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CONCLUSION PAPER

RAN Plenary

13 October 2023, Brussels, Belgium and online

RAN Practitioners Plenary 2023 Practitioners' voices and perspectives: achievements and challenges

Introduction

Annually, the RAN Practitioners Plenary convenes practitioners actively engaged in the network to discuss upcoming topics and challenges relevant to the RAN Working Groups and across the field of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) more broadly. This provides an opportunity to weigh in on the agenda for the year ahead.

This year marks a special occasion, as the RAN will transition into the new *EU Knowledge Hub on the Prevention of Radicalisation* in the second half of 2024, heralding a new phase of P/CVE in the EU and making the 2023 RAN Practitioners Plenary the last of its kind. The achievements made and the continued need to centre practitioners in P/CVE were therefore emphasised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) during the meeting.

Topics and priorities for the first half of 2024 were discussed and substantiated in small groups, including in an online group that was part of this year's Plenary's hybrid set-up, which allowed for streaming of most of the event.

Highlighting practitioners' voices, perspectives and, crucially, their well-being was central to the 2023 Plenary. The continued importance of mental health as a topic in P/CVE was underlined at various moments throughout the meeting.

Opening remarks by Olivier Onidi, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

In his welcoming words, Mr Onidi commended how RAN proved its fast reactivity and flexibility in shifting the focus on the P/CVE-related effects of the Russian war against Ukraine over the course of the past year. With a view to the developments in Israel and Gaza at the time of the meeting, Mr Onidi expressed his shock and called on practitioners to remain flexible in their responses to the fallout of this situation.

Expressing the European Commission's gratitude for practitioners' continued dedication to informing the EU agenda, including the strategic orientations currently being drafted with the Member States, Mr Onidi highlighted some of the main topics to be addressed by the future EU Knowledge Hub in continuation of the RAN. These include the increased variety of extremist ideologies, the need to address mental health aspects, the imminent release of large numbers of (violent) extremist and terrorist offenders (VETOs) from prisons and the question of whether P/CVE prison programmes have in fact proven successful, acknowledging the importance of gender responsiveness, and the continued need to consider the perspective of victims and survivors in P/CVE.

Finally, Mr Onidi stressed the importance of involving the new generation of practitioners by way of establishing RAN YOUNG, thanked the network for its efforts, and offered the prospect that meetings such as the Plenary and the involvement of practitioners therein will continue in the EU Knowledge Hub.

Mental health of P/CVE practitioners

Opening presentation by Stevie Voogt (Moonshot)

At the start of her presentation on mental health of P/CVE practitioners, Ms Voogt explained that Moonshot is a social impact business working to end online harms by applying evidence, ethics, and human rights. Due to the content exposure in their field of work, staff are exposed to a large quantity of disturbing materials, affecting their welfare.

Until a few years ago, mental health of practitioners was not a topic dealt with extensively, neither researched nor discussed, and it only came to the agenda following discussions about mental health among law enforcement professionals. As researchers find out more and more about how exposure to violence and trauma is harmful for practitioners, it turns out that some even suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, secondary traumatic stress or other various trauma due to exposure to harmful graphic content. Even a single exposure may be enough to develop a light traumatic response. One should not assume however that everyone necessarily gets harmed by such work in P/CVE. P/CVE work is not suitable for everyone, and it is important to recognise that and acknowledge and screen capacities already during hiring procedures. Practitioners' work is meaningful, they are making a difference, and it is important not to pathologise it, but to keep the work balanced. When stress arises however, feeling and thought suppression is the least healthy option of coping with trauma and can lead to even more traumatic responses in the long run.

Research was conducted in collaboration with Birmingham University, which shaped Moonshot's approach to and methods regarding the topic. The guiding approach is the understanding that therapeutic support is essential, while preventive measures are key. Their staff are trained to detect signs of stress and anxiety in their colleagues and in themselves (e.g., withdrawing from social activities, overworking) that cause a person not to thrive anymore. This makes it crucial to show real interest in colleagues, and to check in on them, for example during weekly meetings. Asking them how they are may also lead to asking oneself the question: how am I actually doing?

