

## **EU education ministers called upon to take action to support teachers preventing radicalisation**

Teachers from close to all MSs draft manifesto, to feed into tomorrow's meeting of Ministers and Commissioner

**Today, nearly 100 teachers and other educators from EU Member States (MSs) publish a manifesto with 24 recommendations to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism. The first ever meeting of the EU's education ministers and Commissioner discussing the subject of radicalisation, takes place tomorrow in Paris. The hope is that the manifesto will inform this meeting, to ensure that successful practices that teachers have used in their classrooms will be acknowledged and supported.**

The teachers and other educators gathered two weeks ago in Manchester, at a meeting organised by the Prevent working group of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). The RAN is set up by the European Commission, but its deliverables, including today's manifesto, do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Commission. There are eight RAN working groups set up of practitioners such as police officers, NGOs and teachers, who peer review each others' best practices, and draft policy recommendations for both the Commission and MSs. This press release highlights a limited selection of the recommendations mentioned in the manifesto.

### **Do not only invest after terrorist attacks – teachers should be equipped in a sustainable way**

The RAN educators welcome tomorrow's meeting of Ministers and Commissioner on radicalisation and education, which follows the attacks in Paris and Copenhagen. The manifesto calls for a sustainable response, continuously equipping schools to prevent radicalisation that may lead to violent extremism, as this is more effective before than after terrorist attacks. For instance, educators should be trained to detect radicalisation at an early stage, and be provided with the tools to hold conversations that enable pupils vulnerable to radicalisation to challenge violent extremism by themselves. Such training should be available to educators continuously and not be put in place only after incidents.

### **Include democratic values and counter narratives in the curriculum**

The RAN manifesto advises to include the teaching of critical thinking and democratic values in existing courses. The curriculum should be enriched by online tools, which appeal to students. Online content countering extremist propaganda could be part of such a curriculum as a topic for discussion. It is recommended that this content is created by those credible to youth at risk of radicalisation, such as formers and community or religious figures, instead of authorities.

### **Approach parents as partners**

Vulnerable school girls have been recruited from several countries to marry a jihadist, and started a family in the so-called Islamic State. Parents of pupils, who are vulnerable to radicalisation, should be approached as partners in prevention. Although there is a possibility that some families are perceived as a place where extremism could exist, most parents want to help keep their children safe.

### **Testimonials of victims in classrooms - debating and negotiating as extra-curricular activities**

The engagement of victims and formers of terrorism has proven to be of great value in engaging with classes where violent extremism is ridiculed. Their testimonials, both online and offline, have an impact on most students and open up a dialogue. This applies as well to other successful examples of practice, for instance when Jewish and Muslim students have jointly engaged with vulnerable pupils in classrooms. As the curriculum is and should be limited, extracurricular activities such as debating and negotiating should be utilised and encouraged. These provide students vulnerable to extremism with non-violent alternatives to problem solving.

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#### **RAN contact details**

- [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/index_en.htm)
- [RAN@radareurope.nl](mailto:RAN@radareurope.nl), +31 20 463 50 50

#### **Available for more information**

- Omar Ramadan, +31 6 5113 7247, [o.ramadan@radaradvies.nl](mailto:o.ramadan@radaradvies.nl)
- Steven Lenos, +31 6 5109 1741, [s.lenos@radaradvies.nl](mailto:s.lenos@radaradvies.nl)
- Kelly Simcock, +44 1925 581237, [kelly.simcock@foundation4peace.org](mailto:kelly.simcock@foundation4peace.org)
- Péter Krekó, +36 20771 8716, [krek@politicalcapital.hu](mailto:krek@politicalcapital.hu)