European Counter-Radicalisation and De-radicalisation: A Comparative Evaluation of Approaches in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany

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I. Introduction

This report is a comparative assessment of approaches to counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation within four countries from the European Policy Planners’ Network (EPPN). It begins by setting out the definitions of key terms. It then provides an overview of the recent history of extremist violence and the approaches taken in tackling radicalisation and facilitating de-radicalisation in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany in order to contextualise the environment in which the programmes examined in the report operate. The report will then identify some of the key challenges and lessons that can be learned from the outcomes of policies and initiatives in this area. It is part of a larger project funded by the European Commission and is based on research and interviews conducted during visits to countries in question. Although this paper focuses primarily on four EPPN countries, the appendix contains case studies from elsewhere in Europe that offer valuable insights into other successful initiatives and programs in the field of counter-radicalisation.

Although the countries focused on in this report are not diverse in terms of their geographical location, their approaches to the challenges presented by radicalisation vary considerably as do the security and socio-cultural environments that inform them. For example, the problems faced by Germany, a large federal state with a history of far-right and far-left terrorism, are quite different to those faced by its smaller neighbour the Netherlands. In addition to this the evidence base within these countries is strong, allowing for effective and in-depth comparisons. The way in which countries have been affected by extremism has a tangible impact on the formulation of policies and programmes designed to prevent or reduce the impact of radicalisation. Before evaluating the approaches to these issues taken in the four selected European countries, it is important to note that counter- and de-radicalisation policies and programmes cannot “simply be transplanted from one country to another, even within the same region. They have to develop organically in a specific country and culture.”1 Despite this, by evaluating the
strategies and initiatives in their various national contexts it is possible to identify certain elements of
good practice that could potentially inform policy and practice elsewhere.

DEFINING KEY TERMS

Definitions of the concepts of radicalisation, de-radicalisation, extremism and counter-extremism often
vary considerably. This variation is important as it can alter the focus, intentions and outcomes of both
policies and programmes in these areas. This report adopts particular definitions of these concepts, but
accepts that there is not an internationally recognised consensus on how they should be understood.

How these terms are defined depends on how the radicalisation process is understood; it has become
central to the study of terrorism and the formation of counter-terrorism policy, yet there is no universal
theory of radicalisation and no one size fits all terrorist profile. Some states within the European Union
(EU) have tended to concentrate on jihadist inspired radicalisation, while others have a broader mandate
to incorporate other forms of extremism such as the far-right, the far-left or ethno-nationalist
organisations. There are also differing legal interpretations of the threshold between illegal and unsavoury
extremist behaviour. In other instances, there have been attempts to deal with anti-democratic behaviour
regardless of whether or not it is linked to a specific ideology or the use or threat of violence. In order to
encompass this variation in approaches the European Commission has adopted a wide-ranging definition
of radicalisation as the “phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to
acts of terrorism.”

For the sake of clarity this report takes a broad approach to the contested and controversial term and
defines it as “the process through which an individual changes from passiveness or activism to
become more revolutionary, militant or extremist, especially where there is intent towards or
support for violence”. This definition is flexible enough to incorporate a range of extremisms, including
but not limited to Al-Qaeda inspired jihadist groups, far-right and far-left movements, and ethno-
nationalist, animal rights or environmental extremist organisations. It is important to note however that
radical attitudes do not always precede or lead to violent acts, although counter-radicalisation
programmes, by their very nature, are based on the wholesale prevention or curtailment of a process that
could lead to violence.

Academics, policy-makers and practitioners agree that no single cause contributes to individuals becoming
radicalised. There are many factors that, over time, can work either in isolation or combination to alter an
individual’s behaviours and beliefs. These could include a lack of integration into society or the local
community, political disenfranchisement, objections to foreign policy, or exposure to extremist
individuals, groups or organisations. The local, cultural and social context also affects the radicalisation
process and, accordingly, government responses to the problem reflect this. For example, European
countries take a different approach to jihadist extremism than many of their counterparts in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Most European states have tended to avoid theology and therefore have not explicitly challenged jihadist ideologies, narratives or messages. Instead they have initiated projects that focus on enhancing integration and social cohesion in conjunction with their de-radicalisation and intervention programmes.

This report uses the definition of counter-radicalisation adopted by the United Nations Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that lead to Terrorism, which distinguishes counter-radicalisation from de-radicalisation. It defines the former as “a package of social, political, legal and educational and economic programmes specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalised) individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists”. The latter, de-radicalisation, is defined as “programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence”. Counter-radicalisation is therefore concentrated on prevention, while de-radicalisation seeks to reverse the process by helping to refute extremist ideologies and facilitate the departure of individuals from extremist groups. Disengagement entails a change in behaviour (refraining from associating with potentially violent groups or employing the use of violence) but not necessarily a change in political or ideological beliefs.

II. The Netherlands

The Netherlands has not experienced a terrorist attack on the same scale as other European countries such as the UK, Spain or Norway, yet it has had to deal with several crises relating to extremism, radicalisation and terrorism. These include the death of two Dutch citizens of Moroccan descent in Kashmir, killed while apparently trying to join a local jihadist group, and another Dutch-born citizen, Mohammed Bouyeri, murdering the controversial film-maker Theo van Gogh. More recently concern has shifted towards the number of individuals travelling to Syria to fight in the civil war as it is feared that their experiences in Syria may result in further radicalisation and potentially increase the likelihood of them attempting to commit attacks domestically on their eventual return.

The assassination of van Gogh in 2004 had a profound impact on the Netherlands, shocking its traditionally liberal and tolerant society. Muslim communities and institutions became the target of increased hostility, suspicion and in some cases violence. The attacks and opprobrium took place amid a simmering climate of heightened scrutiny of the country’s Muslim communities, intensifying debate around and feeling towards the religion and its adherents. Some suggested that many among the Muslim community were on the fringes of mainstream Dutch society and that radicalisation, violent or otherwise, represented a symptom of a considerably more entrenched problem. It was feared that if integration was
not taking place effectively, and there were young minority populations who were closed off from mainstream society as well as their own communities, then the number of individuals at risk from radicalisation would only increase.

The Dutch government consequently introduced new legislation to tackle the threat of terrorism while also attempting to improve the levels of integration and participation in society. The ‘Polarisation and Radicalisation Action Plan’, launched in 2007, defined radicalisation as the “willfulness to strive for far-reaching changes in society (possibly in an undemocratic manner) to support such changes or persuade others to accept them”.15

Radicalisation was considered a consequence of societal breakdown, with redress lying in programmes intended to reinforce social cohesion and the successful management of a multicultural environment.16 The perception was that radicalisation, while not necessarily violent, could heighten the potential for violence and is therefore harmful to the democratic legal order.17 Many activities under the four-year Action Plan therefore focused on the promotion of shared democratic values, integration and social cohesion, with the hope that “improving the material integration and the sense of belonging of young Dutch Muslims... would reduce the breeding ground for radicalisation”.18 Alongside this there was an emphasis on deploying protective, preventative and repressive measures as a way to avert an individual or group’s willingness to use violence. There were also activities intended to eliminate a sense of perceived discrimination or injustice as a way to prevent young people, especially males from minority communities, from feeling frustrated or excluded.

The strategy attempted to balance preventative and repressive measures and had a number of elements:

- Identify those vulnerable to radical messages and reach out to individuals at risk of “slipping away from Dutch society and legal democratic order” through radicalisation.
- Targeted de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes for those that have been radicalised.
- Disruption of extremist networks through effective law enforcement.
- Weakening the pull of radicalising agents by prosecuting those that seek to promote extremist ideologies and narratives. 19

The Action Plan was not renewed after 2011, yet it offers insights into the environment in which current programmes operate that are aimed at groups at risk of radicalisation and those that are attempting to de-radicalise or disengage. These include Personal Intervention Against Young People in Right-Wing Extremist Circles, Nuansa, and the Slotevaart Action Plan to Prevent Radicalisation whose aims and activities are explored in the case studies below:
**Project name / Country:**

Personal Intervention Against Young People in Right-Wing Extremist Circles, The Netherlands

**Aims/Objectives:**

To support those on the fringes of right-wing extremist groups in Winschoten to exit from these movements.

**Target Audience:**

Those on the edge of groups rather than hard-core activists.

**Description/Activities:**

In the early 2000s, the right-wing extremist group Blood and Honour set itself up in Winschoten and started to attract young people through meetings, festivals and concerts. Between 2005-7, there was an increase in neo-Nazi demonstrations, which led to threats, assaults and other problems. The town was asked by Forum, an institute for multicultural issues in the Netherlands, to take part in a pilot project on de-radicalisation. The aim was to counter further radicalisation and social isolation of young people and thus prevent and counter participation in and support for unacceptable social behaviour.