Ms Voogt stressed that institutions and organisations being increasingly aware of the existing risk, should see prevention and mitigation as a necessary investment. It will pay off in the long term both financially and, crucially, for the mental health of practitioners.

The main points of Moonshot's approach are:

Minimise exposure:

- Considering what data is necessary, how often data collection needs to occur, speaking to researchers who have collected data from similar sources to understand the possible effects of certain pieces of content.
- Use of technological tools such as reducing audio, auto-blur extensions, optical character recognition software to isolate text, disabling auto-play and reducing screen brightness.
- Remaining conscious of why the harmful content is being analysed in the first place, but also remaining conscious of when it is time to stop.

Practitioners should ask themselves:

- o What exposure to harmful content might be involved in my work?
- o What is necessary to my work? Is there exposure that can be avoided?
- o Can I balance higher- and lower-risk work?
- o How do I create boundaries?
- o How can I minimise the exposure of other people?

Prepare practitioners to exposure:

- Recruitment and selection: Exposure to harmful content should be mentioned at several stages during the recruitment process to ensure awareness of risks and check for appropriate coping strategies.
- Psychological screening for high-risk research: Conducted by psychotherapists specialised in vicarious trauma, with 6 monthly follow-up screening sessions.
- Training in vicarious trauma: Led by experts, to educate staff in signs and symptoms of trauma, helpful and unhelpful coping mechanisms, and to develop personal strategies.
- Personal strategies: For example, transitions rituals to mark boundaries, paired research, viewing harmful content at the best time for them.
- Peer supervision: Providing a space to talk through any challenges, psychoeducation around effective and ineffective coping mechanisms, healthy coping strategies, and learning ways to stabilise and build resources to improve self-care and resilience.

Ask the following questions:

- o Could you build in training or guidance on avoiding vicarious trauma?
- o How can I structure my work to provide breaks from higher-risk work?
- o Could you build systems to check on staff carrying out high-risk work?
- o What personal strategies might be helpful/would I like to try?
- o How will I make time to check in with myself for signs of secondary traumatic stress?

