

# RAN Update 23



**October 2015**

*This is an update on the activities of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). You receive this e-mail, as do some 1800 other people, as you have either participated in a RAN working group activity, or you have registered your interest in the network. If you do not want to receive such e-mails, please let us know. Feel free to distribute this RAN Update to colleagues and invite them to subscribe.*

## **RAN Centre of Excellence (CoE) awarded**

**With great joy, we inform you of the setting-up of the RAN Centre of Excellence**

On 1 October 2015, the RAN CoE was established. Its staff consists of the former RAN Secretariat and new personnel from subcontractors who partner with RadarEurope, namely ICF, Intrasoft and the Swedish National Defence College. All look forward to continuing and expanding the work of RAN, and to increasing substantially its impact and added value for the implementation of the Commission's policies on countering violent extremism.

## **RAN CoE activities**

The RAN remains first and foremost a network of practitioners, such as teachers, police officers and community workers, who exchange insights and peer review each other's practices in working groups. This will continue to provide excellent input for drafting policy recommendations and disseminating best practices. Practitioner working groups will remain at the heart of RAN and new working group leaders will be appointed during the October-December 2015 transition period. During this time, the RAN CoE and experts from the network will also continue supporting the 28 EU Member States directly.

In addition to this, the RAN CoE will arrange support for neighbouring priority third countries in the Western Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East and Northern Africa. We look forward to delivering more innovative services, building on all the good work RAN has achieved since its establishment in 2011.

### **RAN CoE's call for relevant research**

From 2016 onwards, the RAN CoE will publish an annual paper presenting relevant research on the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. The aim is to disseminate new academic insights to practitioners and policy makers, and to address gaps in the current supply of academic research. If you would like to contribute with your research, or if you know a relevant research organisation, please send an email to [applications@radareurope.nl](mailto:applications@radareurope.nl).

### **RAN CoE's call for relevant centres and networks**

The RAN CoE will also develop longer-term links with other networks and relevant centres that are active in the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. To contribute to our mapping of relevant bodies at national, regional, European or even global level, please send an email to [applications@radareurope.nl](mailto:applications@radareurope.nl) with your suggestions on relevant centres or networks.

## Working Group activities since the last RAN Update

### **RAN P&P finalised their practitioners' working paper "*Dealing with radicalisation in a prison and probation context*"**

On 2 and 3 September 2015, the core members of the RAN Prison and Probation working group came together in Barcelona (ES). The aim was to fine-tune the [RAN P&P practitioners' working paper](#), presenting the current state of play, main challenges, considerations and recommendations related to the phenomenon of radicalisation and extremism in a prison and probation setting. The programme also included an exchange on specific local situations with regard to radicalisation in prisons and probation with representatives from the region, and a discussion on the reintegration of convicted terrorists and the possible role of victims in this area. One of the key findings was that face-to-face encounters between victims and terrorists, when very well prepared, had a positive impact on an emotional level for both offenders and victims. The encounters helped victims to deal with their personal suffering, by knowing that the offender has changed and has regrets.

### **RAN expertise helped strengthen cooperation between professionals in Austria**

With the Austrian Ministry of Interior and local practitioners, RAN organised a meeting in Vienna (AT) on 3 September 2015 to kick off further networking to tackle violent extremism in Austria. Minister Mikl-Leitner opened the programme, followed by different assessments of the current challenges linked to radicalisation leading to violent extremism (both religious-inspired extremism and right-wing). RAN brought in expertise from Belgium and Sweden on networking in the field of CVE, both between government and practitioners as well as among different government bodies. After this first meeting, in which the current situation was assessed, Austrian practitioners will now go on with more thematic meetings on challenges such as returnees and their implications for both different fields of work and the government.