Young people were offered support in withdrawing from the groups through, for example, help in returning to school, getting a job and finding a permanent residence. The goal was not to directly push them to give up right-wing extremist views, but to distance themselves from vandalism, threats and violence.

The local authorities and the government each provided half of the funding. A steering committee was established, comprising centrally-based figures from the police, social services, youth workers, the school administration, a Dutch foundation involved in youth matters, and the local council's committee for youth issues. It was chaired by the local Mayor.

There was a project managing body, whose role was to identify the young people, make contact with them, and attempt to convince them to get involved. The project ran in 2007-8 and had largely positive outcomes. Fifteen of the 22 young people involved achieved their goals, and by the time the project finished right-wing extremism in the town had been dramatically reduced.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- Partnership between local authorities and government.
- Bought together a coalition of local actors to identify participants to the project and shape the programme.
**Project name/Country:**
Nuansa, The Netherlands

**Aims/Objectives:**
Support, raise awareness and enhance expertise of professionals and policy makers while assisting and advising citizens on matters of radicalisation and polarisation.

**Target Audience:**
National in scope, including wide-ranging support services for local authorities, professionals, parents and young people.

**Description / Activities:**
The overarching aim of the initiative is to provide an integrated, national-level multiagency approach to the challenge of radicalisation, where “politicians connect with communities; frontline workers go to mosques; police interact with minority groups; so that all the networks are in place”. At its core, the initiative is engaged in three activities; an early-warning and advisory service; a research and information database; and the organisation of meetings, workshops and training sessions for professionals.

The advisory service of Nuansa provides information and advice tailored to the needs of a wide variety of constituencies that have questions or concerns related to radicalisation or polarisation. This includes providing policy advice for local municipalities on best practises in counter-radicalisation, assisting citizens in recognising signs of extremism, building relationships between frontline practitioners to foster better interventions, and inviting youngsters and parents to raise concerns of potential extremism.

Nuansa complements this advisory service with a dissemination database, which acts as a repository of information including local and national policy documents, manuals, evaluations, media documents and social scientific studies. It also includes practical information related to workshops, conferences and training while highlighting best practises and lessons learned implemented at local and regional levels. As one representative noted; “if you are a teacher and think certain behaviours are suspicious then you should do something about it. Same is valid for the youth workers. It is our job to help them”.

The programme also performs outreach, by training and supporting those carrying out preventative work. Outreach includes presentations and workshops at (annual) meetings and conferences of networks of professionals (education, police, youth workers, youth care), and lectures and seminars at schools and universities. The initiative facilitates the training and exchange of expertise among a wide range of youth workers, social services, frontline practitioners, the police and local government, and has offered bespoke...
traineeships with the assistance of local government, to train frontline workers across the 25 ‘safety regions’ in the Netherlands.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- Overarching aim of the initiative is to provide an integrated, national-level multiagency approach to the challenge of radicalisation.
- The advisory service of Nuansa provides information and advice tailored to the needs of a wide variety of constituencies that have questions or concerns related to radicalisation or polarisation.
- Nuansa complements this advisory service with a public information database.
- The programme also performs outreach; training and supporting those carrying out preventative work.
- The programme has offered bespoke traineeships with the assistance of local government, to train frontline workers across the 25 ‘safety regions’ in the Netherlands.

### Project name/Country:

**Actieplan Slotervaart Het tegengaan van radicalisering (Slotervaart Action Plan to Prevent Radicalisation), The Netherlands**

**Aims/Objectives:**

To increase awareness of the dangers of radicalisation amongst young people in the Dutch town of Slotervaart and engage those already radicalised.

**Target Audience:**

Young people in the Dutch town of Slotervaart deemed to be vulnerable to radicalisation.

**Description / Activities:**

Following the implementation of a national strategy that emphasised the need to counter radicalisation at a local level, the sub-municipality of Slotervaart was identified as a test case. With high levels of unemployment and a high percentage of the population young, second generation immigrants of Moroccan and Turkish descent, it was identified as area in which there was an acute risk of radicalisation occurring.

Bringing together the local authorities and a range of civil society actors including the ‘Amsterdam Together Forum’, youth groups and mosque federations, the Slotervaart Action Plan worked on three levels to develop a coherent and inclusive response to the issue:
- Micro level: Raising awareness of radicalisation and its dangers, reinforcing this with skills empowerment training so that young people are able to channel their feelings of frustration and alienation more positively.

- Meso level: Placing the issue of radicalisation in its proper social context, for instance highlighting the underlying social problems that push some to radicalism. Bringing the issue out into the open, it also encouraged discussion of the issue in cultural and – importantly – religious institutions.

- Macro level: Worked to put the issue of radicalisation higher up the local agenda. It sought to remove the stigma attached to the issue and foster a discussion about the balance between freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

Though, as with all preventative work, it is very hard to measure the absence of radicalisation, the fact that the project bought together such a wide range of actors and the local community were receptive to its methods was seen as a model of good practice.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- Initiated in response to concerns about the radicalisation of young people in the Dutch town of Slotervaart but has been taken forward as a model of good practice for other interventions.

- Increases awareness of radicalisation at a grassroots level and in those groups at risk, channels discontent and anger in constructive ways.

- At a broader level, addresses the place of religion in a secular society.

### III. Sweden

As in the Netherlands, Sweden has been spared large-scale terrorist attacks similar to those that have occurred in elsewhere in Europe in recent years. Authorities however recognise that events in Europe, and further afield can affect Sweden’s domestic security and overseas interests. One such event was the publication of cartoons in 2007 by the Swedish artist Larks Vilks depicting the Prophet Mohammed. This sparked condemnation and protests from people, and a number of governments, from across the Muslim world, as well as some threats. In 2010 there were a number of significant incidents. Vilks’ home was attacked in May and two Swedish brothers, of Kosovar origin, were consequently convicted of arson. In November an al-Shabaab fighter appeared in a propaganda video, encouraging Muslims in Sweden to kill Vilks. In December 2010 an Iraqi-born Swedish citizen, Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly, died in an apparent botched suicide bombing near a busy central shopping district in Stockholm after an explosive charge detonated prematurely. Also that month a planned attack on the offices of the newspaper Jyllands-Posten in Denmark by four Swedish residents was foiled thanks to co-operation between Swedish and Danish authorities. There have also been a number of instances where Sweden has been...
used as a base – to raise money for extremist groups, disseminate propaganda or various other activities supporting violent extremism.

Violence-promoting extremism is not currently considered as the primary threat to Swedish society, democracy or central government. A more pressing concern has been civil unrest, in the form of demonstrations and protests. Nonetheless extremism in Sweden remains a threat to others, especially overseas. In 2010 the Swedish security service, Säpo, highlighted the increasing threat from individuals planning, supporting or financing terrorist attacks in areas of conflict abroad. Their report on violent jihadist extremism concluded that the largest threat was ‘returnees’ that come back to Sweden having attended training camps or participated in violent struggles abroad.\textsuperscript{25} Recently, as in the Netherlands, there have been fears over the number of Swedish citizens that may have travelled to Syria and the potential risks that they could pose on their return. The focus has shifted towards identifying individuals planning to travel to Syria and engaging in preventative messaging and dialogue, as well as speaking to those returning from such travel. In 2012 Säpo estimated that there were approximately 20 individuals from Sweden engaged in violence or in terrorism training camps in conflict zones such as Syria, Somalia and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{26} More recent figures estimate that there are between 39 and 87 individuals that may have travelled from Sweden to fight in Syria.\textsuperscript{27}

In the ‘Action plan to safeguard democracy against violence-promoting extremism’, published by the Swedish government in 2011, violent extremism is categorised into three different “violence-promoting ideologies”: far-right White Power, left-wing autonomous and violent jihadist extremism.\textsuperscript{28} According to the Swedish plan, radicalisation “denotes the process whereby an individual goes from being non-violent to being in favour of violence” and de-radicalisation “describes the opposite process”.\textsuperscript{29} It reflects current understandings of the social factors that can lead to radicalisation, including discrimination, segregation, a lack of community cohesion and feelings of marginalisation or exclusion.\textsuperscript{30} Such an environment, suggests one report, could create a situation “where it is easier for those who advocate violence and extreme measures to obtain a hearing”.\textsuperscript{31} Exclusion and a lack of social cohesion have consequences for individuals and wider society as tensions and conflicts with ethnic, cultural or religious undertones can arise and possibly contribute to further polarisation, radicalisation or even violence.

