group of 15 practitioners from 8 different Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, United Kingdom) will take part in this study visit. The visits seeks first of all to better understand multiagency cooperation in France at national and local/regional level, but also to stimulate discussion on the experiences (similarities, differences, challenges, lessons learnt) in the other eight Member States. This ex-ante paper will briefly present key expectations for the visit.

Multi-agency cooperation and relevant RAN developments

Since the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism is such a layered process there is no organisation that can prevent radicalisation on its own. Cooperation between different organisation is needed. Each organisation provides parts of the solution. Multi or Interagency cooperation is

essential, in certain cases violent extremism might have been prevented if practitioners and authorities had worked more closely together and shared information across different levels of hierarchy and across domains.

The multi-agency approach focuses on creating infrastructures to ensure that people at risk are provided with early-stage support from different authorities and organisations across multiple levels. This is referred to as multi-agency, as it involves support from different sectors across the public and private domains, both at national and local level. A cooperation where relevant players have the ability, the knowledge and the capacity to identify and support individuals at risk means that practitioners and policymakers should (get to) know each other, have the possibility to share knowledge and experiences, and jointly work on a combined approach to support individuals at risk.

Generally speaking, players across all levels of government and civil society could play a role in participate in the prevention and follow-up of radicalisation. Key players include Law enforcement, youth workers, community workers, community police officers, educators, social workers, healthcare professionals and numerous other civil society players (such as charity workers, volunteers, representatives from faith-based communities).

Lessons Learned

Lessons learnt within the RAN include the following elements:
- Where possible, it can help to build multi-agency structures at a local level. However, especially in more rural areas, regional or even national structures are more realistic due to both available capacity and facilities;
- Involving a wide range of organisations helps ensure that those who are considered vulnerable have access to a wide range of support. Therefore, when identifying possible partner organisations as part of setting up the multi-agency structure, besides the more obvious organisations such as the (local) police, schools and (local) authorities, efforts should be targeted at also including organisations usually less involved in such structures such as the health and social care sectors, communities/families, NGOs, housing organisations, sports, advice centres, employment, and even prison and probation;
- Coming together on a regular basis can help to help to better understand other professionals, organisations, and sectors. It helps when partners have the opportunity to meet each other outside formal meetings to discuss specific cases or when a crises occurs;
- Following the previous point, embedding multi-agency cooperation in job roles and functions helps to build trust through personal relationships. The downside of personal relationships appears when people change position or job and new relationships need to be build. To be less reliant on personal relationships, cooperation with other agencies could be embedded and made an integral element in specific roles/functions. New employees in the involved organisations should immediately get familiar with the multi-agency structures;
- Create a partnership, not a legal entity; legislation varies across countries and even within a country across sectors. Building partnerships, instead of a legal entity, is a way to possibly overcome this challenge. In terms of legislation, examples have shown that the presence of some legislation can be an obstacle as much as it can be an enabler and actually facilitate cooperation making organisations realise the 'duty' they have to cooperate, i.e. it should be clear that cooperation is not optional but rather a must;

- Appoint a coordinator to avoid hierarchical structures and politics; in order to ensure a coordinated multi-agency approach, one organisation could chair and facilitate the process;
- Evaluation and following up is essential for improving multi-agency cooperation. This means not simply circulating lessons learnt as 'words on paper' but actively integrating them into practices, procedures or protocols (whichever apply).

Introduction to the French Action Plan against terrorism

The new **Action Plan against terrorism (PART)**[1] was adopted on the 9th of May 2016. The new plan was developed in response to the large scale threat from radicalized individuals (more than 2,000 people have been identified in the Syrian-Iraqi networks and nearly 11,000 people reported to be radicalised).

The action plan includes 80 measures, 50 of which are new.

PART is made up of **seven key areas**:

- Detect radicalization paths and terrorist networks as soon as possible;
- Monitor, disrupt and neutralize terrorist networks;
- Combat terrorism in its international networks and its sanctuaries;
- Intensify the radicalization prevention mechanisms to provide individualized support for public;
- Develop research on counter arguments and involve France's Islamic community;
- Better protect vulnerable sites and networks.
- How to react to any terrorist attack and demonstrate the Nation's resilience.

The key measure of the action plan consists of the creation, in each region, of a **centre of rehabilitation and citizenship for radicalized individuals**. This will be completed by 2017. Furthermore, since October 2015 there has been a national database containing all known radicalized individuals.

Main players at policy level: Departmental cell co-chaired by the Prefects prevention and Prosecutors for social care of radicalised people and their entourage.

Main players with regard to implementing the strategy at regional and local levels: Law enforcement, the prison system, schools, the media, and social workers.

Interagency cooperation in France

The Interministerial committee for prevention of delinquency and radicalisation (Comité interministériel de prévention de la délinquance et de la radicalisation) or CIPDR is a national organ that is responsible for the coordination and support to regional prefects (state representatives in France's departments), as well as communities and relevant networks of voluntary organisations.

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[1] See: http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/liseuse/7050/master/projet/Plan-d-action-contre-la-radicalisation-et-le-terrorisme.pdf

First reflections

- The objective of a multi-agency approach is to share knowledge and expertise of the counter-radicalisation programme in a more coordinated, effective and managed approach;
- There should be one designated coordinator of the multi agency cooperation. And it should be clear with what goals, tasks and responsibilities all agencies participate in the cooperation.
- A multi-agency approach should be applied at all stages. All players dealing with a (potential) violent extremist should have access to relevant information and resources to enable adequate follow-up. Multi-agency approaches should also be embedded in job roles, functions and responsibilities and should be embedded in day-to-day working arrangements;
- To ensure a coordinated multi-agency approach, one organisation could chair and coordinate the process and have final responsibility over the programme and outcome. The lead organisation differs from one country or city to another, but responsibility is clearly defined. Having a lead organisation can ensure a 'safeguarding hub' (important for continuity), while other entities can be invited to participate on an ad-hoc basis. A mutual understanding of the mandate could enhance shared ownership and shared accountability;
- The number of organisations and the extent to which they are involved varies substantially from one case to another, though a networks needs to remain manageable;
- A multi-agency approach does often not start from scratch or wouldn't necessarily imply new structures and institutions. Instead it could build on existing links and relations between local authorities, civil society organisations (such as education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services), law enforcement and the local community. Duplication of efforts should thus be avoided.