



Federal Ministry
of the Interior, Building
and Community

Strategic Enhancement of Deradicalisation / Disengagement Approaches within a Comprehensive Framework of Preventing and Countering Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Right-Wing Extremism

An (incomplete) collection of Good Practices and Lessons Learned



Strategic Enhancement of Deradicalisation / Disengagement Approaches within a Comprehensive Framework of Preventing and Countering Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Right-Wing Extremism

An (incomplete) collection of Good Practices and Lessons Learned

The author, Milena Uhlmann, can be reached under the following email address:

milena.uhlmann@bmi.bund.de.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	7
a) Background	7
b) Aims, Basis and Target Groups of the Handout	7
2. Good Practices and Lessons Learned within a Comprehensive P/CVE Approach	11
a) Counselling Services for the Social Environment of Radicalised Persons and Exit Programmes Focusing on Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Right-Wing Extremism	12
b) Cooperation Between Administrative Bodies, Civil Society and Security Agencies and Other Involved Parties Within a Multi-Agency Approach	14
3. Analysis of Good Practices and Lessons Learned for Strategic Enhancement of Deradicalisation / Disengagement Approaches	17
a) Evaluation	17
b) Professionalisation	20
c) Knowledge Exchange	22
4. Outlook	25
5. Further Reading	29

1 Introduction

1. Introduction

a) Background

This handout was compiled against the background of one of the main thematic foci of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2020: the fight against international terrorism. The Presidency programme named international terrorism to be “still one of the major challenges in Europe”.¹ In this regard, the programme stated that, “alongside Islamist terrorism, we are placing a particular focus on right-wing terrorism and violent right-wing extremism”.²

The German Presidency programme furthermore identified as one of the main goals of collaboration within the European Union that “Europe must remain a place where all people, regardless of their background, convictions and world view, can feel free and safe.”³

In order to work towards this goal – fighting international terrorism and safeguarding security – the German Presidency had put particular attention to addressing the issue of radicalisation, and how to counter it.

Special emphasis was put on aspects of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) within a comprehensive approach. This reflects the understanding that only with an approach that combines measures of repression as well as P/CVE measures, we will be able to effectively fight terrorism.

This handout was developed with this guiding principle in mind. In line with the focus of the German Presidency on both Islamist and right-wing violent extremism, the handout is addressing both phenomena.

b) Aims, Basis and Target Groups of the Handout

After many years of fighting terrorism within EU Member States and on the European Union level, an extensive body of knowledge regarding the complex phenomena of radicalisation into violent Islamist and into right-wing violent extremism, as well as regarding P/CVE measures, has built up. This vast array of information can and should be used in order to analyse and further develop P/CVE efforts.

To assist in this undertaking, this handout seeks to contribute to a structured knowledge exchange on enhancing strategic perspectives on P/CVE. This means that, taking a meta-level view, the handout aims to outline basic components of deradicalisation / disengagement approaches, and to offer ideas for enhancing their success.

These basic components are addressed in chapter 2: counselling services for the social environment of radicalised persons, exit programmes for radicalised persons, and cooperation between administrative bodies, civil society and security agencies and other involved parties within a multi-agency approach.

The goal of chapter 3 is to introduce a variety of good practices and lessons learned regarding three key elements which are needed to strategically enhance deradicalisation / disengagement approaches: evaluation, professionalisation, and knowledge exchange.

It is important to note that this handout represents but a small selection of the experiences that have been made regarding the mentioned topics, focusing on those that seem most relevant from a strategic perspective. The handout explicitly makes no claim to completeness.

1 Federal Foreign Office. (2020). Together for Europe's recovery: Programme for Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 1 July to 31 December 2020, p. 19.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid, p. 18.

Since good strategies can only be crafted from assessing what is needed at the operational level, this handout is based on practical experiences made throughout the European Union. To this end, findings provided in papers by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)⁴ and the International Forum for Expert Exchange on Countering Islamist Extremism (InFoEx)⁵ are presented in this handout.

This choice was made because these papers discuss practical experiences made in different EU Member States, and thus the findings are likely to be of relevance for the target groups of this handout. Also, they are available in English language, which makes the documents more accessible for a broader audience.

Especially in the sections on evaluation and professionalisation of the handout, further English language papers and studies are cited. Findings from those documents were integrated because of their specificity and relevance in dealing with those topics.

Finally, the handout draws from input of speakers at the video conference of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union “Countering Violent Extremism in Europe – Where do we stand and what’s next?” that was held on 21 December 2020.⁶ This is especially the case in chapter 4, which provides an outlook on the current and upcoming challenges we are facing in preventing and countering Islamist violent extremism and violent right-wing extremism.

The handout’s target groups are persons in public administration in charge of deradicalisation / disengagement programmes and persons with different professional backgrounds carrying out the programmes, on the local, national, and EU level. Hopefully, they will be able to profit from the perspectives gathered in the document at hand – and engage in discussing them together and developing them further in a structured exchange of knowledge.

-
- 4 Funded by the European Commission, the RAN is a network of frontline practitioners who work daily with both those vulnerable to radicalisation and those who have already been radicalised. Since it was founded in 2011, the RAN has attracted over 6,000 practitioners, who collectively represent all EU Member States (European Commission. (2020, June 17). About RAN. Migration and Home Affairs - European Commission Website. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran_en).
 - 5 InFoEx is a joint project of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and the Research Center for Migration, Integration and Asylum of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) funded by the German Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community. InFoEx analyses (inter)national good practices and empirical scientific findings regarding P/CVE approaches as a tool to counter violent Islamist terrorism and extremism with the aim of enhancing them on a practical level.
 - 6 Over 130 representatives of EU Member States, the European Commission, several EU agencies as well as the RAN and the Network of Prevent Policy Makers (NPPM) participated in the conference.