Initiatives such as the Tolerance Project and the Karlskrona Municipality network are used to overcome exclusion through improved integration and urban development, and are therefore considered as measures that can prevent the circumstances in which radicalisation can often occur from arising. These are used in conjunction with various programmes aimed specifically at preventing individuals at risk from radicalisation from falling prey to extremist recruitment, ideologies and narratives, as well de-radicalisation initiatives such as Exit Fryshuset. Case studies of these initiatives are provided below:
**Project Name/Country:**

Tolerance Project, Sweden

**Aims/Objectives:**

To provide opportunities for young individuals to take part in educational projects at school with the aim of disconnecting them with neo-Nazi groups or extremist behaviour.

**Description/Activities:**

The Tolerance Project was developed in 1995 in Kungälv, Sweden, in the wake of the murder of John Hron by a neo-Nazi gang. The goal of the project in the long-term is to get rid of social unrest and eliminate intolerance within the local community. It is aimed at high-school teenagers who have been identified as being at risk of joining the neo-Nazi subculture and/or becoming future activists. Students are encouraged to apply for the programme by initially using a field trip as an exciting incentive, and, once the programme has developed, former participants share their positive experiences of the course to encourage vulnerable individuals to apply.

The programme relies on an established method of analysis to determine the ideological core of the structure of the target group, who belongs to it, and their function in the context of it. From this initial analysis, in conjunction with a detailed understanding of the broader ideology, the most important activists and their followers can then be identified. Individuals identified at most at risk will then be given the option to apply to participate in the project. The identification process is facilitated by co-ordination and liaising with teachers, social workers and local youth workers, who have detailed knowledge of the local area and the students themselves.

The programme itself aims to disassemble and rebuild the structure where social unrest and intolerance originates, with the work that is involved able to be separated into three parts:

- **Splitting activities**
- **Focus on the future**
- **Re-socializing activities**

Firstly, the school offers activities that are designed to create distance between the core group and their followers, providing individuals with meaningful activities in their spare time, as participants may come from less privileged backgrounds and have limited access to sports clubs or any other organisations. Next, the programme puts a particular priority on teaching programmes that can help participants to focus on their future, and be able to visualise a future in which they can be successful and separate from the group. This depends on the notion that students who achieve better results at school are fundamentally less likely
to withdraw into their previous environments. Finally, students are helped to re-socialize by constructing ways for them to attempt to cultivate their own functioning social strategies in groups that they have not done so before. This is facilitated by mixing the groups on the programme - where a group would be comprised of one third A-grade students who are not at risk, and two-thirds targeted individuals - and encouraging them to interact with each other and collaborate during the educational period.

The educational aspect of the project focuses on motivating the students in question to choose studies adjusted to their particular circumstances. In tandem with these studies, a positive social structure is created with the student, where their ability to relate to others in a tolerant manner can be developed. The project is based on a long-term approach and relies on co-operation from all staff within the school. The content in the dialogue between staff and student should be relatable to the student’s life. Otherwise, this education can become the static fulfilling of responsibilities and not the basis for authentic experiences which should illuminate the indispensable value of tolerance.

**Key Points/Lessons Learned:**

- Time is an important component of the programme, as personal reflection between teaching sessions is crucial to the development of the students.
- The project has developed a successful system for mapping the threat of extremism and determining how many students are at risk, through years of experience working within the community.
- Dedicated teachers who are embedded in and have extensive knowledge of the local community is a necessity.
- The programme demands local knowledge of social structures and targeted measures towards specific groups if it is to be successful.
- The project is designed specifically as a long-term approach to tolerance building.
- Developing a dialogue between staff and student that is relatable to the student’s life is essential to create an authentic experience for each participant to demonstrate the value of tolerance.

**Project Name/Country:**

Karlskrona Municipality, Sweden

**Aims/Objectives:**

To counter Swedish neo-Nazi related criminality, demonstrations, and violence in the right-wing ideological stronghold of Karlskrona.
Description/Activities:

In response to Karlskrona municipality becoming a stronghold for Swedish neo-Nazism, which perpetuated itself with the formation of the National Socialist Front (NSF) in 1994, a broad spectrum of measures were taken to counter violence, demonstrations, and criminality that emanated from these groups. Political parties, churches, NGOs, sports movements, and unions banded together to establish a municipal network against racism and anti-Semitism.

The network was able to mobilise joint demonstrations against right-wing extremism and initiative school programs to educate youth in matters pertaining to racism. Supplementary to youth education the Children and Young People’s Committee also encouraged engagement in active prevention and intervention against racism and neo-Nazism. In addition the Municipal Executive Board also allocated funds in support of activities to counter anti-democratic forces. These were available to associations, authorities, individuals or organisations within the municipality that were dedicated to countering anti-democratic forces. The fund allocations were primarily focused on long-term initiatives aimed at targeting children and youth and preventing potential embroilment in racist or right-wing criminality.

Towards the end of the 1990s Karlskrona municipality incorporated further strategies into their wider initiative. At this time efforts were made, in partnership with the relevant authorities, to shut down neo-Nazi websites and bank accounts. With the intention of fostering de-radicalisation and disengagement, some politicians and officials also built personal relationships with neo-Nazis. This proved successful, leading to at least one person leaving the movement. This led to mass media attention which is speculated to have encouraged further de-radicalisation, although the extent of this is not quantifiable. In addition, the municipality paid close attention to getting neo-Nazi group members into work and out of the welfare system in a bid to foster disengagement.

Key Points/Lessons Learned:

- In response to Karlskrona municipality being recognised as a neo-Nazi stronghold, especially in the wake 1994 formation of the NSF.
- Children and Young People’s Committee, Municipal Executive Board, and local schools worked to educate youth in short and long-term initiatives countering racism and anti-Semitism.
- Municipality authorities paid closer attention to tackling the issue through building relationships with neo-Nazis and encouraging individuals to return to work.
**Project Name/Country:**
EXIT Fryshuset, Sweden

**Aims/Objectives:**
To help individuals leave white supremacy groups, and to support them in establishing new lives with economic and social support structures to make their new lives sustainable.

**Target Audience:**
Set up to target individuals seeking to transition out of neo-Nazi circles, but new sister programme targets those seeking to leave organised criminal groups.

**Description/Activities:**
EXIT was established in 1998, and is based on the notion that individuals join white supremacist movements not because of ideology, but due to social reasons and the search for status, identity, support and power. Individuals normally enter these movements when they feel excluded or unaccepted by society. The majority of EXIT staff are former members of white supremacist groups, although they are complemented by others, including a physician and psychotherapists. The project has a number of activities:

- Work with individuals to help them leave behind these groups and forge sustainable new lives.
- Work with the families of neo-Nazis to enable them to support young people engaged in or involved with white supremacist groups.
- Education for those frontline workers who engage with young people to enable them to spot vulnerable young people and provide help and support.

EXIT’s work with individuals is based on long-term cognitive treatment, helping individuals to disengage with white supremacist groups and reintegrate into society. It only works with those who have voluntarily come to the programme as it is important that the individual wants to change. Staff engage them in a number of ways, through direct discussions, taking them out for a coffee or to do an activity together, in order to build a good interpersonal relationship. Staff do not talk directly about ideology or try to challenge the ideas of the white supremacist movement, partly because the programme is based on the idea that young people enter these movements for other reasons, but also because the movements school their members with all the relevant counter-arguments so this can be a futile approach to take and simply put the young person into a defensive mode. This work is always conducted confidentially, as former members and their families are often threatened by the movements.
In the early days, staff are on hand 24 hours a day as the young person may need help at any moment and typically won’t have anyone else to turn to as they have often broken ties with family and friends when they entered the movement. They can be offered a range of different types of support: counselling; specialist help from a psychologist or psychiatrist; help re-establishing contact with friends and family; training in social skills; learning how to manage set-backs, how to trust others, and deal with conflict in non-violent way; safe-housing; and help finding a new job and re-establishing their new life. The nature and length of support offered is tailored to the individual, but on average individuals will be involved in the programme for 6-9 months, although the longest involvement has been 8 years.

EXIT also coaches the relatives of neo-Nazis, helping them to develop parenting skills and work through what the family has experienced; they can convene meetings between the family and a range of service providers, should the family request that; and they can assist with police contact and protection where the family has been threatened by the group. EXIT also conducts educational work with professionals working with young people (schools, social services, and police, for example) helping them to understand how the movement is organised, how to reach and influence individuals in these movements, and provides counselling in how to conduct case work. The initiative also collaborates with a local theatre (Theater Fryshuset) which has set up several plays on destructive subgroups (hooligans, suburban gangs), and on engagement and disengagement from the white power movement called Hatets Röst/the Voice of Hate. The theatre performs around 20-30 times a year.

