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CONCLUSION PAPER*RAN PRISONS Working Group Meeting**12-13 September 2023, Barcelona, Spain*

The role of prison leadership to ensure minimal standards for P/CVE work in the prison environment

Key outcomes

The significance of P/CVE and the rehabilitation of violent extremist or terrorist offenders (VETOs) is realized to different degrees among different prisons. Many good practices and tools exist for P/CVE work in the prison environment and have been identified within the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) (e.g. reinforcing the concept of dynamic security, ensuring multi-skillset training for prison staff), but their actual take-up in daily practice as well as sustainability depend largely on organisational support provided by prison management and policy. The public expectations towards the penitentiary system to rehabilitate VETOs is higher than ever, against the reality of prison overcrowding, staff shortages (incl. of social workers and psychologists), lack of sustainable and effective staff training, or limited reach/availability of specialised deradicalisation, disengagement and rehabilitation (DDR) programmes in prison.

In order to examine the role of prison management in enabling P/CVE work, and to gather inspiration by concrete case studies, this meeting was organised in collaboration with the Centre d'Estudis Jurídics i Formació Especialitzada (CEJFE) in Barcelona, Spain (Center for Legal Studies and Specialized Training) who shared their experience with P/CVE work in prisons in Catalonia and training for prison staff. Participants also visited the prison Centre Penitenciari Lledoners, inaugurated on 24 October, 2008. It stands as the pioneering correctional facility in Catalonia, embodying the principles of the new generation of correction centres. There, the prison's management guided the group through the facility, presented its structure, prison staff, demography and interventions, emphasising the work being done in the field of P/CVE and the management's decisions and efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation.

Following are the key outcomes of the meeting:

- Good relationship between management and prison staff, as well as the feeling of belonging and being listened to, are crucial to encourage prison staff to be alert and attentive to the general environment in prison and to the individual prisoners.
- A way to prevent radicalisation processes is to provide a positive and healthy environment to prisoners, which will contribute to deterring them from developing grievances towards the system and will encourage collaboration with the prison staff and engagement with available programmes. These terms can be

created by enough adequately trained staff members, good living conditions (including sports facilities, courses etc.), being involved in decision making and prison efforts to support personal issues such as missing personal documentation.

- Prison staff trained on P/CVE is key in identifying and countering radicalisation in prison. It is important for all or most prison staff to be aware of the basics of P/CVE and for the relevant practitioners to go through more advanced training.
- Multi-agency work within prison and with the agencies who will work with the clients during post-release are key in disengagement and resocialisation of VETOs.

Highlights of the discussion

The discussion focused on the ability of prison leadership and the inherent decision-making process supporting and facilitating P/CVE work in prison. Consideration was given towards different limitations derived from legislation, budget, lack of staff members and difficulties in staff recruitment, prison overcrowding and other challenging factors. Practitioners' experiences from various EU member states show that prison leadership can create a certain framework for P/CVE work in prison. In different local contexts there are unique challenges and opportunities, and at the same time some similarities can be found. Mutual learning can improve work in this field. Some examples for local decision making were presented by the hosting institutions from Catalonia and discussed among participants.

Key features of the Centre Penitenciari Lledoners prison

Inmate demographics:

- While the maximum capacity in the ordinary regime is 1025 inmates and 33 in the closed regime, the optimal capacity is 750 inmates. At the time of the meeting there were 797 inmates in the facility.
 - 93% of the inmates are sentenced, 5% in preventive detention prior to trial, 2% sentenced and in preventive detention.
 - 44% of the inmates are foreign nationals (in representation order: from the Maghreb, Latin America, Europe/Sub-Saharan Africa/Asia, rest of the world).
 - Administrative situation: 56% Spanish nationals (including nationalised or residents), 7% with residency permit, 31% with identification documents from their country of origin, 6% without any documentation.
 - Offences related to radicalisation: 1 VETO inmate in the past, 1 at present and 5 under surveillance due to suspicion of radicalisation.

Prison staff and management:

The facility has 445 staff members, including the management team which consists of the director, subdirector for treatment, subdirector for the interior regime, judiciary technical secretary and manager. Rehabilitation staff include team leaders, programme managers, psychologists, pedagogical experts, judicial system workers, educators, teachers, social workers, librarians, sports and arts instructors, occupational supervisors and medical staff, alongside human resources, administration and maintenance staff.

The objectives in relation to staff management are: promoting cohesion among the directors' team, motivating all prison staff, keeping enthusiasm and excitement for work high, and improving working conditions as per available possibilities.

The key approach is believing in the potential of all professionals and listening to their needs, challenges and daily concerns. Moreover, the leadership consults with the staff and takes their suggestions into account before introducing changes and strengthens their sense of belonging by encouraging close work relations between management and staff.

