

## **PROPOSED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE**

**FROM THE RAN PRISON AND PROBATION WORKING GROUP (DECEMBER 2012)**

*"The views expressed in this document are purely those of the RAN working group and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission"*

### **1. Introduction**

RAN Prison and Probation held its first meeting in Vienna on November 19th and 20th. Two keynote speakers, M.F. Khosrokhavar (French professor with huge experience on radicalisation in prison) and M. M. Cheppih (deradicalisation specialist from the Netherlands), gave lectures. Best practices from the UK and Denmark were presented. Furthermore there were discussions amongst the participants in breakout groups. This document is mainly based on the results of the Vienna meeting and the position paper made by the working group leaders.

### **2. Analysis of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, from the perspective of the WG**

Prison and probation programs are two working fields where radicalisation, as well as deradicalisation be met. It is therefore important that prison and probation programs play an effective role in preventing radicalisation and raising knowledge regarding (de) radicalisation. Firstly because people who are sentenced for executing radicals acts and ends up there. A part of them will remain hardboiled and are determined to be faithful to their ideology. Others might want to quit their radical activities or want to stop being a member of a radicalized group. A third group are prisoners who are at risk of being recruited and get radicalized during imprisonment.

The mission of the RAN P&P working group is to develop a network of practitioners working within prison or probation programs regarding (de)radicalisation. Through this network practitioners can exchange experience and interesting practices between prison and probation programs.

- Prevent people getting radicalized during their stay in prison.
- Prevent society for harmful situations after radicalized prisoners are released and free of probation.
- Provide more knowledge among practitioners about recognizing radicalisation and deradicalisation programs within prisons and probation programs.

Working on deradicalisation in prisons and probation programs can have the advantage that treatment can be compulsory. As deradicalisation is very much an internal process within a person's mind, a compulsory treatment isn't may be the key to success. However behavior of people within prisons and probation programs is being monitored more strictly than day-to-day life. P&P will acknowledge that prison, and probation are two separated but connected worlds, with each their own goal and means, partly overlapping.

### **3. Best and worst practices, related to the focus of the WG**

- Sharing information: very often only little is known of the history (apart from the conviction) and the present state of mind of the prisoner. Pieces of the story are known by professionals both sub consequential (what happened before, who was involved before) as simultaneously (who is also working with the same person). Some countries made structures to exchange information and knowledge. Some took the following step; working on joint programmes. Examples are contact between prison and the local communities a prisoner goes to after release, and strong cooperation between probation, prison, police and so on. In other words not the chain of institutions should be leading but a life-cycle approach towards the persons.
- Prison workers need tools where it comes to recognize behavior of radicalisation. In a number of countries reference booklet or leaflets are used for this purpose. Those checklists can also narrow the focus. By only paying attention to certain points others may be neglected. When some kind of checklists are used, this should be implemented in a broader perspective of making the prison staff aware.
- Intelligence services have a lot of knowledge and data on radicalisation. This information can be useful for the prison in general or when it comes to the care for some certain prisoners. The degree of cooperation differs very much within the EU.
- Rules of engagement with the radicalised persons are crucial to have influence on them. Respecting a person not his ideology or his acts can be the start of getting to a deradicalisation process.
- Prisons are built with the purpose to keep inmates inside the building and for the internal order and preserve peace. A prison isn't equipped nor considered as a treatment- or detection setting. The (de)radicalisation problem in prisons therefore are, in general, not considered as a main task for the management of a prison. Using external experts can be very valuable and supportive. Multi-agency approach is an important issue in this respect.

### **4. Policy recommendations, from the perspective of the WG**

- Multi-agency working is effective, both for exchange of knowledge/information as for flagging radicalisation of people in prison or in probation processes. However some conditions should be present. First of all, all participans must be open and willing to share their information. This might sometimes cause conflicts of interest. However (de)radicalisation shouldn't be obstructed by unnecessary bureaucratic behaviour. Secondly policy makers should not only be permissive towards multi-agency working but also take into account this has consequences for the deliverables. Where possible, different state-owned or funded institutions should have tasks which

fit in one framework. For example if the police is focussing in getting radicalised people out of society and probation is trying to involve people into society this might work contradictory.