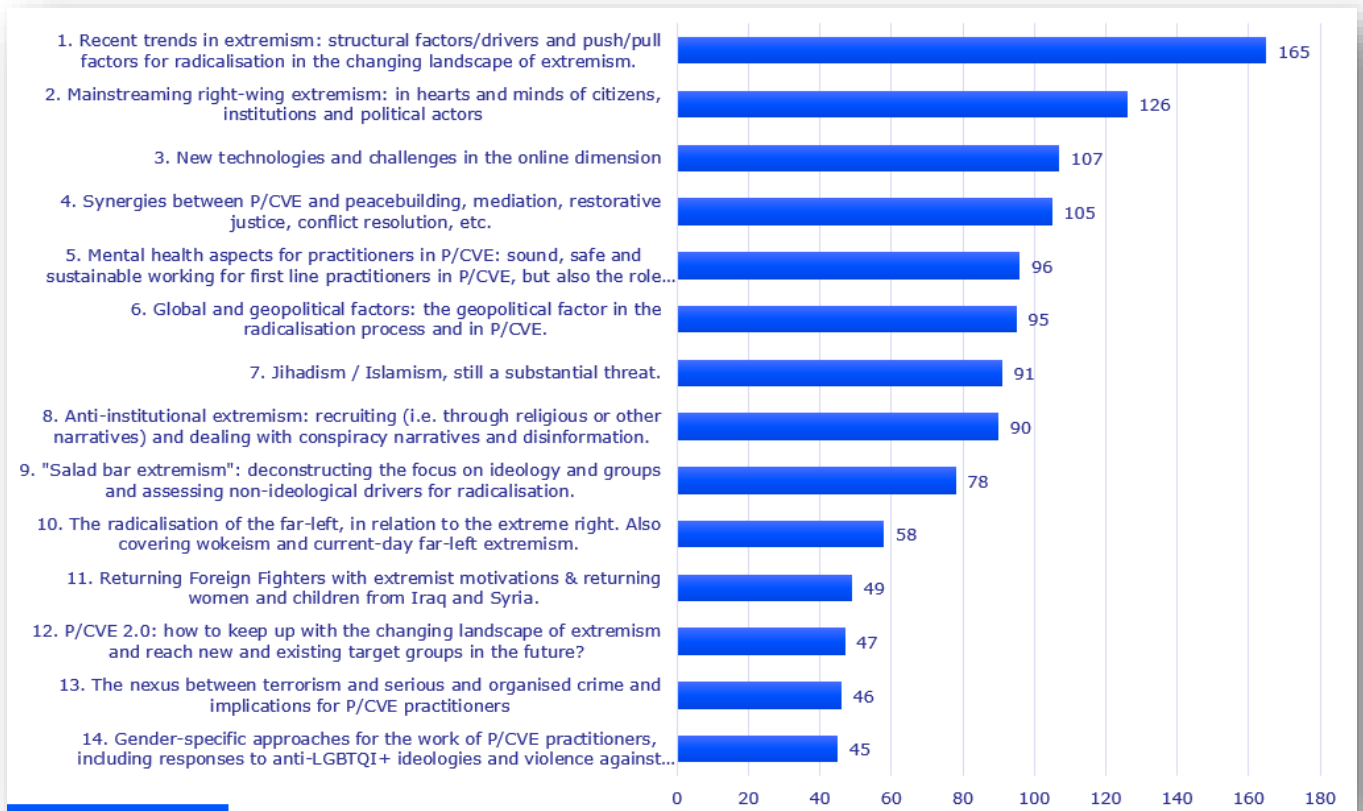
Provide support for those impacted:

- Therapeutic support: Including access to trauma specialist counselling based on self-referral.
- Internal welfare team: Managers trained in mental health first aid conduct weekly check-ins with each member of the team to identify staff struggling with any aspect of their work and make referrals.
- Rotation from high-risk projects: Movement from higher-risk projects to low-risk projects to provide breaks from harmful content.
- Personal mental health plans: Recognition of individual triggers that should be avoided in future work and identification of individual signs someone is experiencing stress.

Ask the following questions:

- o What are individual triggers that should be avoided in future work and which individual signs of stress can be identified?
- o Could we build internal support structures?
- o What personal warning signs should I look for?

Overarching topics 2024



This section reflects the outcomes of the RAN Practitioners Plenary's breakout session in relation to the overarching topics for the year 2024. Based on the outcomes of the survey held before the plenary (see above), participants discussed the overarching topics and formulated recommendations for relevant RAN activities. The five most frequently chosen overarching topics to expand on during the Plenary are outlined below, including a selection of the ideas and reflections derived from the discussions.

Topic: Recent trends in extremism: structural factors/drivers and push/pull factors for radicalisation in the changing landscape of extremism

- It is crucial to stay up to date on the changing strategies of radical groups and address the challenges related to continuing to effectively address ideologies in a changing landscape.
- The cycle of recruitment due to marginalisation must be interrupted.
- The challenge of protecting democracies from extremism must be addressed considering their growing influence in the political framework.
- Mental health practitioners need more support recognising extremism. They are often not aware of the topic, as it is not included in their education or curriculum. Building on the meeting on training for mental health practitioners, more trainings could be delivered and knowledge further disseminated.
- Preventing radicalisation in juvenile detention centres could be explored with the support of RAN YOUNG.
- Sociologists and communication experts could be relevant actors to exchange with law enforcement on anti-system extremism.