The programme believes its approach is relevant to individuals in other kinds of coercive movements, and has just started a sister project for individuals exiting organised crime groups. Moreover, recognising that the radicalisation and community bonding processes of extreme right-wing movements have largely moved online, former neo-Nazis engaged on the programme enter internet chat rooms under pseudonyms and with in-depth knowledge of extreme right-wing discourses and narratives, and actively participate in discussion and debate. Under the cover of anonymity, the engagement process is designed to introduce doubt. Importantly, these activities are designed not to prove users wrong, but to gradually remove black and white thinking.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- It only works with individuals who have referred themselves to the programme so are motivated to change.
- It is mainly staffed by individuals with direct personal experience of white supremacist movements, such as formers.
- It is based within a youth centre, Fryshuset, which provides social support and leisure facilities for young people. This means it is not isolated, has the backing and support of a larger organisation, and is integrated within a wider youth project.
- Focuses on the emotional and social causes rather than ideology.
It recognises the importance of re-establishing support structures and social networks.

Has become well-known and so is seen as an enemy by the white supremacist movement – this helps to raise its profile among EXIT’s target audience.

As radicalisation and community bonding processes of extreme right-wing movements evolved, the project also performs outreach and engagement work online.

IV. Denmark

Again Denmark has not been the victim of a mass-casualty extremist violence, yet in 2005 the publication of cartoons by Kurt Vestergaard featuring the Prophet Mohammed in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten led to what has been described as the country’s “biggest political crisis since World War II”. Reactions were initially restrained and far from uniform; whilst thousands protested in Copenhagen and some Muslim groups, individuals and institutions expressed disapproval, others took more moderate positions. There were also a number of protests outside Denmark, some of which turned violent. In 2006, the Danish embassies in Syria, Lebanon and Iran were attacked and in 2008 a car bomb exploded near the embassy in Islamabad, killing 6 and injuring at least 30 people. Some groups went as far as issuing threats against Denmark and its overseas citizens and interests, including an article entitled ‘The Cartoon Crusade’ that appeared in the first issue of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s (AQAP) magazine Inspire in 2010.

The cartoons were reprinted in 2008 and Denmark, Jyllands-Posten and Vestergaard himself were again identified as high-priority targets. In 2009, two individuals were arrested in Chicago for planning an attack on the Jyllands-Posten offices. In January 2010, the Somali Mohamed Geele attempted to attack Vestergaard in his home, and was given a nine year sentence in February 2011. In September 2010, Lors Doukaev, a Belgian citizen of Chechen origins inadvertently detonated a bomb at the Hotel Jørgensen in Copenhagen that was most likely intended for Jyllands-Posten. Later that year in December a planned ‘Mumbai style’ attack on the offices of the newspaper by four Swedish residents was foiled due to cooperation between Swedish and Danish authorities.

The fallout from the Vestergaard cartoons continues and Danish authorities claim that there is a “significant” threat of terrorism against the country. Recent assessments of the security threat have identified an increase in the number of Danish-based groups, networks and individuals that adhere to a militant jihadist ideology. Despite the significant number of attempted attacks associated with the controversial cartoons, the fear is largely from smaller scale or individual attacks rather than larger, more coordinated plots. There is concern over the potential of Danish citizens traveling to conflicts or training camps abroad in unstable countries or regions such as Syria, Somalia or Pakistan and returning to commit attacks in Denmark. While perhaps not to the same extent there is also the threat posed by either far-right or far-left extremist groups or individuals, which has been raised since the attacks on Oslo
and Utøya by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway in July 2011. This has been fuelled by an increase of anti-immigrant sentiment in Denmark and the anti-immigration Danish People’s Party has gained in popularity, ensuring that, as elsewhere in Europe, debates surrounding migration, integration and community cohesion remain contentious.

In order to counter these threats the Danish government released its ‘A common and safe future: An action plan to prevent extremist views and radicalisation among young people’ in 2009. The plan had two guiding principles; identifying and addressing problems related to extremism and radicalisation, and developing integration and cohesion within Danish society. Radicalisation is defined as, “the process in which a person gradually accepts the ideas and methods of extremism and, possibly, joins its organised groups”. The plan also recognises a number of elements that can play a role in the radicalisation process ranging from “personal circumstances” and “group dynamics” to “political, financial and cultural factors”. It was renewed under the current government, elected in September 2011, again stressing the threats posed by jihadist extremism and radicalisation, but also with a greater focus on far-right extremism following the attacks in Norway in July of that year.

The Danish plan identifies radicalisation partially as a symptom of inadequate social integration. Its strategy to counter extremist radicalisation was therefore divided into preventative activities and targeted interventions. Preventative activities focused on increasing social cohesion and democratic capital and further integrating alienated groups into mainstream society. This was done by reaching out to young people and encouraging them to find healthier social alternatives to extremist groups through community dialogue initiatives and increasing the effectiveness of multi-agency partnerships. The plan did not therefore attempt to tackle violent extremist narratives and ideologies directly, preferring instead to focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of potentially vulnerable young people. Alongside this, intervention programs, such as the Back on Track and Deradicalisation - Targeted Interventions projects (examined in further detail below), were implemented with individuals that already held extremist views or associated with extremist groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name/Country:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Back on Track’, Denmark</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims/Objectives:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Back on Track’ aims to develop and test mentoring schemes as a tool to support inmates in leaving far-right, far-left or religious extremism behind. It has been developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration in close cooperation with the Danish Prison and Probation Service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Target Audience:**

The target group is prison inmates who have either been convicted of terrorism or have been involved in hate crimes or other extremism-related crimes, or inmates who are assessed as being vulnerable to extremism.

**Description/Activities:**

The mentoring scheme aims at supporting and strengthening the motivation of the inmate to engage in alternative and more positive circles and to stay out of crime and extremist environments when released from prisons. The aim of the project is to support inmates through mentoring to become better in handling everyday situations, problems and conflicts. Another key element is to focus on engaging families and social networks in order to offer inmates long-term support when re-entering society.

The total budget for the project is approximately €335,000. The EU Commission provides €268,000, while the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration and the Danish Prison & Probation Service each finance the project with contributions of €33,500. The project is set to run until May 2014.

The project has been established within the framework of an existing mentor program targeted at different groups of inmates and run by the Danish Prison & Probation Service. There are 13 mentors, of which 3 received additional training in order to be able to coach the others. The mentors were recruited from the Probation Service’s mentor corps and from the De-radicalization-Targeted Interventions project.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- Training of mentors is an important element of the project. The aim of the training is to build up competences and tools to handle the role as mentors and increase knowledge about extremism.
- The training will focus on techniques in conversation, coaching and conflict management and will focus on how to involve family and social networks more actively.

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**Project name/Country:**

‘Deradicalisation – Targeted Interventions’, Denmark

**Aims/Objectives:**

The aim of the project is to develop tools that can be adapted to the individual needs of young people and provide the long-term support and advice that is needed in order to break with and stay out of extremist circles.
Target Audience:

Those leaving extremist groups in Denmark.

Description/Activities:

In 2009, the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs was granted EU support for a 3-year pilot project on de-radicalisation. Thus, in co-operation with the municipalities of Copenhagen and Aarhus, East Jutland Police District and the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), the Ministry launched the Deradicalisation - Targeted Interventions project. The project is part of the implementation of the first principle in the Government’s action plan “A common and safe future”.

The Danish Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration Affairs launched the project because there had been several instances where professionals involved in the local cooperation between schools, social services and the police (SSP) and other actors had voiced concerns about young people expressing extremist views or exhibiting discriminatory behaviour towards other groups in their environment. The authorities that receive such reports often lack the relevant tools or measures for helping young people at risk of radicalisation.

One part of the project aims to develop a concept for preventive talks targeted at young people who are part of extremist groups. This part of the project is being developed and implemented by PET. The second part of the project aims to develop a concept for mentoring schemes aimed at young people who socialise with extremists, express extremist views and/or exhibit discriminatory behaviour towards other groups in their immediate environment.

Affiliations to extremist groups can have serious consequences for the future of the individuals, their family, and society. The role of the mentors in Copenhagen and Aarhus is therefore to prevent young people from being recruited into extremist circles, and to support individuals who are in the process of leaving. Leaving an extremist group can be extremely difficult without continuous personal support offered by such mentoring schemes.

Both the mentoring schemes and the preventive talks are intended as voluntary offers to young people. Therefore, a central aspect of the project is to develop methods for reaching these young people and motivating them to participate in a scheme with the objective of helping them find constructive social alternatives to extremist groups.

The concept for mentoring schemes supplements current prevention initiatives in the municipalities of Copenhagen and Aarhus as well as the East Jutland Police District. Other municipal schemes which are deemed appropriate will also be used to ensure that the best intervention package is offered to the individual in the mentoring scheme. Thus, the project also explores how the various authorities can cooperate in the best possible way to prevent young people from being attracted towards violent extremism.
Key Points/Lessons learned:

- By trialling different approaches in Copenhagen and Aarhus, the project will improve understanding of what works.
- It covers a range of different kinds of radicalisation towards violence.