2 Good Practices and Lessons Learned within a Comprehensive P/CVE Approach

2. Good Practices and Lessons Learned within a Comprehensive P/CVE Approach

A variety of approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) have been implemented in Europe since the 1990s. The first initiatives were targeting radicalisation into violent right-wing extremism. Later, P/CVE efforts expanded to address other extremist ideologies as well.⁷ Providing counselling services for persons in the social environment (such as parents, siblings, peers, and teachers) of radicalised individuals, and exit programmes⁸ for radicalised individuals themselves, now constitute important elements of P/CVE strategies.

Radicalisation is a complex, individual, multi-dimensional process. It may involve a variety of factors, such as identity crises, experiences of discrimination, geopolitical events, feelings of powerlessness, but also problems on the job or at school, and conflicts in the family. Ideology is an integral factor of all radicalisation processes.⁹ Yet, ideology may not be the prime motivation for a person to radicalise. But even if not purely ideology-driven, ideological references and patterns of legitimisation are existent.

Radicalisation processes can be described as evolving primarily within three dimensions: the emotional dimension, the pragmatic dimension, and the ideological dimension. The emotional dimension refers to the emotional needs of the radicalised individual (e.g. the need for self-

valorisation). The pragmatic dimension refers to support systems (e.g. help in dealing with everyday matters) and opportunity structures (e.g. to gain access to certain goods) provided by the extremist group with which the individual has connected. The ideological dimension comprises the cognitive level (e.g. interpretation of a religion, the search for meaning, guidance for action).¹⁰

Deradicalisation and disengagement are an equally complex, individual, and multi-dimensional processes. The three dimensions of radicalisation processes – emotional, pragmatic, and ideological – are mirrored in deradicalisation and disengagement processes as well.¹¹

The main goal of deradicalisation efforts is to encourage a process of reflection in a radicalised person, with the aim that they disengage from violent action, question their extremist, ideologised world view, and tolerate how others choose to live their lives. This requires a critical reflection of the radicalised person's own biography by the person himself / herself, including his / her path to radicalisation.¹² Disengagement efforts differ from deradicalisation efforts in that their focus lies specifically on the disengagement of the radicalised person from (advocating) violence, and less on deconstructing their extremist world view beyond that point.

-
- 7 van de Donk, M., Uhlmann, M., & Keijzer, F. (2020). Peer and Self Review Manual for Exit Work. RAN Centre of Excellence, p. 6.
- 8 In the context of this handout, an exit programme is understood as aiming at “providing support to individuals wishing to leave a violent extremist group and/or to abstain from radical thoughts” (van de Donk, M., Uhlmann, M., & Keijzer, F. (2020). Peer and Self Review Manual, p. 28).
- 9 Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report, p. 19.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Endres, F. (2014). The Advice Centre on Radicalisation of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Journal EXIT-Deutschland 2, 2014, p. 3; Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report, p. 19; Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). (2020). Standards in counselling for the social environment of (potentially) radicalised Islamist individuals. Manual by the Advice Centre Network of the Advice Centre on “Radicalisation” at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Violence Prevention Network gGmbH, p. 25.
- 12 Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report, p. 19.

It is important to note that it is not possible to force a deradicalisation / disengagement intervention on someone who is not open to it. It is equally important to understand that the adopted extremist ideology and lifestyle are part of the radicalised individual's identity. From this follows that deradicalisation / disengagement efforts will be futile if they do not encompass support to the person in question to build a 'new' identity whilst helping him / her to find his / her way out of extremism.¹³

a) **Counselling Services for the Social Environment of Radicalised Persons and Exit Programmes Focusing on Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Right-Wing Extremism**

Offering counselling to family members and other persons in the social environment of a radicalised individual is done based on the assumption that these persons are the last link between a radicalised individual and society. It is thus assumed that using this link is maybe the only way to reach a radicalised person. Even in cases where a social environment is completely replaced in the course of a process of radicalisation, contact with close relatives is often maintained.¹⁴

Counselling services for persons within the social environment of radicalised individuals exist in various Member States of the European Union. Often, they evolve around a helpline where people seeking advice can call to receive information on radicalisation in general, and how to best deal with a concrete case of radicalisation in particular.¹⁵



Also, exit programmes to support radicalised individuals to abandon extremism have been set up in different Member States, both in and outside prison contexts.

Some of those services and programmes are run by state agencies, others are carried out by civil society organisations (CSOs). The overall goals and concrete objectives of the services and programmes in place may vary, as do the contexts within which they are implemented. Nonetheless, certain general good practices and lessons learned seem to apply to all of these services and programmes.

13 RAN. (2017). Ex Post Paper: Setting up an exit intervention. RAN Exit Academy, Berlin, 13-14 February 2017, p. 5.

14 Endres, F. (2014). The Advice Centre on Radicalisation, p. 1-4; Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report, p. 22.

15 RAN. (2020). Conclusion Paper: Helplines and hotlines in preventing and countering violent extremism. RAN FC&S event – Helplines and hotlines, 15-16 September 2020.

Good practices and lessons learned that have so far been identified regarding counselling services for the social environment of radicalised persons and exit programmes focusing on violent Islamist and violent right-wing extremism include:

