Police

CONCLUSION PAPER
RAN POL and the Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods (#507)
31 October and 1 November 2022, Rome, Italy

Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods

Key outcomes

On 31 October and 1 November 2022, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Police and law enforcement Working Group (RAN POL) organised a meeting for a group of (police) experts to discuss the police role and contribution in the holistic multi-agency case diagnosis of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods. The participants, mostly police experts, but also other practitioners, have experience in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and/or youth (gang) crime. Through presentations, reflections and group discussions, participants from different Member States shared their practical experiences with holistic cooperation/diagnosis.

While discussing why holistic case diagnosis is needed and exchanging the different approaches and/or tools per country, experts also shared best practices of holistic diagnosis methodologies. The following key outcomes are distilled from the 2-day meeting:
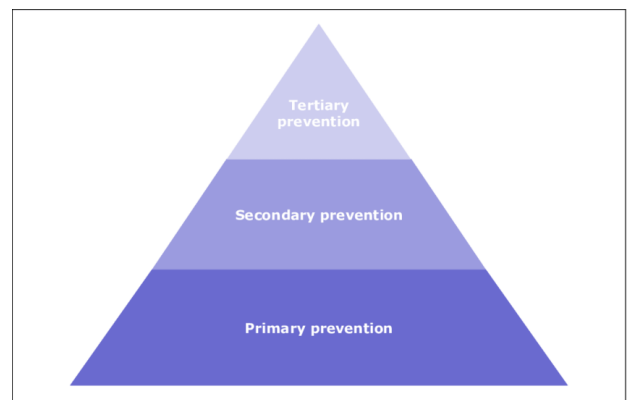
- A successful holistic cooperation starts with a shared and convincing 'why' of the active contribution of *all* involved partners.

- A proper diagnosis of radicalisation needs to be holistic since the process of radicalisation is the result of a kaleidoscope of factors, including social factors. So, we need social and other partners to gather the input and assess the outcome of the diagnosis.

- Meeting regularly is just the first step. The holistic cooperation needs to be based on a clear methodology and proper regulations for the involved partners.

CONCLUSION PAPER
Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis
of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods
Page **2** of **6**

This paper presents the main conclusions of 2 days of presentations and lively group discussions. Since this was not the first time RAN POL had a meeting on multi-agency holistic cooperation for case diagnosis, this meeting aimed to be as practical as possible, with a special focus on the holistic diagnosis as the foundation of multi-agency working. Therefore, it gave practitioners practical tools and know-how for improving holistic diagnosis on the levels of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods/areas.

Highlights of the discussion

Participants shared in smaller groups the current state of play regarding holistic diagnosis/approaches/tools in their local and/or national context. Among their peers, the smaller groups ranked 'the approaches in their Member States', and exchanged on why holistic case diagnosis is important in the prevention of radicalisation.

- Instead of reacting to extremism, the police needs to look at why extremism is happening in a certain local area and dig deeper to understand this question together with other authorities. The police works together with local partners to diagnose the root causes of radicalisation.

    o Root causes, such as an identity crisis, cannot be solved by the police. Therefore, once again, the police cannot do it alone.

- The prevention pyramid brings clarification to what kind of prevention work is being done. The prevention in an at-risk area starts with primary prevention. If there is a clear risk of radicalisation, secondary prevention is needed. The risk assessment of a radicalised individual is an example of tertiary prevention. All of these need a holistic approach, whether it is for an individual, group and/or area/neighbourhood.

- The police in Europe have different roles, depending on the local context and regulations. Sometimes the police are the initiator and chairperson of a team doing the holistic diagnosis, sometimes they are one of the partners, for instance under the chair of the municipality.

- Holistic diagnosis tools are necessary for tailor-made solutions. With holistic diagnosis, the police cannot be the only agency involved in (preventive) diagnosis of at-risk individuals.

- In some approaches cooperation with academics turned out to be very helpful. Some police units have very close and warm relations with academics. The academics long for real-life data and police can benefit from academic insight and knowledge.

- One of the points raised concerns information sharing: motivating colleagues from criminal investigation agencies to report and share social information related to risk factors with multi-agency partners; especially when working with Mental Health practitioners.

- The solutions for holistic case diagnosis are mostly for the local context, but there are cases of at-risk individuals who travel between cities. Responsibilities are travelling then as well, mostly on weekends. The inter-city and beyond-office-hours dimension is a challenge for accurate information exchange.

CONCLUSION PAPER
Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis
of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods
Page **3** of **6**

Recommendations

What are the **main ingredients** of a holistic case diagnosis approach?

- A method or framework for the diagnosis. The method needs constant evaluation to see 'if it works', and needs to be improved while working with it.

- A common understanding of 'why' the goal and situation is needed. Radicalisation is a shared problem.

- Agreement on who is the lead and therefore the one responsible for the case. If there is no capacity to have an independent lead, then decide which agency is in charge. There can also be a co-chair of one of the partners. Giving a 'difficult' or reluctant partner an important role can help them bring on board.

- Involving other partners requires police to acknowledge and respect the expertise and interests of these partners.

  o This helps to build a valuable joint ambition and willingness for the envisioned method.

  o It also builds the relationship and trust between partners.

- Each case should be holistically assessed on (early) risk factors of violence.

- Holistic diagnosis means understanding the person, their system and the culture they are a part of.

Additional key ingredients for holistic diagnosis:

- Evidence-based academic research can also be used as a supportive argument to convince decision-makers about the importance of holistic diagnosis. Therefore, the method of diagnosis should be evidence-based, i.e. supported by research.

- It is important to connect leadership in developing the holistic diagnosis and inter-agency approach with a common goal.