Topic: Mainstreaming right-wing extremism: in hearts and minds of citizens, institutions and political actors

- The increasing prevalence of right-wing narratives in European societies raises many questions for P/CVE programming:
 - How is it possible to deal with the normalisation of hatred and the increasing hate crimes?
 - Who needs to be included in P/CVE?
 - What needs to change with regard to education?
 - How is it possible to keep extremism out of the political debate?
 - How is it possible to address the narratives and fears that make people susceptible to right-wing extremism (they feel that migrants are taking their jobs, getting money from the government, etc.)?
 - What do challenges related to mainstreaming of right-wing extremism look like in the local context?
- Practitioners indicated their interest in hearing from projects that bring together people/groups from different backgrounds and with different opinions, as well as to hear from Europol.

Topic: New technologies and challenges in the online dimension

- Apart from looking at the challenges new technologies present, P/CVE should also consider opportunities and ask how artificial intelligence (AI) can work to the benefit of P/CVE. Practitioners cannot be present everywhere all the time — so technical solutions are needed.
- It should be explored how new technologies can be included in prevention approaches by law enforcement.
- There might be lessons to learn and methods to adapt from efforts countering child sexual abuse online. An exchange with relevant actors could be a good start.
- It should be further explored how challenges in the online world can have a negative impact on youngsters, affecting their mental health and well-being, and how to build their resilience accordingly.
- Practitioners would like to hear from relevant social media companies and organisations on this topic.

Topic: Mental health aspects for practitioners in P/CVE: sound, safe and sustainable working for first-line practitioners in P/CVE

- The mental health of professionals who are in contact with radicalised clients is often not on the agenda of institutions, organisations or supervisors.
- Common terminology with regard to mental health is needed among practitioners and between practitioners and policymakers to address this topic in the context of P/CVE.
- Practitioners require support in the development of strategies to avoid burnout and learning to take care of their own mental health.
- Practitioners require support in dealing with undiagnosed mental health issues in clients ⁽¹⁾.
- Discussing the role of cognitive biases in practitioners themselves would be a worthwhile undertaking.
- Particularly in the Western Balkans but also within the EU, mental health support is a “luxury” and not widely available for individuals and/or professionals. Therapy is frequently inaccessible, unaffordable and stigmatised.
- Prison was acknowledged as a particularly stressful environment for inmates and practitioners alike. The need for better structures and further training to address this issue persists.

Topic: Global and geopolitical factors: the geopolitical factor in the radicalisation process and in P/CVE

- Considering the timing of this year's Plenary, the Israel–Palestine conflict urgently highlighted the need to place polarisation resulting from geopolitical factors and current affairs on the P/CVE agenda.
- This could include exploring topics as diverse as increased cooperation between Iran, Russia and China or the treatment, support and rehabilitation of foreign terrorist fighters detained in Syria.
- Case studies could explore how a geopolitical conflict functions as an incubator for hate speech and acts based on ideological tenants. For example, anti-Semitism as a justification for violence.

⁽¹⁾ For a start, an e-learning module 'Extremism, radicalisation & mental health: guidance for practitioners' is available on <https://academy.europa.eu/>

- Participants voiced their interest to exchange with colleagues from the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) and to hear from independent researchers and UN institutions, and they suggested creating exchange between geopolitical researchers and youngsters.

Focus of RAN Working Groups in 2024

This section reflects the outcomes of the discussions in the breakout sessions of the Plenary. It lists the possible themes for the 2024 agenda from Working Group participants. Discussions on these topics were based on the outcomes of the survey.

RAN Police and law enforcement (RAN POL)

1. *Police dealing with violent demonstrations and disruptive protests*
2. *Digital competences for police in the online world*
3. *Mainstreaming of P/CVE in crime prevention*

In the future, a critical focus for police and law enforcement will involve managing increasingly violent and diverse demonstrations and disruptive protests stemming from various ideological subcultures, some of which may exhibit extremist tendencies. This has been a topic in the last years, and it has been discussed in different Member States, but the urgency now comes from a noted rise of violence, and an alarming participation of ever younger protesters.

