

RAN Update 5

Radicalisation Awareness Network



February 5, 2013

Update N° 5

This is the 5th RAN Update on the progress of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). You have participated in a RAN working group activity, or you have registered your interest in the network. Therefore you receive this e-mail, as do some 500 other people. If you do not want to receive such e-mails, please let us know. Feel free to distribute this e-mail and suggest others to subscribe.

Working group activities since last RAN Update

In the last RAN Update, which was distributed early December 2012, we reported on no less than seven activities of RAN working groups. Since then, two working group activities took place:

- **RAN HEALTH** had its second meeting on **6-7 December in Vienna**. Common factors and structural differences in caring for the vulnerable in different Member States were discussed. Attention was given to awareness raising methodology and partnership working.
- On **12-13 December**, **RAN POL** held a regional conference for police officers and other law enforcement officials from 7 Nordic and Baltic States. The attendees discussed, among other issues, lone wolves, the Internet and radicalisation of extreme right, extreme left and Islamist groups. Promising practices were presented as well.

Activities coming up

The eight working groups have plans for no less than 40 activities until 1 April 2014. Some of these foreseen activities are the following.

- On **8 March 2013**, **RAN HEALTH** will organize a meeting in Amsterdam. Both the programme 'Recognising behavioural risks of loners in Dutch mental health care', as HealthWRAP, the UK awareness raising programme, will be presented. The escalation processes in the health sectors in both states will be discussed too.
- **RAN @** plans to support the production of an online counter-narrative, with the cooperation of YouTube. The members of the AVE network were requested to submit proposals for such an online counter-narrative. The working group leaders will review the submissions soon.
- **RAN PREVENT** plans a meeting, probably on **9-11 April in Athens**. The process of radicalisation and winning the hearts and minds of communities are foreseen subjects to be discussed. The working group intends to focus, during the meeting in Athens, on right-wing and left-wing radicalisation in Greece too.
- On **18-19 April**, **RAN HEALTH** plans a gathering in Berlin. Following the meeting in Amsterdam, where promising practices from the UK and the Netherlands will be

presented, during the Berlin meeting health practitioners from other Member States will be invited to present their local circumstances, ambitions and needs.

- RAN DERAD plans a meeting in **April**, to be held in **Dublin**.
- RAN POL will meet **14-15 May in Rome**. Following the regional conference for the 7 Nordic and Baltic States last December, the Rome meeting will be targeted at the police officers in Southern States.
- On **6-7 June**, RAN VVT will host a meeting in Madrid. There is close cooperation with Spanish practitioners in organizing the activity.
- On **4-6 July**, RAN DERAD will participate in a conference of the International Cultic Studies Association on 'Manipulation, Abuse, and Maltreatment in Groups'. RAN DERAD foresees to organise a workshop at the event in Trieste, Italy.
- RAN VVT foresees a meeting on **14-15 October in Rome**.

RAN Plenary

On **28 January**, RAN held its first **Plenary meeting**. Some 110 participants from all eight working groups gathered in Brussels. Ms. Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, delivered an opening statement at the Plenary. Shortly before, the EC published a press release, in which the Commissioner described violent extremism as one of the greatest threats to EU citizens' security. She highlighted that the terrorist threat had partly shifted away from organised groups to individuals, who are harder to detect, and whose actions are harder to predict. 'A lot can be learnt from front line



Commissioner Malmström, addresses the RAN Plenary

professionals and their recommendations', Cecilia Malmström said, referring to RAN. She added: 'We will not defeat violent extremism without also addressing the populist and demagogic propaganda which lays the ground for ideologically motivated violence in Europe. Not since World War II have extremist and populist forces had so much influence on national parliaments as they have today. We need more European leaders to express their opposition to rising extremism. We must have the courage to stand up and protect our common European values'.



14 RAN activities, 489 practitioners

Omar Ramadan, head of the RAN Secretariat, presented how RAN resulted from the EU Internal Security Strategy in Action. He also focused on the achievements of the eight working groups, that organized, in no more than nine months, 14 activities in all regions of the EU, with 489 practitioners attending.

In a panel discussion the working group leaders Magnus Ranstorp (RAN INT/EXT), Péter Kreko (RAN PREVENT), Yasmin Dolatabadi (RAN @), Guillaume Denoix de Saint Marc (RAN

VVT) and Rupert Dore (RAN POL) elaborated on the three themes of the High Level Conference, which was held the next day. On “the role of diasporas in preventing violent extremism”, the importance of education and providing family support were highlighted, among other issues. On “communication on violent extremism, and counter-messaging via Internet”, attention was given both to the tactics to produce on-line counter narratives and to the difficulty to measure the impact on the targeted population. . The need to make the right use of testimonials of victims was also mentioned, as well as the risk of misuse of these testimonials. On “experiences and lessons learnt by local actors in preventing violent extremism”, the focus was on the multi-actor approach, considered by the practitioners to provide good results in early intervention. The responsibility of political leaders was also pointed out, as well as the fact that solutions should be adapted to national and local circumstances.