- Forensic remedy pedagogue: someone should be involved who understands the security perspective and the (sub-)culture the youngsters live in.

> **Systemic and area-based holistic working**
>
> From Martien Kuitenbrouwer and Martin Nanninga's presentation on their Amsterdam area-based holistic approach:
>
> - Seeing through multiple pairs of eyes: combining different perspectives to understand and analyse the situation.
> - Understanding the broader picture and the repetitive loop of action: past and present dynamics.
> - Understand how and where leverage can be developed: no quick fixes.
> - Develop trust and familiarity in action: pragmatic and practical working principles.
> - Learn and regularly reflect on the problem and how the collaboration is going.

RADICALISATION AWARENESS NETWORK
RAN Practitioners

CONCLUSION PAPER
Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis
of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods
Page **4** of **6**

Best practices

During the meeting, three examples from Poland, the Netherlands and Spain were presented as best practices. These examples differed in prevention goal (see prevention pyramid): primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

The **Polish approach** of holistic diagnosis focuses on the primary prevention of radicalisation. The example looks at the problems in the local environment — the problem diagnosis — by conducting a secondary data analysis of the literature, local statistical data from police analyses and reports, and information on local events. The problem could be an increase in negative behaviour of young people in relation to discrimination and hate crimes. With a survey method, the holistic diagnosis tries to find the causes.
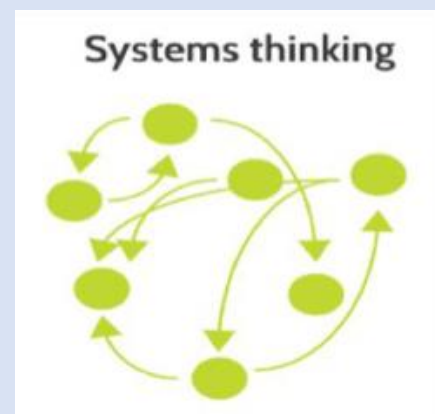
The educational preventive programme (Annex I) UNDERSTAND=RESPECT helps to prevent radicalisation. The approach needs cooperation between police, educators youth workers, local communities and families. The main objectives focus on:

1. preparation of a local spare-time offer for young people;

2. inclusion of parents/legal guardians in the activities addressed to children and young people;

3. sensitising the local community to the need for non-acceptance of inappropriate behaviour;

4. inclusion of proactive activities in the offer of safety initiatives.

The group and area-based approach in the **Amsterdam (NL) approach** is based in secondary prevention, but, depending on the case, also spreads to tertiary and primary prevention. When juvenile crime was rising in Amsterdam, residents and local organisations joined forces for a new approach together with the local authorities. The first step was set in a local playground, where the local youth worker showed the mapping he made of the neighbourhood system with connections and exchanges of the youngsters. Everybody understood that to tackle a flexible system, you need your own flexible network. The partners needed to invest in long-term, systemic collaboration. Furthermore, the involved partners/organisations co-created a graphic representation of the history of the area, to have a common starting point, based on all perspectives.

The local networks in each district of Amsterdam are initiated/chaired by the municipality. The focus on juvenile delinquency and vulnerable girls and the working approach are developed and improved in practice. The approach is evidence-based researched and monitored.

Within the approach to vulnerable girls (sexual exploitation), police reached out to other local care and welfare professionals (youth workers, care workers, peer-to-peer groups) and appointed intrinsic motivated colleagues as ambassadors focusing on the girls and people around the girls. Police ambassadors proactively reached out to the vulnerable girls digitally, physically and through postcards. Just giving sincere attention made the difference most of the time. Former victims were also incorporated in the approach.

CONCLUSION PAPER
Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis
of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods
Page **5** of **6**

The **Spanish approach** has been developed together with the principle of community policing. The holistic tool is the process and vice versa. The Policia de la Generalitat – Mossos d'Esquadra in Catalonia, Spain, is designed to work in partnerships: from the police on the local and national level to ideological groups and the health services. The methods and interventions are co-created with partners in order to have impact in society. The Catalonian police are also well connected to the local universities; police and academics benefit strongly from this cooperation.

The preventive programme focuses on training different partners first, detection and information gathering to find root causes second, doing holistic case evaluation/assessment with involved partners third, and, finally, producing and establishing the intervention and a suitable follow-up programme. Depending on the case, there is also a fifth programme focusing on intervention at the end of the prison period. After all these steps, an overall evaluation for improvement is made that feeds into the training programme.

Shortage of sources remains a reality for police, especially when they are the initiators of such cooperation methods for holistic diagnosis. Therefore, in this example, threats are prioritised according to the sources and capacities the police have.

Follow-up

- RAN Paper on the conceptualisation of a multi-agency approach and inter-agency approach, and the difference between the two.

- Most participants thought the meeting was not long enough and wanted to have one more (half-)day to dive in deep.

Further reading

- RAN POL Workshop for in-depth case diagnosis, online meeting (16-17 December 2021).

- RAN POL – Legislation, training and other options for overcoming barriers to information sharing, Athens (28-29 November 2019).

- RAN POL Lessons from crime prevention, Dresden (12-13 June 2018).

- RAN POL Police, families and family workers. How to foster closer engagement with families and family workers, and why, Lisbon (12-13 October 2017).

CONCLUSION PAPER
Police role and contribution in the holistic, multi-agency case diagnosis
of at-risk individuals, groups and neighbourhoods
Page 6 of 6

Annex I

Polish preventive programme in stages

Stage I: Preparation of the theoretical background of the programme

Stage II: Conducting the diagnosis of the risk of radicalisation at school and in local environments

Stage III: Developing the assumptions of a preventive programme to prevent radicalisation leading to discrimination and hate speech