Since police officers are mostly acting in the offline world, they are not used to dealing with the online dimension of crime in general and extremism in particular. Therefore, the need for digital competences for police is immense, as big parts of radicalisation, hate speech and extremism are taking place online nowadays. Police officers know how to integrate, communicate with partners, and identify expectations and problems, but they need to learn to transfer those skills into the online dimension. It is important to invest in this aspect more in the future.

Crime prevention in general and criminal offences related to P/CVE are seen as two different topics within police and law enforcement. The Working Group's take is to make P/CVE offences part of the general crime prevention by mainstreaming P/CVE. It is their conviction that mechanisms are similar and overlap. Therefore, community policing strategies and P/CVE strategies executed by the police should become part of general crime prevention.

RAN Victims/survivors of terrorism (RAN VoT)

1. *2024 Remembrance Day*
2. *Making use of (the resilience of) victims/survivors in preventing conspiracy narratives in schools*
3. *Gender-specific approaches in P/CVE and in dealing with trauma*

As every year, the preparation of the European Remembrance Day for Victims and Survivors of Terrorism (VRD) will be the most important task in 2024. As it will be the 20th anniversary, it will have even more importance and impact throughout Europe. The VRD will be more PVE-related than ever since the aim is to show on the EU level that victims and survivors want to be involved in PVE work. The VRD is also a symbol for victims and survivors to demonstrate that they stand together, that they are still part of society, and that the desired extremist and terrorist effect of societal fragmentation was not reached. Other Working Groups might be involved next year in the preparations.

Another important task that is to be continued in 2024 is making use of the victims' and survivors' resilience in preventing conspiracy narratives in schools by giving testimonials and encouraging others to tell their story.

The Working Group further wants to examine gender-specific approaches in P/CVE and in dealing with trauma to identify differences in how women and children cope. Within these topics the aim is to synergise with other Working Groups as well.

RAN Rehabilitation

1. *Synergies between rehabilitation and peacebuilding, mediation, restorative justice, conflict resolution, etc.*
2. *Disengagement, deradicalisation and rehabilitation (DDR) with individuals involved in more than one extremist movement (e.g., right-wing, anti-establishment, conspiracy believers, anti-vax)*
3. *Rehabilitation for female VETOs and the role of masculinity in DDR*

In 2024 the Working Group suggests exploring the synergies between rehabilitation, peacebuilding, mediation, restorative justice and conflict resolution since these types of practices address different aspects of violence and how to heal from violent conflicts and extremist attacks. The question to be addressed is what can rehabilitation work learn from the practices mentioned above? There has been experience already with combining rehabilitation with restorative justice, but there is much more to explore.

Another important challenge for the upcoming years will be the question of how to work with clients/individuals in disengagement, when they have been involved in more than one ideology/extremist movement. The Working Group wants to address especially all forms of cross-over extremists and the synergies and overlap between right-wing extremists and anti-establishment, anti-vax and conspiracy believers. The aim is to address overarching factors for disengagement within these groups.

When working in rehabilitation, the role of gender and specifically masculinity within deradicalisation and disengagement hasn't been dealt with enough. Strict gender roles are an underlying topic in most extremist ideologies and the Working Group aims to explore how to address gender in rehabilitation work. The goal is also to better deal with the, sometimes obvious, inequality of gender throughout extremist groups. Practitioners are confronted in their daily work with, for example, domestic violence, and other issues related to gender roles that they would like to address in the rehabilitation process.

RAN Mental Health (RAN HEALTH)

1. *Mass (extremist) violent incidents and mental health*
2. *Success factors of the cooperation between youth work, social care, and mental health care (focusing on secondary prevention)*
3. *The attraction of conspiracy narratives and disinformation: a mental health perspective*

In 2024 the Working Group wants to dive deeper into the interconnections between mass extremist violent incidents and mental health with a special awareness for the boundaries for sharing information about those incidents. Another important topic within this subject is the awareness for the impact that these incidents can have on P/CVE practitioners.