- The goals of a service / programme must be clearly defined. The goals should be described in such a way that they can be broken down into indicators so that the success of the service / programme can be assessed by means of an evaluation (see chapter 3a Evaluation).¹⁶ Also, the target group of the service / programme must be clearly defined.
- The feasibility of a programme and its impact depend on its time frame and budget. Expectations should be based on a realistic definition of goals.¹⁷
- The help offered should allow for anonymous and confidential first contact and be given free of charge.¹⁸
- Institutions offering services / programmes should be transparent about how people seeking help can access the offers, what are the available options, and what are the limitations.¹⁹
- Regarding a radicalised individual's family, it should be noted that each scenario and each family's involvement in a process of radicalisation as well as in a process of deradicalisation / disengagement is different and can have different effects – both positive and negative. Each individual situation therefore requires a detailed, individualised analysis and tailored approaches. The same is the case when working with a radicalised individual in an exit programme.²⁰
- There might be cultural barriers to seeking help in some communities, which may need to be addressed in creative ways. This applies to getting assistance from the outside (e.g. government institutions) as well as to the fact that in some cultures the recognition of mental or social individual problems is low. These factors need to be taken account of when designing and implementing a service / programme.²¹
- In order to be successful, services / programmes always have to address the radicalised individual's original motivation for joining and sustaining engagement in an extremist movement.²²
- Empathy, authenticity, and commitment / liability are crucial factors in building a strong and trusting relationship in counselling.²³
- Since every pathway of radicalisation is individual, deradicalisation / disengagement work calls for a tailor-made approach. Both counselling services for the social environment of radicalised individuals and exit work therefore benefit from staff diversity, both in cultural background and professional experience.²⁴

16 RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices: Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism, p. 134.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid, p. 465.

19 Keijzer, F., van de Donk, M. (2019). Practical guidelines: Management of exit programmes. RAN Exit event, Frankfurt, 17-18 January 2019, p. 4.

20 RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, p. 462; Molenkamp, M. (2018). Ex Post Paper: The role of family and social networks in the rehabilitation of (violent) extremist and terrorist offenders. RAN P&P meeting, Utrecht, 6-7 March 2018, p. 2.

21 RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, p. 465.

22 Ibid, p. 135.

23 Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). (2020). Standards in counselling for the social environment of (potentially) radicalised Islamist individuals. Manual by the Advice Centre Network of the Advice Centre on "Radicalisation" at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Violence Prevention Network gGmbH, p. 14.

24 RAN. (2017). Ex Post Paper Exit Working Group: Setting up an exit intervention, p. 3.



b) Cooperation Between Administrative Bodies, Civil Society and Security Agencies and Other Involved Parties Within a Multi-Agency Approach

Multi-agency approaches focus on creating and maintaining effective P/CVE infrastructures that ensure a coordinated effort of relevant actors when dealing with cases of radicalisation.²⁵ Key players are often found in law enforcement (such as police officers, prison personnel, probation officers), intelligence services, administrative bodies (such as youth welfare departments, employment agencies), civil society (such as P/CVE practitioners, community workers, representatives of religious communities), and healthcare professionals (such as psychologists, addiction treatment services and general practitioners).²⁶

²⁵ RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, p. 589.

²⁶ RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, p. 589 et seq.

Good practices and lessons learned that have so far been identified regarding cooperation between administrative bodies, civil society and security agencies and other involved parties within a multi-agency setting include:

- If collaborations e.g. between local authorities, statutory partners (such as education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services) and law enforcement are already in place, they should be build upon, instead of setting up new arrangements. This is essential in order to avoid overlap and duplication of structures and efforts.²⁷
- In multi-agency settings, different organisations are working together, e.g. in drafting conceptual frameworks on how to deal with specific challenges, or on a concrete case of a radicalised individual. Since several actors are involved, it is necessary to come to a joint agreement on who is in charge of which task, and why.²⁸
- Multi-agency cooperation requires clear, mutual understanding of the mandate of each actor involved and of the purpose of their cooperation.²⁹ Clarity on roles and expectations is a crucial precondition for the success of this cooperation. It may be useful to appoint a coordinator to chair and facilitate the overall process.³⁰
- It helps if each organisation possesses a mission statement outlining the aims that the organisation and its employees are following in their daily work, the concept that underlies the work, and the values that they are committed to (see chapter 3b Professionalisation).
- Developing shared working definitions of key terminology can help to avoid misunderstandings and improve open communication between different actors.
- It is recommended that the representatives of the organisations taking part in multi-agency cooperation come together regularly. Meeting face-to-face on a regular basis increases understanding of the tasks, mandates, opportunities and limits the partners are facing.³¹
- Often, trust in multi-agency settings is built through personal relationships. This means that people changing positions will have an effect on the trust base between organisations. Hence, new employees in the organisations involved should swiftly get familiar with the multi-agency structures and introduce themselves to the other partners in person.³²
- It must be clear not only to all stakeholders, but also to persons being counselled in advice centres / participating in an exit programme, which kind of information is shared when, with whom, and for which reason. The mandates, obligations, goals, spheres of competence, and limits of the different actors involved in working on a case must be communicated transparently. Privacy and confidentiality laws must be respected.³³
- The setup of multi-agency cooperation, as well as how the cooperation partners work together within the setup, should be evaluated on a regular basis (see chapter 3a Evaluation).

27 Ibid, p. 591.

28 Ibid, p. 590.

29 Ibid, p. 591.

30 Ibid, p. 592

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Koller, S. (2019). Issue Paper: International Tour d'Horizon of Tertiary Prevention of Islamist Extremism – InFoEx Workshop, Berlin, 26-27 March 2019. DGAP Report May 2019, p. 6.



3 Analysis of Good Practices and Lessons Learned for Strategic Enhancement of Deradicalisation / Disengagement Approaches

3. Analysis of Good Practices and Lessons Learned for Strategic Enhancement of Deradicalisation / Disengagement Approaches

a) Evaluation

To be able to improve deradicalisation / disengagement approaches, we must know what works when, how, under which circumstances, with whom, and why – and what doesn't. Evaluations allow us to do so.³⁴ They are indispensable to improve both policy and practice and constitute a "prerequisite for carving out a working, coherent strategic approach to P/CVE."³⁵ Therefore, evaluation and policy-making should be seen as a circular process.³⁶

Evaluation analyses practical experiences in a structured and targeted way. It is therefore useful to practitioners (who can use evaluation to reflect on what they are doing) and policy-makers (who need to understand the logic of a programme or implemented measure in order to form an opinion on its usefulness) alike.³⁷



Whilst there are different kinds of evaluations, which are addressing different of the mentioned (and further) aspects,³⁸ they all have the goal "to learn in order to improve" in common.

