

**December 2015**

*This is an update on the activities of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). You receive this e-mail, as do some 1 800 other people, if you have participated in a RAN working group activity, or if you have registered your interest in the network. If you do not want to receive such e-mails, please let us know. Feel free to distribute this RAN Update to colleagues and invite them to subscribe.*

## **RAN activities since the last RAN Update**

### **RAN INT/EXT focused on women within Daesh (IS)**

Becoming a 'good woman' and being a 'good Muslim' are the objectives of most women travelling to IS strongholds. IS offers their (foreign) female recruits a new life with a job (salary), a house and a family. For women this offers the perspective of a moral, pure life on a daily basis. Based on the case studies presented at the RAN INT/EXT meeting on 2 November in Stockholm (SE), there is no single profile that describes these women. Their socio-economic backgrounds vary: the largest group comprises 16-24 year olds of second or third generation descendants of migrants from predominantly Muslim countries; women from middle-class backgrounds and converts to Islam have also left to join IS. Mutual trust is of importance when working with radicalised women and their families. Parents are currently given practical training on how to show their daughters that they are being missed in the family and community. Parents may also be empowered to encourage their daughters to return. It is important to end the isolation of these families, as well as of those women that might want to leave. It is helpful for parents to set up support groups as they can share their feelings and practical tips and tricks on how to deal with the situation from the same perspective. Since working with families can be rather time-consuming, those professionals involved must have a limited case load. If you would like to read more on gender and radicalisation, please read the issue paper on this topic.

### **RAN Plenary meeting: kick-off for new RAN Working Groups**

The RAN Plenary took place on 10 November 2015 in Brussels (BE) and was chaired by Olivier Luyckx, Head of Unit for Terrorism and Crisis Management (European Commission, DG Home), who presented the plans and expectations for the RAN Centre of Excellence (CoE). The RAN CoE is enriched with more permanent staff who will deliver conceptual work alongside efforts to gather experiences from practitioners. The RAN CoE and the prevent work in the context of radicalisation face several challenges, primarily events in the Middle East and the refugee crisis in Europe. The challenge for the RAN CoE lies in translating the outcomes of RAN meetings and discussions into credible, feasible and valid practices to be fed back to society.



During the afternoon, the nominated RAN Working

Group (WG) leaders presented the themes to be addressed in the future: RAN POL acknowledged that inter-agency cooperation in the field is needed more than ever; RAN EXIT's challenges were identified, among others, as a lack of evidence-based programmes and the ongoing discussions on the cost exit programmes at a time of economic crisis; RAN RVT focused its discussions on the organisation of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Terrorism; RAN P&P will look at prison regimes, profiles and mental health links, resettlement and re-integration into society, staff training and spiritual and religious counselling; RAN EDU talked about empowering educators and supporting teachers, building individual and collective resilience against violent extremism and guaranteeing safe schools; RAN LOCAL will work on identifying the requirements that make projects and initiatives worthy of financing; RAN H&SC raised the need to increase awareness, address confidentiality, build trust and the possible link between radicalisation and mental health; RAN C&N stressed the need for a coherent narrative based on democratic values instead of a simple counter-narrative directly challenging militants' propaganda; finally, RAN YF&C will analyse the potential involvement of religious communities and leaders as well as schools and education systems.

### **New Working Group leaders appointed during RAN Steering Committee**

On 11 November 2015, the first RAN Steering Committee (SC) meeting with the RAN CoE took place. The main issues on the agenda were: the formal establishment of the new WGs, the appointment of their chairs and discussions on possible topics for WG meetings. The new RAN Charter and Rules of Procedure were presented, as well as the new, additional forms and tools the RAN CoE has at its disposal to support the prevention of radicalisation. The RAN SC will have an important role in setting the broader RAN agenda, as well as steering and guiding the CoE in its activities.

### **The importance of community police and information sharing: RAN POL**

Countering terrorism is more successful if the local police play a larger role, and if more information is shared. This is one of the conclusions of the RAN POL kick-off meeting that took place on 18 November 2015 in Aarhus (DK). The meeting focused on the state of play as well as the future of the RAN POL Working Group. Community officers play an important role in following up on signs of radicalisation; however, they are not usually the persons signalling radicalisation in the first place. Trust and good relationships with the community are essential. This can be accomplished by building on long-term relationships and showing interest. Training is preferably delivered in mixed groups that include partners in the community who may be able to open doors to community police officers. On 19-20 November, a small delegation of RAN POL participants attended the Aarhus conference '*Building resilience to radicalisation and violent extremism*'.

