

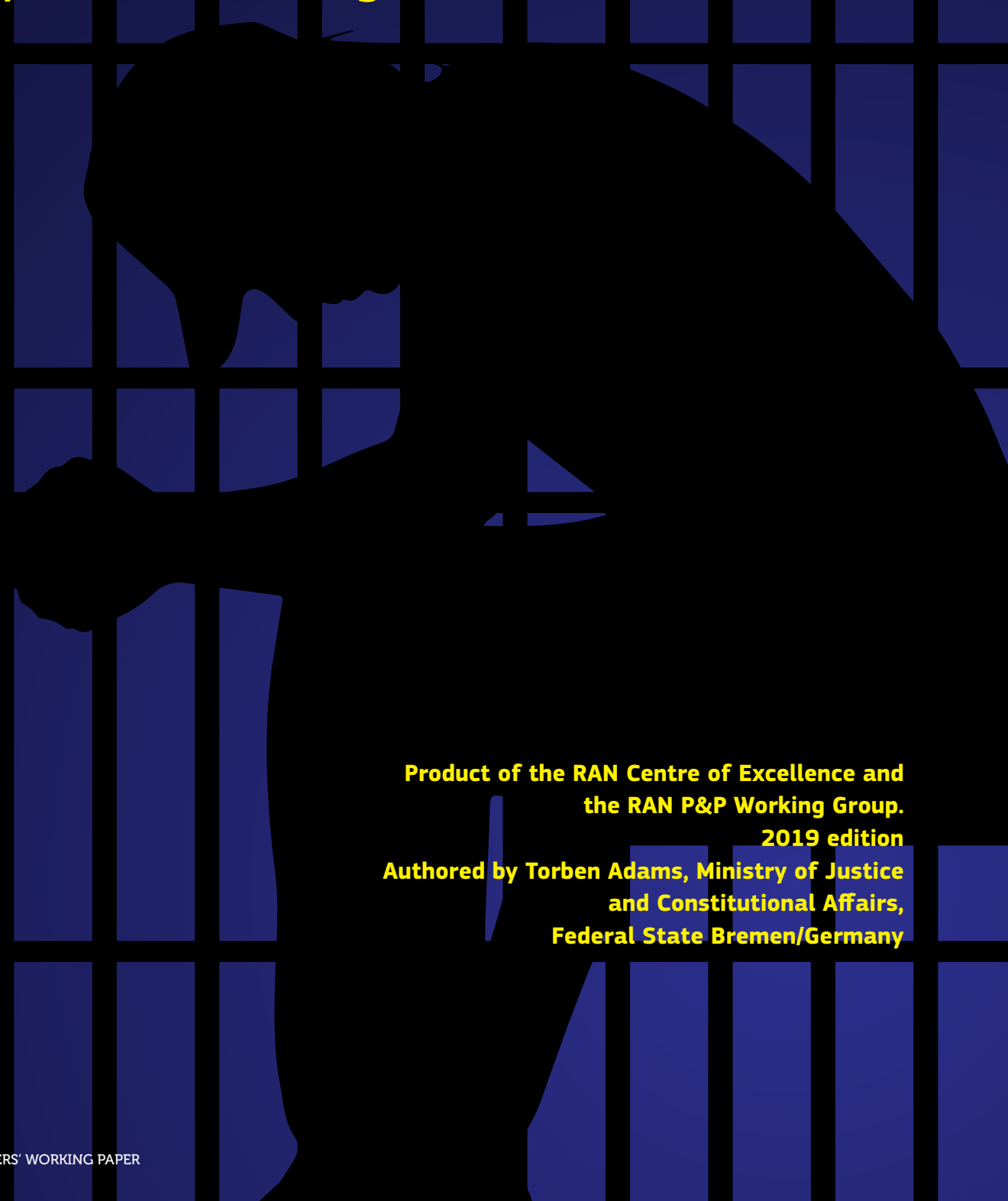
# Approaches to countering radicalisation and dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders in prisons and probation



# **RAN Prison and Probation**

## **Approaches to countering radicalisation and dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders in prisons and probation**

**The prevention and countering of radicalisation and terrorism landscape is changing rapidly, and prison and probation practitioners must constantly respond and adapt to these changes.**



**Product of the RAN Centre of Excellence and  
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This paper presents the practitioners' perspective, and first and foremost aims to be of value to other practitioners in this field. It provides an overview of some of the principal findings emerging in the field of radicalisation, in the context of prison and probation.



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# Executive summary

In recent years, government policy has repeatedly identified prisons as particularly significant environments, not only in terms of risk of radicalisation, but also for disengagement from violent extremism and implementation measures to prevent radicalisation of individual offenders.

Initially, thematic publications on prisoners and radicalisation were focused on analysing the related risks and dynamics, but more recently, authors and Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) activities have centred also on practical challenges: female offenders, family support interventions, the role of religion, returning foreign fighters, the importance of prison conditions, and approaches to rehabilitation and reintegration.

This paper presents the practitioners' perspective, and first and foremost aims to be of value to other practitioners in this field. It provides an overview of some of the principal findings emerging in the field of radicalisation, in the context of prison and probation.

Disengagement and prevention are priorities in contemporary rehabilitation work with offenders. A rise in incarcerations is probable, because recent years have seen a rising threat level and an increase in extremist activity, and consequently, new legislation defining **new** terrorist offences. In light of the various types of offenders and the diverse associated risks and needs, specialised programmes are necessary. For instance, female juvenile (violent) extremist and terrorist offenders (VETOs) differ from other female offenders and are in need of purpose-designed programmes.

Risk assessment tools and rehabilitation interventions can only be implemented satisfactorily if the prison system itself is fully operational. As a rule, sound prison management is key for effective rehabilitation. Without prison management employing the appropriate trained staff, any form of disengagement or prevention is precarious. Although prison and probation can play a key role in rehabilitation and crime prevention work in general, they cannot redress all societal, family or individual shortcomings of offenders in custody.

In dealing with this target group, probation and prison services face different challenges. Probation services must contend with limited time for work with clients, high levels of political pressure and low acceptance of risk. Probation services can play a vital role in rehabilitating VETOs, through specialised organisational structures and training, multi-agency cooperation and tailored interventions.

Given the many related publications and the breadth of relevant issues, this paper highlights and synthesises some of the primary themes, developments and challenges, and proposes practical recommendations. Finally, the paper seeks to identify key knowledge gaps that deserve further attention.

## RAN P&P

### Definitions and principles

RAN P&P maintains the following guiding principles that are reflected throughout this paper.

- Promoting offenders' well-being and rehabilitation is the way to best ensure safety for society.
- Terrorist crimes apply to a range of activities; individuals sentenced for terrorist acts do not all pose the same risk to society.
- Offenders are capable of positive change, and they need support when disengaging from violent extremism.
- Universal human rights must be upheld at all times and under all circumstances.
- Promoting positive staff-prisoner relationships and a beneficial prison setting is necessary if the risk of radicalisation is to be reduced and rehabilitation and reintegration stimulated.
- Multi-agency cooperation is crucial in preventing radicalisation and supporting desistance processes.

The aim of prison and probation interventions is twofold: to ensure security and safety (for society at large, staff and offenders) and to support offenders in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Since the launch of RAN in 2012, the Prison and Probation working group (P&P) has focused on preventing violent extremism, engagement with extremist groups, and extremist behaviour during detention and probation. This paper is based on practitioners' input and up-to-date research on the subject, although validated research in this area is limited due to the relatively small sample group.

RAN P&P comprises approximately 400 practitioners including representatives from prison governors and officers, probation services, ministries of justice and intelligence services, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society

organisations (CSOs) working with offenders. RAN P&P has convened over 25 meetings with leading researchers and practitioners across the EU Member States (including study visits to the Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), enabling high-quality exchanges on a range

of themes. In the course of these meetings, a range of promising practices in prison and probation contexts emerged. Descriptions of the practices are available online via the RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices (1). Some of the practices will serve as practical examples in this paper.

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(1) Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran\\_collection-approaches\\_and\\_practices\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran_collection-approaches_and_practices_en.pdf)

# 1. Introduction

This paper is first and foremost written for practitioners in the field of prison and probation such as prison governors, prison and probation staff, and relevant stakeholders and NGOs working in partnership with prison and probation authorities. The paper may also contain relevant and valuable information to inform policymakers. The aim is to provide these target audiences with information on current practices and issues relating to management of VETOs and on how to prevent the radicalisation of other imprisoned individuals, in a prison and probation context. The working paper expands on a previous RAN P&P practitioners' working paper (second edition) under a different title: Approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalisation in prisons and probation <sup>(2)</sup> This paper reflects the outcomes of discussion in the different meetings of the RAN P&P working group and related RAN events regarding the detention and rehabilitation of VETOs.

This paper will concentrate mainly on Islamist radicalisation in prison, reflecting current priorities in countering terrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE); other forms of radicalisation also occurring in prison (e.g. far-right, far-left and single-issue radicalisation) are mentioned but not elaborated. This is not to minimise or underestimate the importance of other forms of radicalisation.

## Definitions and principles

This paper's target group is VETOs and includes the following:

- individuals charged or sentenced with terrorist (-related) crimes (pretrial suspects (awaiting trial), whether detained or not, sentenced and detained or serving an alternative sentence e.g. through electronic monitoring);
- individuals charged or sentenced with other types of crimes who show (violent) behaviour connected to extremism;
- released offenders charged with terrorist (-related) crimes or charged with other types of crimes, who show (violent) behaviour connected to extremism.

This paper also aims to provide guidance for the decision-making processes, at policy level, and operational prison and probation management level. It is written with accessibility in mind. It aims to:

- present an overview of current challenges faced by the prison and probation sector when dealing with VETOs;
- share the approaches (already in place and still under development) to detect, monitor and rehabilitate VETOs;
- provide guidance on how to prepare for (re)integration of VETOs into society.

A one-size-fits-all solution applicable across EU Member States is not feasible. Member States vary in legislation, standard operating procedures and organisation of their prison and probation systems.

This policy paper contains four types of information.

## 'Definitions and principles'

boxes provide information about key definitions used and key guiding principles underpinning practice.

## 'Did you know ...?'

boxes present related issues that are part of the broader discussion of dealing with VETOs.

## 'Key recommendations'

boxes briefly highlight the most important concepts and lessons learned.

## 'Practical example(s)'

boxes highlight experiences of EU Member States, describe practices from the RAN Collection or outline certain approaches to VETOs in particular prisons, probation services, regions or countries.

Additional, in-depth information about the issues and topics discussed in this paper can be accessed through reference list.

<sup>(2)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalisation in prisons and probation. RAN P&P practitioners' working paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_approaches\\_to\\_violent\\_extremist\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_approaches_to_violent_extremist_en.pdf)

## 2. General context

The prevention and countering of radicalisation and terrorism landscape is changing rapidly, and prison and probation practitioners must constantly respond and adapt to these changes. This chapter (Chapter 2) introduces the general context and issues that have been the focus of attention.

### 2.1 Rising threat level and new legislation

In response to the rising terrorist threat level in recent years, the EU and its Member States have adapted their legislation. As result of these developments, the prison and probation sectors are confronted with a growing number of individuals charged with and/or convicted for terrorism-related offences.

#### Did you know ...?

##### TE-SAT numbers on terrorism convictions and penalties

The Europol Terrorism Situation and Trend (TE-SAT) report 2018 gives insight into the terrorism convictions and penalties based on information gathered by Eurojust in 2017. Please note that not all EU Member States have contributed to these data. Some highlights from the report:

- 'In 2017 17 Member States reported a total of 565 individuals who were convicted or acquitted of terrorist offences. This number is similar to the numbers submitted over the past two years';
- 'In 2017 the vast majority of verdicts (352) in the Member States concerned jihadist terrorism confirming a trend that started in 2015';
- 'The average prison sentence for terrorist offences in the EU in 2017 was five years, similar to that of 2016'.

Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism (replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA) was adopted. The directive consolidates existing EU legislation and international standards on the criminalisation of terrorist offences and incorporates 'new' terrorism-related offences (see below for examples). This new directive could impact the size and nature of the respective VETO

group in custody – depending on its adoption in national legislative frameworks.

#### Did you know ...?

##### New legislation related to terrorist activities

New offences are linked to terrorist activity. The following acts, among others, are to be considered criminal offences throughout the EU, and therefore may constitute reason for incarceration in EU Member State prison institutions <sup>(3)</sup>.

Public provocation to commit terrorism, or advocating terrorism, either directly or indirectly through the glorification of such acts, thereby causing a danger that such offences may be committed (Article 5).

Recruitment for terrorism (Article 6).

Providing or receiving training for making explosives or weapons or noxious or hazardous substances. This provision also applies to 'lone wolves' researching how to carry out an attack on their own (Articles 7 and 8).

Travelling abroad for the purpose of committing, or contributing to the commission of a terrorist offence or for the purpose of the participation in the activities of a terrorist group, or undertaking preparatory acts by entering a Member State with the intention to commit, or contribute to the commission of, a terrorist offence (Article 9).

Organising or otherwise facilitating the above mentioned travelling (Article 10).

Providing funds to commit or contribute to terrorism. If the funding concerns terrorist offences (laid down in Article 3 of the Directive), offences relating to a terrorist group (Article 4) and travelling for the purpose of terrorism (Article 9), it is not necessary that the funds be in fact used to commit, or to contribute to the commission of any of those offences, nor is it required that the offender knows for which specific offence or offences the funds are to be used. Member States would also be required to take measures to freeze or seize such funds (Article 11).

<sup>(3)</sup> Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA. 2017. Official Journal of the European Union, OJ L 88, 6–21. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32017L0541>

## 2.2 Different types of violent extremist and terrorist offenders

There are diverse types of extremist offenders, including those who have not committed acts of violence and may never do so. Being radical does not necessarily entail violent action. But there is a range of terrorist offences that do not necessarily refer to violent behaviour of the offender, such as recruitment and financing. However, they are considered to facilitate the use of violence by others. In terms of response, it is important to realise the diversity in the profiles of extremist and terrorist offenders and their role and tendency towards violence. It is generally accepted that there is no one single profile applicable to violent extremists in terms of age, sex, educational achievement, upbringing, mental health, nationality, ethnicity and personal background. Although not intrinsic to this population, some violent extremists and radicalised individuals tending to violence have a mental health illness. In terms of age, they may be young adults, older adults or juvenile offenders. Offenders used to be chiefly male, but increasingly, women are becoming involved in violent extremist offences. Despite these variations, there are indicators that can be distinguished and collated to form a protocol for identifying specific characteristics, for identifying and describing the risk presented by an individual, and for providing pertinent information that will prove useful in the management of violent offenders in prison and on probation.

Crucial differences have been identified in terms of the personal needs, motivations, political and ideological perspectives, grievances, values, attitudes, personal characteristics and histories of violent extremists, as compared to other criminal actors. Elements pertaining to the individual's continuing intention and capacity should be considered, as should any present or potential 'protective' or risk-mitigating factors. Such details are important when making risk-related decisions concerning violent extremists and radicalised individuals tending to violence. These elements are also key to the identification of future individualised intervention programme goals and intervention strategies to counter violent extremism.