34 European Commission. (2019). Practical guideline for policy-makers and practitioners regarding Evaluations in tertiary prevention in the field of Islamist extremism, p.3

35 Ibid, p. 4.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid, p. 3.

38 Ibid; Koller, S. (2020). Issue Paper: Good Practices in Evaluating Tertiary PVE Programs – outcome of workshop discussion with around 30 participants from Australia, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States. InFoEx Workshop, Berlin, 19-20 September 2019. DGAP Report 8, 2020.

Good practices and lessons learned that have so far been identified regarding the evaluation of P/CVE programmes and projects include:

- You needn't (and shouldn't) start from scratch: take account of the state of the art when designing, implementing, and assessing an evaluation.
- Evaluation is a complex endeavour, requiring specific expertise and skills. Therefore, involving experienced researchers with a track record of conducting high-quality evaluations is paramount.³⁹
- Since evaluations in P/CVE assess a wide variety of programmes, projects, and measures with different phenomenological foci and goals, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to evaluation. Hence, the evaluation design always has to be tailored to the evaluation subject.
- Evaluations can be carried out by external or internal evaluators. Which option is going to be more useful depends on the context and the focus of the evaluation, as well as the sensitivity of the data (e.g. classified information) that is to be analysed.⁴⁰
- The earlier, the better: putting an evaluation process in place from the outset is the best way to ensure that the data needed to conduct the evaluation can be collected on time. Furthermore, it greatly enhances the informative value of the data, as it can be collected in a structured way that an evaluation can make use of from the very start.
- Another advantage of starting an evaluation as early as possible is that it enhances the programme's / project's success by providing instruments for monitoring and intervening while it is still running.⁴¹
- Be aware that different stakeholders (e.g. funding institutions, administrative bodies, practitioners, researchers) will most likely have different perspectives on and expectation towards the process and the outcome of an evaluation. These perspectives and expectations are characterised by professional and institutional background. They all have their legitimacy. They must be respected and taken account of in order for the evaluation to be successful.⁴²

39 European Commission. (2019). Practical guideline for policy-makers and practitioners, p. 11.

40 See Wouterse, L., & van de Donk, M. (2019). Ex Post Paper: Evaluating disengagement, deradicalisation and resocialisation efforts. RAN Policy & Practice event, Madrid, 8 November 2019, p. 3 for factors to consider.

41 European Commission. (2019). Practical guideline for policy-makers and practitioners, p. 3.

42 Koller, S. (2020). Issue Paper: Good Practices in Evaluating Tertiary PVE Programs, p. 11.

- The perspectives of relevant stakeholders should be integrated already when designing an evaluation. This is needed to build trust, foster openness towards the evaluation, and create a sense of owning the process and outcome. The stakeholders must discuss and agree on the objectives, the framework, and the design of the evaluation process. This is necessary for committing the different stakeholders to the evaluation and for obtaining conclusive evaluation results.⁴³
- To support an evaluation, peer and self-reviews should be performed regularly in facilities offering counselling services and in exit programmes. Peer / self-review and evaluation fulfil different goals, but can complement each other meaningfully.⁴⁴
- Evaluations should be performed regularly, each evaluation taking on the results of the previous one.⁴⁵ This implies that programmes / projects should be given the time to implement recommendations resulting from evaluations, thereby fostering a “culture of constructive criticism”.
- To give each other the opportunity to learn from experiences made elsewhere, and thus improve P/CVE work nationally and across the EU, it is important to discuss not only what works well, but also the lessons learned and the limits of programmes and projects.⁴⁶
- Therefore, wherever possible, evaluations should be made publicly available, and fora for structured exchange on evaluations, their outcomes and policy responses should be provided (see chapter 3c Knowledge Exchange).⁴⁷

43 European Commission. (2019). Practical guideline for policy-makers and practitioners, p. 8.

44 Peer / self review supports critical reflection of the work of colleagues in the same field respectively one's own work. To this end, the RAN has issued the Peer and Self Review Manual for Exit Work (van de Donk, M., Uhlmann, M., & Keijzer, F. (2020)).

45 European Commission. (2019). Practical guideline for policy-makers and practitioners, p. 4.

46 Ibid, p. 13.

47 Koller, S. (2020). Issue Paper: Good Practices in Evaluating Tertiary PVE Programs, p. 4.

b) Professionalisation

As has been alluded throughout this handout, P/CVE in EU Member States has not been developing as one coherent field of action bound together by joint standards, but rather needs-based and budget-dependent in processes that were largely disconnected from each other.

In most EU Member States running P/CVE programmes and projects, structured and sustainable knowledge exchange regarding how to best design, implement and assess them has been initiated only in recent years.

In the beginning, it was not yet clear what makes counselling services and exit programmes successful, and how to identify and cooperate with other relevant actors in the field. Persons with different professional backgrounds became “exit workers”, without this being a registered profession.

Especially in the past years, with rising awareness of the necessity of P/CVE and a comprehensive approach, the question of what exactly constitutes good quality in exit work has come more and more to the fore. With it came requests for further professionalisation of this field of work, in order to provide for quality assurance and (political) accountability in the funding of the programmes and projects.

Per definition, professionalisation is not possible without a certain degree of standardisation of practices and approaches. This is true for P/CVE just as it is in any other field and applies to all actors taking part in a comprehensive approach. Standards “refer to what is done in a given field when, with whom, why and how.” As opposed to routines, the application of standards is based on “a process of thoughtful reflection and validation”⁴⁸ of good practices and lessons learned while the standards were consolidated. This process ensures that the practices that pass as standards are suitable, reliable, and sustainable.⁴⁹



Consolidated standards in deradicalisation / disengagement work that have been tried and tested and agreed upon in providing counselling services to the social environment of radicalised persons, and regarding the implementation of exit programmes, are still in development. The same is the case regarding standards for the implementation of multi-agency approaches in P/CVE.