To take stock of the knowledge that has been achieved in previous years, the Working Group suggests to identify success factors of the cooperation between youth work, social care, and mental health care with a special focus on secondary prevention. The challenge will be to explore what can be the next steps when working with violent (extremist) offenders and how to re-integrate them into society. The identification of push and pull factors within this topic will be crucial.

An intriguing aspect from the mental health perspective is the attraction of conspiracy narratives and disinformation throughout all types of extremism. This should be further explored.

RAN Communication and Narratives (RAN C&N)

1. *AI: understanding and opportunities for P/CVE practitioners*
2. *Borderline hate speech (related to meme culture/use of humour) and issues of public trust (bottom-up approach)*
3. *FIMI + relation to domestic extremism: how do platforms/tech sector deal with this and how does it impact practitioners?*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the fastest growing technologies in recent years. The development of new tools bringing advantages to society is as fast as the development of abuse and the interconnected disadvantages. In 2024 the Working Group would like to learn about these new technologies in the first place and then discuss how to use AI from the practitioners' perspective and which opportunities it can offer to the practical side of their work.

The online world and especially social media are showing a great diversity of humour often expressed by memes. Extremist content and/or hate speech within social and other media is mostly easy to identify. But what happens when extremists make use of the meme culture and deploy humour to show their messages and respectively hide the deeper meaning of their expressions behind "funny" content? How is it possible to deal with these toxic environments that show borderline content not easy to detect by practitioners and even less by average internet users? How can we address implications for the freedom of speech while we want to achieve bottom-up trust-building towards public audiences?

Within the area of communication related to P/CVE, Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) has become an ardent subject over the last years. Since the disinformation and influence of foreign countries in the area of domestic extremism is increasing, there is a need to discuss FIMI with tech companies (e.g., in a small-scale meeting) and its impact on practitioners. The aim could be a publication on how to deal with FIMI to share this with practitioners of all kinds. Another idea is to organise a webinar together with RAN Policy Support on this, since RAN Policy Support is working on that subject already.

RAN Local authorities (RAN LOCAL)

1. *Local impacts of war and international conflicts*
2. *Strengthen local democracy: initiatives, activities, and common narratives*
3. *Deconstructing local P/CVE strategies in the face of "salad bar extremism": understanding needs and grievances*

The number of international conflicts and wars is increasing in recent times. Practitioners notice that these conflicts and crises have an impact on a local level. Practitioners working on that level need to realise and reflect this in their work. To avoid being just reactionary, practitioners need support in acknowledging the impact of war and international conflict within their work to mitigate consequences.

Almost not separable from the first point there is the ardent need to strengthen democracy on a local level. The Working Group wants to have a deeper look at initiatives, activities, and common narratives on a local level and on how practitioners can be actively involved in strengthening communities to build on local democracy informed by P/CVE-based knowledge.

The term salad bar extremism has become more common over the past 2 years since the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have become visible. All sorts of different people are attracted by this phenomenon that is a new and different kind of extremism with a lower level of commitment. P/CVE practitioners still need to understand better what 'salad bar extremism' looks like and how they can deal with it. Therefore, to be equipped for future challenges, the Working Group wants to examine how to deconstruct local P/CVE strategies in the face of salad bar extremism to understand the needs and grievances of people attracted to it.