### **RAN EDU's kick-off meeting focussed on the role of teachers and students**

*"Extreme ideas exist, and if schools and teachers are not able to handle conversations on these ideas with their students and ask the right questions, where will they be handled?"*. On 25-26 November in Prague (CZ) the RAN EDU WG kicked-off with an interactive meeting, that focused on the role of teachers and students. With their knowledge of social media and creativity, students are the ones who should be in the driving seat, providing alternative messages. Teachers, on the other hand, need support and confidence to maintain a dialogue with their students - a dialogue that may also cover delicate issues. One possible response to attacks and a growing threat is, however, to let teachers emphasise democratic values in classrooms rather than talking about conflicts. Promising practices on the use of narratives and reflection in the classroom that could be used in a safe environment were presented in Prague.

### **RAN P&P organised successful study visit to penitentiary institution in NL**

One of the main conclusions of the RAN P&P study visit to the penitentiary institution (P.I.) in Vught (NL) on 26 November 2015, was that tailor-made regime options are necessary to have an adequate and effective response to the risks and the needs of the radicalised prisoners. The P.I. has a special wing and regime for people convicted of - or charged of - terrorist (related) activities and people who propounded or propagated radical messages prior to or during detention. The study visit focused on:

- a tour of the wing and more detailed information about the regime;
- presentations about the risk assessment tools being developed for the Dutch prison and probation services based on VERA II;
- radicalisation training for prison staff, wardens and others working in prison.

Radicalised prisoners are a distinct group of offenders that need specific risk assessment tools as well as specific risk management tools. Within this group of offenders, three subgroups can be distinguished:

1. Leaders (highly ideological, high influence over others, hard to disengage).
2. Followers (influenced by extremist ideas coming from leaders, possible to disengage because also open to other influences).
3. Criminal opportunists (join extremist groups if they see a personal gain, most likely to disengage).

These differences ask for tailor-made regime options.

### **Successful small-scale RAN CoE workshop on helplines**

As helplines can offer great support to individuals witnessing signs of radicalisation amongst their loved ones, more and more countries revert to setting these up. To properly execute a reliable and accessible helpline, trustworthiness and consistency are essential features. Moreover, a multidisciplinary partnership should be in place, to enable the referral of those who call. These were the main conclusions of the small-scale RAN CoE workshop organised in Vienna (AT) on 3 December 2015 to share the lessons learned of the Dutch, French, Austrian and German (family) helplines. In interactive sessions, the pre-conditions, organisation and implementation of helplines, as well as case-studies were discussed. The workshop was attended by representatives of Member States interested to set up similar mechanisms in their country.

## **Upcoming RAN activities**

### **RAN study visit to prisons in Paris**

A second RAN study-visit is foreseen to take place on the 20th January and the 21st of January to two French prisons, respectively the Maison d'Arrêt d'Osny-Val-d'Oise and Maison d'Arrêt de Fresnes. The visit will focus on deradicalisation programmes and regime choices. The idea behind this visit is to give prison and probation, as well as exit practitioners a closer look at how specific interventions are implemented in the French context.

### **RAN H&SC: how to identify and deal with potential lone actors**

On 27-28 January 2016, the RAN Health and Social Care (H&SC) working group will gather for the first time in Zagreb (HR). A key issue for this meeting is the role of the Health and Social Care professionals in relation to identifying and treating potential lone actors, before or during their process of radicalisation or violent extremism. RAN H&SC wants to explore the role of both sectors in dealing with this issue, learn from different national approaches and reflect on what has been learned from other RAN WGs in

previous years. Since the problems around potential lone actors are complex, a multidisciplinary approach is essential (police, (mental) healthcare, social care, school, probation, customs) and therefore a broad range of practitioners will be invited to learn more on this issue.

### **RAN YF&C: kick-off meeting on mission, topics and deliverables**

RAN Youth, Families and Communities (YF&C) is a new working group that builds on the legacy of the former WGs RAN INT/EXT and RAN Prevent. The working group will 'hit the ground running', but also wants to make sure it is running in the right direction. As a new WG it is of great importance to formulate a clear vision on both the programme for 2016 and the longer term mission. The first meeting, on 28 January 2016 in Munich (DE), will therefore be a kick-off event for discussing proposed meeting topics and deliverables for RAN YF&C. The objective of this meeting is to fine-tune the programme for 2016 to improve the quality of the following meetings.

## **RAN CoE Publications**

One of the RAN CoE's new tasks is to consolidate expertise in policy and issue papers. RAN CoE issue papers are short, succinct documents, setting out a contribution from RAN to a specific identified topic, in response to a request for information. RAN CoE policy papers provide a basis for feeding into the policy process based on the (known) longer term needs of policy makers. In October, two issue papers were produced, one on counter narratives and one on gender aspects. This first paper discusses how to improve the volume and quality/impact of counter- and alternative narratives. The second issue paper depicts the gender dimension in preventing and countering violent extremism and specifically focuses on projects and experiences. In the coming months, the RAN CoE will also produce an issue paper on prison regimes, explaining in depth and further developing the recommendations on different prison regimes for detainees convicted of or suspected of acts of violent extremism or terrorism. A second policy paper is also foreseen, focusing on the impact of the refugee crisis on the risk of radicalisation and the consequences for prevention policy.