Yasmin Dolatabadi in panel discussion 1



Robert Örell in panel discussion 2

In a second panel, the discussion was started by working group leaders Kelly Simcock (RAN PREVENT), Luca Guglielminetti (RAN VVT), Robert Örell (RAN DERAD), Peter Knoope (RAN INT/EXT) and Chris Charlton (RAN HEALTH). On counter-narratives, and the role of victims, formers and family, it was stated that much can be learned from the values highlighted by the testimonies of survivors of World War II. On the role of ideology and religion in de-radicalisation, many practitioners mentioned that a thorough understanding of the concerned ideology and religion is necessary, as well as the cooperation of moderate religious leaders. On the status of and need for cooperation between sectors and between States, the necessity of a multi-actor approach, was highlighted again with regard to the health sector.

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The working group leaders Yola Wanders (RAN P&P), Jean Pierre Devos (RAN POL), Harald Weilnboeck (RAN DERAD) and Hamp Harmsen (RAN HEALTH) focussed on the internal organisation of the RAN. There was a plea for the creation of national groups of practitioners dealing with radicalisation. Furthermore, policy makers were encouraged to involve practitioners, on RAN’s model. The RAN goals of exchanging knowledge between practitioners and delivering policy recommendations were reaffirmed. It was also underlined that RAN should be an effective and inclusive network of practitioners, besides the fact that working groups differ in both size and acceptance within their sectors.



Harald Weilnboeck in panel discussion 3

High Level Conference



Commissioner Malmström, DG Manservisi

On 29 January 2013 the 110 participants of the RAN Plenary attended the **High Level Conference** ‘Empowering local actors to prevent violent extremism’, hosted by the European Commission and chaired by Mr. Stefano Manservisi, Director General of Home Affairs. In total, the conference was attended by some 220 people, including several Ministers and Secretaries of State. A discussion paper, with the proposals for 15 concrete actions in the field, was discussed in both plenary and break-out sessions. This discussion paper was based on the recommendations

formulated by the RAN working groups at the end of last year, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-high-level-conference/index_en.htm.

In her opening statement, Commissioner Malmström noted that violent extremism goes beyond threat from extreme Islamist groups such as Al Qaida. She stated that violent extremism can arise within any ideology, and that the threat today mainly comes from within our own societies, as illustrated in the cases of Norway and France. The Commissioner repeated her concern about the growing populist, nationalist and xenophobic movements across Europe. She made it clear that these movements are not directly responsible for terrorist attacks, but that they provide oxygen - and increasing acceptance - for extremist views. Cecilia Malmström stated that countering violent extremism is possible only if we counter the propaganda of those who support extreme, xenophobic and racist views too.

The conference started with two testimonies. The first was given by the mother of a convicted UK Islamist extremist. She is now working with the police to prevent others from following his example. A testimony of a former left wing extremist from Denmark showed how he became engaged in violent extremism, despite his affectionate upbringing.

Opening interventions were given by Mr. Manuel Valls, the Minister of Interior of France, and by Ms. Grete Faremo, the Norwegian Minister of Justice and Public Security. The attacks of both Mohammed Merah and Anders Behring Breivik in France and Norway drew the attention to home grown violent extremism.



Norwegian Minister Grete Faremo

Three round table discussions took place simultaneously. Each round table was co-chaired by a Minister and a practitioner, and was accompanied by a RAN rapporteur. These rapporteurs debriefed the plenary session of the conference. In the round table on “experiences and lessons learned by the local actors in preventing violent extremism”, the necessity of a multi-actor and integrated approach was again encouraged. Improving community policing and partnerships was seen as a challenge. Among the promising practices were the cooperation with imams and parallel awareness trainings of both first-liners and communities. Existing networks should be involved in the way forward.



Plenary session of High Level Conference

In the round table on “the role of diasporas in preventing violent extremism”, foreign fighters and the role of the media were among the topics discussed. One of the challenges mentioned was establishing trust with the diaspora communities to engage them in prevention. The use of both powerful testimonies of formers and leading figures from diasporas (role models) were some of the promising practices discussed at this round table. An aspect of the way forward highlighted was the input of civil society in a revised EU strategy on violent extremism.

In the round table on “communication on violent extremism, and counter-messaging via Internet”, one of the issues discussed was the Internet as a tool to widen the effect of offline activities. A true challenge is the limited availability of on-line counter narratives. Among the several promising practices mentioned was the Trojan T-shirts campaign of Exit Germany, where the impact of an offline initiative was widen online (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSlbsHKEP-8>). Part of the way forward is educating people to deal with information in the Internet era, and increasing the use of successful online counter narratives.



RAN working group leader Denoix de Saint Marc briefing on round table session

In a ministerial discussion on this debriefing from the round tables, RAN and the recommendations from the working groups were often described as part of the way forward. There were statements by Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Ms. Joëlle Milquet, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Belgium. The statement of Mr. Alan Shatter, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence of Ireland, was delivered by the head of the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU. After the closing remarks of Commissioner Malmström the meeting was concluded.

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