### **RAN@ chaired a meeting on lessons learned around counter-narratives**

On 4 September 2015 the RAN@ working group took the lead in collecting the various insights gathered across RAN on online counter-narratives. The meeting took place at the Google offices in London (UK) and also involved other RAN working group leaders and practitioners that have addressed and discussed this topic. The diversity of participants led to a lively discussion and an extensive overview of ways practitioners are working with counter-narratives. This varied from differences in the messages of the narratives (ridiculing extremist messages, deconstructing ideological arguments, promoting inclusive society), the target audiences (broad public, the "fence-sitters", or extremists at the hard-end), and the ways narratives are used and disseminated (mothers/victims' testimonies, government strategic communication, or through local civil society).

### **RAN Prevent discussed lessons learned around early prevention of violent extremism**

On 15-16 September 2015, a mosque in the multicultural neighbourhood *Lombok* in the city of Utrecht (NL) was the setting for a RAN Prevent meeting that discussed the guiding principles on how to deal with the growing fear, tensions and hatred in society, and how to restore trust between and within communities to prevent reciprocal radicalisation. The meeting discussed three perceived "Big Fears" that are fuelling polarisation in different regions of Europe; the Refugees and Migrants Crisis, the Ukraine Crisis and Russian activities, and the attacks and threats of Global Jihadists like IS and Al Qaida. In the meeting, participants were stimulated to rethink prevention and approaches to holding difficult conversations with communities to prevent future and/or

reciprocal radicalisation through practice and policy. The focus was on local solutions with an inclusive perspective.

#### **RAN Train-the-Trainer workshop delivered to Czech police psychologists**

At the request of the Ministry for Interior, on 23-24 September 2015 in Prague (CZ), the seventh RAN Train-the-Trainer workshop was delivered to police psychologists responsible for post-traumatic intervention care in the different regions of the Czech Republic. The training raised awareness of the process of radicalisation among those practitioners who support first-line police officers in their daily work and take care of victims. The focus was on information sharing and inter-agency work to help in the early prevention of violent extremism. It was agreed that local police officers are well positioned to detect these signals.

#### **RAN VVT will publish a lessons learned handbook for victim organisations**

On 24-25 September 2015, participants of RAN VVT had a final meeting to create and discuss a handbook for victim organisations in Madrid (ES). This handbook is based on lessons learned and recommendations collected since the start of the RAN VVT working group. In addition, recommendations for victim organisations, Member States and the European Commission were formulated. The handbook will be launched in a few weeks.

#### **RAN Health discussed Declaration to clearly define role of health sector in CVE**

On 29 September 2015, participants of the RAN Health working group came together in Brussels (BE). The aim of this final RAN Health meeting before the start of the RAN CoE was to draft a RAN Health Declaration. The participants shared their thoughts on the role of the (mental) health sector in preventing violent extremism, lessons learned and policy recommendations. When finalised, the Health Declaration will be disseminated among the RAN Health participants and published on the RAN website.

#### **RAN Steering Committee discussed the transition to the RAN CoE and paid tribute to WG leaders**

On 30 September 2015, four years after the formal launch of RAN, the Steering Committee gathered in Brussels (BE) for a meeting focusing on the transition to the RAN Centre of Excellence, entering into force on the 1 October. The working group leaders presented the results and achievements of their working groups and a discussion on the prospects for the new RAN Centre of Excellence took place. The European Commission paid tribute to all working group leaders for their efforts and pioneering work over the years.

## **Upcoming Activities**

#### **RAN INT/EXT will focus on the role of gender**

On 2 November 2015, a final RAN INT/EXT meeting called 'Dealing with women travelling to join the 'Islamic State', does gender matter?' is foreseen to take place in Stockholm (SE). This one-day, expert roundtable brings together selected frontline practitioners, psychologists, content experts, policy-makers and others to exchange experiences on their work with women joining the 'Islamic State' in Syria and Iraq. The meeting will assess the gender-specific aspects around these travellers, in order to provide practitioners with new insights for their work.