V. Germany

Historically Germany has been more concerned with combating far-right and far-left violent extremism than violent jihadism, so its de-radicalisation activities have traditionally been focused in these areas. The Red Army Faction (RAF) for example was the most notorious far-left terrorist group in Europe, committing numerous assassinations and bombings from their founding in 1970 until they disbanded in the 1990s. Extremist violence associated with the far-left has however been less prevalent in recent years. Contrastingly there have been a number of recent incidents of violence associated with groups from the far-right. Members of the Autonome Nationalisten (Autonomous Nationalists) group attacked far-left protesters and police officers in 2009, leaving dozens injured. 2011 saw the arrests of five individuals from the National Socialist Underground (NSU) suspected of involvement in a series of murders and several bombings between 2001 and 2007. The group was only discovered following the deaths of two members after a failed bank robbery, prompting accusations that the security services underestimated, or in some instances were even complicit in the threat posed by far-right extremists. The trial of the remaining member of the group, Beate Zschäpe is ongoing, although the case has already prompted an investigation into the mistakes that allowed the group to go undetected for so long.

As well as a history of far-left and far-right extremist violence, Germany has also been affected by a number of jihadist related incidents. These include the trials of members of the so-called ‘Hamburg Cell’ for their association with the September 11th 2001 attacks on the U.S., the attempted bombing of a Strasbourg Christmas Market in 2004 and the attempted bombing of trains in Dortmund and Koblenz in 2006. There was also the ‘Sauerland Group’ who were prevented from carrying out a series of attacks on American targets in Germany by the security services in 2007. The only successful attack to date occurred at Frankfurt Airport in March 2011 when gunman Arid Uka, a 20 year old native of Kosovo, killed two US soldiers. Figures from that year show that there were 19 arrests and 12 convictions related to jihadist terrorism, which represented the highest levels since 2006. There was also an increase in the estimates of the number of jihadist extremists present in Germany to 38,080. As in the other countries mentioned in this report there has also been concern over the potential threat posed by returning German ‘foreign fighters’ that have fought, and potentially been radicalised, in Syria. German officials therefore continue to rate the level of the threat from jihadist extremism as its greatest challenge.

Germany does not currently have a specific national action plan for combating extremist radicalisation,
nor an official concept of what the term entails. ‘Extremist activities’ are defined by the Ministry of the Interior as “those which oppose our democratic constitutional state and its fundamental values, norms and rules, and aim to overthrow the liberal democratic order and replace it with one in line with the ideas of the respective group”. Radicalisation in the German context can therefore be understood as the process an individual undergoes in order to hold views or commit actions (not necessarily violence) that are in line with the above definition. The responsibility for preventing radicalisation and implementing de-radicalisation programmes falls under the remit of the wider German counter-terrorism strategy. The strategy emphasises the distinction between repressive and preventive measures, using law enforcement and general criminal prosecutions (existing statutes on homicide or public order offences for example) to deal with the former, and softer approaches for the latter.

Germany's counter-terrorism policy has five primary aims, the second of which is to fight the causes of terrorism and extremism by thwarting the radicalisation process. Despite the lack of a specific stand-alone plan or strategy for countering radicalisation much attention is given to this objective in the wider counter-terrorism strategy. It incorporates a multidimensional approach by the Ministry of the Interior which includes civic education to reinforce fundamental liberal democratic values, attempts to foster interfaith and religious-political dialogue, and broader policies aimed at improving integration and social cohesion within German society. Attempts are also made to counter and refute extremist ideologies, narratives and messaging. For example in 2011, the Federal Government established formal, institutionalised dialogue between Muslims and the security services to fight radicalisation, violence, and jihadism. This was done through annual summits and the funding of partnership projects between the security services and representatives of the Muslim community to identify and challenge radicalisation at an early stage.

In tandem with these various initiatives there are also a number of de-radicalisation programmes that encourage and provide support for those hoping or attempting to leave extremist groups. There are a mixture of private and government funded projects conducting de-radicalisation including EXIT Germany and the Violence Prevention Network (VPN) whose activities are summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name/Country:</th>
<th>EXIT, Germany</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims/Objectives:</td>
<td>Provides support structures to enable individuals to leave extreme right-wing movements through on- and offline engagement.</td>
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</table>
Description/Activities:

EXIT Deutschland performs outreach work to enable individuals to leave extreme neo-Nazi movements in Germany. In 2011 the initiative used music, clothing and social media to scale their impact, seeding one of the most successful online outreach strategies designed to engage right-wing audiences. Based around the theme ‘Get Out of the Scene’, Exit Deutschland set up a task force of private sector representatives, former neo-Nazis and social media experts to assist in maximizing the reach of Exit Deutschland’s campaigning reach.

This resulted in the ‘Trojan T-Shirt’ campaign, in which Exit Deutschland distributed 250 white power t-shirts at a neo-Nazi music festival that when washed altered the logo to ‘What your T-shirt can do, so can you - we'll help you break with right-wing extremism’ and included the Exit brand. The initiative made the headlines both on and offline, including mainstream and far-right forums, which even temporarily shut down because of the positive reaction to the initiative. The campaign increased overall awareness of EXIT among right-wingers, trebling the number of self-referrals to its disengagement programme. To maximise the impact of the campaign, Exit produced a video sequencing the production and distribution of the offline campaign.

Key Points/Lessons Learned:

- Performs outreach work to enable individuals to leave extreme neo-Nazi movements in Germany, uses music, clothing and social media to scale their impact.
- Resulted in the ‘Trojan T-Shirt’ campaign where staff distributed 250 white power t-shirts at a neo-Nazi music festival whose logo changed when washed.
- To maximise the impact of the campaign, Exit produced an audio-visual production sequencing the formulation, design and distribution of the offline campaign.

Project name/Country:

Violence Prevention Network, Germany

Aims/Objectives:

This project works with individuals in prison convicted of violent crimes linked to far-right extremism to reject their past, move away from extremism, and forge new lives. It has also recently begun to work with individuals who are religiously radicalised.
**Target Audience:**

The project was set up to target far-right extremists, but has recently been extended to work with religiously radicalised individuals.

**Description / Activities:**

The Violence Prevention Network runs a project working with individuals in prison who have been convicted of violent crimes linked to far-right and – more recently – religious extremism. It has been running for over 10 years. The Violence Prevention Network is funded by the Federal Agency for Civil Education, which is part of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, but the project is run on an entirely independent basis.

The project has three elements:

- A 23 week programme in the prison with a small group of prisoners;
- One year dedicated support once the individual has been released from prison;
- Support for the individual’s family before and after release

The work with individuals is conducted on a voluntary basis; those taking part are free to leave at any time. Individuals are brought together into small groups of approximately 8 for a 23 week programme, which amounts to an average of 0.5-1 day per week.

The unique approach of the training programme is the fact that it brings together social work with civic education in order to disentangle the individual’s sense of anger and hatred from their political view of the world, help in tackling the factors driving their anger and also re-educating them in the ways of democratic society and alternative ways of expressing and answering their concerns.

The programme talks about a ‘hierarchy of needs’ – first is self-responsibility and leaving violence, and second is leaving the ideology. Both are important, but if you attack the ideology first, you leave the individual with nothing and no sense of meaning or worth. In a very few cases the training was in danger of failing because it has been too quick to focus on ideology.

During the training they cover a number of discussion points, with the aim of helping them to reflect on their crime, understand what motivated them to engage in violence linked to extremism, help them identify alternative responses, and offer civic education to help reintegrate them into the ways of democratic culture. They also receive help in alternative ways of handling conflict without resorting to violence.

The training involves discussions, role playing, social work, and other activities. Counsellors also work with the individual to prepare them for life outside of the prison and institutional structures. Individuals
receive dedicated support for one year after their release, although in many cases there is contact longer than this. The individual has the name, address and phone number of their mentor (the same person they have dealt with in prison to provide continuity). They meet each month with their mentor, and more often if necessary. Their mentor also helps to find them accommodation and employment, although the latter is becoming more difficult in the current economic climate; and the mentor arranges 3-4 meetings with the individual’s family.

The programme also works with the individual’s family and social networks to help prepare them for the individual’s release, and to better understand the context into which the individual will return. In many cases, the individual is returning to a violent setting; either in the family, or wider social scene. This is especially the case in cities and towns, rather than rural areas. It is important to be realistic about this, and build the programme and support around the individual to deal with it.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- A voluntary project so those involved are motivated to take part.
- Only works with individuals convicted of violent crimes linked to radicalisation.
- The programme is scheduled for as close to the individual’s release date as possible.
- Seen to be independent from ‘authority’ which is vital for its credibility and in gaining the trust of individuals involved.
- Programme workers take the individuals and their ideas seriously.
- Contact is consistent and long-term – individuals work with the same person inside and outside of prison so have a trusted relationship.
- It is vital to work with families, although this can be the most challenging aspect of the programme.