### 2.2.1 Female violent extremist and terrorist offenders

The current structure of existing rehabilitation programmes could be incompatible with the treatment needs of female VETOs. The reason for this is that female prison populations differ from their

male counterparts in several significant ways. On the whole, the female prison population (not sentenced for VETO-related crimes) is less likely to have committed a violent offence and is more likely to have been convicted of a crime involving alcohol, other drugs or property. Many such property-related crimes are economically driven, often motivated by alcohol or other drug abuse/addiction and/or poverty.

Approximately 50 % of female offenders are likely to have histories of physical or sexual abuse, and women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence. Past or current victimisation can contribute to drug or alcohol abuse, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and criminal activity. These factors are instrumental for most rehabilitation programmes seeking to tackle the individual issues mentioned above.

Compared to the number of programmes focused on cognitive behavioural change available for male offenders, such programmes for women are limited. The incarceration of female VETOs could present a challenge to prison administrations, depending on the nature and degree of involvement in violent extremist offences.

Nevertheless, historically women have been key members of violent extremist movements as well: examples are the Tamil Tigers and Chechen Black Widows, and more recently, Daesh and Boko Haram (4). However, female participation in the global jihadi movement has been more widespread than in other terrorist movements. This is due to both ideological and operational shifts. While leadership remains resolutely male, groups are adapting and incorporating women in more active ways. Several hundred foreign Daesh members, including large numbers of women and children, were captured after the fall of Daesh-held territory in Iraq. A number of foreign nationals were sentenced to death or imprisonment by Iraqi courts. By September 2017, approximately 1 400 foreign women and children linked to presumed Daesh fighters were in custody, according to media reports relying on Iraqi intelligence sources. These women and children were said to have surrendered with their husbands to Kurdish forces, who then transferred them to Iraqi authorities.

Consequently, the presence of both returnee men and women, and to an extent, minors (who, alongside their parents, have shared a conflict zone with foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and/or jihadists, or who have themselves undergone indoctrination and military training) are believed to pose a continuous threat to security.

(4) Winter, C. (2018). *ISIS, Women and Jihad: Breaking with Convention*. Retrieved from Tony Blair Institute for Global Change website <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/isis-women-and-jihad-breaking-convention>



Another characteristic worth noting is the way jihadi terrorist movements seek to establish communication with – and attempt to engage and recruit – women. Daesh female sympathisers in particular have successfully made use of the internet to mentor and mobilise other women. In contrast to al-Qaeda, who conceded that women were permitted to fight but never encouraged them to do so, Daesh has appeared to be openly calling on women to take up arms. Moreover, Daesh promotes the idea that every Muslim, regardless of his or her physical condition, can play a role in jihad. In recent months, it has issued at least three videos featuring disabled fighters, in order to reinforce this argument.

There still is a tendency to underestimate the role of women engaging with violent extremist groups. On the other hand, the role women play in preventing radicalisation likewise tends to be oversimplified.

## 2.2.2 Juvenile offenders: a vulnerable group

### Definitions and principles

The minimum age of criminal responsibility in European Union Member States starts at 12 years old. This paper categorises young offenders into three groups.

1. Age 0-12: The first group is children under the age of 12 who cannot be held criminally responsible. When involved in extremist and terrorist activities, children are considered victims first and foremost. This does not exclude certain security risks related to these children.
2. Age 12-18: The second is ‘juveniles’ – albeit minors, members of this group can, nevertheless, be held responsible and therefore imprisoned. Although the minimum age at which children can be held accountable for criminal acts ranges nationally across countries, for the purpose of this paper, ‘juveniles’ are offenders aged between 12 and 18.
3. Age 18-29: In line with the United Nations, the third group is defined as young offenders (van der Heide, 2016) <sup>(5)</sup>.

Recent research underlines that these groups of offenders must be treated differently from non-terrorist offenders and from adults (van der Heide, 2016). The United Nations Office for Crimes and Drugs (2017) expresses concerns that for terrorist offences, exceptions are increasingly being made concerning the minimum age for criminal responsibility <sup>(6)</sup>.

The differences between juvenile/young offenders and adult offenders is widely recognised: juveniles have not reached cognitive and social maturity and still display impulsive behaviour. They have a higher chance of being influenced by (radicalised) individuals, and in addition, have diminished capacity to fully understand their own behaviour. Indeed, research also shows that juvenile and young offenders are more likely to have acted out of ideological belief and to have witnessed violent acts, in contrast to non-terrorist juvenile offenders <sup>(7)</sup>.

Young people, including many minors, receptive to ideological discourse and seeking the apparent sense of social purpose offered to them by radical Islamist organisations, are drawn into extremist movements engaged in violent conflict (for example, in Syria and Iraq), and terrorist acts (including in Europe). This is reflected in the significant increase in the numbers of foreign terrorist and the growing threat of home-grown radicalisation.

In light of these considerations, it could be posited that involvement in a violent extremist organisation by a juvenile is never completely voluntary, something that should be taken into account with young offenders. Youngsters do demonstrate greater capacity for change, compared to adults. Therefore, these characteristics of vulnerability and capacity of resilience must be taken into account when dealing with juvenile VETOs in prison.

When a juvenile is imprisoned, the primary goal should be normalisation. Therefore, the VETO characterisation should not be the focus of attention when dealing with such a young person.

Although adult VETOs are increasingly considered and researched in the related literature, research on children and juvenile VETOs is limited <sup>(8)</sup>. Further re-

<sup>(5)</sup> Van der Heide, L., Entenmann E. (2016). Juvenile Violent Extremist Offenders: Peer Pressure or Seasoned Soldiers?. Retrieved from International Centre for Counter-terrorism – The Hague website: <https://icct.nl/publication/juvenile-violent-extremist-offenders-peer-pressure-or-seasoned-soldiers/>

<sup>(6)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). Juvenile and young violent extremist offenders. RAN study visit ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_study\\_visit\\_juvenile\\_young\\_violent\\_extremist\\_offenders\\_7-8\\_06\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_study_visit_juvenile_young_violent_extremist_offenders_7-8_06_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>(7)</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2017). Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook\\_on\\_Children\\_Recruited\\_and\\_Exploited\\_by\\_Terrorist\\_and\\_Violent\\_Extremist\\_Groups\\_the\\_Role\\_of\\_the\\_Justice\\_System.E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf)

<sup>(8)</sup> Penal Reform International. (2017). Children and violent extremism: International standards and responses from criminal justice systems. Retrieved

search is needed to gain an in-depth understanding of juvenile and young VETOs and to create effective strategies for imprisonment, reintegration and rehabilitation. Tools to assess the risk of children and youngsters should be developed and validated, as well <sup>(9)</sup>. This is especially critical with regard to those young returnees below the age of 12 who are not yet criminally accountable but who may have received combat training and other forms of preparation for violent assaults and attacks.

### Did you know ...?

#### UNODC guidelines for treatment of young individuals in prison

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System, (2017) sets out guidelines on the treatment of young individuals in prison, based on five recommendations:

- ensuring that deprivation of liberty is a measure of last resort;
- limiting and regulating administrative detention;
- ensuring separation of minors from adults, and of girls from boys;
- providing access to a variety of services such as health and educational services, vocational training, and leisure and sport;
- preventing and responding to violence against detained minors

### 2.2.3 Returning foreign terrorist fighters

The term 'foreign terrorist fighters' (FTFs) is defined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178 as 'individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or

receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict' <sup>(10)</sup>.

Now that the geographic Daesh 'caliphate' has collapsed almost entirely, the number of FTFs returning to Europe (especially Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) is expected to rise. Although it is difficult to predict how the situation will develop, most affected EU Member States expect a slow but gradual increase in returnees, rather than a surge. Various estimates exist, predicting between 1 200 and 3 000 returnees of different backgrounds and including a large proportion of women and children. So far, the return rate for FTFs is around 20 % to 30 %.

Countries' experience of returnees across Europe shows that multi-agency structures and working processes are crucial for handling FTF cases <sup>(11)</sup>. Prison and probation services should be included in these processes. Early and effective identification of returnees, improved information-sharing and joint decision-making require coordinated efforts. Information on individuals having departed to join a terrorist group must be shared (while respecting the legal framework) with relevant partners at local, regional and national levels such as local authorities, prosecution, prisons, probation and social services.

The significance of such information-sharing increases when there are signs that the FTF will return. Upon arrival, returnee intelligence assessments and police investigations are prerequisites to determining appropriate responses in line with the specific circumstances of each case. When charges are made, in most cases returnees will await trial in detention. Prison and probation services should be involved at an early stage to prepare detention and possible interventions, if required for the particular returnee.

The anticipated growth in the number of returnees will present a number of challenges for the criminal justice system. Not every returnee will be detained, and a number of them will only receive short-term sentences. This means a relatively large number will return into society sooner rather than later. This allows less time for reha-

from [https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PRI\\_Children\\_and\\_violentextremism\\_Briefing.pdf](https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PRI_Children_and_violentextremism_Briefing.pdf)

<sup>(9)</sup> Global Centre on Cooperative Security; ICCT. (2017). Correcting the Course — Advancing Juvenile Justice Principles for Children Convicted of Violent Extremism Offenses. Retrieved from [https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Correcting-the-Course\\_Global-Center\\_ICCT.pdf](https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Correcting-the-Course_Global-Center_ICCT.pdf)

<sup>(10)</sup> United Nations Security Council, (2014). Resolution 2178. Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. (S/RES/2178 (2014)). Retrieved from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2178>

See preamble paragraph 9. The term 'foreign terrorist fighters' was first mentioned in Security Council Resolution 2170 (2014) (<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2170>). With this resolution, the Council condemned 'gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights' by ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Nusra Front. In an annex to the text of the resolution, the Council also named the individuals subject to the travel restrictions, asset freezes and other measures targeted at al-Qaeda affiliates. However, the resolution did not define 'foreign terrorist fighter'.

<sup>(11)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2017). Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families. RAN manual. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran\\_br\\_a4\\_m10\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf)

bilitation and tailored disengagement activities in prison. Preparation for these releases therefore requires careful planning and a multi-agency ap-

proach to ensure that released returnees do not revert to previous patterns and networks, which may lead to reoffending.



# 3. Cross-cutting issues

This chapter (Chapter 3) addresses three cross-cutting issues that are of importance to prison and probation: information-sharing and multi-agency cooperation, the role of religion, and training.

## 3.1 Multi-agency cooperation and information-sharing

Since many of the sentences for terrorist activities are relatively short (ranging from a couple of weeks to 10 years) and may entail electronic monitoring or a closed prison environment, these offenders will re-enter society. Prison and probation services might have had too little time to influence or make a long-lasting impression on the prisoner. Multi-agency cooperation with other stakeholders is vital in such cases, as it acts to foster the work initiated by the prison and probation service and ensure that it continues through other agencies and society. It is the responsibility of the various organisations involved (judiciary organisations, prison, probation, police, intelligence services, municipalities, housing associations, social services, etc.) to minimise the individuals' chances of reoffending and to maximise their chances to integrate as non-criminal citizens into society. The same principle applies in cases where offenders are not charged with or convicted of terrorist activities but show signs of radicalised behaviour. To detect the signs and intervene in these cases, multi-agency cooperation, which brings together different flows and types of information, is crucial.

Knowing what information is relevant and can be shared with other agencies requires knowledge about the phenomenon of violent extremism and radicalisation. As with other criminal cases, the single pieces of the puzzle held by individual actors may constitute valuable intelligence when viewed together. As the information being shared is sensitive, all agencies must be trained in handling such data. Clearances and vetting processes are preconditions for a structure in which information can be shared. On a strategic level, agreements and protocols can be drawn up to facilitate the sharing of detailed, sensitive information. On an operational level, information can be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis.

This implies (for operational purposes) that only relevant information is shared with the agency or agencies directly responsible for the offender. Sharing of all available collected data is considered disproportionate <sup>(12)</sup>.

Besides a legal framework for information-sharing, trust is another key issue. Agencies need to be confident in each other's expertise and ability to determine what information is relevant and can legally be shared. Transparency on the structure of information-sharing is helpful, too. Instead of all actors exchanging all data, agencies would be aware of who possesses what kind of information.

New legislation with frequent ramifications on the daily practice of prison and probation services is EU Directive 680/2016 <sup>(13)</sup>, which focuses on 'the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, including the safeguarding against and the prevention of threats to public security ...' (L119/90). This directive sets out extensive requirements for transparency, individual rights and individual legal protection, as well as supervisory control of data-processing. It will lead to a paradigm shift, as it calls for data exchange with security authorities to be disclosed. In future, the exchange of information will thus be subject to even greater discipline and bound by stricter rules and protocols.

### Practical example(s) Model law for information-sharing (Germany) <sup>(14)</sup>

As a response to EU Directive 2016/680, the German federal states have submitted a model law to the Conference of Ministers of Justice. The model law takes into account the case-law of the Federal Constitutional Court, implements the Data Protection Directive (Directive 95/46/EC) and thus provides a legal framework for cooperation between the prison system and the security authorities.

<sup>(12)</sup> Schulenberg, S. (2018). Extremistische Gefangene im Strafvollzug. Retrieved from <https://www.reso-infoportal.de/images/Publikationen/FS-2-18-kurz.pdf>

<sup>(13)</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA. (2016). Official Journal of the European Union, L 119, 89–131. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016L0680&from=EN>

<sup>(14)</sup> See [https://www.landtag.sachsen-anhalt.de/plenarsitzungen/25-sitzungsperiode/?eID=apertoSessionsAjax&tx\\_apertosessions\\_transcript%5Bspeaker%5D=11273&cHash=88fc4b5c95a042b6b556b21585d21053](https://www.landtag.sachsen-anhalt.de/plenarsitzungen/25-sitzungsperiode/?eID=apertoSessionsAjax&tx_apertosessions_transcript%5Bspeaker%5D=11273&cHash=88fc4b5c95a042b6b556b21585d21053) online.

## Practical example(s)

### Information-sharing infrastructure (France) <sup>(15)</sup>

At local level, an evaluation group operates under the authority of the Prefect, made up of all the security services (territorial intelligence, General Directorate for Internal Security (DGSI), judicial police, national gendarmerie, prison administration, Ministry of Defence intelligence services). At this level, information can be shared easily and effectively. At national level, a prefectural monitoring unit for the prevention of radicalisation and support for families comprises members from the state services (police, education, judicial protection of young people and the unemployment office), local authorities and civil society. Under the authority of the prosecutor, it puts in place specific measures based on the profiles of people undergoing radicalisation, including their families, in order to prevent violent acts.

