

EX POST PAPER

Preparing RAN POL's Guide on Training programmes for police officers in Europe

Introduction

Police officers play a crucial role in the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. They are expected to recognise signals of radicalisation, but their role is much broader. RAN POL identifies four core competences that require training:

- Awareness and understanding of the process of radicalisation, breeding grounds and vulnerabilities
- Community and neighbourhood policing, built on warm networks of trust in society;
- Intercultural sensitivities, 'policing for all' and human rights
- Police as an effective actor in multi agency cooperation, initiating, supporting and facilitating the cooperation.

This results in eight different types of training programmes being identified that should be in the curriculum for police. They will be described in the RAN POL Guide, which will be shared this summer.

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessary reflect the views of the RAN Centre of Excellence, the European Commission or any other institution or participant of the RAN POL working group.

Preamble

RAN strongly advocates investing in training for first line practitioners. Through training they can be made aware of their role and responsibilities. Training enlarges the required competences. That's why RAN POL is issuing this comprehensive guide on training for police officers.

In Athens the first draft of RAN POL's Guide on training for police officers was discussed. It was drafted by the RAN Centre of Excellence, based on the legacy of RAN POL, an online survey in the RAN POL network and the RAN POL meeting in Athens (14-15 June 2016)

This ex post takes stock of the RAN POL meeting with national experts in Athens.

The actual Guide will be published this summer. The outline of the Guide will most likely be

- The tasks and roles for police in the joint prevention of radicalisation
- The required competences and training
- General remarks and observations on training
 - On culture, leadership and management
 - On trainers
 - On competences, knowledge, attitudes and skills
 - Needs based
- *What's missing?*
- *Eight different chapters covering the eight competences*

In this ex post paper the What's missing and Eight different chapters are not yet included.

The tasks and roles for police in the joint prevention of radicalisation

The training that is needed for police officers follows, or better put, starts from the role for the police. RAN POL's Mission Statement describes the role as follows;

*Terrorism, violent extremism and the process of radicalisation are traditionally subjects for intelligence agencies or secret services, since they involve national security and classified information. However the **police have a crucial role to play in facilitating a preventative multi- (or inter-) agency approach at local or regional level.** Especially in local settings, it is the police that very often have strong networks. The police know the schools, youth groups and families but also the existing violent extremist groups. Police are a key player, and should be stimulated to optimise the professional networks and engage with communities.*

Within RAN POL there is sometimes some confusion what is meant with the term prevention. Police arresting a terrorist prevents the society from an attack. Prevention of violent extremism and terrorism can be done by disturbing and pursuing, but also by 'prevention' in the pre-criminal phase of radicalisation. Pre-criminal prevention is not new to police. Crime prevention and other prevention activities are considered a valuable and necessary approach. When RAN talks about prevention the pre-criminal prevention is meant.

RAN DNA of prevention

Four years of exchange in the RAN community of practitioners led to the RAN 'DNA' of prevention of radicalisation.

1. Radicalisation is a process: unique processes, multiple factors, different pathways
2. In Europe there are many different violent extremist ideologies (inter-related)
3. Prevention is about safeguarding of vulnerable people and communities
4. Families and communities are more victims and partners than hotspots
5. Local is key
6. Prevention is necessary, complementary to pursue and disrupt
7. Multi agency, sometimes even inter agency
8. Aware and empowered practitioners are key
9. Tailor made and personal contact
10. RAN (and local networks) as an open and transparent network

The required competences and training

Despite what some still think, is the role for recognising much broader than recognising signals of radicalisation. As was discussed in the kick off meeting for the new RAN POL in Aarhus (November 2015) it turns out very difficult for a community police officer to recognise the signals of radicalisation. The Dutch researcher Pieter Appelboom¹ shared his conclusions²:

"It appears that the early-signaling role of potential cases of radicalisation is not one necessarily carried out by the community officer (...)

(...)

The role of the community officer nonetheless seems particularly present in the direct follow up of radicalisation, after been made aware of potential radicalising residents. In this role they can bring in an extra piece of a potential radicalisation puzzle, but can also act out-reaching towards those individuals or families involved. The community officer here seems to be a great fit for being able to portrait a pro-active rather than reactive role within the community, illustrating cooperation rather than being at opposite ends."