## **Noteworthy information**

### **Information on the Internal Security Fund-Police**

The Commission's Internal Security Fund - Police, is the main instrument for funding actions related to the fight against terrorism, including radicalisation. This [funding map](#) will provide you with details on financial allocations per country as well as the responsible authority, national website and how the funds will be administered. The funding map will be updated regularly.

### **VOX-Pol Online Library**

The EU-funded VOX-Pol Network of Excellence, concerned with research and analysis of violent online political extremism and terrorism, is launching an Online Library on 8 December. The aim is to provide one-stop open source access to categorised academic research and policy documents on the contemporary terrorism-Internet nexus, including online radicalisation and recruitment, IS' online strategy, far right online activity, etc. The library presently contains links to over 200 relevant books, journal articles, and other documents and more will be added as they are published. VOX-Pol also recently released two free-to-access research reports that will also be of interest: [What Are the Roles of the Internet in Terrorism? Measuring Online Behaviours of Convicted UK Terrorists](#) and [Check the Web: Assessing the Ethics and Politics of Monitoring the Internet for Extremist Material](#). Both are available for download from the website.

## Dissemination of RAN lessons at non-RAN events

RAN CoE head Omar Ramadan was interviewed by Al Jazeera's English-language channel on the prevention of radicalisation. The recent attacks in Paris and the lockdown of Brussels have raised questions on whether radicalisation to violent extremism and terrorism can be prevented. Omar shared convincing best practices, exchanged within the RAN, of prevent efforts, such as the Belgian town of Vilvoorde, a de facto suburb of Brussels, which had a huge number of youngsters joining Daesh (IS), relative to its population. After its mayor and his staff engaged with vulnerable communities, they succeeded in stopping others from travelling. Also, teachers across Europe are succeeding in preventing the recruitment of pupils at risk of radicalisation by peers, by planting seeds of doubt on violent extremism.

RAN CoE was invited to present the outcomes of the RAN P&P working group to the counter-terrorism focal points from all EU Member States on 17 November 2015. There was great interest in hearing about how prison and probation may cope with the risk and effects of radicalisation. In response to the presentation, some Member States confirmed and underlined the importance of discussion on specific regimes for terrorist offenders and the need for additional training for professionals in this sector.

Finally, the RAN CoE was invited to attend a roundtable conference on radicalisation in prisons on 2-3 December 2015 in Amman, Jordan. Some of the outcomes on risk assessment tools of the recent RAN P&P study visit in the Netherlands were shared, and further exchange on best practices, trainings and practitioners experience was discussed to strengthen the Jordanian preventive approach to CVE.

## RAN CoE's call for research and centres/networks

### RAN CoE's call for relevant research

From 2016 onwards, the RAN CoE will publish an annual paper presenting relevant research on the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. The aim is to disseminate new academic insights to practitioners and policy makers, and to address gaps in the current supply of academic research. If you would like to contribute with your research, or if you know a relevant research organisation, please send an email to [applications@radareurope.nl](mailto:applications@radareurope.nl).

### RAN CoE's call for relevant centres and networks

The RAN CoE will also develop longer-term links with other networks and relevant centres that are active in the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. To contribute to our mapping of relevant bodies at national, regional, European or even global level, please send an email to [applications@radareurope.nl](mailto:applications@radareurope.nl) with your suggestions on relevant centres or networks.

## Member State support

### National authorities can apply for customised RAN support in their Member State

The RAN CoE can deliver support to Member States on a specific question or topic on receipt of a request for advice and assistance. You can find additional information in this [leaflet](#). Member States interested in such support should e-mail [ran@radareurope.nl](mailto:ran@radareurope.nl).

## RAN Calendar

December 2015

January 2016

<p><b>RAN Train-the-Trainer in Greece</b>  Date and location: 22-23 December 2015, Greece</p>	<p><b>RAN study visit to France</b>  <i>Dealing with radicalisation in French prisons</i>  Date and location: 20-21 January, Paris (FR)</p> <p><b>RAN CoE</b>  <i>Official launch</i>  Date and location: 25 January, Amsterdam (NL)</p> <p><b>RAN H&amp;SC</b>  <i>Lone actors</i>  Date and location: 27-28 January, Zagreb (HR)</p> <p><b>RAN YF&amp;C</b>  <i>Kick-off meeting</i>  Date and location: 28 January, Munich (DE)</p>
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Many more people registered interest to participate than the number of spaces available. So that expectations are realistic, please note that the Working Group leaders decide who will be invited to attend RAN WG meetings. When selecting participants (depending on the meeting topic), division of Member States, type of expertise, contributions in meetings, etc. will be taken into consideration. Additionally, please note that only one person per organisation can be invited.

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