RAN Prisons

- 1. The active role of the inmate in DDR: opportunities and limits for involvement in developing individualised plans, improving cooperation between inmates and P/CVE practitioners, fostering voluntary participation and compliance*
- 2. Strengthening public awareness and support for the importance of DDR work in prison and beyond, towards realistic expectations and depoliticisation, including more transparent strategic communication and normalisation of the public image of VETOs*
- 3. Practical methods and approaches to conducting multi-agency case conferences in prison in relation to security-relevant VETO cases, including exchange with approaches implemented outside of Europe (online)*

The role of inmates in disengagement and deradicalisation (DDR) programmes and activities has gotten increased attention in recent years. Interventions in this area are only effective when inmates are motivated to join and get involved. To reach this goal, individualised plans, improved cooperation between inmates and P/CVE practitioners, as well as fostering voluntary participation and compliance are needed. People who are radicalised are hard to reach because they oftentimes refuse to attend rehabilitation programmes and continue to keep prior networks. Even in prison they get support from these networks. Trust-building is therefore key as well as promoting strong contacts with previous environments and networks beyond the extremist scene.

The public has a low awareness of and hence a limited interest for prisons. Given the anticipated release of a significant number of inmates associated with violent extremism in the upcoming years, it is crucial to increase awareness among practitioners working in prisons and beyond. Additionally, attention is needed for the former VETOs (violent extremist offenders) and their reintegration into society post-prison, emphasising the challenges they face and the support required for successful reintegration. The public perception (especially if dehumanising) following their release can be crucial for their future development and hamper their progress. We must move towards realistic expectations and depoliticisation in relation to those inmates, including more transparent strategic communication and normalisation of the public image of rehabilitation from extremism. Communities should therefore be better informed about "formers" and how they can be integrated. Reflections on this should also be considered in national policies and practices for prison and probation.

In 2024 the Working Group suggests exploring the multi-agency approach within P/CVE in prisons, examining the role of other actors and stakeholders, and connecting the findings by exchanging experiences with countries from outside Europe to find out which approaches can be transferable in the EU context. The Working Group also wants to dive deep into practical methods and approaches to conduct multi-agency case conferences in prison in relation to security-relevant VETO cases.

RAN Families, communities and social care (RAN FC&S)

- 1. Children in extremist families*
- 2. Community resilience (the perspective and context of the practitioner)*
- 3. Trust-building approaches*

The conflicts and wars in all parts of the world have a great impact on children. Often, they are affected the most but at the same time have no chance to protect themselves. The Working Group wants to explore how practitioners can support families and where are the boundaries of such a support. A special case within this subject is children of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), who have special needs when it comes to dealing with trauma. Parental perspectives have to be considered throughout the process with a special eye on their trauma being excluded from the community they want to live in.

Community resilience has been key for a long time now. To get an advanced picture, the Working Group wants to take a systemic look into the practitioners' perspective of community resilience, looking at the practitioners as being part of the communities they work in and therefore not just being observing bystanders. The aim is to also explore the mental health perspective of practitioners when building resilience as they are part of the system.

The Working Group's focus for 2024 is on trust-building approaches. These include not only communities, target audiences and clients but also different stakeholders. This will be a constant effort to keep the trust in and the good relationship to the stakeholders.

RAN Youth and Education (RAN Y&E)

1. *Overlap between vulnerability to criminal and extremist recruitment*
2. a) *Anti-institutional and anti-democratic attitudes, alienation of youngsters*
 - b) *Conspiracies and alternative truths*
3. *Transferable lessons from the fight against/prevention of jihadist extremism to current-day forms of extremism*

Many practitioners who work with young people realise that in early and secondary prevention it is very hard to say whether one is preventing someone from being a criminal or violent extremist. They observe an overlap between vulnerability to criminal as well as extremist recruitment. Criminal offences of youths often get political responses. The age of incarceration keeps lowering. This is worrying since prisons are a place where people are exposed to radicalisation. The Working Group aims to discuss this challenge also with the input of the RAN HEALTH and RAN PRISONS Working Groups.