## Key recommendations

### On multi-agency cooperation <sup>(16)</sup> <sup>(17)</sup> <sup>(18)</sup>

- There is no one-size-fits all model for multi-agency cooperation, and often the model chosen needs to be suitable for the local context. It is also highly dependent on the criminal justice infrastructure that Member States have in place, e.g. whether prison and probation fall under the same ministry, whether both are organised nationally or at different levels, etc. This makes comparison more difficult but also presents the opportunity to choose between many different means and models to shape multi-agency cooperation. Various examples that have been introduced in RAN meetings: national coordinators' offices, safety or info houses (Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands), joint intelligence centres, etc.
- It has become clear that more formalised cooperation procedures have many advantages. In particular, they allow better distribu-

tion of information and intelligence, a better organised common knowledge base and the possibility of developing links and cooperation channels, increased capacity for synthesis and analysis, and finally, reduced risk of omitting or overlooking a sensitive individual case, since the continuous exchange of bits and bytes among all relevant actors helps to keep an eye on the bigger picture.

- Trust is a key component of effective multi-agency cooperation. Often trust is built through personal relationships which means that people know each other, understand each other's work and interests and can offer and provide help when needed. To reduce reliance on personal relationships, cross-agency cooperation should become established for specific roles/functions.
- A formalised agreement facilitates multi-agency cooperation, both between prison and probation and intelligence services and between them and external actors. An optimal level of multi-agency cooperation can be achieved when supported by ministerial agreements, relevant policies and adequate legislation.
- In the context of a strong culture of classified and non-sharable information, it is vital to distinguish genuinely classified information from sensitive information that could be shared with some prudence.
- All Member States are developing their own tools to work with radicalised offenders. In particular, risk, need and responsivity assessments are being developed that are specifically aimed at radicalised offenders (e.g. Violent Extremist Risk Assessment 2 Revised (VERA 2R), Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG)). As a result, different categorisations of radicalised offenders are surfacing. Having different definitions, tools, understandings of risk assessment and categorisations of radicalised offenders can hamper effective sharing and interpretation of information between organisations. Therefore, a shared

<sup>(15)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). Dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders: Formalising cooperation among police, prison, probation and prosecution. RAN Policy and Practice event ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ran\\_pol\\_p-p\\_optimising\\_triple-p\\_cooperation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_pol_p-p_optimising_triple-p_cooperation_en.pdf)

<sup>(16)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Working group meeting — Multi-agency cooperation. RAN P&P ex post paper, 24 -25 February, Stockholm. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_p-p\\_multiagency\\_cooperation\\_around\\_radicalised\\_offenders\\_stockholm\\_24-25022016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_p-p_multiagency_cooperation_around_radicalised_offenders_stockholm_24-25022016_en.pdf)

<sup>(17)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). Dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders: Formalising cooperation among police, prison, probation and prosecution. RAN Policy and Practice event ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ran\\_pol\\_p-p\\_optimising\\_triple-p\\_cooperation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_pol_p-p_optimising_triple-p_cooperation_en.pdf)

<sup>(18)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). Dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders: Formalising cooperation among police, prison, probation and prosecution. RAN Policy and Practice event ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ran\\_pol\\_p-p\\_optimising\\_triple-p\\_cooperation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_pol_p-p_optimising_triple-p_cooperation_en.pdf)

language and toolset to work with radicalised offenders is recommended.

- In many Member States, multi-agency structures are already in place that cater for other types of offenders (e.g. organised crime, gangs and sex offenders). Investigating whether these structures can also be adapted to work for radicalised offender may save time and resources.

### 3.1.1 The role of religion

Traditionally, religion and ideology have played an important role in prisons, and criminologists have long recognised that religious or ideological commitment can substantially benefit inmates. Especially for first-time offenders, imprisonment can be a disheartening experience. Adopting a belief system can help inmates assume a new, more positive identity, give purpose and meaning to their prison experience, and help them cope with feelings of guilt and shame and gain a sense of control and self-significance while in prison. This subchapter predominantly looks at the role of religion in prison. In the context of probation, religion plays a different role and it is mostly addressed through specific interventions. Nevertheless, some of the recommendations at the end of this subchapter are also applicable for probation professionals.

### 3.1.2 The role of chaplaincy

Prisons have a long tradition of providing mostly Christian religious facilities and clerics who perform religious ceremonies, prayers and religious counselling in individual or group settings. With the number of Muslims in European societies growing, imams and spiritual Muslim counsellors are now increasingly active in prisons, although most prison staff in EU Member States are not familiar with Islam and its customs. Several EU Member States must resolve organisational issues like capacity-building, the identification of suitable stakeholders in the Muslim community, the recruitment of suitable imams or other counsellors, logistical challenges, and finally, ways to integrate the imams' work into the daily standard operating procedures.

## Did you know ...?

### Religion in prison and the state <sup>(19)</sup>

The provision of chaplaincy departments for VETOs differs across EU Member States. France, for instance, does not formally recognise Muslim chaplains as part of the prison system, whereas in England and Wales, chaplains are formally employed by the state and are increasingly involved in risk assessment <sup>(20)</sup>, although this has been controversial as it can erode prisoners' trust <sup>(21)</sup>. It is crucial that chaplains are respected by prisoners and that their role is distinct and clearly unaffiliated with the security role, so that they remain trustworthy in the eyes of the inmates and can provide both pastoral and spiritual care, and guidance.

Religiously inspired ideologies are a challenge for clerics dealing with the phenomenon of radicalisation. The term 'religiously inspired' indicates that the specific interpretation of religion held by individual VETOs is by no means commonplace among the wider religious community.

It is commonly understood that elements of the religion are used selectively and sometimes exaggerated to produce an intolerant, exclusive and even violent narrative. This phenomenon is typical of Islamist groups like Daesh, that propagate hatred against non-followers (including Muslims) outside their movement. In most EU Member States, the logical consequence is an institutional demand for a suitable 'workforce' able to counter this narrative, support individuals during their disengagement process and prevent radicalisation.

Working with religion in disengagement and/or prevention programmes involves dealing with a number of controversial issues, e.g. the extent to which the separation between church and state (which in some EU Member States is embedded in the constitution) allows religious input into state-run or financed projects. Other controversial questions relate to interference in individuals' religious convictions, or how these should be valued. Finally, religion is sometimes considered to not lie at the root of radicalisation and violent extremism, nor to be a viable pathway for addressing such phenomena.

<sup>(19)</sup> Williams, R. J., & Liebling, A. (2016). Faith Provision, Institutional Power, and Meaning among Muslim Prisoners in Two English High-Security Prisons. In K. Kerley (Ed.) *Religion in Prison: Research, Theory, and Policy*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. Retrieved from [https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ\\_f5654eb/Religious\\_provision.pdf?Expires=1554850934&Signature=bcpXYE4zrq331qdWmKlbMZjBjs8DTLNtopLTejOkIXwpcSc4U0QFWXRpP-gWiztwP7LpMfMTIIntsjqwTpJnR0n-d73AtBYKHsZidCUJSDzkMPVdv7ZMcuNyHsPtHL-y3tNxx3KHNYkgZ3sjBkT1uB5IKRr~0VaAuDgA6KSGRjasw4Dvj6sFJm0C3jSV5vAl5WpsxmfCCxTC7JMpnW5JxTjwBswseYdANazeoxHCBkMxecbwyQbeY~o6JPCr1Gr8KHj3Ju3Ty~nGST5YRkMfMnZZigtPvAvpVf4bsg7j99JJJdC0EFo85Hc2D6HoJ~VegvBghQ0~oyv7bZY29yghg\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJKNB4MJBJNC6NLQ](https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_f5654eb/Religious_provision.pdf?Expires=1554850934&Signature=bcpXYE4zrq331qdWmKlbMZjBjs8DTLNtopLTejOkIXwpcSc4U0QFWXRpP-gWiztwP7LpMfMTIIntsjqwTpJnR0n-d73AtBYKHsZidCUJSDzkMPVdv7ZMcuNyHsPtHL-y3tNxx3KHNYkgZ3sjBkT1uB5IKRr~0VaAuDgA6KSGRjasw4Dvj6sFJm0C3jSV5vAl5WpsxmfCCxTC7JMpnW5JxTjwBswseYdANazeoxHCBkMxecbwyQbeY~o6JPCr1Gr8KHj3Ju3Ty~nGST5YRkMfMnZZigtPvAvpVf4bsg7j99JJJdC0EFo85Hc2D6HoJ~VegvBghQ0~oyv7bZY29yghg_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJKNB4MJBJNC6NLQ)

<sup>(20)</sup> Beckford, J., Joly, D., & Khosrokhavar, F. (2005). *Muslims in prison: Change and challenge in Britain and France*. Basingstoke, England & New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Retrieved from <https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9781403998316>

<sup>(21)</sup> Gilliat-Ray, S., Pattison, S., & Ali, M. (2013). *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.

The role of prison imams in relation to extremist prisoners can also be problematic. If the imam is considered to be part of the prison system (i.e. a hostile institution), extremists often refuse to recognise the role as such. Furthermore, prison clerics usually do not have sufficient expertise on the particular and often unanticipated position of extremists on religious matters and on the processes of radicalisation.

But imams can also play an important role in the prevention and detection of extremism in prisons, in the following three ways:

- They can meet the needs of individuals wishing to change the direction of their lives in a religious sense, whether this entails (re)turning to a different interpretation of religion, or converting. If assistance is not provided by a prison imam, individuals may seek information or guidance themselves, or through informal religious leaders. Extremist groups targeting vulnerable groups seeking answers would be able to turn this to their advantage.
- Imams' general experience as spiritual and sometimes community leaders can help them to gauge prisoners' demeanour (as expected, common, unusual or worrying, for instance).
- Imams are in contact with the Muslim prison community and might therefore be able to detect signs of radicalisation, tensions and so on.

### Practical example(s)

#### Female and male spiritual guidance to prevent violent radicalisation in prisons (Italy) <sup>(22)</sup>

This pilot project has been running from before the Memorandum of Understanding signed on November 2015 between the Union of Islamic Communities and Organisations in Italy (UCOII) and Italian Department of Prison Administration (DAP). The project offers continuous spiritual support from two imams from Turin to Muslim inmates, to ensure a non-violent radical interpretation of Islam.

Prayers are performed every Friday, in Italian and Arabic, focusing on the values of Islam and reconciliation and using arguments found in the Qur'an, in order to promote rehabilitative and spiritual counselling.

Additionally, female volunteers from the Islamic associations provide a counselling service for the inmates' families. Participation in the project is on a voluntary basis, and the imams are not employed by the prison or UCOII.

Subsequent to the agreement between the previously mentioned institutions, the national agreement between DAP and UCOII was institutionalised. It resulted in the promotion of spiritual guidance in prisons. This allows prisoners to have access to an Islamic minister of worship (albeit not in across all prisons yet), thus guaranteeing their right to freedom of worship, transforming the prison experience for Muslim prisoners, from a place of conflict to a place for reflection. This also reduces the risk of developing ideologies of violent extremism based on distorted interpretations of the Islamic religion.

The extent to which imams can perform an official monitoring role for state authorities is another matter for consideration. Since imams hear confessional secrets, their credibility might be at stake, in the eyes of both prisoners and prison staff. Clear ethical and legislative rules are needed to tackle this issue. The modus operandi should be also transparent for offenders seeking guidance from imams, to avoid misunderstandings and erroneous expectations.

Furthermore, the presence of imams should not be abused: they do not constitute an alternative to finding skilled staff to detect concerning behaviour among offenders. Imams' missions and mandates should be clear-cut, so they can carry out their duty and sustain trust with the prisoners. The integration of religious welfare via imams or other qualified persons in prisons should be rolled out in countries where this is lacking or sparse.

### Key recommendations

#### The role of religion <sup>(23)</sup>

- There are several different models of interventions involving religion (gender-specific, faith-inclusive, etc.). Organisations also exist that do not self-identify as religious, but that run programmes to stimulate critical thinking.
- The inclusion of formers who had previously taken a similar, religious extremist path could help to build trust among individuals. In addition, they could help to involve offenders

<sup>(22)</sup> Project description based on the Collection of Inspiring Practices of the EU FAIR project. Fighting Against Inmates' Radicalisation (FAIR). (n.d.). Collection of Inspiring Practices – Deliverable D21. Retrieved from [http://fair-project.eu/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwfpisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd\\_category\\_id=171&wpfd\\_file\\_id=855&token=02428583e1aa99b0e74777d840946c29&preview=1](http://fair-project.eu/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwfpisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=171&wpfd_file_id=855&token=02428583e1aa99b0e74777d840946c29&preview=1)

<sup>(23)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2017). The role of religion in exit programmes and religious counselling in prison and probation settings. RAN P&P & RAN EXIT ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_role\\_of\\_religion\\_in\\_exit\\_programmes\\_10-11\\_10\\_2017\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_role_of_religion_in_exit_programmes_10-11_10_2017_en.pdf)



in prosocial and democratic groups (engagement).

- Coordination between exit/prison officers on one side, and the mosque and family on the other, is an effective practice.
- The provision for mosques to support released prisoners and their families should be planned well in advance and in a coordinated manner.
- Religion can help in reintegration, just as it can be used in counselling and exit interventions in prison and probation. Religious mentors not only facilitate practical tasks for individuals (e.g. help with arranging housing or finding employment), but through spiritual assistance can also provide hope and social objectives as set out in religious teachings. These mentors can also help individuals to reconcile religion and society. While this work may begin while individuals are in prison, it is far from complete when they are released; the intervention is even more important when individuals experience the challenges of returning to society first-hand.
- Religion should be taken into account when assigning a mentor to a mentee. There is no hard and fast rule, and whether they should share the same religious belief is debatable. As for a male-female combination, this decision should be taken on an ad hoc basis.
- Staff working in prison, probation and community settings must be trained: as knowledge of religion increases, prejudices fade.

Additional considerations and recommendations are reflected in the EuroPris expert group report Prison Chaplaincy and Deradicalisation (2016) <sup>(24)</sup>.

## 3.2 Training

### 3.2.1 General need for training

The mission of staff of prison services and probation agencies is to significantly contribute to public safety through the safe, secure and humane management of suspects and VETOs and the provision of opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration. Their role and functions should be defined by law.

Prison and probation services should have their own staff induction and advanced training curricula, which correspond to the respective roles and tasks and to the aims and purposes of their work. Ideally, they should have their own training facilities. Interactive training methodologies appropriate for adult learning should be used, drawing inspiration, for example, from the European Commission's Advice for training providers <sup>(25)</sup>.

Where appropriate, there should be opportunities for joint prison and probation staff training and for training with staff from other criminal justice agencies, to encourage inter-agency and interdisciplinary work. Opportunities should be offered to probation staff to learn about the nature of prison work, and prison staff should be offered similar opportunities to understand probation work.

In general, it is no surprise that the quality and quantity of prison and probation staff greatly influences the extent to which dynamic security and successful rehabilitation can be implemented and achieved. Prison and probation staff should be sufficient in number and should have a status comparable with the status of staff of other criminal justice services, allowing them to recruit, train and retain staff of the highest professional value, needed for the efficient fulfilment of their everyday tasks and the overall purpose of the services they provide.

