



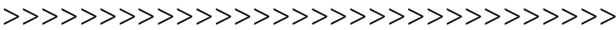
The role of local authorities in European national strategies against radicalisation

Over the last few years, policy agendas across Europe have included initiatives to tackle radicalisation and countries have designed and implemented national strategies. This initial period of policy crafting and implementation, often in the wake of a terrorist attack, has been characterised by the introduction of “hard” or “repressive” counter-radicalisation measures, whether legal or administrative in nature (arrest, proscription of organisation, freezing of assets, etc.).

In complement to these repressive measures, prevention initiatives have progressively been included in national strategies and legislations. The degree of involvement and capacities of local authorities for decision-making vary from one country to another. Some give local authorities a large margin of autonomy to decide counter-radicalisation initiatives, such as Denmark and Germany, while others define municipalities as mere implementers of national guidelines, such as the United Kingdom. Concerning their area of intervention, local authorities are usually responsible for detection and primary and secondary prevention initiatives.

In this document, we present the national strategies of nine countries, which include the role of local authorities, as well as their approaches and measures. These are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom

Belgium



In the last years, the Belgian federal government has focused on drafting an integrated and global strategy to prevent radicalisation, with an important emphasis on the involvement of local bodies. A 2014 government agreement says that the federal level should assist local authorities in detecting and tackling radicalisation.

The current national strategy, originally drawn up in 2004 and reformed in 2015, is called “Radicalism Plan”¹, also known as “R plan”. It aims to build an integrated and global approach to tackle radicalisation and creates a structure to coordinate actions between local and federal authorities. Two kinds of task force are created:

- *The National Task Force* gathers the various national security agencies as well as the Immigration Office. Managed by the Coordination Unit for the Analysis of Threat (Organe de coordination pour analyse de la menace), it works on seven thematic areas of intervention and meets once a month.
- *Local task forces* are linked to the National Task Force to exchange information on radicalised individuals. They are responsible for following each case.

Apart from this strategy, a ministerial circular on “foreign fighters” issued in August 2015 emphasises the need for collaboration between services at different levels. It organises the exchange of information between federal and local authorities and the monitoring of returnees by the authorities. It requires the police to share information on foreign fighters returning from conflict with local authorities (the mayor) so that they can better organise their action locally. It also encourages mayors to create a local multi-agency security unit (LISC) to coordinate actions at the local level and exchange information between services. Local authorities can choose the relevant services they want to involve in such a platform.²

Specific plans were also developed by the local level, especially with regards to information-sharing between services and the importance of local authorities’ actions to detect possible cases of radicalisation: The Wallonia-Brussels Federation (French speaking part of Belgium) developed its own counter-radicalisation Plan, which includes preventive measures in schools. It launched a free helpline for professionals and recently created a support centre for the public and professionals. Apart from the existing regional and proximity plans, the

¹ Contrary to other francophone countries such as France or Canada, which are also confronted by radicalisation leading to violent extremism, Belgian authorities use the term “radicalism” (*radicalisme* in French) to refer to this phenomenon.

² Info sheet of the Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs regarding the local platform and actions for the prevention of radicalisation (Besafe newsletter): https://www.besafe.be/sites/besafe.localhost/files/u18/besafe39_extra_fr.pdf

Including 30 specific measures, this plan builds on the existing cooperation framework between the police and municipalities within the so-called STL (*Samordning av lokale kriminalitetsforebyggende tiltak*, Coordination of local crime prevention measures).²⁰ This model requires that the municipal authorities at top level and the local head of the police collaborate within an administrative local board. Such cooperation exists in half of Norway's municipalities and in all major cities (approximately 180 of 430 Norwegian municipalities). The scheme is mainly aimed at young people under the age of 18, but also covers youngsters aged up to 23.

The Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism stresses the need for further cross-sectoral cooperation and improved coordination between municipalities and security agencies, especially with regards to information sharing.

The exchange of information on returnees between the police and municipalities is already well organised: The Norwegian Police Security Service has established routines for notifying the home municipality when individuals come back after having travelled to conflict zones abroad where they may have taken part in terrorist activities (foreign fighters). Municipalities can assess whether it is relevant to monitor these individuals. The State provides guidance material and support to municipalities for the establishment of mentoring schemes aimed at individuals at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism, but also guidance material for working on exit programmes for individuals who want to disengage from violent extremist groups. These support actions are coordinated by the ministry of Justice and Public Security.

The Action Plan also calls for increasing research on local prevention and evaluating the prevention efforts of municipalities in cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS).^{21 22}

Spain



¹⁹ Norwegian ministry of Justice and Public Security (2014): Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism_2014.pdf, p.20

²⁰ This model came to use in Norway in the early the 1990s after it had been proven to be very successful in Denmark.

²¹ Ibid, p.17

²² see also www.radikalisering.no

In January 2015, the Strategic Plan to Fight Against Violent Radicalisation (Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha contra la Radicalización Violenta, PEN-LCRV) was approved by the Spanish government.

