

The Radicalisation Awareness Network Annual Activity Plan 2018 — a summary

Introduction

The annual activity plan is a product of in-depth discussions between practitioners on the frontline against violent extremism, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Centre of Excellence and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Home Affairs and Migration. It also integrates recommendations made by the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation. The document sets out the priorities and creates a **roadmap supporting practitioners**, as well as those charged with formulating policies to address current and future challenges.

Indeed, while RAN has always strived to support both policy and practice, 2018 will see added emphasis on building bridges between these two stakeholder groups — while also involving researchers: a series of tailored events encouraging the exchange of experiences and facilitating networking is planned.

Priorities for 2018

Discussions on RAN's annual work plan begin within the [nine working groups](#), which bring together practitioners from across Europe around a certain theme. The results of these discussions are shared and further discussed at the annual RAN Plenary. This year, the Annual Activity Plan also takes account of the priorities identified by the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R) — the group mandated to advise the European Commission on how to improve cooperation and collaboration among different initiatives and stakeholders, and in particular with EU Member States.

The RAN Working Groups

Communication and Narratives ([RAN C&N](#))

Education ([RAN EDU](#))

Exit work ([RAN EXIT](#))

Youth, Families and Communities ([RAN YF&C](#))

Local Authorities ([RAN LOCAL](#))

Prison and Probation ([RAN P&P](#))

Police and Law Enforcement ([RAN POL](#))

Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism ([RAN RVT](#))

Health and Social Care ([RAN H&SC](#))

Building a bridge, and meeting halfway

Everyone in preventing/countering violent extremism (PCVE) benefits from a stronger connection between practitioners and policy-makers. A more frequent and in-depth exchange of information allows policy-makers to guide practitioners, and creates the conditions for practitioner recommendations to feed into policies.

A series of policy and practice events foreseen for 2018 — bringing together both policy-makers and practitioners — will go some way towards forging such bridges.

New knowledge

RAN values its links to academia, which ensure insights into current research, thinking and trends — all of which are precious for prevent work. In 2018, RAN will further strengthen existing ties and reach out to other research networks. A seminar in the second half of the year will take stock of research needs identified by the HLCEG-R, and provide a platform for discussing how new research findings can be integrated into prevent work.

Clustering for greater impact

Grouping activities with shared objectives enhances mutual learning increases the sharing of experiences, and avoids duplication of effort. Clustering also serves to illustrate the contribution that RAN's many individual activities make to the overall objectives for 2018.



Children

Context: Children are vulnerable on two fronts: they may have radicalised parents or other relatives, which can harm their development, and they may be targeted for recruitment by extremists.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on the role of family, friends and community members in resocialisation, working with primary-school children, building resilience, and using strong voices to strengthen resistance. Workshops on children raised in a radicalised environment to support Member States looking at this issue. **Policy and practice meetings addressing child returnees and resilience to radicalisation.**

Narratives

Context: When designing an alternative or counter narrative, it is important to identify credible messengers. These can include young people and the victims of violent extremism.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on extremist propaganda from a psychological/neuroscience perspective, the role of police in online PCVE, holding difficult conversations, ensuring young voices are heard, boosting resilience by bringing strong voices into the classroom, driving offline PCVE interventions, and identifying how to deliver effective testimonials. 2017 also saw the creation of a network of civil society organisations (CSOs) active in PCVE. RAN led the establishment of this network and offered training to CSOs in close collaboration with Facebook, Twitter, Google/YouTube and the European Strategic Communications Network. In 2018, a meeting with industry on continued support will take place, alongside workshops (and a preparatory meeting) for CSOs who will receive EU funding for online communication campaigns.

Coming up: Manual on making sure the voices of young people in PCVE are heard. Paper on the impact of alternative and counter narrative campaigns in terms of changing discourses and actions.

Engaging with communities

Context: Communities and families are stronger when they partner up. They can prevent community members from radicalising, and help resocialise those who followed this path previously.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on engaging with communities, the role of families, friends and community members in resocialisation,

youth involvement in PCVE, social inclusion from a social and health-worker perspective. Policy and practice event on working with local communities in CVE.