**VI. Lessons Learned**

This section identifies elements of good practice and the lessons that can be learnt in the fields of radicalisation prevention and de-radicalisation, utilising the experiences of the programmes examined from the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

Programmes and initiatives must **account for the context in which they operate.** Both national policy strategies and frameworks, as well as the local environment, need to be considered in order for a programme to be successful and relevant to its intended target audience. The Slotevaart Action Plan to Prevent Radicalisation from the Netherlands and the Karlskrona Municipality project from Sweden both consulted and partnered with local communities and organisations in order to set the goals and methodologies of their programmes for example. The development of working relationships and trust
between project partners and stakeholders is also crucial to the success of any initiative. A multi-agency approach is required to address the range of causes of radicalisation and support those that wish to de-radicalise. Work in this field can involve numerous public and private actors, as well as communities themselves and cooperation is therefore vital at local, national and international levels. The Personal Intervention Against Young People in Right-Wing Extremist Circles project from the Netherlands or the Danish De-radicalisation - Targeted Interventions programme both represent good examples of such cooperation as they brought together local authorities, central government and a combination of local actors to define the aims and scope of their programmes. Finally it is important that the facilitation of the sharing of information between projects continues so that past successes can be replicated elsewhere and previous mistakes can be avoided in future. The Nuansa project represents an important step in this direction, within the Netherlands at least, as its primary aim is to enable an integrated, multiagency approach to the challenges posed by radicalisation and de-radicalisation. Their advisory service also offers information and advice for others that have questions or concerns related to radicalisation, a model that could easily be adopted elsewhere.

Constructive and healthy personal relationships between practitioners and participants can also be crucial, especially in de-radicalisation programmes. Sustainability is therefore important as this can only realistically be achieved through the continuity of both funding and staff. The Violence Prevention Network in Germany for example has had success by offering consistent and long-term contact between individuals on the programme and their counsellors both inside and outside of prison in order to build up a trusting and beneficial relationship. It is also essential that both practitioners and participants are committed to the programme in question as de-radicalisation especially can be a difficult and long-term process in which set-backs are far from unusual. Programmes should therefore be voluntary where possible, such as those offered by EXIT Fryshuset, EXIT Germany or the Violence Prevention Network, who will only work with individuals that have referred themselves and are motivated to change their behaviour and beliefs. Programmes should be tailored to individuals where possible as there are not universal requirements for those at risk of radicalisation or attempting to de-radicalise. Effective working relationships are essential in understanding the nature of each participant’s specific problems and needs and addressing them in a satisfactory manner.

The use of ‘formers’ that have personal experience of both the processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation can also help to achieve the goal of building constructive working relationships as they offer a unique understanding of the dangers and problems that participants may encounter. EXIT Fryshuset and EXIT Germany represent successful attempts at such an approach as they are both primarily staffed by individuals that have previously been associated with far-right white supremacist movements, precisely the groups from which participants in their program are attempting to extricate themselves. The sensitivities surrounding state involvement should also be considered. Legitimacy and credibility are crucial as many of the individuals that programmes are intended to reach are often distrustful or openly
hostile to the authorities due to their ideological beliefs. The use of ‘formers’ is one potential way of ensuring that participants have someone to work with that they feel they can trust. However it should also be ensured that programme staff must be well trained and supported, and be aware of the potential signs of radicalisation and the barriers to de-radicalisation that their charges may encounter. Reformed extremists may be in a better position in this sense as they should be well aware of both the radicalisation and de-radicalisation processes. Both the Tolerance Project in Sweden and the Back on Track initiative from Denmark have specifically emphasised the importance of staff training as a vital element of their respective projects.

VII. Conclusion

This report has explored the range of approaches taken in four European countries to the problem of radicalisation. It has examined a number of programmes from these countries that are intended to limit the threat from radicalisation or assist those that have been radicalised to reintegrate themselves back into mainstream society and identified areas in which they have been successful. It is however important to reiterate that such programs do not represent comprehensive solutions to these problems, they should instead be considered as pieces of a larger puzzle. There are numerous factors that can work in tandem to lead an individual to adopt extremist views or participate in violent extremism, and subsequently there are a range of measures and programs that are required to combat radicalisation. The four countries examined in this report have largely recognised this and adopted policies that aim to address both the individual and societal factors that can contribute to the radicalisation process. Despite this, counter-radicalisation remains a relatively recent concern for many governments and communities. Consequently considerable gaps remain in both our understanding of the process of radicalisation and our knowledge of what makes for effective policies and practices in this area. This report has therefore attempted to highlight those programmes that have had success in order to inform future efforts at tackling the threat of radicalisation. However, more needs to be done to facilitate the dissemination of good practice both domestically and internationally. Any attempts at counter-radicalisation, whether by governments or other actors, must understand that success can be difficult to quantify and will require long-term planning, commitment and cooperation of all those involved in order to achieve the desired results.
The case studies in this section fall outside the primary geographical scope of this report (the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany) but represent valuable sources of comparison and best practice. The projects included are as follows:

- CoPPRa (Belgium)
- TERRA (EU)
- Aggredi (Finland)
- Project Exit - Leaving Violent Groups (Norway)
- Toolbox of Radicalisation and De-radicalisation and Wiki-Prevent (Norway)
- Active Change Foundation (UK)
- West London IMPACT (UK)
- Channel (UK)
- Rewind (UK)

### Project Name/Country:
Community Policing and the Prevention of Radicalisation (CoPPRa), Belgium

### Aims/Objectives:
The project aims to improve the capacity of frontline police officers to prevent radicalisation.

### Target Audience:
Frontline police officers working to prevent all forms of radicalisation.

### Description/Activities:
CoPPRa is a project co-funded by the EU and the Belgian Federal Police. It rests on the assumption that regular frontline police officers – community police officers – have an important role to play in preventing radicalisation because they work on the ground, understand their local communities, and tend to have good community links. This means they are well-placed to spot the signs of radicalisation and work in partnership with local communities to prevent or tackle it. However, such police officers do not always have a good understanding of radicalisation, know the warning signs, or understand what to do in response. This project has aimed to help plug those gaps through the spread of knowledge and training.
The project has three areas of activity:

- The creation of a practical, user-friendly tool to support frontline police officers in detecting signs of radicalisation at an early stage. It has taken the form of a ‘pocket guide’ which includes guidelines on community engagement, brief information on the indicators that officers might see, and logos, symbols and tattoos used by the full range of groups operating across Europe. It is highly visual and written in a basic and accessible style. The guide is available free of charge in electronic format.

- The development of a common curriculum for training frontline officers in how to use the tool in their daily work. This takes the form of a longer manual for training, which can be used by police schools or the individuals responsible for training within individual police forces. It includes information on the full range of groups and movements, allowing trainers to tailor the training to the local threat context. It includes material on terminology, the radicalisation process, indicators, case studies, how to build community relations, legal frameworks, and group profiles. The manual is available free of charge, and will be made available in electronic format in December 2010.

- The identification and exchange of good practice on how to stop the spread of radicalisation in close partnership with other local partners. A number of examples are provided in the training manual, and ideas were exchanged at a recent EU-wide conference organised as part of the project.

The project has a steering committee and experts group made up of country representatives and subject experts from the participating EU countries and the Council of Europe. The international composition of these groups has helped to ensure that a wide range of expertise can be used and the end products will be applicable in the different national contexts.

The project has also been presented at the EU’s Terrorism Working Group meetings, which has helped to disseminate information to all EU countries. There are plans for a second phase of CoPPRa, which would include the roll out of a web portal to house the guide and training manual, and act as a depository for good practice. The products will be updated, and more examples of good practice will be compiled. It is also hoped that both products will be translated into all 27 languages of the EU.

**Key Points/Lessons Learned:**

- It has a very specific target audience so is able to tailor its products to their needs.

- It seeks to provide information in a practical and usable way, though grounded in expert understanding.

- It has clearly defined goals and those running it have avoided the temptation to go broader which has enabled them to deliver and on time.

- It has involved considerable liaison with target audiences in each of the countries to ensure the products are relevant in each of the local contents.
Project Name/Country:
Terrorism and Radicalisation (TerRA), Europe

Aims/Objectives:
To reinforce the positive role victims and former terrorists can play in relation to the prevention of radicalisation and providing practical guidance to specific target groups.

Description/Activities:
Supported by the European Commission DG Home Affairs, Terrorism and Radicalisation (TerRA) is a European project comprising of a European network-based prevention and learning program. The activities of the project are based upon an initial research phase which builds upon gathered knowledge of radicalisation. Through this research, existing prevention and de-radicalisation programs can be enhanced and new ones developed. TerRA aims to emphasise the fruitful role that victims and former terrorists can play in relation to the prevention of radicalisation and provides a practical guidance to specific target groups.