This national strategy aims at preventing all forms of radicalisation processes, based on a global and integrated approach that concerns both the understanding of the phenomenon and its prevention. For this purpose, the strategy establishes the creation of two levels of action: national and local (municipal and regional level).

- *National level:* The strategy includes the creation of an inter-ministerial National Group composed by 12 ministerial entities, the intelligence services, members of the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, and associations. This group is under the supervision of the ministry of the Interior and aims at coordinating all activities that result at the local level from the national strategy
- *Local level:* The strategy includes the creation of two types of local groups depending on the administrative specificities of the concerned local area.
 - > *Municipal level:* Each municipality has its own local group. A multi-agency structure gathering municipal, social and educational workers, as well as city hall representatives, the local group is in charge of dealing with cases of possible radicalised individuals or groups.
 - > *Regional level:* Regional groups can be created in the regions that have their own regional police.²³

The assessment of cases is undertaken by national and local groups. Depending on the result of the analysis, the case might be addressed at the local level, always selecting the most adequate area of intervention through which to tackle it, or for cases that go beyond the local scope and might constitute a threat for national security, transferred to the National Group. Aiming at empowering and involving civil society within this strategy, a digital platform was launched through which citizens can report relevant information regarding a possible case of radicalisation leading to any form of violent extremism. This platform is called “stop.radicalismos” and is available in Spanish, Arabic, French and English. Three different types of channels of contact are connected to this platform: a website, a hotline number and the app “Alertcops”. The information received is handled by the Centre for the Coordination of Information on Radicalisation, which is based at the Intelligence Centre Against Terrorism and Organised Crime.

To date (summer 2016), this Centre has been contacted more than 1,800 times.

²³ Four autonomous communities (regions) have their own regional police: the *Policía Canaria* in the Canary Island, the *Mossos d'Esquadra* in Catalonia, the *Policía Foral* in Navarra and the *Ertzaintza* in the Basque Country.

United Kingdom



The United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy was first developed in 2003 under the name of CONTEST. Its aim is "to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence."²⁷ This national structure is split into four work streams, known as the 'four Ps':

- *Pursue*: to stop terrorist attacks by detecting, prosecuting and disrupting those who plan to carry out attacks.
- *Prevent*: to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This includes countering terrorist ideology and challenging those who promote it, as well as supporting individuals who are considered as vulnerable to radicalisation.
- *Protect*: to strengthen protection against terrorist attacks and so reduce vulnerability. This strategy mainly focuses on border security, transport systems, national infrastructures and public places.
- *Prepare*: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack that cannot be stopped. This includes work to bring a terrorist attack to an end and to increase resilience to recover from its aftermath.

Under the Prevent strategy, authorities seek to reduce the threat terrorism can pose to the UK by preventing people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. An important component of Prevent is Channel, a highly flexible intervention programme implemented at the local level, which aims at pulling individuals away from extremism through tailored interventions.

The Channel programme is based on a multi-agency approach and works according to the following stages:

1. Identification of individuals at risk
2. Assessment of the nature and extent of that risk
3. Development of the most appropriate support intervention for the individuals concerned.

<http://www.samordnarenmotextremism.se/in-english/>

27 CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism, Home Office, July 2011, p. 3

Offline resources

D. Schubert: Wie schützen wir unsere jungen Menschen vor gewaltbereiten Salafisten? – Über die Rolle der Kommunen in der Prävention von Radikalisierung, 2016

Homme Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, July 2011

Home Office, Government, *Prevent Strategy*, 2011

United Kingdom Government, *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act*, 2015

Online resources

> Association of Netherlands Municipalities

<https://vng.nl/onderwerpenindex/veiligheid/aanpak-radicalisering>

> Association of Netherlands Municipalities

<https://vng.nl/onderwerpenindex/veiligheid/aanpak-radicalisering/nieuws/rol-gemeenten-in-integrale-aanpak-radicalisering-factsheet>

> Belgian Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs

https://www.besafe.be/sites/besafe.localhost/files/u18/besafe39_extra_fr.pdf

> Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice

https://english.nctv.nl/Images/def-a5-nctvjihadismuk-03-lr_tcm92-562673.pdf

> Dutch national Coordinator for Security and Counter-terrorism

https://english.nctv.nl/themes_en/Counterterrorism/

> French Ministry of the Interior

[file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/decret-2016-553-6mai2016-sgciidr%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/decret-2016-553-6mai2016-sgciidr%20(1).pdf)

> North Rhine-Westphalia ministry of the Interior

http://www.mik.nrw.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Redakteure/Verfassungsschutz/Dokumente/Wegweiser/FAQ_Wegweiser_Maerz_2015.pdf

> Norwegian ministry of Justice and Public Security

https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism_2014.pdf

>Swedish ministry of Justice

<http://www.government.se/sb/d/16072/a/195928>

> Swedish National coordinator for protecting democracy against violent extremism

<http://www.samordnarenmotextremism.se/in-english/>