- Detection of radicalisation is both important when a convicted person is brought into prison as during his/her time in jail. The quality of the assessment is very important in this perspective. Radicalisation should be one of the parts of the detection method.
- The 'look and feel' (e.g. clothing and use of logos) of radicalist movements is in progress all the time. New phenomena and groups which need attention are coming up constantly. Detection is also a part of the rat race between the state system and the prisoners who will try to hide their opinions and purposes in order to keep away from being suspect and put in special programmes. In this respect adapting the European Prison Rules (2006 Council of Europe) might be helpful.
- Formerly, radicalised prisoners were clearly visible by their explicit behaviour. Now we are experiencing that more and more radicals adjust themselves to their environment. They thus become almost invisible. Recognizing this group ask for new skills, training and also here: exchange of information.
- Prisoners are on a daily basis in contact with other prisoners and they observe a lot. Intensive interaction between prisoners and staff is not only beneficial for security reasons, but can also be a useful source of information.
- Training the professionals in prisons. Radicalisation should be a part of the mainstream training programme of staff members. Both radicalisation as a process/ change of behaviour as current kinds of radicalisation (e.g. extreme right) are possible topics. Apart from knowing what radicalisation is, people should be made clear what the significance is of the subject. Finally it is crucial to train the right skills at the right level. Sharing information and selecting the right officials is important.
- The risk of getting radicalised in prison partly is within the basic principles of the institute: being pulled out of your comfort zone, being convicted for something, have limited freedom all can be triggers for prisoners to get feelings of grievance. Failing basic conditions like bad food and overcrowded cells can strengthen this. The presence of ideologies/religions who promise relief can be felt as attractive in this circumstances. So lowering the number of factors which lead to grievances makes vulnerability lower.
- Radicalize and becoming religious are two different things. However sometimes it is difficult to distinguish what is going. In order not to overreact or to neglect, good judgement is necessary. Furthermore, letting in moderate versions of religion can contribute to the need of religious assistance/relief without letting people fall in the hands of radicalized forms of religion.
- Present cooperation and exchange of best practices on radicalisation in prison between the EU members states, both as a whole as mutual, is rather limited. Although some circumstances are national to a large degree one can also notice a lot of similarities between the situation in the different prisons across the EU.

#### **4 a. The role of local actors/civil society in preventing violent extremism, from the perspective of the WG**

- Prison is the place people are being kept away from civil society. As the stay is in general temporary possible future radicalisation motivated harm to society after release should be taken in consideration. This both applies people who entered prison radicalized as people who were affected by it inside the penitentiary institution.
- Prison can be the ideal place for radicalisation as people in a controlled environment. In some countries this opportunity is recognized and deradicalisation programmes are present.
- Working on deradicalisation implies one knows there are radicalised prisoners. It is felt that not all radicalism is noticed. When staff is scarce and prisons are overcrowded it working on deradicalisation will be difficult. The same applies if deradicalisation is not considered a main priority (policy choice).
- Deradicalisation is an intensive process in which the prisoner should trust their mentor and skills should be developed and attitudes should be changed. Keeping the same mentor is beneficial in this process.
- A risk of deradicalisation projects can be the cooperating client who changes his attitude not because he has changed for ideological reasons but for getting a nicer regime, shortening of sentence and so on.

#### **4b. The role of diasporas in the process of violent radicalisation, from the perspective of the WG**

- Some Foreign Fighters have been in prison before this period. For example The Toulouse bomber, Mohamed Merah was in prison before going abroad. To what extend his time in jail influenced his decision to do so or if he was even recruited there for going to a training camp is unclear and will often be unclear in similar situations.
- As it is generally acknowledged that radicalisation is apparent in prisons and it is also clear that apart from self radicalisation organized radicalisation processes occur, it might be plausible recruitment for foreign fighters is happening. As people tend to be more vulnerable for radicalisation and prisoners are looking for a perspective after being released a new life as foreign fighter seems to be tempting.

#### **4c. The role of communications/the Internet and elsewhere, from the perspective of the WG**

- No specific point from this working group. As the use of internet and social media mostly is restricted in the prison environment the radicalisation power in prison will be less than in the rest of society.
- Radicalised prisoners can send messages outside the prison. Those messages can spread fast and wide via the internet. Supervision on communication at this target group is important.