#### **First RAN CoE Plenary and Steering Committee meeting will be the kick-off for new working groups**

On 10 November 2015, the first RAN CoE Plenary will take place in Brussels (BE). The new working groups (WGs) and their chairs will present the WG mission statements and their plans for the future. As in previous years, the main goal of the RAN Plenary is to network, and to exchange knowledge and experiences within and across the different new WGs. The next day, on 11 November, the first RAN CoE Steering Committee will take place. The main issues on the agenda will be the formal establishment of new WGs and the appointment of their chairs, as well as discussions on possible topics for WG meetings.

#### **A RAN P&P study visit to a terrorist prison wing to discuss prison regimes is planned**

A High Level Conference organised by DG JUST on 19 October 2015, will feed into the RAN P&P working group. Subject to this input, a meeting on prison regimes is foreseen, to answer some of the many questions faced by those in the MSs that have to deal with the increased numbers of convicted terrorists. The meeting will take place in the form of a study visit to the Dutch prison in Vught (NL), which has a terrorist wing, to develop a more in-depth understanding of the different types of regimes.

#### **RAN POL meets in Aarhus (DK) to set the agenda for the future**

On 18 November 2015, the RAN POL working group will have a one-day meeting in Aarhus (DK) aimed at defining the state of play of preventive policing, and at engaging with communities. Success stories on community policing will be presented and the situation in the different countries will be mapped. Based on this reality-check, the meeting will set the agenda for the future. What will be the contribution of RAN POL to further improving community policing in Europe, and what, or who, is needed to achieve this objective? Over the next two days, a delegation of participants will attend the Aarhus conference '[Building resilience to radicalisation and violent extremism](#)'.

#### **New working group RAN EDU kicks off with meeting showcasing promising practices**

The RAN Education (RAN EDU) working group will focus on the prevention of violent extremism in schools and the formal school system. On 25-26 November 2015 in Prague (CZ), the working group will present opportunities and possibilities for the educational system in this area, presenting promising practices. In order to provide insight into the role current role of the educational system, the situation in schools in the different Member States will also be mapped. Prior to the meeting, the RAN [Manifesto for Education](#) will be shared, as a basis for discussion. In preparation for a possible joint meeting of RAN EDU and RAN Communication and Narratives (RAN C&N) in 2016, the meeting will present online tools which can help teachers in preventing and countering violent extremism in their classrooms.

#### **RAN EXIT will discuss the role of mental health in exit work**

Engagement in violent extremist activities can lead to mental health problems, such as post traumatic (stress) disorder, or exacerbate pre-existing conditions. Recent research also shows that a considerable number of people already coping with mental health problems take the pathway to violent extremism or fighting in conflict zones abroad. What implications does this have for exit strategies? How can these people, who were perhaps already in the margins of mainstream society because of their mental problems, be socialised after a destabilising experience? On 8 December 2015, in Vienna (AT), both first line de-radicalisation practitioners and mental health workers will be invited to discuss these issues.

#### **RAN C&N will collect lessons learned on effective counter- and alternative narratives online**

On 10-11 December 2015, the first meeting of the RAN Communications and Narratives (C&N) working group will take place in Frankfurt (DE). Although the RAN C&N working group will, in due time, host meetings on offline narratives, hear testimonials from victims and give presentations in schools, the forthcoming event will focus on the use of the Internet and social media. The RAN C&N meeting will focus on lessons on effective counter- and alternative narratives online and how to translate these lessons into concrete support for practitioners.

### **Study visit to Germany on countering far right extremism**

On 16-17 December 2015, a study visit to Germany (DE) is foreseen. During this two day trip, the RAN CoE will offer practitioners and policymakers the opportunity to learn from the extensive German track record on dealing with right wing extremism. Rising polarisation and right wing extremism is a growing concern in many European countries. The refugee crisis and the different Pegida groups have brought the topic even further into the limelight. On day one, the focus will be on practitioner exchange covering a wide range of projects, from youth work and family support to exit programmes. On day two, a trip to Halle will provide insights into impact and challenges for practitioners in the local community. For more information, e-mail Steven Lenos: [s.lenos@radaradvies.nl](mailto:s.lenos@radaradvies.nl).