The role of ideology and reciprocal radicalisation

Context: There is no single path to radicalisation, and not all paths involve ideology. Its role cannot however be ignored. Jihadism is often the focus of such discussions and will be addressed in most 2018 RAN meetings. But RAN will also address other ideologies leading to radicalisation.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on left-wing extremism, how the police deal with left- and right-wing radicalisation, as well as reciprocal radicalisation, extremist influences in primary schools.

Coming up: Guidance paper on exit work for left-wing extremism.

Evaluating interventions

Context: The urgency of PCVE interventions means that evaluation is often an after-thought. It is however crucial to the success of future actions, and should be considered from the outset when designing strategies or actions.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on evaluating family support projects, reviewing the RAN collection of inspiring practices, evidence-based approaches for the health and social care domains, assessment tools in the prison and probation sector, training and methods of dialogue in exit interventions. Workshops to support Member States on evaluation, including the vetting of CSOs. Research seminar on the inclusion of impact in research projects.

Cooperation between — and learning from — adjacent fields

Context: There is no need to start from scratch when assessing what works in PCVE and what does not. There is much to be learnt from related fields.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on learning from work on gangs, sects, criminal youth groups and crime prevention, and on optimising the Triple P (police – prison – probation) cooperation.

Coming up: Guidance paper on lessons learned from crime prevention.

Resocialisation

Context: Resocialisation is key to avoiding recidivism, and can include both deradicalisation and disengagement.

2018 activities: Working group meetings on how extremist propaganda works from a psychological/neuroscience perspective, on dealing with stress and trauma from a mental health perspective, the role of gender in prevention and disengagement, the influence of mental health disorders and substance abuse on exit work, and types of exit interventions. Workshops for non-EU countries addressing returning foreign terrorist fighters, and reintegration after prison.

Coming up: Guidance paper on approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalisation in prisons and probation.

The full list of RAN events for 2018 is available via the [calendar](#) on the RAN website.





Support for individual countries — local is key, context is everything

EU Member States

Following a formal request from an EU Member State, RAN experts may organise workshops, or provide training or counselling. Such support might be considered when a country is introducing or reviewing a national strategy, for example, or creating a new network of stakeholders. RAN has the capacity to organise 11 such Member State support events in 2018:

Workshops

Three workshops will offer advice on evaluating PCVE practices, and will gather project managers and/or local authorities from around five different countries per event. The sessions will draw upon recent guidelines issued by academics to help project managers evaluate their achievements, and to assist local and national authorities to judge the value and outcomes of individual initiatives.

Two workshops will address the challenges posed by children raised in a radicalised environment in general, and child returnees in particular. The events will address the concerns raised by the HLCEG-R about the vulnerability of Europe's youngest citizens.

Counselling services

The topics and locations for the *three counselling deployments* foreseen for 2018 depend entirely on demand from EU Member States. Once a relevant request is received, RAN will rapidly put together a team of practitioners and/or academics to provide tailored counselling on the topic outlined.

Support will be provided before, during and after a visit to the country, as appropriate.

Training

Three train-the-trainer sessions will take place in 2018. They are designed for national trainers or radicalisation experts who already have training skills, but who require guidance and training material to either deliver training, or adjust it to national circumstances.

See the [RAN website](#) for regular updates on RAN's activities in 2018. The conclusions and learnings from RAN working group meetings and study visits will be published online, while the RAN Update provides a monthly overview of recent and forthcoming events.

Third countries

RAN may provide support to non-EU countries in certain circumstances, and subject to both available funding and approval by the European Commission. Priority regions remain the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the Western Balkans and Turkey. For 2018, four interventions are foreseen: workshops on approaches to returning foreign fighters (the topic may change), and two *ad hoc* services depending on requests and circumstances.

A full calendar

Over the course of the year, RAN will organise **three meetings** for each working group, **five joint meetings** involving two working groups, **five study visits, ex post papers** for almost every meeting, **six policy and practice events, one RAN plenary**, and a RAN **high-level conference** involving policy-makers and practitioners from across Europe.