Pieter Appelboom's last sentences are *"The community police officer (...) seems to be a great fit for being able to portrait a pro-active rather than reactive role within the community, illustrating cooperation rather than being at opposite ends"*

¹ Appelboom, Pieter. the role of the community police officer in the signalling of religiously affiliated radicalisation within the Netherlands (2015)

So what are the potential roles and contributions for local police. Police...

- have information to offer, information not known to other actors
- can be a source of expertise and advice on radicalisation and violent extremism for partners
- can deploy unique tools and measures that they only have
- are well positioned to build a strong local networking
- are very often a known and trusted partner for safeguarding, and prevention of crime and drug abuse
- can be a linking pin to national agencies and intelligence services
- can be a very effective tandem with the local authority

This result in four core competences that are needed:

1. Awareness and knowledge about **processes of radicalisation** leading to terrorism and violent extremism. This includes **signals** of the process of radicalisation (not same as terrorism). Also about factors that result in vulnerability, or protective factors. Also understanding of interventions that might mitigate radicalisation;
2. **Community policing**: awareness, attitude and skills to build trusted relations in the community, or communities within the community. Communications and networking in **general (not specifically on minority communities)**.
3. **Intercultural sensitivities, 'policing for all' and human rights**. Diversity, intercultural sensitivity, and knowledge, attitude and skills for engage with minority communities, confronting hate crime and prevent racial or ethnic profiling.
4. How to be an effective **initiator** or **partner** in **multi or inter agency cooperations**, also outside the world of security & safety. For instance partnering with youth protection, education, family support and youth work.

Eight competences, eight training programmes, eight chapters in the guide

We split the above identified four core competences in eight smaller competences that can be achieved through trained. This will result in the next eight chapters.

We are aware of the fact that there are training programmes that cover more than one of the topics, but there is benefit in putting the separate modules or training programmes in the spotlight.

1. Training programmes on **radicalisation** (awareness, understanding, preventing, intervening and/or signalling)
2. Training programmes on **community policing**
3. Training programmes on **Intercultural sensitivities, 'policing for all' and human rights** (cultural differences and sensitivities, engaging with minority communities, prejudices and discriminatory profiling)
4. Training programmes on police in **multi/inter agency cooperation**
5. Training programmes on **polarisation and social tensions**

6. Training programmes on **use of Internet and social media** for prevention of radicalisation
7. Training programmes on **effective communication** (attitudes, language, body language)
8. Training programmes on the role for police in **deradicalisation** of extremist individuals

The RAN POL Guide will be a living document that can and will be updated. In the future, when new training approaches for police are presented in RAN POL meetings or send to us by points of Contact, these training programmes could be added to the RAN POL Guide on training. The most inspiring training programmes will also be included in the overall RAN Collection of Practices.

General remarks and observations on training

On the trainers

Delivering these kind of training programmes can be challenging for trainers. It involves dealing with attitudes, biases and prejudices. The trainers should be able to deal with these sensitivities and potential obstruction.

External trainers can be an added value, or sometimes even necessary, but should be managed, because of the internal police culture is not always open to outsiders. Working in couples of trainers with a police trainer and an outsider can be very effective.

Culture, train the management as well

Community policing, intercultural policing and prevention were at the meeting described as a style of policing. They are not so much a specific topic of expertise but moreover a culture or even a professional standard. This implies that the management should be trained as well, and the other police colleagues as well. Working on culture can only be done if it is related to the actual work, and delivered in team training.

Not only lecturing, exercises, experience and practice

The training will have the most effect when it is problems and needs based. An interesting example is the training programme for dealing with minorities from the Czech police. It started with a research into which situations caused tensions for police officers while engaging with minorities. Based on this research there were training programmes developed.

Training for the core competences should be part of the curriculum of the initial police training. But it should get a follow up and refreshing on the job. Being a community police officer walking the streets, offers the opportunity to practice the skills required for community policing.

In general were the experts convinced that practicing with simulations, working with actors and doing other exercises are preferred techniques because they are more effective.