These target groups and beneficiaries include victims, potential terrorists, EU Member States and frontline workers in the fields of rehabilitation, welfare and social workers, journalists, policy makers, law-enforcement, and religious leaders. This is due to the European Union’s recognition that ‘many actors at different levels are involved.’ TerRa aims to realise a broad platform to exchange available materials, lessons and experiences between all member states and to provide practical tools, advice, and policy input to all involved stakeholders.

The results of this project will be: network coverage in all member states in close cooperation with the Network of Associations of Victims (NAVT) and the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN); an overview and description of methods and approaches to screen victims and recognise signs of radicalisation; a manual with recommendations for a broad group of front-liners; guidance for journalists and policy makers; and education packages for schools.

Partners of TERRA are Impact, a Dutch knowledge and advice centre for post-disaster and psychological care that in turn partners with the Netherlands’ Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, and the Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism (NAVT) and the Association of Aid to Victims of March 11th Spain (AAVM11).

Key Points/Lessons Learned:
- Project supported by the European Commission DG Home Affairs comprising of European network-based prevention and learning programs.
Activities are based on an initial research phase that builds upon gathered knowledge of radicalisation and aims to develop new prevention and de-radicalisation programs.

Provides target groups with practical guidance, advocating the positive role that victims and former terrorists can play in improving and establishing EXIT programs.

Results of the project will be network coverage, guidance, education packages, manuals for frontline workers, and an overview of approaches to recognise signs of radicalisation.

Project Name/Country:
Aggredi® HelsinkiMissio Program, Finland

Aims/Objectives:
To create and develop a system for providing otherwise hard-to-reach clients with interactive support services and developing therapeutic methods for working with clients that have engaged in violence.

Description/Activities:
Seeded in 1983, Aggredi is a non-governmental organisation for social services. The primary objective of Aggredi is to locate, find, and help neglected and forgotten citizens and to challenge and encourage individual social responsibility. The organisation’s HelsinkiMissio program, established in 2006, is funded by RAY (Finland’s Slot Machine Association) and aims to create and develop a system for providing otherwise hard-to-reach clients with interactive support services and developing therapeutic methods for working with clients that have engaged in violence.

HelsinkiMissio aims to offer therapeutic working methods and programs taking place outside of offenders’ homes. At an individual level, the aim is to reduce or eliminate the violent engagement clients may partake in. HelsinkiMissio locates and targets young adults that have either a fear or a strong personal experience, be it as a perpetrator or victim, of violent crimes in Helsinki. These violent crimes are defined as assaults, homicides, and robberies. The program aims to create a system based on partnership and collaboration that enables a fast and efficient intervention in the lives of young adults.

The activities employed by the program are based on a strong partnership with the authorities. The partners function as ‘filters’ with the purpose of directing clients who fill the target group to the program. These authorities comprise of the police, probation and prison services. The program also cooperates with Finnish government authorities such as the Ministry of the Interior and Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and the Criminal Sanctions Agency.

Currently The National Research Institute of Legal Policy is working in partnership with Aggredi and the HelsinkiMissio program to conduct research into the impact of Aggredi’s programs on target groups and
analysing the costs/benefits. The National Research Institute produces independent research on crime and justice, supporting planning and decision-making in criminal and legal policy. Aggredi is keen to develop existing working methods simultaneous to creating new forms of work to meet changing needs in society, and will use research findings to do this.

**Key Points/Lessons Learned:**

- Established in 2006 and funded by RAY, the program aims to offer and develop therapeutic methods of reducing and eliminating cases of violent crime among youths.
- Works with partners from Finnish law and justice system and cooperates with governmental departments to encourage engagement of activities with targeted youths.
- Keen to develop existing working methods and new working methods to meet changing needs in society through research conducted by The National Research Institute of Legal Policy.

**Project Name/Country:**

Project Exit – Leaving Violent Groups, Norway

**Aims/Objectives:**

To provide aid and support to youths seeking to disengage from racist or violent groups, with an emphasis on involving parents.

**Description/Activities:**

Project Exit was formally established in 1997, originating as a three-year development project by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Children and Family, and the Directorate of Immigration. It was hosted by the NGO ‘Adults for Children’. The project had three primary objectives: to establish local networks to support the parents of children embedded in racist or violent groups; to enable young people to disengage from these groups; and to develop and disseminate methodological knowledge to professionals working with youths associated with violent groups.

The project was not created as an independent organisation, instead operating through local agencies by providing them with methodological information and expertise. Consequently, child welfare officers, police, teachers and local youth workers were the actors directly working on the project. Seven hundred practitioners and professionals were trained in methods of prevention and intervention as a result of Project Exit. Two methods were developed by the project focusing on early intervention involving parents: the ‘parental network group’, and The Structured Youth-Parent-Professional Conversation.
‘Parental network groups’ enable parents of children in racist or violent youth groups to engage in conversation with one another, providing a platform for them to share concerns and experiences. The groups benefit parents by improving their understanding of the scene their children are involved in, and sharing advice on how to care for, monitor and restrict children in non-alienating ways. Additionally they notify parents about upcoming events that have the potential for violent conflict.

The Structured Youth-Parent-Professional Conversation is a powerful method of early intervention for youths embedded in racist groups, or other delinquent behaviour. It is a voluntary conversation where the act or behaviour that led to the meeting is discussed. The youth is then presented with a set of alternatives to the extremist group. This conversation has also been referred to as “The Empowerment Conversation”, and is a popular intervention method in Norway.

**Key Points/Lessons Learned:**

- Played an important role in early intervention for youths from racist or violent extremist groups.
- Emphasised the need for parents to be involved in dialogue between youth and professionals, highlighting their integral role in the process of disengagement.
- Enabled parental network groups which facilitate the sharing of advice and information between parents whose children were involved in the racist youth scene.
- Developed the Structured Youth-Parent-Professional Conversation to help change the behaviour of vulnerable youths and help them withdraw from racist or violent groups.

**Project Name/Country:**

The Toolbox of Radicalisation and De-radicalisation and Wiki-Prevent, Norway

**Aims/Objectives**

To disseminate information on counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation and crime prevention to police, practitioners and local community actors.

**Description/Activities:**

The Toolbox of Radicalisation and De-radicalisation is an extension of the Toolbox of Crime Prevention that has been developed by Norwegian authorities and academics to enable access to information on methods of counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation and crime prevention. Law enforcement agencies and community organisations inexperienced in combating radicalisation and extremism use the toolbox to gain expertise and build confidence in tackling the issue.
The toolbox is a collection of different approaches split into five different sections: inter-disciplinary cooperation; prevention; triggers; intervention; and de-radicalisation.

It is a database of methods and practices designed to tackle crime and extremism within the local community. It offers a variety of different initiatives, identifying the circumstances in which they are most likely to be effective.

Wiki-prevent is an innovative online platform that functions as an online encyclopaedia, sharing much of the information included in the Toolbox for Crime Prevention. It is used as a platform for learning, and can be added to by users who have experience in the field that they wish to communicate to a wider audience. This website is an open medium, where tools on crime prevention and counter-radicalisation are collected and added to, as long as they are not confidential.

The website encourages people to add information about, or relating to, undocumented initiatives or projects, to provide an increasingly comprehensive knowledge bank for others to use. Thus, the aim is to continually improve and develop the website in the future. Wiki-Prevent is currently only available in Norwegian.

This database is used as a guidance tool for communities across Norway, so experiences and lessons learnt can be shared between municipalities to enable them to fight crime and tackle extremism in a more efficient and measured fashion. Additionally, this online portal merges all of this information, to reduce the difficulty of locating and accessing important data.

**Key Points/Lessons Learned:**

- Provides an important database for practical use in tackling crime and radicalisation.
- Accessible to a variety of people, including police, practitioners and local community actors.
- Includes an online platform for tools to be shared in the public domain.
- Allows users to add information from previously undocumented projects which may supplement information that has already been uploaded.

**Project Name/Country:**

Active Change Foundation (ACF), UK

**Aims/Objectives:**

To promote integration and cohesion within communities by confronting and preventing violent extremism in all its forms.
Description/Activities:

Founded by Hanif Qadir and supported by his two brothers and Michael Jervis. Since 2003 the Active Change Foundation has been working to prevent the spread of violent street crime, gang related issues, community tensions and violent extremism in all its forms.

The ACF is staffed by employees with extensive personal experiences of street crime and violent extremism. ACF has a highly unique and in-depth understanding of the social, cultural and faith issues that need addressing in the community. Among its most extensive projects is Outreach, a locally-based effort of street patrol. By working at the local level with a diverse group of individuals, the ACF is able to gain a stronger understanding of the issues facing communities without drawing attention, along with figuring out appropriate measures to reduce extremism and violence.

