

This is an update on the activities of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). You receive this e-mail, along with more than 3 500 other people, because you have participated in a RAN activity, or because 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](#).

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New year, new priorities?

Since the launch of the RAN Centre of Excellence in October 2015, it has addressed many issues that affect those working on a daily basis to counter or prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. Some of these topics remain relevant, others less so. And of course changing circumstances mean that new themes need to be added to the RAN agenda. This special version of the RAN Update reports on discussions concerning the draft 2018 plan during the RAN Plenary meeting on 15 November.

Challenges for 2018

World events, local problems

Events within and outside Europe mean that the terrorist threat within the EU is now greater than ever. Abroad, Daesh is losing territory and dispersing. “But these successes in defeating Daesh in 2017 will be challenges for 2018,” said RAN C&N Working Group leader Jonathan Russell at the plenary. And as Daesh changes tactics, the general consensus was that we must too.

We can expect to see more copy-cat attacks and lone actors in the future, as direct recruitment decreases and self-selection and indirect recruitment increase.

But Islamist extremism is not the only threat. Right-wing extremism is on the rise; this is fuelling left-wing extremism as well as Islamist extremism as reciprocal radicalisation comes into play.

The refugee crisis, combined with terrorist attacks, is also feeding existing tensions and resulting in polarisation in many EU countries.

Priorities for policy and practice

During discussions on the year ahead, both practitioners and EU Member State representatives called for more early-stage prevention work, diversity of interventions to reflect the diversity in causes of radicalisation, as well as the inclusion of the policy-makers and the private sector in such efforts.

Plenary participants also highlighted sector-specific priorities, such as closer cooperation between the police, prison and probation sectors, and the involvement of mental health workers in prevention and deradicalisation initiatives.

Other priorities for 2018 included contact between first-line practitioners and the families of foreign terrorist fighters, working with the children of returnees, engagement with (religious) communities - by policy-makers as well as practitioners, polarisation, multi-agency approaches, and greater engagement with researchers.

2018 will be a busy year for those working against extremism. But there was encouragement from those attending the plenary, with the European Commission underlining its recognition for the work RAN is doing, and the commitment of all of the network's practitioners.

One Member State representative also had heartening words for the network: "RAN is a prominent EU tool - a guiding light for other EU efforts."

Uniting policy and practice

While RAN remains primarily a network for practitioners, one key objective for 2018 is to enhance cooperation with policy-makers at national level. This will enable RAN to feed the policy-making process with practitioners' insights, as well as to acknowledge policy priorities when scheduling topics to be explored within RAN. "We should build a bridge between policy and practice and meet in the middle, respecting each other's safe spaces," said Luigi Soreca, Director for Internal Security at the European Commission's DG Home Affairs, at the plenary.

Five 'policy and practice' meetings are therefore planned for 2018, designed to encourage closer links. National policy-makers were present during the plenary meeting to share their thoughts on how this closer collaboration might work.

Working group plans

Discussions on activities for 2018 began at the 27 September 2017 Steering Committee meeting between the European Commission, RAN working group leaders and the RAN Centre of Excellence. The draft activity plan will be discussed again on 21 November, before a final draft is submitted to the Commission. A first list of topics being considered for 2018 is however already available, and takes stock of the priorities set by the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R), which explores how EU efforts to prevent radicalisation can best be shaped. Please note that these topics may change.

- **Youth, families & communities:** strengthening community voices, youth work, issues specific to men, refugees;
- **Health & social care:** post-traumatic stress disorder, institutional structures, social inclusion or refugees;
- **Police & law enforcement:** online propaganda & recruitment, growing right-wing extremism, cooperation between policy, prison & probation services;
- **Prison & probation:** the reality inside of prisons, rehabilitation & reintegration;
- **Communication & narratives:** psychology/neuroscience, informal actors, driving offline interventions through communication;
- **Local authorities:** returning foreign terrorist fighters, evaluation of local and regional interventions, cooperation between authorities, political will;
- **Remembrance of victims of terrorism:** avoiding secondary victimisation; using victims' testimonies in prevention;
- **Education:** polarization, voices from outside of the classroom, challenges for colleges & universities;
- **EXIT:** lessons from adjacent fields, relations between different extremist groups, approaches to Exit clients' needs;
- **YOUNG:** effective counter and alternative narratives, how to hold difficult conversations.

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