P/CVE measures in the Centre Penitenciari Lledoners

- **Training for professionals:** There are two levels of training for the staff of the Centre Penitenciari Lledoners – basic and advanced – designed and delivered in collaboration with the CEFJE. Prison management strives to ensure that all staff members receive basic training and that those staff members for whom it is relevant receive advanced training.
- **Unit for radicalisation and extremism and periodical monitoring:** The unit has been operating since 2019 and focuses on identifying and working with inmates at risk, those already in the process of radicalisation and recruiters. The unit's multi-disciplinary team supports general prison staff in emerging questions about possible radicalising inmates and in the case of required interventions. Information is exchanged and stored in the form of reports written by prison staff. Once signs of radicalisation are detected, the radicalisation unit places the inmate into 1 of 3 categories, which determine the frequency of assessments and checks: every 6 months, 3 months or 1 month. As of September 2023, there were 25 inmates in these categories. The inmates are aware that they are being monitored, which is not the case in the majority of prisons in Spain. This is done to create a space for sharing concerns. Their imprisonment conditions are not changed, and permits and privileges are not deprived while these measures are being applied. Counselling is available during this time and other interventions and programming, even though they are not specific P/CVE ones.
- **Detecting possible radicalisation:** As most staff members have gone through at least one of the training programmes in P/CVE, and as they strive to have good relations with the inmates, they can detect changes in behaviour among inmates, as well as other signs suggesting a turn to radicalisation.
- **Implementing general preventive actions:** There are no designated P/CVE interventions or programmes applied, just general preventative measures. One example is the multicultural attitude and approach of the prison. They use mediation and avoid creating 'ghettos' of any sort in the different departments, they provide access to religious practices and a multi-faith prayer room, religious figures from the nearby local communities are invited to visit and volunteers recruited who speak different languages to cater to the large variety of cultural backgrounds of inmates. Moreover, the prison administration endorses values and attitudes that are favourable towards human rights and are transversal through different cultures and religions, including intercultural mediation services.
- **Individualised Treatment Programmes** are implemented to create a tailor-made rehabilitation plan for each client.

Programmes and interventions

There are no designated programmes or interventions on disengagement or deradicalisation in the Centre Penitenciari Lledoners. Nevertheless, they address factors that might enable processes of radicalisation. They promote social protective factors, such as assistance in documentation, family programmes, work on social networks etc. Moreover, the prison staff strive to maintain good relationships with the inmates, which assist in their participation in the different programmes.

- **The Reception programme:** When new inmates arrive to prison, an evaluation is conducted and attention is given to establish confidence between inmates and the staff. The staff offer information, clarify doubts, facilitate inmates' needs and include them in the community. This is the initial step in their Individualised Treatment Programme.

- **R-N-R intervention model¹** relies on three parameters:
 - Risk – the level of treatment will be adjusted according to the level of risk.
 - Need – detecting criminological and non-criminological needs.
 - Responsivity – detect factors which can allow or challenge an adequate response of the client to the interventions.
- **Risk assessment:** The RISCANVI² tool³ was developed in 2007 to assess and contribute to the case management of the clients. It is used throughout all penitentiary facilities in Catalonia. It evaluates self-inflicted violence, anti-institutional violence, general recidivism, violent recidivism and breach of sentence. The assessment will define high, medium and low levels of risk. Intervention will be decided upon the results of the risk assessment.

Training

Management aspires for all prison staff to be trained in P/CVE. The CEJFE in Barcelona provides training to all those who work in the criminal justice system, such as prison staff, probation workers, restorative justice systems, prosecutors, practitioners working with juveniles, etc. Moreover, as Catalonia has its own civic code, the centre is dedicated to adjusting it, producing research and studies, applied research and assessment of public policies.

To date, nearly all prison staff have gone through the basic training, which focuses on legislation and prison conditions in relation to radicalisation. The second more advanced training is delivered by the CEFJE and deepens the understanding of radicalisation and ways to detect processes.

All prison staff and other staff of the Ministry of Justice go through the 5-hour basic training programme. Practitioners and other professionals who might have more involvement with VETOs will go through an advanced course of 20 hours. The estimation is that about half of overall prison staff members have gone through the advanced training.

¹ [Rehabilitating criminal justice policy and practice. \(apa.org\)](#)

² [Manual d'aplicació del protocol de valoració RisCanvi \(gencat.cat\)](#)

³ Antonio Andrés-Pueyo, Karin Arbach-Lucioni, Santiago Redondo (2017) The RisCanvi. A New Tool for Assessing Risk for Violence in Prison and Recidivism. In: Singh, P. Kroner, D. et al (eds.) Handbook of Recidivism Risk/Needs Assessment Tools, First Edition. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781119184256.ch13>

The Catalan example – Case study:

Y is a 25-year-old Moroccan woman, who was convicted for publishing and disseminating DAESH-related content on social media at the ages of 17-18. She has been living in Catalonia since the age of 3. Her father left the family, after she, her sisters and her mother experienced abuse from him. Her relationship with her family deteriorates, she suffers from bullying at school, becomes introverted and is referred to a mental health centre. In the same period, she meets her boyfriend, who is involved with criminal operations and who involves her in the criminal action she undertakes later. In Spain, individuals who have been convicted of crimes against national security may be subject to expulsion even when they have obtained permanent residence permission, according to the Organic Law 4/2000 and Organic Law on Citizen Security 4/2015.