Along with community engagement, the ACF also does extensive work with youth development. Recognising that youth represent both a group prone to extremist influence and a source of innovation and dynamism, the ACF runs a Youth Leaders Programme and a Youth Centre (aka Change Centre). With these dual organisations, the Active Change Foundation encourages prevention of extremism and engagement against extremism among British youth.

Key Points/Lessons Learned:

- There is no single solution in the context of violent extremism and young people. Recognising this, the ACF uses a multi-tier strategy of both prevention and engagement with British youth to keep communities safe.

- Though support for anti-extremism efforts is needed from national and international political bodies, the most important work is done at the local level. Preventing extremism requires a firm understanding of the local problems a community faces and a recognition that local engagement and local solutions are often vital in preventing the spread of extremist sentiment and violence.

Project Name/Country:

West London IMPACT, United Kingdom

Aims/Objectives:

To foster personal and social development amongst youths susceptible to violent extremism and criminality.
**Description/Activities:**

Founder Najeeb Ahmed has used his personal story as a former founding member of a violent Muslim gang operating in West London as the inspiration behind this organisation. West London IMPACT (WLI) aims to foster personal and social development amongst youth that are susceptible to violent extremism and criminal activity. To achieve its goals WLI provides a legitimate holistic alternative to young people which it delivers through innovative intervention methods. WLI’s research suggests that young people are at a higher risk of engagement with criminal behaviour without projects that provide opportunities and training in various management and life skills. With this in mind the organisation’s intervention methods are tailored to educate, empower, build resilience and promote youth participation in civic society. The organisation adopts an ‘open for all’ approach encouraging young people from diverse backgrounds to participate in activities and develop new skills.

Operating at a grass roots level WLI is staffed both by individuals with backgrounds similar to that of its target audience, and skilled and experienced practitioners. The organisation’s work includes direct and indirect targeting of members of similar organisations who directly or indirectly promote or entice others towards acts of religious or racial violence. In addition, WLI conducts supplementary outreach work via its contact with mosques, statutory and non-statutory organisations, families, and local businesses.

Currently WLI is working to establish a post-release inmate program whereby short term accommodation, training, and educational programs will be offered to assist in the reintroduction of ex-offenders back into communities and minimise re-offending.

**Key Points/Lessons Learned:**

- Aims to encourage personal and social development amongst youths that are susceptible to violent extremism and criminal behaviour.
- Provides holistic alternatives to violence through intervention methods that are tailored to educate, empower, build resilience and promote youth participation.
- Conducts supplementary outreach work through its contact with a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations.

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**Project Name/Country:**

Channel, United Kingdom

**Aims/Objectives:**

The Channel process aims to provide support to individuals at risk of being drawn into violent extremism. It has three objectives: to identify individuals at risk of being drawn into violent extremism; to
assess the nature and extent of that risk; to develop the most appropriate support for the individuals concerned.

**Target Audience:**

The principal target audience for the Channel process is those individuals vulnerable to recruitment to Al Qaeda affiliated, influenced and inspired groups. However, it recognises that the principles that underpin the radicalisation process are equally relevant to those who may be targeted by other violent extremist groups, and as such, the process may be used locally for all vulnerable individuals.

**Description/Activities:**

The work of Channel is organised by the Channel Coordinator who is often a police officer working at the local level. Their role is to establish and maintain a multi-agency panel to enable risk assessment and decision making, and develop strong relationships with partners locally. It is vital that they understand the communities they serve.

The main work of the Channel process is conducted through the multi-agency panel. It is usually chaired by the local authority and includes statutory and community partners along with the Channel Coordinator. Depending on the nature of the case, the panel may include: police; local authority Prevent lead; schools, colleges, and universities; youth offending services; health services; UK Border Agency; social workers; housing; prisons; probation; and local communities, voluntary organisations and charities. Local areas can decide whether to have a single Channel panel for all cases, a bespoke panel for each case, or to work through an existing panel or group with the right mix of representation.

Channel is not a process for gathering intelligence, but does require the sharing of information about people at risk. Information sharing is governed by UK legislation and is guided by principles of necessity, proportionality, and consent (where possible).

Referrals are first screened by the Channel Coordinator to ensure they are not malicious or misguided, that the person’s engagement with the process would not compromise with an ongoing investigation, or that the individual is not vulnerable. In these cases, the individual does not enter the Channel process. As long as this is not the case, the preliminary assessment process begins, where the Channel Coordinator, their line manager and senior statutory partners assess the risk. Then a needs assessment is carried out to determine the kind of support that is needed by the individual.

**Key Points/Lessons learned:**

- Local areas are encouraged to tailor the process to their local needs.
- It can deal with individuals vulnerable to radicalisation linked to all forms of threat.
Local areas are able to integrate the process into existing frameworks if they choose.

It provides a multi-agency response to ensure all relevant support structures are brought to bear.

**Project Name/Country:**

Rewind, United Kingdom

**Aims/Objectives:**

To provide generic anti-racism awareness sessions for young people and staff, and to provide support to those vulnerable to recruitment to far-right groups, and help to those in influencing positions, such as teachers.

**Description/Activities:**

Rewind conducts bespoke intervention work with white young people and adults who are at risk of becoming involved or are already involved in far-right activity or groups. In some cases, this is delivered one-to-one.

It is also done through sessions for small groups of around 12 people which are conducted over a prolonged period of a few months. Participants tend to be virulently racist individuals, and staff and volunteers work to build their trust and cement relationships that are on their level. Rewind staff focus on listening and letting the participants open up and share their views, challenging them without judging them.

They also run Peer Education training courses where participants learn delivery techniques and also in depth knowledge around issues of ‘race’, racism, identity, belonging and extremism. In their sessions, they have a range of resources they can use: DVDs, PowerPoint presentations, debate and the sharing of the personal stories of those involved with Rewind to provide a safe space for discussion without judgment.

They are also able to conduct a DNA test to provide participants with their genetic lineage for up to 20,000 years. This helps to undermine the idea of “race” purity. As well as challenging the ideas of the far-right, sessions like this have also been shown to increase self-esteem and self-confidence, which can sometimes be underlying issues behind their behaviour patterns.

Rewind organises educational field visits to places such as Liverpool International Slavery Museum, Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, and Auschwitz and other former concentration camps in Poland. They have also developed early interventions for nurseries and primary schools, and are involved in training staff at a number of football clubs.
Key Points/Lessons Learned:

- Some of those working with Rewind are former members of far-right extremist groups, so have first-hand knowledge and understanding of the issues and can relate to the young people Rewind works with.

- It focuses on listening and non-judgement which helps young people to open up and engage in the project’s work – young people need safe spaces that are blame-free.

- It is housed within the Sandwell primary care trust (West Midlands), but works nationally/internationally.

- Rewind relies heavily on project funding rather than core funding, which raises issues of on-going sustainability – it would be better for it to be mainstreamed.

- It takes a systematic approach involving all those who can help.
Endnotes and References


5 Ibid.


8 Ibid.


12 The figures published by the ICSR in December 2013 estimate that anywhere between 29 and 152 individuals may have travelled from the Netherlands to fight in Syria. The full report is available online: http://icsr.info/2013/12/icsr-insight-11000-foreign-fighters-syria-steep-rise-among-western-europeans/


17 Ibid, p.140.
18 Ibid, p.32.

19 Ibid, p.29.

20 For more information, see:


23 For more information, see:


29 Ibid.


34 For more information, see:


37 For more information, see:


39 For more information, see:


42 Ibid.

43 The figures published by the ICSR in December 2013 estimate that anywhere between 25 and 84 individuals may have travelled from Denmark to fight in Syria. The full report is available online: http://icsr.info/2013/12/icsr-insight-11000-foreign-fighters-syria-steep-rise-among-western-europeans/
European Counter-Radicalisation and De-radicalisation


45 Ibid, p.8

46 Ibid, p.8


52 For more information, see:


54 For more information, see:


56 Ibid, p.3.

57 The figures published by the ICSR in December 2013 estimate that anywhere between 34 and 240 individuals may have travelled from Germany to fight in Syria. The full report is available online: http://icsr.info/2013/12/icsr-insight-11000-foreign-fighters-syria-steep-rise-among-western-europeans/
Punishable terrorism-related offences include supporting or recruiting members for terrorist organisations, or the incitement of extremist violence.

The other four aims are; to destroy terrorist or extremist structures through increased utilisation of search and investigative measures; to protect the general population and reduce Germany’s vulnerability to attacks; to manage the aftermath and consequences of any successful attacks in a sustained way; to utilise international cooperation where possible.