

Seminar 2 on Radicalisation Prevention

Concept Note

Background and rationale

Terrorist attacks, risks to public security, rise of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, and violations of fundamental rights in the EU Member States (MS) continue to occur, affecting many countries throughout the EU. The criminal justice response to these phenomena has to be enhanced and there were concrete steps taken at European level.¹ Radicalism towards terrorism has materialised in the last three years, with EU terrorist acts in several places in Europe (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, UK). Indeed, countering terrorism and radicalisation –among CoE priorities- is urgent on EU soil. One of the major threats highlighted in the April 2017 annual report by the Secretary General “Populism - How strong are Europe’s checks and balances?” is the surge in extremist violence that Europe faces, showing the damaging effects of hate speech, incitement to hatred and most particularly of Islamophobia. The SG highlighted the importance of human rights education as a “fundamental component of any measure taken to address discrimination, prejudice and intolerance, thus preventing and combating violent extremism and radicalisation in a sustainable and proactive way”.

Terrorist and violent extremist activities in the EU are not always the exclusive domain of hierarchical organisations. Threats also consist of lone actors, small cells, cross-border terrorist travel, terrorist

¹ Actions in this regard were included in the European Agenda on Security adopted in 2015, and in particular in the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council Conclusions on enhancing the criminal justice response to radicalisation. Those problems are also reflected in research and surveys of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the May 2015 annual report by the CoE Secretary General “A shared responsibility for democratic security in Europe” and his follow-up report of April 2016 “State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law: A security imperative for Europe” which conclude that Human rights (HR), democracy and security are threatened across the continent and that HR foster democratic security. The reports analyse the situation in Europe, based on the findings of the CoE monitoring mechanisms and bodies (including high number of cases reaching the ECtHR). Radicalisation was a concern raised in several events organised by the Council of Europe, such as the high-level meetings organised under the Turin Process in 2016, focusing on discussing on how full enjoyment of social rights could help resolve the economic crisis, ensure migrants’ integration and promote societies in which radicalisation ceases to be an option for young people.

training or financing of terrorism.² Many terrorists planning and perpetrating attacks on European soil are themselves European citizens. Such attacks and threats cause more than loss of life and economic damage; they can sow the seeds of division between communities in Europe, giving rise to increasingly reactionary and extremist views in other parts of society.

This contributes to a breeding ground for extremism, perpetuating a vicious circle of radicalisation, aggression, and violent responses. Prevention, though difficult, becomes imperative.

The EU and CoE work together in this area and strongly believe in eradicating terrorism at its source, with tackling terrorist radicalisation and recruitment among their priorities. While there is no universally agreed definition of radicalisation, the [Council of Europe Guidelines for Prison and Probation Services regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism](#), adopted some terminology for the purpose of the guidelines, including radicalisation and violent extremism. According to them, “radicalisation represents a dynamic process whereby an individual increasingly accepts and supports violent extremism. The reasons behind this process can be ideological, political, religious, social, economic or personal.” The causes are complex and recruitment often follows extremist propaganda by terrorist organisations, sometimes with roots abroad but operating in Europe. Recent studies on radicalisation recommend examining the processes of recruitment, be it online or in places such as schools, detention centers and prisons. As recruitment often takes place in prison, alternative measures to detention for young persons below the age of 18 should be considered to the extent possible. According to the above-mentioned Guidelines, “violent extremism consists in promoting, supporting or committing acts, including acts which may lead to terrorism and which are aimed at defending an ideology advocating racial, national, ethnic or religious supremacy and opposing core democratic principles and values.”

Since the prevention of radicalisation is a key part of the fight against terrorism it is worth mentioning that the CoE has developed legal standards to prevent and suppress acts of terrorism

² Without official statistics, according to the Soufan Group, it is estimated that over 27,000 foreign fighters have travelled to Iraq and Syria since fighting broke out in 2011, out of whom approximately 6,000 people from Europe - with the most fighters leaving France, Germany and the UK and most of them being young people including 10% young women. The fact that the number of foreign fighters from Western Europe has more than doubled since June 2014 shows that efforts to contain the flow of foreign fighters are limited. At least 20% is presumed to have returned home, many of whom come back radicalised and with potentially deadly new skills.

through criminal law and other measures, and works to improve international co-operation in bringing terrorists to justice, in synergy with the 19 universal legal instruments and EU work.³

The Project

The EU-CoE Radicalisation Prevention project (EUCoE Radicalisation) aims at improving the criminal justice response in the EU to prevent radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism by increasing the capacities and mutual trust of primarily justice practitioners dealing with radicalisation prevention (RP) through training, inter-agency and cross-border cooperation. The 2-year project is implemented by the CoE under the HELP Programme and will target legal professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers), prison and probation staff as well as (a limited number of) law enforcement officers.

Description of the activity and outline of the agenda

The Seminar is the second of a series of three⁴ to be organised under the Project (EUCoE Radicalisation), aiming at **mutual learning, exchange of good practices and cooperation**. It will focus on deradicalisation programmes and strategies, with a view to share practices and discuss current challenges.

The event will gather approximately **60 participants, practitioners and core actors working in this field** and will benefit from the expertise of several key experts in the field and representatives of relevant departments of the CoE.

The purpose of the seminar will be to exchange information, views and best practices on several topics of interest, namely: de-radicalisation strategies, programmes and practices; process and role of

³ In 2015, an Additional Protocol to the CoE Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (or the Riga Protocol) that aims to further strengthen the efforts to prevent and suppress terrorism in all its forms, while respecting human rights and the rule of law and, i.a., addresses the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as an Action Plan on the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism were adopted. The Action Plan has two main objectives: (1) to reinforce the legal framework against terrorism and violent extremism; and (2) to prevent and fight violent radicalisation through concrete measures in the public sector, in particular in schools, detention centers and prisons, and on the Internet.

⁴ Information about the first seminar held in Strasbourg on 15-16 March 2018 and focusing on risk assessment tools is available [here](#).

the authorities and of the various actors involved (focus on prison, probation, judiciary context); challenges; the human rights dimension in the de-radicalisation interventions; capacity building.

The Seminar will also serve as a platform for presenting the HELP course on Radicalisation Prevention (which at the time will be in its final stages of development) for gathering feedback on the structure and the content, as well as for collecting the relevant contributions from participants which can be integrated in the course.

In order to follow the methodology used for the first Seminar, a dedicated page⁵ will be created on the HELP platform in order to store the Seminar papers, the useful materials shared by the participants and to allow them to exchange among themselves also after the event.

Organisational details

In order to participate, please [REGISTER HERE](#).

The seminar will be held at the premises of the Judicial Training Institute in Brussels on 20-21 September 2018. The working languages will be English.

The participation is covered by the organisers.

For further information, please send an email to Sylvie.ELTER@coe.int.

⁵ Access will be restricted to the participants in the Seminar.