Staff should function within the context of high professional ethics, based on treating suspects and offenders humanely and with respect for their human dignity. At the moment, there is great disparity in the levels of training, both in quality and quantity, of such professionals across the EU. For example, the duration of induction training for trainees to become correctional officers ranges from several weeks in some EU Member States to three years in others. Nevertheless, the high expectations that politicians and civil society have of prison and probation services will only be fulfilled when the financial and human resources to do so are available.

### 3.2.2 Specific training to deal with radicalisation and extremism in prison

With the growing diversity of European society, sensitivity and understanding of cultural and religious norms, values and expressions is increasing-

<sup>(24)</sup> EuroPris. (2016). Prison Chaplaincy and Deradicalisation. European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services. Retrieved from <https://www.europris.org/file/europris-expert-group-report-prison-chaplaincy-and-deradicalisation/>

<sup>(25)</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice. (2015). Advice for training providers: European judicial training. Publications Office. Retrieved from <https://e-justice.europa.eu/fileDownload.do?id=9f252d82-8ef4-4f6e-b562-372f9fa50096>

ly important for good staff-offender relationships. While it is not necessary for all staff members to have expert knowledge on specific ideologies or religions, correctional officers should have some background knowledge of the religious and cultural backgrounds of the prisoners. Prejudice, uncertainty and fear of offenders can lead to over-reporting, negative interactions with prisoners, marginalisation and an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and distrust.

### Practical example(s)

#### Radicalisation awareness training modules (Netherlands) <sup>(26)</sup>

The Netherlands' radicalisation awareness training modules are developed for professionals who might encounter radicalised persons in their day-to-day work in Dutch prisons, and for their managers, who are key contacts for these professionals. The training lasts one (beginner) or four (expert) days. The main purposes of the training are to:

- raise awareness of the phenomenon of radicalisation (including its scope and the current threat level) and of the infrastructure for reporting suspicions within the prison;
- make professionals aware of how their personal views on radicalisation could affect their professional conduct;
- dispel any fears that could hold professionals back from acting when encountering individuals that are potentially radicalising, by making them aware of their skills and showing them how to use them

General training on radicalisation. All frontline prison and probation staff should receive training to recognise the process of radicalisation and how to report this. It is crucial that staff understands that this approach does not involve seeking 'signs' of radicalisation, but rather observing changes in behaviour that may indicate someone is adopting an extremist world-view that legitimises violence. All prison and probation staff should know how to communicate information, intelligence or concerns they hold about particular offenders that show signs of radicalisation or extremism. They should know where, how and who to pass this information on to,

using clear and well-known channels of communication such as referral systems, information/intelligence reporting systems and staff meetings. Services may have dedicated systems for this purpose, or alternatively, clear policies about how this can be achieved through existing systems. Where possible, 'live' systems (tracking signals and incidents in real-time) should be developed and used for offenders 'of concern' i.e. those interested or involved in extremism and extremist activities.

Additional advice for training is as follows:

- use interactive training methodologies, such as case studies, possibly drawing inspiration from the European Commission Advice for training providers <sup>(27)</sup>;
- clarify that training might focus on a specific type of violent extremism and radicalisation, but that lessons learned will mostly apply to different ideological backgrounds as well — this avoids bias;
- demonstrate how to settle and defuse a heated discussion and repair relationships that have been damaged while working;
- teach trainees how to deal with their clients' extremist narratives and support the legitimacy of the officers' positions.

### Practical example(s)

#### Training courses on violent radicalisation and proselytism in prison (Italy) <sup>(28)</sup>

The key objectives of the training are to:

1. provide an overview of Islamic culture through lectures by both university professors/experts and cultural mediators;
2. increase awareness of violent extremism and the proselytism signals that can be detected early within prisons, using specific indicators/tools;
3. further the use of cultural mediators inside prisons;
4. encourage information-sharing among different professionals (penitentiary police, educators, social workers, etc.) working in different prisons on how to deal with radical-

<sup>(26)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, April 9). Training for the prison sector. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/training-prison-sector\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/training-prison-sector_en)

<sup>(27)</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice. (2015). Advice for training providers: European judicial training. Publications Office. Retrieved from <https://e-justice.europa.eu/fileDownload.do?id=9f252d82-8ef4-4f6e-b562-372f9fa50096>

<sup>(28)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, April 9). Training courses on violent radicalisation and proselytism in prison. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/training-courses-violent-radicalisation-and-proselytism-prison\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/training-courses-violent-radicalisation-and-proselytism-prison_en)

isation, so as to identify the best approaches and practices; this is done using case studies during working group activities.

The speakers were selected on account of their knowledge and specific experience/background. An agreement between the Penitentiary Administration and the Board of Italian Universities on tackling radicalisation has also been signed recently, promoting common actions to tackle the phenomenon.

The training is focused mainly on the early detection of the radicalisation and proselytism dynamic inside prisons. It covers how to recognise relevant signs and improve the information-sharing network, as well as involving cultural mediators.

**Specialist training.** Staff working directly with convicted terrorists need specific skill sets. Training should typically cover a range of professional practices and skills, including understanding pathways to violent extremism, recognising radicalisation warning signs and features of positive regimes, carrying out intelligence assessments, following ethical standards, employing interpersonal skills, practising stress management, and respecting religious and cultural diversity.

Specialist staff can usually be divided into two categories: regular officers who work on a specialised wing or unit (e.g. a terrorist wing) and those who collate information from other experts (social workers, psychologists, etc.). These specialist staff will carry out assessments and manage interventions/programmes, and they require support as they deal with morally complex issues and need to build trust with offenders.

Training at different levels should also take into account social media: social media awareness and proficiency helps to protect officers, and although it tends to be greater among prison and probation officers of younger generations compared to those recruited some time ago; training can bridge this gap.

## Practical example(s)

### Training of on-site referee trainers (ORTs) on violent Islamist radicalisation awareness in detention (France) <sup>(29)</sup>

The ORT training is for all correctional staff, to gain awareness of violent radicalisation.

The initial sessions are refreshers on basic knowledge of radicalisation, mental manipulation and procedural points of reference regarding tracking and description. More comprehensive knowledge is available to staff working in specialised units via continuous training.

Training involves lectures by multidisciplinary experts, PowerPoint presentations and an instructional video. It also covers theoretical content on radicalisation and instructional courses.

The video was designed by the L'école nationale d'administration pénitentiaire (ENAP) communications unit, with the help of internal staff and external experts.

Experts are chosen according to their knowledge of the subject (e.g. through university recognition, or publication of their practice on inmate management). The ministry has not officially decided on an expert list, but calls upon experts who work with national institutions related to this area.

## Key recommendations

### Prison staff training <sup>(30)</sup> <sup>(31)</sup> <sup>(32)</sup>

- General awareness training should be provided to all staff, and specialist training to staff working directly with incarcerated terrorists.
- Staff members should be supported in managing their anxiety and gaining confidence in their decisions, based both on results from the assessment tool and on their professional insight. A support structure should be put in place involving colleagues, psychologists and prison management.
- A training and support unit at national level should be established, to update and disseminate

<sup>(29)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, April 9). Training of on-site referee trainers (ORT) on violent islamist radicalisation awareness in detention. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/training-site-referee-trainers-ort-violent-islamist-radicalisation-awareness-detention\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/training-site-referee-trainers-ort-violent-islamist-radicalisation-awareness-detention_en)

<sup>(30)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Plenary meeting of the RAN Prison and Probation Working Group. RAN P&P ex post paper, 14-15 December, Riga. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_plenary\\_meeting\\_14-15122016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_plenary_meeting_14-15122016_en.pdf)

<sup>(31)</sup> Council for Penological Co-Operation (PC-CP). (2016). Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism. PC-CP (2016) 2 rev 4. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/16806f9aa9>

<sup>(32)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, March 8). Training for first line practitioners. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-best-practices/ran-training\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/ran-training_en)

inate course training material and offer support to staff and governors.

- Regularly revise and update annual training plans for workforce development and for responding to needs of prison services and probation agencies. This will allow staff to develop the capacities to counter and prevent violent extremism and to secure a sufficient number of trainers and resources to be able to put it in practice.
- In order to improve the quality of the training, data and national and international good practices should be compared. Training should be informed by research and adapted accordingly; it should also be adapted to suit the respective population.
- In general, it is advisable for Member States to pay particular attention to prison and probation staffing and their on-the-job training in radicalisation (for instance via e-learning), and to take advantage of EU-level training opportunities (e.g. through the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)). It would be beneficial for all Member States to join the European network of Penitentiary Training Academies (EPTA) network, as it could

become a forum where training for prison staff is shared, evaluated and further developed. All national training and support units should take part in the ongoing EU co-funded (Justice programme) EPTA project, coordinated by the Netherlands Helsinki Comité in cooperation with the training units of Ireland, France, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

- Other funding opportunities may be available to support national prison administrations in developing the required training activities or advancing existing training activities. The EU Internal Security Fund Police (ISF), the EU Police and Justice programmes, and Erasmus+ are national programmes which are managed by Member States and are designed to offer benefits by acting at European level to raise national standards, reduce disparities and stimulate synergies between EU Member States. Several EU Member States included specific actions to tackle radicalisation in their national programmes. The Justice programme is an EU-level fund, which supports judicial cooperation regarding the prevention of radicalisation and cross-border training of justice professionals (judges, prosecutors, prison staff, probation officers) in the field.



## 4. The prison context

The European Prison Rules (EPR) provide recognised standards on good principles and practices in the treatment of detainees and the management of detention facilities. The rules are substantively revised and updated in order to reflect developments in penal policy, sentencing practice and the overall management of prisons in Europe. The thorough transformation of EPR principles in daily practice is a step towards rehabilitation, and therefore also towards prevention of extremism, and ideally, disengagement from violent extremism <sup>(33)</sup>.

It is accepted that prisons are a part of our society. But neither prison administrations nor probation agencies can replace the role of society. Considering the time available in prisons to implement offender rehabilitation and disengagement programmes, it is impossible to guarantee that recidivism is not a possibility. The rehabilitation of offenders must succeed in society ultimately, not only in artificial environments like prisons. Prison and probation services are responsible for preparing and supporting offenders with a view to eventual release, but social inclusion can only occur outside the institution.

### Did you know ...?

#### The terrorist narrative of the European criminal justice system

It is important that certain commonly employed terrorist narratives be countered; one such narrative holds that VETOs and returnees will receive exceptionally bad treatment in EU countries, including imprisonment without fair trial, excessive interrogation and the prospect of never being accepted (again) in society. Common values and the rule of law should be highlighted. Free access to healthcare and education and fair treatment in general should be stressed instead, as this is applicable for all inmates, VETOs or otherwise.

### 4.1 Healthy prison environments

Poorly managed and overcrowded prisons can be a factor in increased radicalisation. The grievances, moral outrage and frustration resulting from inhu-

mane treatment may exacerbate the influence of violent extremist recruiters in the prison setting. Extremist ideologies may be easier to propagate in a hostile and overcrowded environment. Some of the perpetrators of major terrorist acts in Europe have passed through the prison and probation systems; it is important to address issues that might contribute to risk and to include approaches that counter the risk of violent extremism, while being cognisant of the investment this requires.

A healthy prison environment is likely to contribute to staging a successful disengagement intervention. Indeed, the risks of radicalisation are reduced in professional and secure prisons with fair treatment of prisoners. The absence of these elements can reinforce extremist mindsets and heighten distrust towards authorities, increasing the possibility of formation of groups and triggers for violence. Investing in day-to-day staff-offender relationships through staff empowerment, professionalism, respect and dynamic security measures is key to dealing with VETOs.

### Key recommendations

#### Ensuring a healthy prison environment <sup>(34)</sup> <sup>(35)</sup>

- Staff-prisoner relationship. A good VETO-staff relationship builds trust and breaks down the binary opposites narrative of 'us' versus 'them' that reinforces the distrust and suspicion towards 'the authorities' often held by extremist individuals.
- Well-being and personal development. Offenders' well-being and development must form the core of rehabilitation in prison. Ensuring this involves meeting basic needs (access to decent food, clean sanitary facilities, time spent outside) and providing vocational training so that prisoners may pursue personal development. Access to education, creative endeavours such as art and music, and a space for practising and developing a religious faith are all important avenues for encouraging personal development and minimising distress.
- Conditions and family contact. Family contact

<sup>(33)</sup> Council of Europe. (2016). European Prison Rules. Council of Europe Publishing: Strasbourg. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806f3d4f>

<sup>(34)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalisation in prisons and probation. RAN P&P practitioners' working paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_approaches\\_to\\_violent\\_extremist\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_approaches_to_violent_extremist_en.pdf)

<sup>(35)</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2016). Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. New York: United Nations Publication. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf)

**Table 1.**  
Regimes: advantages and disadvantages

Regime choice	Potential advantages	Potential disadvantages
<b>Containment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close monitoring</li> <li>• Limited effect on mainstream population</li> <li>• Focused interventions</li> <li>• Specialised staff</li> <li>• Reassuring to public safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and stronger bonds forged among prisoners</li> <li>• Trust between staff and prisoners is eroded</li> <li>• Entrenched oppositional mindset</li> <li>• Perceptions of unfairness reinforced</li> <li>• Labelling effects, stigmatisation</li> <li>• Status associated with being on a special unit</li> <li>• All VETOs assumed to be of equal risk</li> <li>• Difficulties finding staff</li> <li>• High financial cost</li> </ul>
<b>Dispersal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less stigmatisation and marginalisation</li> <li>• No status derived from placement on special unit</li> <li>• Opportunities for positive influence from others</li> <li>• Breaking up extremist networks and groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of specialised staff, training costs</li> <li>• Difficult to ensure high quality of intelligence</li> <li>• Challenges in knowing prisoners and dynamic security</li> <li>• VETOs may exert influence over others</li> <li>• VETOs may be influenced by criminal gangs</li> </ul>

is a crucial form of support for prisoners, and contributes to the formation of healthy relationships after release. Frequency of contact with family, a meaningful space for visits that includes comfortable, child-friendly areas, and an appropriate time allocated for meaningful contact are key. Family bonds can be a positive driving force for rehabilitation.

- **Security, safety and control.** A lack of structure and inconsistencies in security and control negatively impact prisoners' experiences, leading them to meet their safety needs through alternative means such as groups that offer protection (e.g. religious or gang-like groups).
- **Professionalism.** Professional discretion should be exercised to ensure that punitive practices are enforced only when other options have been exhausted. Staff should communicate clearly with prisoners so that they understand why disciplinary actions are being taken and which behaviour needs to be addressed. Professionalism entails equal treatment of VETOs and other offenders.

## 4.2 Risk assessment and implementation

EU Member States are currently adopting different approaches to how they use the results of intelli-

gence and risk assessments, and how they collect information. Approaches include general monitoring on the one hand, and formal risk assessment tools, on the other.

### 4.2.1 General monitoring and prison intelligence

General monitoring is linked predominantly to intelligence gathering. If considered relevant, information is collected, analysed and reported. General monitoring has the advantage of individualising the decision-making process, as information-gathering targets specific individuals.