Working in a multi-agency cooperation setting on the Y case:

1. Establishing 2 work roundtables for comprehensive intervention, seeking creative dynamic solutions and coordinating different agencies: 1) local roundtable consisting of community case manager, municipal police and citizenship services (migration and interculturality); 2) scientific roundtable consisted of prison services, Catalan police and the municipality.
2. Risk assessment tool: RisCanvi
3. Y was invited to participate in the Multi-agency work, being aware that her participation does not guarantee to prevent her from being expelled, and her compliance comes with a probation period of 5 years.
4. Interventions included meeting with probation officer who conducted disengagement interventions and periodically appeared in the administration of justice.

This was the first case of multi-agency work with a VETO client in Catalonia. Y is still in probation (5 years), but the results so far are promising. She maintains a positive relationship with the probation officer, she reacts well due to the mental and emotional support and her general behaviour became friendlier and more active and productive than before.

The Department of Justice of the government of Catalonia had participated in PREPARE, a project preventing radicalisation through probation and release (2017-2019), where the foundation for multi-agency work with VETOs were established.

Recommendations

Participants reflected together on the prison visit and the Catalanian approach and drafted recommendations regarding the role of prison leadership in ensuring minimal standards for P/CVE work in the prison environment, according to what they learned during the meeting and their own experiences:

For prison management: Key factors in ensuring minimal standards for P/CVE work have been discussed and identified:

- Build **trust between management and staff**, including defining clear tasks and responsibilities to ensure good working relationships and avoid tensions.
- Invest in **staff training related to P/CVE** to ensure good detection of potential radicalisation processes in prison.
 - Maximise use of e-learning programmes for prison staff.
 - Consider creating in-house training programmes instead of relying on a central training agency.
 - Create basic training about P/CVE for all prison staff and advanced training for the ones specialising in P/CVE.
 - Share case studies among relevant practitioners and encourage staff members to participate in national and international meetings and events to gain further knowledge.
- Consider creating a **designated group or unit with advanced knowledge on P/CVE** and risk assessment to perform specialised and tailored-made assessments and interventions.
- Create procedures and frameworks for **multi-agency work** involving other agencies and Civil Society Organisations to provide high-standard interventions during the imprisonment period and create a good transition to post-release.
 - Ensure clear and effective distribution of responsibilities among different stakeholders, including case management.
 - There is a need for better **sharing of information protocols** between the different agencies and practitioners who are involved in case management of VETOs.
- Create a **support system for documentation** in order to create better collaboration of the clients with the system.

For policy makers:

- Grant more autonomy to prison management for them to be able to allocate resources for P/CVE work if they feel necessary.
- Answer the need for sufficient staff, as most prisons suffer from human resources issues, as well as overcrowded facilities.
- Consider the undesired effects of some counter-terrorism measures, such as deportations to the country of origin: if the inmate will be subject to extradition at end of their sentence, efforts put in place by the prison staff as well as other actors in supporting rehabilitation and reintegration are negatively affected by the fact that the person will not return to society after release. This might create frustration both among practitioners as well as among the inmates and can negatively affect the success of the rehabilitation process.

Follow up

Topics for further exploration within RAN Practitioners meetings include:

- Prisons across the EU are dealing with overcrowded facilities and staff shortages. What can be done?
- Training in P/CVE for prison staff and other practitioners involved with VETOs in prisons.

- Dynamic security and personalised interventions in prisons.

Relevant practices

1. Model of participation and co-living: Prisoners' community council. In Centre Penitenciarilor Lledoners there is a democratic system of representatives from the different departments who actively participate in organising inmates' life in the prison setting. The council discuss different topics of collective interest, co-living and the use of leisure time. Through the different commissions they establish connections with the different prison's departments and staff, as well as the inmates themselves.
2. Kiosk. As in Centre Penitenciarilor Lledoners, other prisons (for example in Hungary), where inmates can use the machine to follow their economical situation, check their bureaucratic processes and other functions.
3. In Poland, security services and prison management work together in the development of training for prison staff on P/CVE.

Further reading

[UNODC \(2015\), Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence](#)
[RAN \(2021\), Rehabilitation work with convict offenders outside of prison,](#)
[RAN \(2021\), Risk and Needs Assessment tools](#)
[RAN \(2021\), How to effectively train prison staff and partners for P/CVE](#)
[RAN \(2022\), What is in the European prison toolbox of DDR programmes?](#)