At the same time, the dynamics of extremist networks, milieus, and push and pull factors of radicalisation are continuously evolving. The complexity of the tasks as well as the network of actors involved in deradicalisation / disengagement efforts are growing. The ideologies those working in the field encounter are becoming more diverse and multi-layered, especially in times of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁰

All this requires the constant and reliable adjustment of P/CVE approaches, whilst bearing in mind the objective to identify and consolidate standards in the field in order to allow for better quality assurance.⁵¹

48 Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation, p. 16 (see there Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2020) for further information about different types of standards and an example of how standards in P/CVE can be identified and consolidated).

49 Ibid.

50 RAN. (2020). Conclusion Paper: Helplines and hotlines, p. 2

51 Emser, C., Rupp, T., Uhlmann, M. (2019). Counselling work in tertiary prevention of Islamist extremism – challenges and approaches. International Expert Workshop, Berlin, 19-20 March 2019, p. 17.

Good practices and lessons learned that have so far been identified regarding the professionalisation of P/CVE programmes and projects as well as the implementation of multi-agency approaches include:

- In order to keep up with the developments in and requirements of the field, regular trainings for those in charge of / working in P/CVE are essential.⁵²
- In general, these trainings should be tailored to the professional and institutional backgrounds and needs of those that are trained.⁵³
- In addition to profession- / institution-specific trainings, also joint trainings should be carried out. They have the advantage of bringing different experiences and perspectives together, whilst promoting a multi-agency approach “on the spot”, and providing the opportunity to build and strengthen networks.⁵⁴ Therefore, it is very helpful to have “people who work together also learn together.”⁵⁵
- In order to foster mutual understanding of tasks and roles of other actors in the field, teaching trust-building methods and promoting mutual understanding of the roles and tasks as well as the challenges and limitations of partners with other professional / institutional backgrounds should be an integral part of the trainings.⁵⁶
- Training programmes should be regularly updated to make sure they factor in current developments in research and practice regarding P/CVE.⁵⁷
- In order to further develop and strengthen shared quality benchmarks, trainings should include the teaching of consolidated standards in P/CVE. This should include universal standards, which refer to the ethical and general bases of P/CVE work,⁵⁸ action standards, which describe the goals, processes and methods of the work,⁵⁹ and guideline standards, which address the tasks and responsibilities of actors within a multi-agency setting, and define and clarify procedural channels.⁶⁰

52 RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, p. 465; van de Donk, M., Uhlmann, M., & Keijzer, F. (2020). Peer and Self Review Manual, p. 6; RAN. (2017). Ex Post Paper Exit Working Group: Setting up an exit intervention, p. 1.

53 Emser, C., Rupp, T., Uhlmann, M. (2019). Counselling work in tertiary prevention of Islamist extremism, p. 10.

54 RAN. (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, p. 22.

55 Koller, S. Presentation on “InFoEx. What we (think we) do differently” at the video conference of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union “Countering Violent Extremism in Europe – Where do we stand and what’s next?” (CVE video conference), 21 December 2020.

56 Emser, C., Rupp, T., Uhlmann, M. (2019). Counselling work in tertiary prevention of Islamist extremism, p. 10.

57 Koller, S. (2019). Issue Paper: Psychological Factors and Mental Health Issues in Tertiary Prevention – outcome of workshop discussion with around 30 participants from Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. InFoEx Workshop, Berlin, 23-24 May 2019. DGAP Report Dec. 2019, p. 4.

58 Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). (2020). Standards in counselling, p. 9.

59 Ibid.

60 Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report, p. 17.

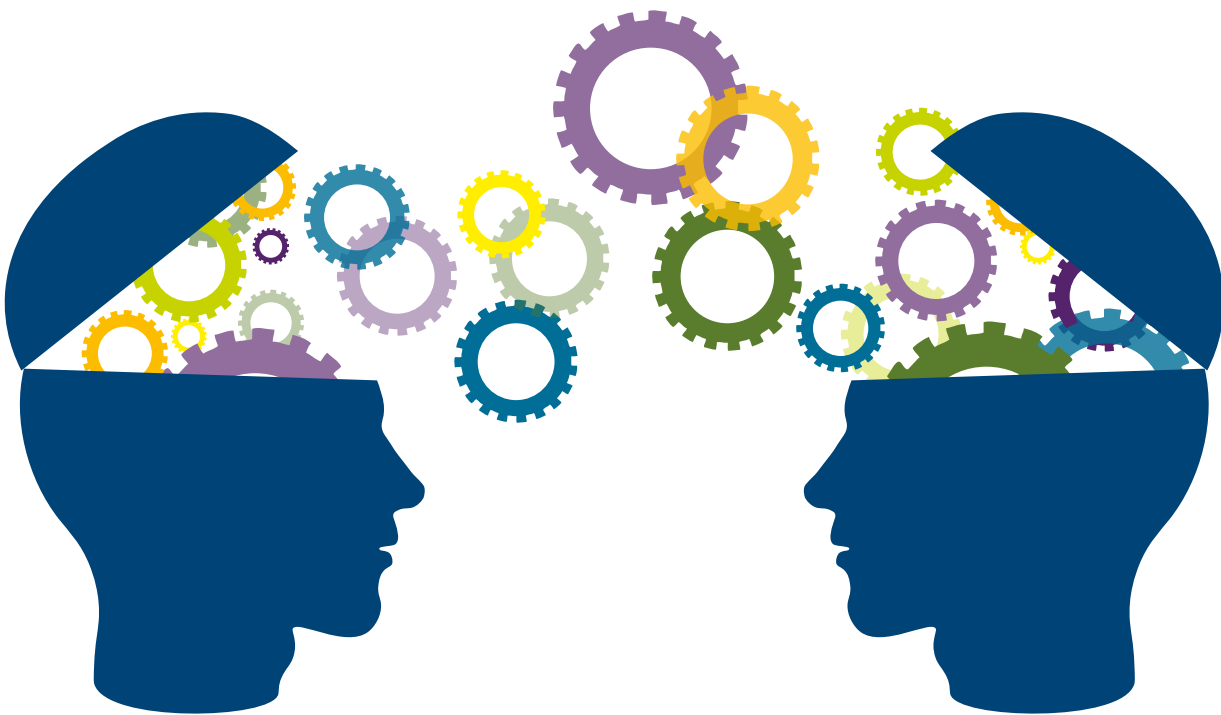
c) Knowledge Exchange

As stated in the introduction, the key concern of this handout is to give an impulse for (inter)national, targeted exchange on good practices and lessons learned in P/CVE. Only through sharing what has worked, and what has not, can we learn from each other, and make the most of each other's experiences.