Procedures to detect radicalisation are currently in place in several Member States (e.g. Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom). These procedures include intelligence gathering and reporting <sup>(36)</sup>. Intelligence is crucial to the safe functioning of prisons.

### Key recommendations Intelligence gathering and general monitoring <sup>(37)</sup> <sup>(38)</sup> <sup>(39)</sup>

Four sets of considerations are recommended to assist decision-making on intelligence.

- If intelligence is used to inform decision-making, including placement of prisoners in special units, it must be used in accordance with

<sup>(36)</sup> Global CounterTerrorism Forum. (2015). Prison Management Recommendations to Counter and Address Prison Radicalization. Retrieved from <https://theijj.org/wp-content/uploads/Prison-Recommendations-FINAL-1.pdf>.

<sup>(37)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalisation in prisons and probation. RAN P&P practitioners' working paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_approaches\\_to\\_violent\\_extremist\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_approaches_to_violent_extremist_en.pdf).

<sup>(38)</sup> Council for Penological Co-Operation (PC-CP). (2016). Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism. PC-CP (2016) 2 rev 4. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/16806f9aa9>

<sup>(39)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Study visit of the RAN Prison and Probation Working Group. RAN P&P ex post paper, 26-27 October, Venice and Padua. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_study\\_visit\\_26\\_27102016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_study_visit_26_27102016_en.pdf)

legal frameworks and human rights.

- The intelligence systems working with 'target group' must be multilevel systems: they should recognise degrees or levels of risk or threat (e.g. in relation to capability, intent and engagement) and must specify whether this threat relates to the offenders themselves, prison officers, other prisoners or the public.
- Intelligence should be used in a dynamic way, allowing for risk levels of individuals to be lowered and for intelligence to be dismissed when invalid or out of date.
- Intelligence must be contextualised: individuals prompting concerns and the need for security intelligence around radicalisation must have this information contextualised and embedded within other sources of information.

This contextualised understanding should include:

- accounts from persons with personal or close knowledge of the offender that provide a context for and understanding of him/her, for example, chaplains or prison officers;
- actuarial data about the individual and the offence;
- dynamic factors such as employment, housing, mental health and family support; changes in these factors may trigger increased risk, while mitigating circumstances may reduce risk;
- clinical factors, employing professional judgement and experience, using personal and professional experience to assess the information collected through interviews and research;
- information from partners in a multi-agency framework, e.g. social workers, police and intelligence services.

Some Member States (e.g. Sweden) have a dedicated prison intelligence organisation. A common complaint from prison directors is the lack of information-sharing between prisons and intelligence services. A dedicated prison intelligence organisa-

tion can allow for information-sharing protocols that make it easier for general intelligence services to inform prisons about offenders who might have started becoming radicalised.

#### 4.2.2 Specialised risk assessment tools

The general purpose of risk assessment is to point to probability of future crime and manage offender risk throughout the course of the criminal justice process. Risk assessment is the process whereby offenders are assessed on several key variables empirically known to increase the likelihood of committing an offence <sup>(40)</sup>.

Specialised tools for radicalisation and extremism have been developed in an attempt to prevent the formation of subjective judgement based on information gathered through monitoring. These tools thus provide a 'statistical' foundation for the decision-making process. However, they are still under development and are essentially still in their infancy. There is also a risk that these tools might be used in a predictive way: labelling individuals as 'extremists', contributing to alienation and potentially decreasing the legitimacy (fairness) of the prison. Therefore, it is crucial to use specialised tools alongside other more general risk and need assessment tools. In both cases, it is vital that risks be assessed regularly, to ensure that individuals have the possibility of lowering their risk.

Across the EU, there is a call for more specialised risk assessment tools to assess the risk of radicalisation, extremism and/or terrorism in the offender population. Several such tools have been developed and are in use at the time of writing, for example, the ERG 22+ and the VERA 2R. More specialised tools are being developed across the EU, either in national contexts or in EU project contexts. At the time of writing, some of these tools have not been in use for very long: examples are the Radicalisation Risk Assessment in Prisons (RRAP) and a newly developed tool in Spain for risk assessment in prisons <sup>(41)</sup> <sup>(42)</sup>.

#### Practical example(s)

VERA 2R (Sweden, Austria, Netherlands, France and Germany, among others) <sup>(43)</sup>.

VERA-2R focuses on all forms of (violent) extremism and operates across five domains: beliefs, attitudes and ideology; social context and intent; history, actions and capability; commitments

<sup>(40)</sup> Insideprison.com. (2006, April). Risk assessment: approaches and applications. Retrieved from <https://www.insideprison.com/risk-assessment.asp>

<sup>(41)</sup> R2PRIS. (n.d.). Radicalisation prevention in prisons. Retrieved from <http://www.r2pris.org/rrap-radicalisation-risk-assessment-in-prisons-toolset.html>

<sup>(42)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, March 9). Risk assessment instrument in the Spanish prison context. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/risk-assessment-instrument-spanish-prison-context\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/risk-assessment-instrument-spanish-prison-context_en)

<sup>(43)</sup> Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA). (n.d.). Violent Extremist Risk Assessment 2 Revised (VERA-2R). Retrieved from <https://www.vera-2r.nl/>

and motivations; and protective indicators. Within these domains, 36 questions are posed. There is also an additional domain exploring 11 factors related to criminal history, personal history and mental disorders. The assessment is carried out by trained individuals who interview offenders. They aim to engage offenders in the process, while gathering information about how individuals ended up committing offences, and gauging their capacity for violence, physically or psychologically, to society or individuals.

The tool is only used to assess terrorist and violent extremist prisoners. In some circumstances, it is used to screen vulnerable prisoners, but the tool does not have a screening portion, nor is it designed specifically for screening.

Information gained under the assessment is used in interventions and programmes supporting rehabilitation of individuals. The tool is used to support the pretrial process within the criminal justice system, and can be drawn on to support sentencing decisions

### **Practical example(s)** ERG 22+ (United Kingdom) <sup>(44)</sup>

The ERG 22+ has three domains: engagement, capacity and capability. Within these 3 domains, 22 questions measure the dimensions of engagement within an extremist cause, consider how the individual will offend within that cause and assess their capability to cause psychological or physical harm. The tool examines the push-pull factors behind the offence and produces a full picture of why the individual committed the offence and how they were drawn

into the ideology.

All individuals convicted of a terrorist offence will undergo assessment by ERG 22+, carried out by trained professionals (psychologists, probation officers or prison officers), who engage offenders in the process through interviews and report writing. The assessment is still produced even if the individual does not engage in the process.

The ERG 22+ contains a screening tool, which allows for its use with vulnerable offenders not convicted of terrorist offences but considered to be at

threat of being radicalised or drawn to extremist ideology. Through the screening tool, a shorter version of the ERG 22+ is provided, which determines whether a full assessment is required, thereby saving time and resources and targeting those most in need of assessment.

Although an assessment may be used for several purposes, it must be designed with specific outcomes in mind, e.g. prisoner categorisation, support of pretrial work or sentencing, rehabilitation or determining risk. Target groups might include specific cohorts of offenders such as convicted terrorists, or those with particular issues such as mental health disorders. The use of screening tools can help save time and resources. Those working with specific screening tools for radicalisation, extremism and/or terrorism must be trained to use these tools and record their observations.

All relevant stakeholders should discuss and determine jointly which specialised risk assessment tool and its related processes is best suited to their purpose, before actually considering which particular tool to use. Decisions around use of the tool, and who 'owns' and which agency completes the assessment, as the individual passes through the criminal justice system, are key to helping all agencies understand the process and the need for information-sharing.

### **Key recommendations**

#### **Specialised risk assessment tools <sup>(45)</sup>**

- Specialised risk assessment tools are key in work with violent extremists; information should be collected from multiple sources and care must be taken to reduce assessor bias.
- Specialised risk assessment tools should complement other risk and needs assessment tools and approaches.
- Risk assessments must be completed regularly so that any changes in risk levels are immediately evident; assessments must take account of the personal, social and environmental circumstances of offenders.
- Risk assessment protocols need to be appropriate for the complexity/size of the process/population, resource level and staff capabilities of a given Member State.

<sup>(44)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders. RAN P&P ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_developing\\_implementing\\_using\\_risk\\_assessment\\_brussels\\_09-10\\_07\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_developing_implementing_using_risk_assessment_brussels_09-10_07_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>(45)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders. RAN P&P ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_developing\\_implementing\\_using\\_risk\\_assessment\\_brussels\\_09-10\\_07\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_developing_implementing_using_risk_assessment_brussels_09-10_07_2018_en.pdf)



- With regard to rehabilitation, risk assessment should include an assessment of needs — both general as well as specific — for dealing with the extremist mindset (e.g. increased contact with family, development of religious understanding, more interaction with other prisoners or staff members who can positively influence VETOs).
- Implementing specialised risk assessment tools requires careful consideration. Using already developed tools as a starting point is cost-effective and ensures a higher level of quality from the start.
- As is the case with interventions focused on preventing or dealing with radicalisation, the effectiveness of any risk assessment ultimately depends on the professionalism of the staff employing the tools. Therefore, appointing and training qualified assessors is equally as important as developing a good risk assessment tool.
- Assessments should be free of bias and stereotyping, and writers must avoid prejudice throughout the process. Otherwise, their assessments will not be robust and able to withstand challenges, and they will appear unfair and unreliable.

specific risks and behaviours. This regime is, initially, an option for VETOs entering the prison system, but it is also an option for individuals not convicted of violent extremist offences if their behaviour is linked to radicalisation.

Dispersal regime. VETOs are placed into the mainstream prison population and fall under the same general regime. Under this approach, there is an effort to normalise VETOs within the mainstream population — although again, security regimes may differ for these offenders. Problematic behaviour among VETOs and mainstream prisoners whose behaviour is related to radicalisation can be managed through existing procedures. Problematic prisoners may warrant special placement in line with prison procedures.

There has not been enough research on the effectiveness of the regimes for one to be preferred over the other. Historical and other contextual factors play a significant role in opting for a specific regime. RAN P&P will work on achieving a more in-depth understanding of the practice of different regime types in a dedicated meeting in 2019. Thus far, discourse between European prison practitioners has resulted in the following overview of the advantages and disadvantages of the different regimes.

### 4.3 Prison regime choices

EU Member States currently use differing regime types to manage VETOs <sup>(46)</sup>. Not all VETOs are located in high-security prisons (several do not have high-security prisons); some Member States have dedicated prison sections for VETOs charged with or convicted of terrorist crimes (e.g. Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom). Policy and practice are shifting rapidly in this area, with countries exploring different regime options.

#### Definitions and principles

The term 'regime' in this paper refers to the system or ordered way of dealing with VETOs. This includes both the choice of accommodation for these type of offenders as well as the security level and related rules and regulations they are subject to.

Concentration regime. VETOs are placed in separate, dedicated units. Sometimes these smaller units follow a similar regime; sometimes they have unique regimes that help staff manage

Concentration regime: advantages. The containment model allows the close monitoring of behaviours and interactions. Through training, staff can become highly specialised in working with this population and interventions can be focused on their needs. VETOs are separated from the mainstream population and this prevents shifts in the power hierarchy as well as the exertion of any influence from VETOs as regards violent extremism: they do not directly recruit or influence others in the mainstream population. In addition, in the public eye, this is a highly 'visible' way of dealing with VETOs.

Concentration regime: disadvantages. Placing VETOs together may strengthen social bonds and contribute to a culture of opposition between prisoners and staff, undermining staff efforts to build relationships and trust. These social dynamics may further entrench an oppositional mindset of binary opposites (between 'us' and 'them'), and may reinforce views that the state is against individuals. Grouping by similar religious or ethnic group may also reinforce views held inside prison and within society more generally about the unfair or biased treatment of particular religious or ethnic groups, legitimising grievances. The units could serve as a source

<sup>(46)</sup> King, R. D., & Resodihardjo, S. L. (2010). To max or not to max: Dealing with high risk prisoners in the Netherlands and England and Wales. *Punishment & Society*, 12(1), 65-84. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1462474509349010>

of stigma and/or status (see ‘Did you know ...? The challenge of “special units”’ below), subverting their aims by damaging offenders’ self-image or making the units desirable placements; in both cases, this undermines rehabilitation efforts.

### Did you know ...?

#### The challenge of ‘special units’

Locating VETOs and persons considered at risk of radicalising others in special units raises issues around stigma and status. Special units could entrench the risk labels these individuals are given, hindering rehabilitation opportunities. They can also contribute to group bonding among prisoners and undermine rehabilitation efforts. Special units can serve to boost the status of individuals: being sent to a special unit designates prisoners as distinct from other prisoners, and this could be seen as a marker of prestige. The case for using special units rather than the existing processes and structures for managing problematic behaviour must be clearly articulated in each context.

Dispersal regime advantages. Inmates believed to be capable of radicalising others are placed among the mainstream prison population. Although problematic inmates may warrant special treatment, there is an advantage to applying the same regime to both VETOs and regular prisoners. VETOs can directly compare their treatment to that of other offenders, which may help discredit their view on authorities treating them differently as citizens. In terms of group dynamics, VETOs in a dispersal regime are less likely to benefit from the ‘martyr’ status that separate units might engender. There is also the possibility that radicalised individuals might be influenced to change their views and disengage through interactions with the mainstream prisoner population. From the point of view of police and prison authorities, the dispersal regime helps to break up networks and related group dynamics that may otherwise reinforce ideological rigour and criminal behaviour.

Dispersal regime disadvantages. This policy poses significant risks of prisoner radicalisation through VETOs exerting influence over others. Moreover, they could also be influenced by criminal gangs, perpetuating the nexus between terrorism and organised crime. As discussed in the introduction,

Middle Eastern countries tend to follow the dispersal method, separating prisoners only according to sectarian lines and not according to the crimes committed. The general units also lack staff specially trained to understand the threat of violent extremism or equipped with the knowledge and ability to recognise and address vulnerabilities.

### Key recommendations

#### Regime options <sup>(47)</sup> <sup>(48)</sup>

Prison regime choices should be guided by the aim to normalise VETOs whilst minimising risks to the VETOs themselves, other prisoners, staff and the general public.

The pros and cons of different prison regime models for managing the risks around radicalisation must be carefully considered alongside the individual needs of offenders. For prisoners demonstrating concerning behaviour linked to radicalisation, special units might be necessary, but their use must be guided by clear entrance and exit criteria, and they must operate within the legal frameworks of the country concerned.

Differentiation within special units is important for tailoring security and rehabilitation efforts to different degrees of risk and need, in relation to the level of the offence and the individual’s gender and ideological background.