## **Member State support**

### **National authorities can apply for customised RAN support in their Member State**

The RAN CoE can deliver support to Member States on a specific question or topic on receipt of a request for advice and assistance. Member States interested in such support should e-mail [ran@radareurope.nl](mailto:ran@radareurope.nl). Before the end of the year, the RAN is still able to deploy its expertise or deliver the RAN Train-the-Trainers programme in two Member States which have not yet received such support. For 2016, all Member States are entitled to apply for such support.

### **Member State support on helplines open for all MSs**

In Europe as in RAN there is a common understanding of the importance of involving community, family and other members of social networks in the prevention of radicalisation. To offer support to individuals witnessing signs of radicalisation in their loved ones, a number of countries have set up helplines. These helplines provide a direct connection to professionals and/or volunteers who can answer questions and deliver guidance in these difficult cases. Setting up helplines as part of a prevention strategy is gaining momentum. To support this development, the RAN CoE will offer a workshop in Vienna (AT) on 3 December 2015 to share lessons on family helplines and supporting those interested in setting up similar mechanisms in their Member State.

## **Dissemination of RAN lessons at external events**

RAN regularly participates in external events to share experience and expertise with third parties. The permanent delegation of the EU in Algiers invited RAN to give a presentation on 22 September 2015 at such an event. The meeting was the consequence of a recent large regional summit on CVE, which highlighted the need for cooperation and the importance of prevention and involvement of civil society. The meeting was attended by embassy staff from the EU MSs, Canada and the US, and by UN representatives. On the side-lines of the official programme, opportunities for exchange of knowledge among practitioners from Algeria and the MS were explored.

On 24 September 2015, RAN delivered a presentation to the Directors-General for Youth Policy of the EU Member States, who gathered in Luxembourg (LU). Both the RAN

Education Manifesto and lessons learned regarding family helplines were shared and discussed. Finally, RAN was represented at the Leaders' Summit on countering IS and violent extremism, which US President Obama hosted on 29 September 2015 in New York, on the margins of the UN General Assembly. While all present contributed to the military campaign against IS, several heads of state/government and ministers of foreign affairs underlined the need for prevention and early intervention.

In New York, RAN representatives were also present at the Global Youth Summit, where formers explained that a sense of belonging determines both radicalisation and disengagement. Finally, RAN attended the launch of the Cities Strong Network, which will support mayors and their cities in countering violent extremism.

## RAN Calendar

November	December
<b>RAN INT/EXT</b> <i>Role of gender in FFs phenomenon</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 2 November, Stockholm (SE)	<b>RAN MSs support</b> <i>Workshop on helplines</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 3 December, Vienna (AT)
<b>RAN Plenary</b> <i>Kick-off new RAN WGs and their chairs</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 10 November, Brussels (BE)	<b>RAN EXIT</b> <i>Derad programme and mental health</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 8 December, Vienna (AT)
<b>RAN SC</b> <i>Kick-off new RAN WGs and their chairs</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 11 November, Brussels (BE)	<b>RAN C&amp;N</b> <i>Effective online counter- and alternative narratives</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 10-11 December, Frankfurt (DE)
<b>RAN POL</b> <i>Define the state of play on community policing</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 18-20 November, Aarhus (DK)	<b>Study visit</b> <i>Countering far right extremism</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 16-17 December 2015, Germany
<b>RAN EDU</b> <i>Mapping the CVE situation in EU school systems</i> <u>Date and location:</u> 25-26 November, Prague (CZ)	
<b>RAN P&amp;P</b> <i>Study visit to prison in Vught (NL)</i> <u>Date and location:</u> TBC, Vught (NL)	

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