Nevertheless, lessons learned and good practices should always be assessed within their respective local context. By considering not only why something appears to work but also under which circumstances, the practicability as well as applicability of such recommendations can be strengthened. It might also be helpful to go even further and identify necessary conditions for effective transferability of good practices.

In addition to not having to start from scratch, knowledge exchange is the only way to determine which practices deserve to be transferred to standards in P/CVE, and thus ultimately become not only good, but best practices.⁶¹

At the same time, knowledge exchange helps to more comprehensively explain to the general public how P/CVE programmes and projects work and what their goals and their limitations are. This is important for the sake of transparency and accountability, and to maintain support for the programmes and projects. Also, this contributes to realistic assessments of what they can achieve and to expectation management.



⁶¹ For a discussion of these concepts, see Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report, p. 17-19.

Good practices and lessons learned that have so far been identified regarding knowledge exchange include:

- Encourage (inter)national, cross-institutional expert peer learning through regular closed-door workshops on specific topics of mutual interest. It can be useful to have a fixed group of individuals continuously participating in the workshops, if the intention is also to foster network building / maintenance. In order to make the most of the participants' expertise, it is helpful to focus on discussion, and less on presentations.⁶²
- It is useful to implement a needs-based approach, so that the network members can choose which questions to address and how. This also gives them more ownership of the learning process.⁶³
- In addition, host public events with (some of) the workshop participants to discuss selected topics with an interested, non-expert audience.⁶⁴
- specially when addressing P/CVE approaches and their complexity to a non-expert audience, it should always be noted that they do not constitute a "silver bullet" to solve the problem of radicalisation into terrorism and extremism. Neither does P/CVE substitute law enforcement. P/CVE is just one of many instruments in the toolbox of the comprehensive approach to fighting terrorism and extremism.⁶⁵
- Therefore, the different stakeholders in P/CVE should proactively communicate their methods and goals, share successful examples of their efforts, explain which approaches did not yield the desired outcomes, and outline the limits of their work.⁶⁶

62 Koller, S. Input during the breakout session "Countering Violent Extremism on the European level – initiatives and perspectives" at the CVE video conference, 21 December 2020.

63 Koller, S. Input during the breakout session "Countering Violent Extremism on the European level – initiatives and perspectives" at the CVE video conference, 21 December 2020.

64 Ibid.

65 Neumann, P.R. Key Note Speech "Understanding the past, preparing for the future: key trends in violent extremism in Europe" at the video conference of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union "Countering Violent Extremism in Europe – Where do we stand and what's next?", 21 December 2020.

66 Koller, S. (2019). Issue Paper: International Tour d'Horizon of Tertiary Prevention of Islamist Extremism, p. 8.



4 Outlook

4. Outlook

When discussing strategic enhancement of P/CVE approaches, we must of course not only take a look at what we have done so far, but also at the challenges that lie ahead of us. This was the main goal of the video conference of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union “Countering Violent Extremism in Europe – Where do we stand and what’s next?” that was held on 21 December 2020 and which

has been referred to already in different parts of this document.

In his keynote speech “Understanding the past, preparing for the future: key trends in violent extremism in Europe”, Professor Dr Peter Neumann of King’s College London presented five key challenges:

- Making sense of the anti-lockdown movement;
- Getting ready for returnees from Syria and Iraq;
- Prioritising prisons;
- Understanding right-wing extremism;
- Making the case for deradicalisation.

These challenges were mirrored in the presentations by the expert speakers in the breakout sessions of the conference on “Countering Violent Extremism on the European level – initiatives and perspectives”,⁶⁷ “Looking through the fog: Islamist extremism after the fall of the ‘caliphate’

and how CVE can deal with it”⁶⁸ and “Going full circle: two decades of countering right-wing extremism in Europe – what have we learned and how can we prepare for the future”.⁶⁹ Further / more specific topics discussed by the speakers and participants are listed (not in order of priority) below:

⁶⁷ Moderator: Maarten van de Donk, M. (Senior Advisor, Radicalisation Awareness Network); Input 1: Yolanda Gallego-Casilda Grau (Head of Unit, Prevention of Radicalisation, Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission); Input 2: Sofia Koller (Research Fellow CT/PVE at German Council of Foreign Relations).

⁶⁸ Moderator: Milena Uhlmann (CVE Policy Officer, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany); Input 1: Dr. Tina Wilchen Christensen (Associated Professor at Aarhus University, Denmark); Input 2: Prof. Thomas Renard (Senior Research Fellow, Egmont Institute, Belgium).

⁶⁹ Moderator: Alexander Ritzmann (Senior Advisor Counter Extremism Project (CEP)); Input 1: Robert Örell (Director of Transform Sweden and Co-chair EU RAN Rehabilitation); Input 2: Nikki Sterkenburg (Senior Analyst, Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism).