## 4.4 Rehabilitation interventions

Issues around radicalisation are usually addressed through existing structures and processes, and these are individualised for each offender as part of his or her sentence plan <sup>(49)</sup>. Behaviour is addressed through psychological interventions, chaplaincy activities, education and employment, and good relationships between staff and prisoners. Vocational training whilst in prison is significant in preparing offenders for release and desistance

By applying a broad and holistic approach, practitioners recognise and allow for the fact that disengagement from violent extremism is a multifaceted and often unique journey. The rising number of extremist and terrorist offenders has prompted many countries to develop more specialised interventions for VETOs that really focus on the radicalisation pro-

<sup>(47)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2015). Working group meeting — Case-study Terrorist Wing in Vught. RAN P&P ex post paper, 26 November, Vught. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_visit\\_pi\\_vught\\_2611\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_visit_pi_vught_2611_en.pdf)

<sup>(48)</sup> Council for Penological Co-Operation (PC-CP). (2016). Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism. PC-CP (2016) 2 rev 4, p. 38. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/16806f9aa9>

<sup>(49)</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2016). Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. New York: United Nations Publication, p. 42. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf)

cess the offender undergoes. These interventions are considered to be necessary and add value to the holistic, tailor-made approach that should be in place for all offenders. In this paper, a short overview is given of the different types of specialised interventions used with VETOs.

#### 4.4.1 Exit programmes

This collective term refers to programmes and interventions aimed at disengaging and/or deradicalising violent extremist/terrorist offenders. As the RAN EXIT working group notes <sup>(50)</sup>, 'Deradicalisation is a common term in public debate, but not always embraced by most of the people working on it. The term does not reflect everything involved in persons leaving an extremist environment and/or changing their thinking pattern. Apart from shifting mindset and thinking, this process also requires behavioural (like abstaining from violence) and practical (like work, housing and school) changes. Disengagement is the term used for these changes. 'Exit' combines deradicalisation and disengagement. Other terms refer more ... to the goal of a process, such as like "rehabilitation" or "resocialisation"' (RAN, 2016c, p. 2).

In practice, programmes and tailored rehabilitation plans for VETOs contain both deradicalisation and disengagement elements. Rehabilitation plans are highly dependent on the risk and needs assessments made by professionals within the penitentiary system, the availability of interventions and the willingness or requirement of offenders to take part in them. The following interventions may be used specifically with this target group.

#### 4.4.2 Interventions focused on the ideological dimension

Whether or not VETOs adhere to an extremist ideology and mindset depends on their motivations and drivers to become involved in these types of activities. Initial assessment is necessary to determine the extent to which a rehabilitative intervention aimed at influencing a VETO's mindset is necessary, or whether other interventions will provide a better match with the given risks and needs. There are several forms an intervention can take at ideological level, discussed below.

One-on-one counselling. In these sessions, a professional with expertise in ideology, theology, ex-

tremism or related fields talks with VETOs. The objective is to expand their world view to include different perspectives and interpretations, through conversation. Some countries have appointed special 'deradicalisation experts' to conduct this kind of counselling. Voluntary participation in these counselling sessions is recommended; the sessions also create a safe space to share thoughts and emotions.

Group dialogue sessions. As a means to reflect real-life situations (in which people coexist with others), and to draw on differences in views and opinions, group dialogue sessions can be an effective way of triggering emotions and thought processes on world views. It is best to combine a group approach with an individual approach.

Careful consideration should be given to:

- who will form part of the group (heedful selection is necessary: diverse profiles are better than offenders who are already connecting within the prison);
- whether to use a voluntary or compulsory approach (the former is recommended);
- who will lead the group (this should be someone with expertise on the topic and experience in handling group dynamics);
- group dynamics and creation of a safe space (to ensure there is no intimidation/bullying to disrupt the learning process).

Education and reflection. There are several ways in which the VETO himself or herself can reflect on beliefs and world views. Offering a diverse collection of books, magazines and documentaries that showcase a variety of perspectives on, for example, foreign policy, double standards and discrimination, may prompt reflection, especially when VETOs spend time in their cells <sup>(51)</sup>.

Also see Section 3.6 for specific insights into the role of religion.

#### 4.4.3 Specialist psychological interventions

There are few examples of specialist interventions targeting VETOs directly <sup>(52)</sup>. These are psychologi-

<sup>(50)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). Minimum methodological requirements for exit interventions. RAN EXIT ex post paper. p. 2. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran\\_exit-ex\\_post\\_paper\\_london\\_15-16032016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit-ex_post_paper_london_15-16032016_en.pdf)

<sup>(51)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2017). Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families. RAN manual. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran\\_br\\_a4\\_m10\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf)

<sup>(52)</sup> Dean, C. (2014). The Healthy Identity Intervention: The UK's Development of a Psychologically Informed Intervention to Address Extremist Offending. In A. Silke (Ed.), Prisons, terrorism and extremism: Critical issues in management, radicalisation and reform. London: Routledge. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321914837\\_The\\_healthy\\_identity\\_intervention\\_the\\_UK's\\_development\\_of\\_a\\_psychologically\\_informed\\_intervention\\_to\\_address\\_extremist\\_offending](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321914837_The_healthy_identity_intervention_the_UK's_development_of_a_psychologically_informed_intervention_to_address_extremist_offending)

cally driven and conducted one-on-one or in small group settings.

The need for specialist interventions is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Experience suggests that individual interventions might be harder to finance.

During group interventions, participants are often less 'honest', especially regarding their own situation and views. The potential disruption of group dynamics (e.g. charismatic, radical 'leaders' who challenge the facilitator) must also be taken into account. Increasingly, data and experience point to a link between radicalised offenders (and radicalised individuals in general) and the existence of mental health illness.

#### 4.4.4. Theological education and pastoral support

Chaplaincy provisions can provide religious education and support. Moreover, in the case of violent Islamist ideology, chaplains can also challenge particular views and provide opportunities for detainees to think about issues in a different light. However, opportunities for participating in chaplaincy activities vary across EU Member States according to resources, the demographics of each prison, and the state's position on religion. Specialist theological interventions, including dialogue sessions, as found in Muslim majority states, are rare among EU Member States. Care and guidance at times overlap with disengagement activities and preventive aims, for example when providing alternative theological perspectives, but security should not be a chaplain's primary focus. If chaplains are involved in disengagement efforts, they should be experienced and trained in this task. A grounding in religious education alone does not suffice for undertaking specialist interventions with VETOs. More information of the role of religion is provided in Section 3.6 of this paper.

#### 4.4.5 Social and family support

Providing opportunities for offenders to maintain close ties with networks of family and friends is crucial in bridging the transition from prison to release. Research on desistance among criminals in general, and among VETOs specifically in relation to disengagement, supports the importance of social ties in these processes. It is important to assess whether the family and social circle will act as partners in a disengagement process or as a stimulus for extremism. If the latter is true, social support should be provided additionally through other channels (in line with le-

gal and human rights regulations).

In order to have families or social networks act as a positive influencer in the rehabilitation process, cooperative family members or cooperative individuals from the social network have to be involved on a voluntary basis. Certain VETOs (e.g. 'illegal'immigrants or asylum seekers) lack family or social networks: they are thus a potential target group for extremist group recruiters. Extremist groups also employ prisoner support networks that provide VETOs with financial and moral support during imprisonment, taking the place of family and friends in their absence. These groups negatively influence offenders and hinder disengagement. Much of this influencing process is also carried out online.

Rebuilding and navigating a social network while having the 'terrorist' label to manage is one of the toughest challenges during rehabilitation. Backsliding and becoming drawn back in by extremist groups is an ever-present danger. Rehabilitation programmes, often overseen pretrial and during parole by prison or by probation staff, encourage offenders to frequent new spaces (sports and leisure clubs, theatres, etc.), interact with new social groups and build a network. Cooperation with service providers in these areas is a key element for success. The same applies to mentor programmes and organisations' training mentors<sup>(53)</sup>.

#### Practical example

##### Social network conferencing (Austria)<sup>(54)</sup>

Social network conferences (SNCs) are already in place for various types of offenders. The Austrian probation service Neustart uses this method for offenders below the age of 21 who have been charged with or convicted of terrorism-related crimes. An SNC is ordered by the court, and the probation services receive an official request to implement this within two weeks. The client can also reject the SNC, but the chances of release are higher when accompanied by the SNC, and therefore they will often agree to participate.

The SNC is formed by the professional network, the offender's social/family network and the offender. The client decides who should be part of the social/family network.

The SNC is rolled out in three steps.

<sup>(53)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). The role of family and social networks in the rehabilitation of (violent) extremist and terrorist offenders. RAN P&P ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_role\\_family\\_social\\_networks\\_rehabilitation\\_extremist\\_terrorist\\_offenders\\_06-07\\_03\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_role_family_social_networks_rehabilitation_extremist_terrorist_offenders_06-07_03_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>(54)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, March 9). Social Net Conferencing. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/11694\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/11694_en)



- Step 1. All parties gather in one room and the practitioners explain how the SNC works.
- Step 2. Exclusive phase: the professional network leaves the family network to consult alone (it is imperative that no experts are present). The family network draws up a rehabilitation plan.
- Step 3. The professional network assists in setting out and presenting the developed plan, also checking whether its objectives are realistic. In most cases, some changes are made and the plan is then sent to the court for approval.

There is no follow-up (from social services) with the family after the SNC; this is only foreseen during the first two weeks of coordination support.

#### 4.4.6 Mentoring programmes

Specific mentoring programmes are also often used to support violent extremist prisoners participating in disengagement activities, as well as individuals deemed vulnerable to radicalisation. Mentors can provide one-to-one, individually tailored support to meet the prisoners' specific needs. Mentors can serve as a valuable supplement to reinforce interventions carried out in prisons, as well as stand-alone interventions. They are usually recruited from civil society (e.g. social associations, religious organisations) or public organisations (police, probation, social services), so they are able to support the prisoner while in prison, upon release and during the crucial transition phase. In order for a mentor programme to be effective, mentors should be carefully vetted, trained and offered professional supervision. Similarly, individual mentor plans should be drawn up and coordinated with the prisoner's action plan and the requests of the prisoner. Structured follow-ups and adjustments should be in place. In comparison to other interventions, mentoring programmes are relatively low-cost, and can be adjusted to accommodate diverse structural and cultural settings<sup>(55)</sup>.

Some European countries such as the United Kingdom and Norway, have mentoring systems in place for radicalised individuals wishing to withdraw from violent extremism. These mentors, who serve as role models and guides within society, could also be trained volunteers. In some countries, mentors might also be so-called formers, i.e. individuals with

a history of violent extremism and experience of withdrawing from this scene. They are familiar with the VETOs' circumstances and can offer guidance on pathways out of extremism as well as showcase alternative lifestyles. Other mentors may be from religious or community organisations and may support the offender in a number of ways, including day-to-day help (e.g. job applications). Vetting mentors to ensure there is no hidden agenda and making a good match between mentors and offenders are key elements to success.

#### Practical example

##### CVE mentorship programme 'Back on Track' (Denmark)<sup>(56)</sup>

In 2011, the Danish Prison and Probation Service in collaboration with the Danish Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs started a mentorship programme to address violent extremism and radicalisation in prisons.

The CVE mentorship programme is available to individuals meeting the following criteria: 1) persons charged with or convicted of terror-related offences, 2) persons causing concern among prison staff (with regard to radicalisation), and 3) persons deemed vulnerable to radicalisation.

The mentorship programme is always complementary to the general prison scheme and the individual's sentence plan.

The mentor does not perform the duties of professional staff or other authorities, but supports prisoners in their cooperation with such bodies. It is important to distinguish between the responsibilities of different actors. If these roles are not clear-cut, and if a specific mentorship plan is not planned, the mentorship could potentially be counterproductive.

Mentors hail from various backgrounds and professions: police/prison officers, social workers, teachers, therapists, lawyers, engineers, academics, youth workers, etc. They are not recruited based on their professional qualities, but rather on their experience and personal skills. As a rule, mentors themselves cannot have a criminal record, and the programme does not involve formers. The mentors receive a monthly allowance based on their documented workload.

<sup>(55)</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2016). Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. New York: United Nations Publication, pp. 77-78. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf)

<sup>(56)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, March 9). Back on Track. Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7411\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7411_en)

#### 4.4.7 Rehabilitation of juvenile VETOs

With young offenders, it is important to maintain a long-term perspective with a focus on rehabilitation, education, social and interpersonal skills and psychosocial support from professionals for offenders, their families and social networks. Experience shows that education and vocational training can have positive impacts, even for returnees who initially refuse to cooperate. Especially with young people, an alternative path/perspective is key to the rehabilitation approach<sup>(57)</sup>. As such, the focus on education is crucial. In most countries, this is already the case with regard to juveniles, and it should remain so for this particular target group of VETOs.

Peer groups play a key role in the radicalisation and disengagement processes. At juvenile detention centres, the other inmates (peers) can help persuade VETOs to make a shift away from radical leanings.

##### Practical example

##### Wiesbaden juvenile prison (Germany)<sup>(58)</sup>

Wiesbaden juvenile prison has adopted a strong rehabilitation-oriented approach with their juvenile population. The penal institution is organised into therapeutic communities in which offenders live together and organise parts of their daily life and responsibilities as a group (e.g. cleaning). In addition, they spent their leisure time together (e.g. cooking extra meals). As Germany does not group together extremist/terrorist offenders, juvenile violent extremist offenders are also dispersed across the therapeutic communities, taking into account the network of offenders they are being brought into. Each community has a social worker connected to it who is available daily. The other offenders in the community also play an important role in the rehabilitation process.

As important as peer groups are, the risk of isolation of juvenile offenders is also significant, as they might be more easily affected than adults by such a situation. When isolated in a prison setting, they are targets for prisoners or groups with extremist objectives.

Experience of dealing with juvenile extremist offenders appears to be limited in the EU. However, some lessons can be learned from EU Member States' work with both juvenile offenders and adult extremist offenders, especially in the context of reintegration and rehabilitation.

##### Key recommendations

##### Interventions in prison<sup>(59)</sup> <sup>(60)</sup>

An integrated case-management system approach should be adopted for VETOs. It must feature a common framework, tools and language to assess and identify needs and monitor progress, and should be updated with the outcomes of all processes: violent extremist prisoners' imprisonment, transition to release and community supervision.

Where available, an intervention team should include a multidisciplinary group of specialists who implement disengagement interventions: psychologists, psychiatrists, faith leaders, sports instructors, art therapists, social workers, vocational guidance officers, teachers, healthcare professionals, etc.

VETOs should be informed of the purpose of the interventions and the way they are operated. Staff members must explain to violent extremist prisoners that participation in the programme is voluntary. Appropriate incentives should be put in place to encourage prisoners to participate in interventions.

There should be a supervisory or management team that holds overall responsibility for establishing and overseeing the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions, as well as providing mentoring and support for the prison-based intervention teams.

Psychological interventions can be held in a one-to-one or group setting. Despite being more expensive, one-on-one interventions should take priority over group interventions because of the potential negative impact of group dynamics in the latter.