The upcoming year will be a "super election" year (EU, United States, etc.). Young people will be confronted with and affected by information they cannot trust. They will be targeted by anti-institutional and anti-democratic attitudes, conspiracy narratives towards politics/politicians and about the trustfulness of elections, etc. The pressing question is: How can we prevent (young) people from being influenced by conspiracy narratives concerning elections and constitutions? The Middle East conflict will likely remain a topic of interest and activate both anti-Semitic and Islamophobic feelings, leading to polarisation in classrooms across the EU. Questions regarding these challenges will have to be addressed.

There is a long tradition of doing P/CVE work in the field of youth and education. The Working Group's goal is to review and take stock of the lessons learned and experiences gained throughout the years and to transfer lessons from the fight against and the prevention of jihadist extremism to current-day forms of extremism.

Online breakout session

The outcomes of the online breakout session can be summarised as follows:

- To counter the changing landscape of right-wing extremism, we need to build resilience via education while practitioners are working with increasingly younger target groups. Building resilience at a local level and among civil society is a key aspect, especially for practitioners from Eastern Europe. To promote democracy in times of elections, practitioners could help build resilience on a local level by supporting NGOs, grassroots organisations, etc.
- At the same time, there is the need for mental health support for community representatives and NGOs involved in providing important P/CVE work on the ground.
- Regarding the field of education and youth work, it was noted that early prevention should be emphasised, also in relation to the lone actors phenomenon, as well as in terms of vulnerabilities to right-wing extremism.
- In relation to the prison environment, P/CVE practitioners need more exchange in terms of working with the rising number of right-wing extremist offenders in some Member States.

- The impact of AI on human interaction is a big concern. A deeper insight is needed on how it impacts human interaction, and what it means for P/CVE since the way we build social relationships is changing. The key question is how to integrate this into P/CVE practices and how to address these risks and trends from a mental health perspective. How is it possible to increase awareness of the impact of technology and social isolation on human interactions and reinforce positive interactions and real bonds? Further work is also needed to increase awareness of the importance of human rights and the manifestations of misogyny and related behaviours/attitudes in interactions with AI and in gaming.
- The reintegration of released VETOs is a phenomenon that some Member States are facing right now. Reintegration on a bigger scale may require more robust frameworks and enhanced information sharing agreements among various national and local agencies or practitioners involved. Building connections between local and national coordination can be helpful to support the prison/exit continuum.

Closing remarks by Katarzyna Cuadrat-Grzybowska, Deputy Head of Unit D3 Prevention of Radicalisation Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

Ms Cuadrat-Grzybowska thanked the practitioners present at the RAN Practitioners Plenary. She noted that there are similarities between the results of the RAN Plenary and the ones of the RAN Policy Support Annual Researchers' Conference and Spanish Presidency conference in Malaga that were recently held. We are all working in the same direction, contributing to the Strategic Orientations for 2024 and 2025 and the Global Agenda for the first half of 2024.

Ms Cuadrat-Grzybowska highlighted the following points:

- There are events taking place outside of the EU that will impact the work in P/CVE in Europe: Israel–Palestine, Sahel, Ukraine. Regarding these recent developments, a lot of work is being done together with Member States and Europol and incorporating input from practitioners.
- Mental health and the emotional well-being of practitioners is an important topic and it will probably grow in the near future. Although we are already looking into it, more work is required. There will be a cross-cutting event on mental health aspects and the topic is aligned with Spain's presidency.
- Focusing on minors is of great importance. This was discussed with the EU Member States and for Belgium's next presidency. The online dimension is another crucial one (for example, AI, new technologies, borderline online hate speeches), which is also increasingly being addressed by EU regulations (Terrorist Content Online, Digital Services Act).

Practitioners know what is happening on the ground. Their input is crucial, and the European Commission wants to keep learning from them.

The future

In times like these, our work must be interlinked and that is why we need to break silos between, for instance, prisons, rehabilitation work, police, etc. The coming EU Knowledge Hub seeks to improve the way we work in this aspect. Nevertheless, the mutual work will continue, and practitioners will remain an important part of it.