- Engaging local actors in P/CVE. Local actors can, in addition to direct involvement, also play a role in developing and drafting programmes and methods. As they know the field and the target group, they can provide useful input.
- Engaging communities in P/CVE. In addition to providing them with direct support where needed, this is also important for the acceptance of programmes and projects within the communities.
- Defining the relevant target groups for exit programmes, taking into account social and age structures.
- Assessing the role of gender in violent extremism.
- Assessing the role of mental health issues in violent extremism.
- Addressing the “formative experience”⁷⁰ of the rise and demise of the “caliphate” of the Islamic State (IS) terrorist organisation. This refers to the organisation but also to individuals returning from territories held by IS. Returnees will remain persons of interest for a long time, as they have many anecdotes and experiences to share with the next generations of possible jihadists.
- Assessing and dealing with the threat of “failed travellers”⁷¹ to IS territory.
- Enhancing risk assessment of radicalised individuals, especially regarding high-risk clientele.
- Optimising concepts to deal with possible recidivism of terrorist offenders who have served their prison sentence.
- Enhancing knowledge (exchange) about Islamists and Islamist radicalisation in prison.
- Enhancing transition processes and their management after prison release and during aftercare.
- Addressing and overcoming institutional challenges in multi-agency cooperation.
- Providing a nuanced understanding of how P/CVE works and of its limits.
- Countering violent extremism and hate speech online.
- Emerging territories of conflicts outside the EU that already have or could have an implication for violent Islamist extremism in Europe.
- Assessing reciprocal effects between extremist narratives and movements and how extremists “feed off each other”.⁷²

70 Renard, T. Input during the breakout session “Looking through the fog: Islamist extremism after the fall of the “caliphate” and how CVE can deal with it” at the CVE video conference, 21 December 2020.

71 Ibid.

72 Wilchen Christensen, T. Input during the breakout session “Looking through the fog: Islamist extremism after the fall of the “caliphate” and how CVE can deal with it” at the CVE video conference, 21 December 2020.

- Learning from adjacent fields, such as sects, dealing with sex offenders, preventing and counter-ing crime and substance abuse.
- Enhancing the strategic outlook on P/CVE, including supporting evaluation, professionalisation of and knowledge exchange on the approaches.
- Providing an easy (anonymous) access to exit programmes, e.g. via online exit work.
- Further developing exchanges between institutional actors and, in particular, the idea of devel-oping closed discussion groups in order to deepen the exchange.
- Understanding and responding to shifts in extremist ideologies. A better understanding espe-cially of the changing right-wing extremism phenomenon (e.g. shift from race to identity in right-wing extremism) and a better information base (e.g. data regarding age, the role of women, transnational connections and activities) is needed.
- Analysing global crises in their function as “wake up calls” for conspiracy theorists and extrem-ists, possibly resulting in alliances comprising a broader spectrum of right-wing and left-wing extremists reaching into mainstream society, as has become apparent during the current COV-ID-19 crisis. This applies also to adherents e.g. of the QAnon and Incel movements, who may be difficult to locate clearly within a right-wing / left-wing extremist spectrum.
- We need to keep a close look at COVID-19-related anti-democratic anti-government actors and groups because of overlapping narratives with right-wing extremists.

This incomplete, yet extensive list demonstrates how complex and manifold the challenges are that we are facing. Each of the aforementioned challenges requires a tailored approach using distinct methods and processes. Therefore, we constantly need to adjust and refine our derad-icalisation / disengagement approaches, taking

into account new developments and making use of the lessons that we have learned in a strategic manner.

Hopefully, this handout will prove useful in this endeavour.



5 Further Reading

5. Further Reading

Basra, R., Neumann, P.R. (2020). Prisons and Terrorism: Extremist Offender Management in 10 European Countries. ICSR Report. https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ICSR-Report-Prisons-and-Terrorism-Extremist-Offender-Management-in-10-European-Countries_V2.pdf

Bellasio, J., Hofman, J. et al. (2018). Counterterrorism evaluation: Taking stock and looking ahead. Research report. RAND Corporation for RAND Europe. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2628.html

Bjørge, T. (2011). Dreams and disillusionment: engagement in and disengagement from militant extremist groups. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 55(4), 277-285. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-011-9282-9>

Christensen, T.W. (2020). Civil actors' role in deradicalisation and disengagement initiatives: when trust is essential. In S. J. Hansen & S. Lid (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Deradicalisation and Disengagement*. Routledge.

Emser, C., Rupp, T., Uhlmann, M. (2019). Counselling work in tertiary prevention of Islamist extremism – challenges and approaches. International Expert Workshop, Berlin, 19-20 March 2019. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/workshopdokumentation-qualifizierungslehrgang-tertiaerpraevention.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5

Endres, F. (2014). The Advice Centre on Radicalisation of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. *Journal EXIT-Deutschland* 2, 2014. https://journal-exit.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/68-281-1-CE_FE.pdf

European Commission. (2019). Practical guideline for policy-makers and practitioners regarding Evaluations in tertiary prevention in the field of Islamist extremism. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/docs/pages/2019_evaluation.pdf

European Commission. (2020, 17. June). About RAN. Migration and Home Affairs - European Commission Website. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran_en

Federal Foreign Office (AA). (2020). Together for Europe's recovery: Programme for Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union 1 July to 31 December 2020. https://www.eu2020.de/blob/2362036/e0312c50f910931819_ab67f630d-15b2f/07-02-pdf-programm-en-data.pdf

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). (2020). Standards in counselling for the social environment of (potentially) radicalised Islamist individuals. Manual by the Advice Centre Network of the Advice Centre on "Radicalisation" at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Violence Prevention Network gGmbH. https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/deradikalisierung-standardhandreichung-2020.pdf;jsessionid=F781D9B427328D-21894CECF81B9A236D.internet571?__blob=publicationFile&v=4

Hofman, J., & Sutherland, A. (eds.). (2018). Evaluating interventions that prevent or counter violent extremism. A practical guide. RAND Corporation for RAND Europe. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2094.html