<sup>(57)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). *Juvenile and young violent extremist offenders*. RAN study visit ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_study\\_visit\\_juvenile\\_young\\_violent\\_extremist\\_offenders\\_7-8\\_06\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_study_visit_juvenile_young_violent_extremist_offenders_7-8_06_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>(58)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2018). *Juvenile and young violent extremist offenders*. RAN study visit ex post paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_study\\_visit\\_juvenile\\_young\\_violent\\_extremist\\_offenders\\_7-8\\_06\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_study_visit_juvenile_young_violent_extremist_offenders_7-8_06_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>(59)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). *Exit programmes and interventions in prison and probation*. RAN P&P ex post paper, 14-15 June, Berlin. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ex\\_post\\_paper\\_ran\\_p\\_and\\_p\\_14-15\\_06\\_2016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ex_post_paper_ran_p_and_p_14-15_06_2016_en.pdf)

<sup>(60)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2016). *Approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalisation in prisons and probation*. RAN P&P practitioners' working paper. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_approaches\\_to\\_violent\\_extremist\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_approaches_to_violent_extremist_en.pdf)

Providing religious and spiritual support is key and may have a disengaging effect on VETOs with religiously motivated ideologies. However, if chaplains are intentionally involved in disengagement efforts, they should be experienced and trained in this area. Their credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the offender and wider community should be considered. Social

support is important for disengagement and for eventual release. Working with family and friends as partners in a disengagement process is effective only if the social circle was not a factor in the radicalisation process in the first place. Other avenues of social support (e.g. mentor programmes or community involvement) must also be considered.

# 5. The probation context

## 5.1 General context

Cooperation between prison and probation is a logical requirement in the context of dealing with offenders, including those radicalised and/or charged with and sentenced for terrorist crimes. Institutionalised cooperation does not always exist in EU Member States, as prison and probation services are organised differently within EU Member States. In certain cases, they are two separate entities, while in others, they act under the same centralised agency. In some countries, the prison system is organised at national level while the probation system is organised at local or regional level. This clearly impacts how information is shared and how these elements cooperate. Some Member States proactively recognise the existence of a divide between prison and probation services.

Probation may be broadly defined as the activities related to the implementation of community sanctions and measures, defined by law and imposed on suspects or offenders. It includes a range of activities and interventions, which involve supervision, guidance and assistance, aiming at the social inclusion of suspects or offenders, as well as at contributing to community safety. The Council of Europe issued a recommendation to governments containing European rules on community sanctions and measures <sup>(61)</sup>. The rules aim to strike a balance between the protection of society and improving the social reintegration of offenders.

In the current context of the threat of terrorism and the increased number of terrorist offenders, the role of probation is receiving considerable attention and gaining importance. Several offenders have been sentenced to a limited period or even no time in prison. This reduces the chances to start a rehabilitation programme in prison. Moreover, not all radicalised individuals entering probation have been sentenced for terrorism-related crimes. They may have been incarcerated for other criminal acts and then been radicalised while serving their sentence.

As explained in Chapter 2, probation services must manage a highly diverse profile of radicalised and terrorist offenders. In addition, a growing number of (terrorist) offenders on prison leave or after release have committed attacks <sup>(62)</sup>. These cases, highlighted extensively in the media, increase pressure on probation services and those managing the cases and the reintegration after release.

## 5.2 Specific challenges for probation

Regarding the rehabilitation and reintegration of radicalised and terrorist offenders, probation services are faced with challenges on three different levels:

- in ensuring the effective role of the probation services in a multi-agency cooperative framework;
- in ensuring the safety and well-being of probation professionals working with offenders;
- in promoting reintegration of terrorist offenders.

### 5.2.1 Ensuring the effective role of probation services in a multi-agency setting

Probation services have a dual responsibility: to manage the risks related to violent extremism, while working towards the reintegration into society of offenders. In most countries, the time available for probation professionals to work with clients is limited (e.g. once a week). Compared to prison, probation clients are in a non-controlled environment and have access to the internet, old networks, etc. Therefore, they are highly dependent on cooperation with other actors, both inside and outside the criminal justice domain, who must play an effective role.

One of the overarching challenges for multi-agency prison and probation cooperation relates to the existing culture around classified information. This is particularly relevant when sensitive information needs to cross the border of a public system to be shared with external private partners. Cooperation with intelligence services is limited, in some cases. However, information held by intelligence services is important in the probation context. Probation officers and other involved services should have a certain degree of knowledge on respective individuals' features related to the phenomenon, that will enable them in turn to develop a strategy to counter and halt it. And prison and probation officers hold information that could be useful for law enforcement and intelligence agencies with a view to risk reduction and getting a better general understanding of the target group.

<sup>(61)</sup> Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe. (2017). Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Rules on community sanctions and measures). CM/Rec (2017) 3. Retrieved from [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680700a5a](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680700a5a)

<sup>(62)</sup> Reference to the Dutch case of prevented attack, and reference to Belgian attacks.

## 5.2.2 Ensuring the quality, safety and well-being of probation professionals

Working with VETOs has a marked effect on probation workers, above and beyond ordinary probation work. The social and political attention for extremism heightens stress levels for those working with VETOs. There is a low-risk acceptance of VETOs, meaning that errors made with this group will receive particular attention from both politicians and the general public, and that heightened pressure is placed on prison and probation staff. This can restrict the professional judgement of probation officers. The officers may feel the need to balance social and political pressures with the best interests of the offenders and their needs for reintegration.

Practical experience has shown that VETOs may try to influence the mindset of those professionals working with them. They might wish to hold conversations about their ideology or even try to recruit staff members. This can be challenging for probation professionals when confronted with this unusual and unfamiliar interaction, as compared to other criminal groups in their experience.

Moreover, probation professionals as well as other professionals working with offenders may have concerns for their personal safety and may be at risk of becoming a target for extremist/ terrorist groups.

## 5.2.3 Promoting reintegration of terrorist offenders

In most cases, violent extremist prisoners will at some point be released and return back into the community. Supporting the reintegration of violent extremist prisoners into the community should therefore be a key element in any strategy for preventing and countering violent extremism<sup>(63)</sup>. The social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, with sound coordination among the different stakeholders involved, including CSOs, public institutions, the private sector, NGOs, families and communities. If relevant, psychological and religious counselling, employment assistance and/or support to the families should continue. In order to create a welcoming and enabling environment and with a view to reducing stigmatisation, engagement with the general public is necessary, in an attempt to create social awareness and counter the prejudices concerning former violent extremist prisoners.

Research has long established that offenders encounter significant difficulties (economic, relational and emotional, among others) in becoming 'requalified citizens', once released from prison. Individuals convicted of terrorist offences face additional barriers. There is a specific form of stigmatisation associated with terrorist offences, and in some contexts, this negative label may be appropriated to serve as a status symbol in marginalised communities.

**Stigmatisation.** Stigmatised offenders experience challenges in accessing social support and opportunities to reintegrate, including employment or education opportunities. Professionals working with VETOs must make a point of providing support to offenders as they seek to reintegrate. Offenders who feel they are the subject of prejudice may entrench barriers and reinforce oppositional and radicalised identities.

**Trust.** It is crucial that professionals aim to build up and maintain trust with offenders as well as with wider segments of the community and public that play a role in the rehabilitation process of the offender. Member States' probation services (or their equivalent) can benefit from building strong relationships with community organisations. This ensures that multiple sectors of society will maximise opportunities for offenders, post-release.

**Release conditions.** Conditions can be extremely strict for these offenders, more so than for other types of offenders. This poses extra challenges for reintegration, if, for example, offenders are easily recalled to prison for breaches. Practitioners, however, may also turn these conditions (because of the more frequent contact they entail) to their advantage and take the opportunity to work closely with offenders and respond to their needs.

## 5.3 General good practice

Next to reintegration, public protection, risk reduction, and promoting disengagement are considered as important with VETOs as with other types of offenders. Probation staff should fully utilise multi-agency cooperation arrangements to manage risk, deal with licence breaches effectively (including the appropriate use of recall to custody) and seek to ensure attendance and compliance with licence restrictions. It is acknowledged that stringent licence conditions may compromise other goals such as encouraging employment and restoring family relationships. In order to manage risk, probation staff should develop constructive relationships with probationers and motivate pro-

<sup>(63)</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2016). Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. New York: United Nations Publication. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf)



bationers to engage with the supervision process.

The probation agency also has the task of selecting and recruiting sufficient staff of the highest calibre and of equipping them with adequate training and professional development to enable them to ethically provide just and effective supervision, guidance and assistance to suspects and offenders, that will enhance their prospects of social inclusion (on which desistance from crime usually depends).

Probation agencies should have their own introduction and advanced training curricula for staff. The training provided should correspond to the role and tasks of the different categories of their staff and to the aims and purposes of their work. Ideally, probation agencies should have their own training facilities. The provision of training should promote professional identity and develop the culture of the organisation in line with the overall mission.

Where appropriate, there should be opportunities for joint prison and probation staff training and for training with staff from other criminal justice agencies, in order to encourage inter-agency and interdisciplinary work. Such cooperation will promote the mutual goals of the respective services, i.e. to promote public safety, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Probation staff should be offered the opportunity to learn about the nature of prison work; similarly, prison staff should have the option to better understand probation work.

It is advisable to regularly revise and update annual training plans aimed at workforce development and at adequately responding to the needs of the prison services and probation agencies, and to secure a sufficient number of trainers and resources to be able to put it in practice.

EU Directive 680/2016 <sup>(64)</sup> must also be considered. It focuses on 'the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, including the safeguarding against and the prevention of threats to public security ...' (L 119/90).

## Key recommendations

### Good practice <sup>(65)</sup>

- Resettlement plans as part of reintegration programmes need to be defined as early as possible during the prison sentence. In particular, the higher risk of stigmatisation and prejudice should be taken into account as hindering successful reintegration.
- Sound transition management. Early plans to deal with offenders' problematic home or personal life are needed. Similarly, plans are needed to facilitate smooth transition management; transitional periods carry a higher risk of recidivism.
- Individualised risk and need assessments must be carried out by multidisciplinary teams so as to recognise offenders' potential to contribute to society, as well as the potential risks.
- A relationship between probation officers and offenders, built on trust and maintained over time, is paramount to ensuring the success of the work.
- Collaboration with any individuals having influence over offenders is crucial, e.g. friends, family members and significant others. Figures such as religious leaders, teachers or formers might also have a positive influence.
- It is important to build genuine relationships that demonstrate 'care' about the probationer being supervised, their desistance and their future, and not to express interest in their monitoring and surveillance alone.
- An understanding of how desistance may occur is key, including careful consideration of how relapses or breaches should be dealt with.
- Attention must be paid to the relevant practical obstacles to desistance, not just the psychological issues.
- Qualified staff and adequate training and professional development paths, preferably in conjunction with other services such as police and prison, are a precondition for

<sup>(64)</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA. (2016). Official Journal of the European Union, L 119, 89–131. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016L0680&from=EN>

<sup>(65)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), (2018f). The challenge of resocialisation Dealing with radicalised individuals during and after imprisonment. RAN P&P – RAN EXIT ex-post paper. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_dealing\\_with\\_radicalised\\_individuals\\_06\\_112018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_dealing_with_radicalised_individuals_06_112018_en.pdf)

good general practice.

- Knowledge of and access to the resources of local services/provision is crucial, in order to help probationers deal with practical obstacles.

## 5.4 Specific probation interventions for working with radicalised and terrorist offenders

Radicalised and terrorist offenders pose specific challenges, and probation services across Europe have developed tailored structures and interventions in response to these challenges.

### 5.4.1 Organisation and multi-agency cooperation

Alongside training, probation services in the EU deal with VETOs by adjusting their organisational structures and/or their positions in multi-agency cooperation settings. The former method (organisational structure adjustments) is employed by countries that have developed specialised teams of probation professionals dealing only or chiefly with these offenders (e.g. the Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom). Having these specialised teams in place helps to assure the right quality and level of training for professionals. It may also contribute to gathering information on links between VETOs and their environments.

#### Practical example

Team TER (Terrorists, Extremists and Radicals) (Netherlands) <sup>(66)</sup>

With the nationally operating Team TER, the Dutch Probation Service helps prevent (further) radicalisation by Dutch probationers. It aims chiefly to disengage radicalised Muslims (mainly home-grown jihadi) from radical movements with a tailor-made probation approach, and to influence their behaviour. Push-pull factors are used to promote behavioural change and stimulate the process of reintegration into society. The main tasks are risk management and supervision, carried out in close cooperation with partners (judicial, prison, police and municipal authorities). The team is also supported by psychological and theological experts.

The Dutch Probation Service engages with per-

sons suspected or convicted of terrorism-related offences such as rioting, recruiting and financing terrorist organisations. Individuals suspected or convicted of offences like attempting to travel to or return from conflict areas or preparing an attack are referred to Team TER. Team TER is also responsible for individuals suspected or convicted of other offences but known to be involved in radicalisation- or terrorist-related risks.

The team is staffed by 13 (internationally) trained probation officers who are specialised in relevant fields. They use regular probation methods of work in a judicial framework with mandated clients as well as cognitive behavioural interventions.

Another organisational measure applied to VETOs is to connect them with two probation professionals instead of just one.

Trust is a crucial and necessary prerequisite for successful probation work. However, the relationship between probation officers and offenders can be undermined by confidentiality issues. This is an ongoing problem. A practical solution is to apply the 'need-to-know' principle: while it is important to communicate relevant information to the intelligence services and maintain cooperation with them, information is not shared in bulk or comprehensively. A similar dilemma arises in work with other vulnerable groups with a significant risk of relapse, e.g. sexual offenders: there may be tension between the need to share information and the need to base a relationship on trust.

#### Practical example(s)

Germany <sup>(67)</sup>

In the German state of Lower Saxony, the exchange of information with law enforcement authorities is only possible in round-table meetings in the presence of the competent authority who supervises conduct. For further exchange of information between the probation service and police, consent of the probationers is necessary. Offenders are informed about the multi-agency approach and the ongoing flow of information between different actors. However, probationers tend to be highly motivated, and often the advantages of having a trusting relationship with their probation officers outweigh the disadvantages resulting from the exchange of information.

<sup>(66)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, March 9). Team TER (Terrorists, Extremists and Radicals). Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/11695\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/11695_en)

<sup>(67)</sup> <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/> - § 203 of the German Criminal Code 'Violation of private secrets'

From a different point of view, adopting a multi-agency approach can prevent probationers from reoffending: if friends and/or family members encourage them to backslide, they can justify their refusal to be involved by explaining that they are under an exceeding multi-agency supervision.

#### 5.4.2 Risk assessment tools

Increasingly, probation services across Europe are using specialised risk assessment tools to enhance their professional judgement about the risk level for extremist criminal acts and the circumstances that increase or decrease this risk. On the whole, similar tools are used in prison and probation, e.g. the VERA 2R or the ERG 22+. In some jurisdictions (e.g. the Netherlands), probation professionals make these risk assessments pre-conviction and include them in their court reports.

