Mid-term evaluation of the action plan
“A common and safe future”

"A common and safe future: Action plan to prevent extremist views and radicalisation among young people”

Summary

June 2011
In January 2009, the Danish government published an inter-ministerial action plan on the prevention of extremism and radicalisation among the youth: "A common and safe future." The action plan is part of a wide range of government initiatives aiming to promote the values of freedom, safety and individual opportunities, both in Denmark and internationally. The action plan has two overall objectives:

1. Society is equipped to identify and handle specific problems involving extremism in time.
2. Society is maintained and developed as a democratic society with freedom, responsibility, equality and individual opportunities.

This mid-term evaluation reports on the preliminary results, assessments regarding fulfilment of the established success criteria and the contribution of the initiatives to achieving the goals of the action plan. The mid-term evaluation is based on a thorough evaluation of 13 selected initiatives and a – mainly self-assessing – evaluation of the other initiatives.

Significant results have already been achieved under the action plan. For instance, extensive knowledge and competence building both among the different agents who are in daily contact with the youths in question, and among the youths themselves. The immediate results also cover preparation of teaching and information material, arrangement of information meetings and courses, development of specific tools for identification of worrying youth behaviour etc. Moreover, in the context of the action plan, new interdisciplinary and coordinating cooperation structures have been set up, allowing future efforts to be more targeted and more effective.

Specifically, more than two thirds of those responsible for initiatives in the action plan find that at this point in time – around halfway through the implementation period – a significant part of the planned results have been accomplished. Compared to a prior survey (January 2011), the assessments of results have increased slightly.

It is the evaluator's assessment that the results currently achieved support the fulfilment of the overall goals of the action plan. To obtain a more tangible effect, it is important to continue and anchor the initiatives.
### Relevance

Based on the thorough review of the chosen initiatives, the evaluator assesses that the activities carried out are relevant to the objectives of the initiatives. In dialogue with a number of local employees in contact with youths, the evaluator has confirmed, among others, that there is a need for the outreach services provided by the Division for cohesion and prevention of radicalisation at the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs. It is also stressed that frontline staff have a special interest in services relating to democracy, citizenship and inclusion - rather than radicalisation and extremism.

### Goal fulfilment

It is difficult to assess the goal fulfilment of the action plan by looking at the 22 initiatives. Consequently, we have analysed the goal fulfilment in relation to the objectives stipulated for the seven action areas, under which the initiatives lie. This shows that already now there is a relatively high degree of goal fulfilment under the action areas "Efforts in vulnerable residential areas" and "Democratic community", whereas increased attention is required within "Special efforts in prisons" and "Inclusion based on duties and rights".

The persons responsible for the initiatives across the action plan are relatively positive in their expectations regarding fulfilment of the stipulated goals: two thirds expect a general goal fulfilment throughout the implementation period in the range from 76 to 100 per cent.

Among the almost 100 police officers and SSP consultants/coordinators that have so far participated in the tailor-made courses on radicalisation in the SSP cooperation (initiative 2.1) offered by the Danish Security and Intelligence Service and the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, almost all find that they have benefited or greatly benefitted as regards their knowledge of radicalisation, extremism and prevention. Similarly, Danish gymnasium students greatly benefited from meeting with employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and gymnasium teachers appreciated the organisation of feature days on Danish foreign policies in the Middle East. The establishment of a democratic platform for youths (Initiative 12), i.e. the Danish Ethnic Youth Council has to a high degree achieved the planned goals. The registered press coverage, the interest in the Danish Ethnic Youth Council Facebook page, and the YouTube segments produced by the council show that the council is very visible. 130 language teachers have received further training in democracy, and teaching material has been prepared. Thereby, the goals for initiative 9.5 have already been achieved. The Division for cohesion and prevention of radicalisation at the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs has greatly succeeded in involving large Danish municipalities; Odense as a model municipality, and Aarhus and Copenhagen as participants in a mentor project. The latter has provided specialised competence development to municipal employees and mentors. To a great extent, the Division for cohesion and prevention of radicalisation has succeeded in establishing coordination and cohesion across the initiatives of the action plan, e.g., by means of stationing employees in the Danish Security and Intelligence Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, Denmark is internationally recognised for its leading role in EU’s work on de-radicalisation.
### Cost effectiveness

It is fundamentally difficult to assess the cost effectiveness of the initiatives. Partly because exact information about costs is not available as large parts of the initiatives are financed within the existing financial framework of the ministries, and partly because it is difficult to measure whether this type of preventive work is in fact effective. Still, the evaluator finds that there is a reasonable balance between the resources spent and the results achieved.

### Sustainability

The general impression is that the results already achieved can have a long life if the activities continue and have the chance to become firmly anchored in the different environments that they target.

### Long-term effect

For many initiatives, it is still too early to assess the long-term effects. For the initiative regarding focus on radicalisation in the SSP cooperation (Initiative 2.1) it is still too early to assess the long-term effects. But generally it is expected that more attention is given to radicalisation since this has been picked up as a focus point by several levels. The target groups of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' dialogue and information on Danish foreign policy greatly benefit from communication and learning about Danish foreign policy in general and about specific Muslim countries. There are strong indications that upgrading the skills of language teachers (Initiative 9.5) will have the medium-term effect that better training is provided at language schools within the topics of democracy and active citizenship. Nonetheless, it is difficult to say whether this entails that adult foreigners receiving the training will be better equipped regarding knowledge, attitudes and the competence to act within the areas of democracy and citizenship. Through the activities of Division for cohesion and prevention of radicalisation, the municipal capacities within these areas have been built to a certain extent, but there is still some way to go before the municipalities are able to fully handle their preventive tasks.

### Contribution to the goal fulfilment of the action plan

It is important to emphasise that the overall objectives of the action plan to identify and handle specific problems involving extremism in time and that society is maintained and developed as a democratic society greatly differ. Consequently, the focus areas and initiatives of the action plan target the two objectives to varying degrees. A majority of the action areas and initiatives primarily target the action plan objective to maintain and develop the democratic society. Whether this is the right distribution depends on how the specific needs are assessed and how this relates to the government's other initiatives and action plans within the area. Such an assessment is beyond the scope of the present mid-term evaluation.

The data collected in connection with the mid-term evaluation shows that the majority of those responsible for initiatives find that their initiatives currently have not contributed significantly to fulfilling the overall objectives of the action plan. This may be because it is still too early, or because the gap between the individual initiatives and the overall objectives is too large for the responsible to see any immediate link.

### Coordination

Several of those responsible for initiatives and key municipal staff have indicated that it carries a certain weight to be backed by an inter-ministerial action plan. For instance, it is pointed out that having the Danish Security and Intelli-
gence Service and the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs as co-actors paves the way for local political backing. At the same time, the inter-ministerial aspect entails that a degree of inertia may occur when the implementation of an initiative – which without such action plan would fall under the jurisdiction of a specific ministry – depends on other ministries and third parties.

**Forward considerations**

The report contains specific recommendations for each initiative. Across the entire action plan, a more tangible and lasting effect requires a continuation of the initiatives and a focus on how the achieved results and effects can be maintained beyond the life of the initiatives and the implementation period of the action plan.