Holdaway, L., & Simpson, R. (2018). Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming. A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/improving-the-impact-of-preventing-violent-extremism-programming.html

Keijzer, F., van de Donk, M. (2019). Practical guidelines: Management of exit programmes. RAN Exit event, Frankfurt, 17-18 January 2019. RAN Centre of Excellence. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran-exit_practical_guideline_frankfurt_17-18_01_2019_en.pdf

Koller, S. (2019). Issue Paper: International Tour d'Horizon of Tertiary Prevention of Islamist Extremism – InFoEx Workshop, Berlin, 26-27 March 2019. DGAP Report May 2019. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. (German Council on Foreign Relations). https://dgap.org/system/files/article_pdfs/dgapbericht_infoex.pdf

Koller, S. (2019). Issue Paper: Psychological Factors and Mental Health Issues in Tertiary Prevention – InFoEx Workshop, Berlin, 23-24 May 2019. DGAP Report December 2019. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. (German Council on Foreign Relations). https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/infoex_issue_paper_psychological_factors_and_mental_health_issues_in_tertiary_prevention_en.pdf

Koller, S. (2020). Issue Paper: Good Practices in Evaluating Tertiary PVE Programs – InFoEx Workshop, Berlin, September 19-20, 2019. DGAP Report 8, 2020. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. (German Council on Foreign Relations). https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/DGAP-Report-2020-08_EN.pdf

Koller, S. (2020). Issue Paper: Reintegration of Returnees from Syria and Iraq – InFoEx Workshop, 5-6 December 2019. DGAP Report 12, 2020. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. (German Council on Foreign Relations). https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/dgap-report-2020-12-en_o.pdf

Koller, S. (2021). Issue Paper: Good Practices in Risk Assessment for Terrorist Offenders – InFoEx Workshop, 16-17 March 2020. DGAP Report 3, 2021. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. (German Council on Foreign Relations). https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/dgap-report-2021-03-en.pdf

Molenkamp, M., Wouterse, L., & Gielen, A.-J. (2018). Ex Post Paper: Guideline Evaluation Of PCVE Programmes And Interventions. RAN MS Workshops On PCVE, July 2018. RAN Centre of Excellence. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ms_workshops_guidelines_evaluation_of_pcve_programmes_and_interventions_july_2018_en.pdf

Molenkamp, M. (2018). Ex Post Paper: The role of family and social networks in the rehabilitation of (violent) extremist and terrorist offenders. RAN P&P meeting, Utrecht, 6-7 March 2018. RAN Centre of Excellence. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_role_family_social_networks_rehabilitation_extremist_terrorist_offenders_06-07_03_2018_en.pdf

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Exit. (2017). Ex Post Paper: Setting up an exit intervention. RAN Exit Academy, Berlin, 13-14 February 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit_setting_up_exit_intervention_berlin_13-14_022017_en.pdf

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2019). RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices: Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran_collection-approaches_and_practices_en.pdf

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2020). Conclusion Paper: Helplines and hotlines in preventing and countering violent extremism. RAN FC&S event – Helplines and hotlines, 15-16 September 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_conclusion_paper_fcs_event_15-16092020_en.pdf

Rekawek, K., Ritzmann, A.; Schindler, H.-J. (2020). Violent Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism – Transnational Connectivity, Definitions, Incidents, Structures and Countermeasures. Counter Extremism Project (CEP). https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/CEP%20Study_Violent%20Right-Wing%20Extremism%20and%20Terrorism_Nov%202020.pdf

Renard, T. (2021). The caliphate's legacy and fringe extremists. <https://icct.nl/publication/the-caliphates-legacy-and-fringe-extremists/>

Ritzmann, A. Ruf, M. (2020). Conclusion Paper: Harmful Conspiracy Myths and Effective Countermeasures. Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_paper_conspiracy-myths-expert-meeting_en.pdf

Ritzmann, A., Scheele, R. (2020). Conclusion Paper: The Role of Hotbeds of Radicalisation. Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_small_scale_meeting_hotbeds_conclusion_en.pdf

Uhlmann, M. (2017). Evaluation of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation – Final Report. Research Report 31. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). https://www.beratungssstelle-radikalisierung.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/broschuere-fb31-evaluationsbericht-pdf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3

van de Donk, M., Uhlmann, M., & Keijzer, F. (2020). Peer and Self Review Manual for Exit Work. RAN Centre of Excellence. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit_peer_self_review_manual_for_exit_work_en.pdf

Wouterse, L., & van de Donk, M. (2019). Ex Post Paper: Evaluating disengagement, deradicalisation and resocialisation efforts. RAN Policy & Practice event, Madrid, 8 November 2019. RAN Centre of Excellence. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit_policy_practice_evaluation_exit_programmes_spain_08112019_en.pdf

Publication data

Published by

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community
Alt Moabit 140
10557 Berlin

Last updated

2021

Design by

Orca Affairs GmbH
Schumannstr. 5, 10117 Berlin

Photo credits

p. 10, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28: BMI; p. 14: ©alexmillos/stock.adobe.com; p. 17: ©AnKudi/stock.adobe.com; p. 22: ©Feodora/stock.adobe.com

Contact information for orders

Publikationsversand der Bundesregierung
Postfach 48 10 09, 18132 Rostock

Telephone: 030 18 272 2721

Fax: 030 1810 272 2721

E-Mail: publikationen@bundesregierung.de

Article no. BMI21032

Video relay service (German Sign Language, DGS): gebaerdentelefon@sip.bundesregierung.de

Online orders: www.bundesregierung.de/publikationen

Additional Federal Government publications can be downloaded or ordered here:

www.bundesregierung.de/publikationen

This publication is issued as part of the public information work of the Federal Government. It is available free of charge and is not for sale. It may not be used by political parties, electoral candidates or campaign workers for purposes of election campaigning. This applies to elections to the German Bundestag, federal state and local elections, and elections to the European Parliament.