Risk assessment tools must be used as part of a multi-agency approach, and not as stand-alone standardised procedures: this ensures that judgements made will be based on a comprehensive picture of offenders with information sourced from various actors across agencies. Categorisation based on solid risk assessment also gives probation staff direction. In terms of ensuring staff safety, officers must be trained to identify risks and judge 'acceptable risk'.

#### Practical example(s)

##### DARR programme (Belgium) <sup>(68)</sup>

Since 2016, the Brussels House of Justice has operated the 'Dynamic analysis of risks and resources' (DARR) programme. DARR's emergence is directly related to the Brussels and Paris attacks and the large number of warrants linked to violent extremism.

This programme has two major objectives: the reintegration and non-recidivism of offenders involved in violent extremism.

These two objectives are pursued through four main lines of intervention:

- multi-agency exchange information
- support work
- control work

- information management.

These four areas of intervention are implemented during the detention period, continue during the community measure, and end after the closing phase of the supervision.

#### 5.4.3 Programmes and interventions

Some Member States (e.g. France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) have (voluntary) programmes and interventions tailored specifically for VETOs on probation.

Offenders must have continuity of support, from prison to release. The first few weeks post-release is when ex-offenders are most vulnerable. Adjustment can be difficult for both ex-offenders and their families. One way to ensure this continuity is to provide a mentoring or facilitator arrangement with offenders, both pre- and post-release. The same person working with the offender throughout the sentence should remain a point of contact and support after release. In Germany, for example, this happens through the counselling services of the Violence Prevention Network.

#### Practical example(s)

##### Prevention and deradicalisation in prison and probation (Germany) <sup>(69)</sup>

The 'Prevention and deradicalisation in detention and probation' programme of the Violence Prevention Network (VPN) aims to enable young people arrested for ideologically motivated acts of violence (far-right extremists or radical Islamists) to live responsibly and non-violently and to distance themselves from inhuman ideologies.

Trainers work with trainees to achieve the following goals:

- to develop relationship skills, empathy, self-esteem and the capacity for self-reflection;
- to dissociate themselves from inhuman hate ideologies;
- to better understand and correct their violent behaviour;

<sup>(68)</sup> Confederation of European Probation (CEP). (2018). Report of the 3rd CEP Expert Meeting on Violent Extremism. Paris, France. Retrieved from <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Report-meeting-final-paris-radicalisation.pdf>

<sup>(69)</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019, March 9). Taking Responsibility – Breaking away from Hate and Violence – Education of Responsibility (Verantwortungspädagogik®). Retrieved from RAN Collection of inspiring practices: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7422\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7422_en)



- to accept each individual's fundamental right to liberty and freedom from bodily harm;
- to learn how to resolve conflicts non-violently;
- to take responsibility for their actions;
- to play an active role in planning their future.

The approach involves deradicalisation training, civic education, long-term group training and post-release stabilisation coaching. Key elements in training are the separation of offence and offender and the questioning of ideology, strategies of justification and offence. Trainers and trainees should have a well-grounded relationship based on confidence and respect. Participation is voluntary.

Vocational training for prison staff is offered under the programme.

Providing for material and social support needs of VETOs. Structured cooperation with service providers like housing agencies, employment agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers and family services are crucial for ex-offenders' successful reintegration and rebuilding of their lives, post-release. This cooperation must be prepared and built into resettlement plans prior to release. Building and supporting relationships, developing positive social bonds, supporting and stimulating personal strengths and skills, encouraging hope, and offering guidance in religious and spiritual matters are also important for offence-free reintegration into society. The exact forms of support will depend on the internal and external needs of the offender. Because of the stigma terrorist offences carry, providing this kind of support might prove more difficult for VETOs.

Interventions in cooperation with offenders' social networks. Desistance research has shown the importance of strong social ties. Involving ex-offenders' social networks, especially families<sup>(70)</sup> in interventions provides crucial support for desistance processes. This may entail engaging family members in professionals' decision-making about ex-offenders, giving them tasks or responsibilities to help ex-offenders, and providing training that prepares them to deal with their loved ones when the intervention ends. Negative influences within offenders'

social networks should not be involved, but care should be taken when identifying such negative influences. Promising practices in this area may be inspired by the 'social net of benefits' approach employed with juvenile offenders on remand or close to release, whose networks of significant others are organised and surround them in support. All parties sign a contract that is agreed upon by offenders. This binding contract places responsibility with the offenders' networks and this serves as a social safety net. Austria is experimenting with this approach.

Theological interventions and support from religious communities. Such specialist interventions may be offered in prison and post-release. Religious communities (including volunteers and imams) play an important role in supporting offenders post-release; a lack of social and spiritual support can heighten vulnerability at this time. Offenders may benefit from general religious counselling or from tailored religious and theological interventions. Specialist interventions may be underpinned by either a theological approach, where the aim is to counter specific ideological beliefs, or by a cognitive behavioural approach. Probation staff do not need to engage in ideological or motivational discussions with probationers, but should rather focus on resettlement issues. Practitioners should seek to use these community resources as part of a network of support that aids ex-offenders in their desistance and reintegration journey. As with mentoring schemes and work with family members, appropriate risk assessments should be carried out for the individuals involved.

Mentoring programmes. Some EU Member States (e.g. Denmark and the United Kingdom) have a mentoring system in place for radicalised individuals wishing to withdraw from violent extremism<sup>(71)</sup>. These mentors, who serve as role models and guides through society, can be trained volunteers. Some might be formers, with a violent extremist past and experience of leaving the extremist arena<sup>(72)</sup>. They are familiar with the VETOs' situation and can offer guidance on pathways out of extremism as well as showcase alternative lifestyles. The involvement of ex-offenders can be useful, but political nervousness vis-à-vis this group of offenders is higher than for any others. Other mentors may come from religious or community organisations and may support the offender in any number of ways, including day-to-day help (e.g. in completing job applications). Vetting mentors to ensure there are no hidden agendas at play, and skilfully match-

<sup>(70)</sup> Spalek, B. (2016). Radicalisation, de-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation in relation to families: Key challenges for research, policy and practice. *Security Journal*, 29(1), 39-52. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/sj.2015.43>

<sup>(71)</sup> Spalek, B., & Davies, L. (2012). Mentoring in relation to violent extremism: A study of role, purpose, and outcomes. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35(5), 354-368. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2012.666820>

<sup>(72)</sup> Global CounterTerrorism Forum. (2012). Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders. Retrieved from <https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Rome-Memorandum-ENG.pdf> .

ing mentors and offenders are key to success.

**Mental health services.** Increasingly, data and experience support some kind of connection between radicalised offenders (and radicalised individuals in general) and mental health issues. Mental health services and assessments are needed both in prison and post-release to ensure that offenders receive the support they need.

### Practical example(s)

#### Individualised support programme for social reaffiliation (PAIRS) (France)

The The French programme PAIRS is an individualised multidisciplinary program for radicalised or radicalising people, aimed at reintegrating individuals into the community through the development of independent living skills and building effective support networks. This programme is implemented by the French penitentiary administration in partnership with a NGO : ARTEMIS. Participants to the programme are persons prosecuted or sentenced for terrorism and offenders (or probationers) sentenced and detained for other offenses who can potentially be radicalized. Participants in the programme can get support on three intensity levels: 3 hours, 10 hours or 20 hours a week. They are being supported by a multidisciplinary team including Intercultural mediators (including prison chaplains), psychologists and psychiatrists and social workers.

### Key recommendations

#### Probation work with radicalised and terrorist offenders <sup>(73)</sup>

- The principle of proportionality should be applied – control and surveillance are to be regulated according to the level of risk.
- General ‘what works’ and ‘desistance’ principles apply in this context.
- The quality of the relationship with VETOs is key and warrants special attention.
- Probation staff will be responsible for coordinating and/or delivering services to VETOs. However, it is good practice to involve external actors such as mentors, social workers and religious experts. Their involvement is likely to increase legitimacy and trust.
- When involving external actors, good recruitment, selection and training arrange-

ments should be in place. It is important to take security aspects into consideration. Practical and effective support and monitoring mechanisms for external actors should be available.

- Interventions should involve multi-agency cooperation. This cooperation should be based on clear protocols and mechanisms. Information-sharing must be clearly defined and agreed.
- Interventions should be holistic, covering education, vocational training, psychological and spiritual counselling, employment services, accommodation advice, substance abuse services, mindfulness and so on.
- Interventions should be trauma-informed.
- All interventions should be based on standardised and validated risk/needs assessment tools, when the acts are driven by ideological reasons. Individuals who have acted out of opportunism or family loyalty without particular ideological motivation do not require the use of risk assessment tools.
- Families should play an important role in the monitoring and support of VETOs. In this respect, families will be supported and prepared to receive VETOs. Financial and practical help will be made available to families so that they do not turn to radical networks for such assistance.
- Probation services should promote community and urban regeneration projects that will target discrimination, social inclusion and social justice.
- Probation services should engage in the production of national or regional counter-narratives to promote diversity and social justice. Working with mass media to decrease the stigma associated with this group is important.
- Probation services should encourage evaluation and research in order to better understand the impact of reintegration interventions.
- The probation service should support initiatives to strengthen local municipalities in work on inclusion, so that everyone can participate and share experiences. In this sense, associative networks at local level are key.

<sup>(73)</sup> Outcomes of Expert meeting on violent extremism of Confederation for European Probation – (CEP) – 2018 (internal report)

- It is important to promote risk-mitigating factors: most theoretical and empirical studies on radicalisation and violent extremism tend to focus solely on risk factors. Risk factors predict unhealthy or undesirable developments; reintegration action should consider the importance of promotive factors in enhancing well-being and strengthening individual and societal resilience.
- Staff involved in deradicalisation, disengagement and reintegration interventions should be provided with special training and support during their work.

- National training units for probation officers should cooperate at EU level under the framework of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP), and more particularly, in the context of the ongoing EU co-funded (Justice programme) 'PONT' project carried out notably by CEP.

Adequate resources in terms of time, staff, mobility and so on should be made available so that the probation services can perform their tasks efficiently

## 6. Conclusions

The challenges for prison and probation practitioners working with VETOs are still increasing and shifting. As rising numbers of individuals are being held in prison for terrorism-related offences, there is a growing need to respond appropriately to their risks and needs, and to use available resources to prepare them for safe release into society.

Member States will need to allocate available resources in a way that benefits both the overall prison climate and the more specialist interventions for monitoring and managing risks, preventing radicalisation and contributing to rehabilitation and resettlement of VETOs. These decisions are further influenced by the number of individuals presenting a risk and the type of radicalisation under consideration.

In terms of daily practice and lessons learned, practitioners across EU Member States are growing in confidence and competence to master challenges. There is recognition that investing in high-quality day-to-day interactions between staff and prisoners, and applying the dynamic security approach are both key in minimising the risks of radicalisation. However, because countries have differing degrees of risk to manage, some are unable to normalise VETOs owing to the risks they present to the prisoner population and/or the public.

For the moment, there still is sparse empirical scrutiny of the underlying social and psychological dynamics behind prisoner radicalisation<sup>(74)</sup>. Several studies have set out to identify factors that may be conducive to radicalisation (e.g. overcrowding, gang dynamics and the presence of charismatic extremist leaders). Although useful, such research fails to account for the fact that not all people living in the same prison conditions react the same: some radicalise while others do not. In order to accurately identify those individuals at risk, empirical research is needed that aims to disentangle the social and psychological mechanisms by which contextual conditions may lead to radicalisation in some individuals but not others.

Specialised risk assessments and interventions are now being piloted and used in a dynamic way to evaluate the needs and risks of offenders. Good practices in this area are individualised and responsive to the needs of offenders. However, further precision is needed. Risk assessments should be subject to robust empirical evaluation and compared with other types of risk management practi-

es to determine what methods and approaches are most effective.

Practices are constantly changing across EU Member States, which has made it very difficult to identify countries using particular practices. The reasoning behind decisions that lead to particular policies and practices being adopted needs to be more transparent and fed into a broader knowledge base of good practices. Decision-making is rarely evidence-based. Research needs to be embedded into practice early on.

A more coordinated approach to research is needed, to better understand the contexts in which radicalisation seems to succeed, where its risks are diminished, and what kind of support is most beneficial for offenders reintegrating into society. Staff training also needs to be evaluated in light of whether it improves staff-prisoner relationships, alongside the ability to manage risks related to radicalisation.

For 2019, the RAN P&P working group will have to prioritise these many challenges and address them through the knowledge and experience of prison and probation practitioners.

The focus for the year will be on the following issues.

- **Rehabilitation of VETOs.** A manual will outline current challenges and practice in organising this process, from a security perspective as well as a reintegration perspective.
- **Risk assessment.** After concentrating on the implementation of risk assessment in 2018, the focus in 2019 will be on using risk assessment at individual level and on how assessors are dealing with challenges at case level.
- **Prison regimes.** A more in-depth account of experiences of several prison regimes will be developed. The aim is to move beyond the pros and cons of concentration and dispersal regimes, and develop context-based lessons drawn from the experiences of a group of EU Member States.
- **Reviewing exit programmes.** Together with the RAN Exit working group, a review format will be designed to help promote the quality and effectiveness of exit programmes.

<sup>(74)</sup> Silke, A., & Veldhuis, T. (2017). Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons: A Review of Key Recent Research and Critical Research Gaps. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 11(5), 2-11. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320757052\\_Countering\\_Violent\\_Extremism\\_in\\_Prisons\\_A\\_review\\_of\\_key\\_recent\\_research\\_and\\_critical\\_research\\_gaps](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320757052_Countering_Violent_Extremism_in_Prisons_A_review_of_key_recent_research_and_critical_research_gaps)

# List of acronyms

ALF	Animal Liberation Front
CEP	Confederation of European Probation
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CSO	Civil society organisation
CT	Countering terrorism
CVE	Countering violent extremism
DAESH	so-called Islamic State (IS) (al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham)
DAP	Italian Department of Prison Administration
DARR	Dynamic Analysis of Risks and Resources
DGSI	French General Directorate for Internal Security (DGSI),
ELF	Earth Liberation Front
ENAP	L'école nationale d'administration pénitentiaire
EPR	European Prison Rules
EPTA	European Penitentiary Training Academies
ERG	Extremism Risk Guidance
ETA	Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna)
FAIR	Fighting Against Inmates' Radicalisation
FTF	Foreign terrorist fighter
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
ICSR	International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IS	(so-called) Islamic State
ISF	Internal Security Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ORT	On-site referee trainer
P&P	Prison and probation
PAIRS	Individualised support programme for social reaffiliation
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê)



RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
RRAP	Radicalisation Risk Assessment in Prisons
SNC	Social network conference
TER	Terrorists, Extremists and Radicals
TE-SAT	Terrorism Situation and Trend (report)
UCOII	Italian umbrella organisation representing smaller Islamic faith organisations (Unione delle Comunità e Organizzazioni Islamiche)
UK	United Kingdom
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VERA 2R	Violent Extremist Risk Assessment 2 Revised
VERA	Violent Extremist Risk Assessment
VETO	Violent extremist terrorist offender
VPN	Violence Prevention Network

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