

EXPERT MEETING ON RADICALIZATION

Thursday 15 December 2016

**IBIS hotel Utrecht, IJssel zaal (room "IJssel"), Bizetlaan 1, Utrecht,
Netherlands**

Notes

Willem opens the meeting by welcoming everyone to Utrecht. He tells the participants that CEP was founded 35 years ago, at that time being the "solution" to the problem the high number of Foreign National Prisoners¹. The organization's aim was the exchange of knowledge and best practices, and has grown over the years. In 2007 the first General Assembly took place in Tallinn (Estonia).

At the moment CEP has an important role in Europe as being a spokesperson and counsellor to the Council of Europe and other European bodies. For example it was CEP's initiative to start the working on the Recommendations on Community Sentences (together with the Council of Europe) and she has the observer status in the PC-CP. CEP has members (full, individual and universities) in almost all European countries.

Then Anna Esquerrà, CEP Liaison and Policy, officer takes over and tells about the projects on Radicalization in which CEP is involved: "Re-Story" (led by the University of Leuven, CEP is associated partner), "Enhancing cross border mutual legal assistance" (led by the European Law Academy ERA, CEP is associated partner), "DERAD" (led by the Italian Ministry of Justice, CEP is associated partner) and LIAISE II (led by EFUS, CEP is full partner).

More detailed information can be found in Anna's powerpoint (attached).

The first participant to start with an individual presentation is Ada Andreas, who works for the TER (Terrorism, Extremism and Radicalization) team of the Dutch Probation Service. This team works with jihadists and thus concentrates its work in the cities where they live². It started in The Hague where the work was most needed because of the many jihadist offenders there, and the team works with high risk offenders only. They meet their clients every week and focus on disengagement: where are the small openings towards a new and different life?

¹ The average rate in Europe at the moment is 23%.

² In Ada's presentation there is a map of the Netherlands that shows the concentration of the offenders.

Because of the heavy and extremely difficult work, the probation officers in the team (only 12!) are supported by a psychiatrist and a muslim theologian. And they know one truth: a "deradicalization carwash" does not exist!

All detailed information can be found in Ada's powerpoint (attached).

Ada is followed by Carl Beckers of the Flemish House of Justice. These Houses of Justice (existing in the French part – 14 houses, the Flemish part – also 14 houses and the German part of Belgium – 1 house) do the probation work in Belgium. It is only since 2015 that these separate organizations exist – before 2015 all probation activities belonged to the Ministry of Justice.

In each house there is a manager and there are justice assistants (probation officers). Their tasks are:

- Penal matters: advice to judges and the courts
- Supervision
- Victim support
- Civil matters: custody and citizen rights

On a central level there are the policy workers, of which Carl is one: he is the contact person for the topic of Radicalization.

Since the attacks in Brussels the cooperation with other partners in the judicial chain has grown expansively. Also a database for Foreign³ Terrorist fighters has been set up, in which now around 600 people are listed divided in 5 categories (for example also the people that have not committed a crime but are thought to maybe become a risk are included).

Not all Probation officers have access to this database – at the moment it is being discussed if this is suitable and useful to be able to see the complete information. The Team Radicalization however does have access.

The contacts with the Police department have become more flexible in order to ensure an effective follow-up of radicalization cases by both services.

Another important development is that a guideline from the minister of internal affairs and the minister of justice has made it possible for mayors to establish multi-disciplinary meetings for terror-watchlist cases. Also the probation service has attended a few of these meetings, which have proved to be very useful for the exchange of information. Also meetings with the penitentiary sector are arranged for the continuity of someone in prison and then coming out.

The category "terrorist offender" has been created in 2016, since it never existed in the past. There are now 37 terrorist cases in Flanders and besides these also "suspected cases". These latter ones are very difficult because there are no real accusations or sentences. Of the actual terror cases 90% is in the pre-trial phase, which means 'presumed innocent unless proved otherwise'.

Every House of Justice in Belgium has 2 reference persons for radicalization. They have been trained and will receive a second training in January 2017.



³ "Foreign" here means people who have been abroad (in Syria) or are planning to go.

Next speaker is Hanna Ouled Slaoui from the community of Vilvoorde in Belgium. She works in the community and is coordinator of the so-called "Round Table" in her city. Vilvoorde is facing some serious problems nowadays: 50% of the people is unemployed, of which 42% of foreign origin. There are a lot of school drop outs and the gap between rich and poor is large.

Vilvoorde knows a lot of people who have gone to Syria or are planning to go. Main reason is the lack of prospects and the high frustration that people feel. Something therefore needed to be done, and this is where the Round Table comes in. Here many partners (social workers, school, police – all professional actors that are needed for the case are involved) come together for meetings led by the mayor – a very successful approach. The difficulty however is the confidentiality: not all partners want and/or are allowed to provide the other partners with details of the person.

Oliver Field from NOMS (National Offender Management Service, UK) tells that in his organization there are 3 experts on Extremism, who have oversight not only on people under probation but also on those in prison. Security and treatment are separate aspects in the process, although the experts of both fields do work together.

NOMS offers joint trainings for prison and probation staff and makes use of assessment tools among which the "ERG" (Extreme Risk Guidance), under which 250 people have now been assessed.

This tool entails the engagement of someone, the intention to actually commit an offence, and his or her "capability", which means certain contacts, having access to weapons etcetera.

Oliver says that the so-called "risk factors" of someone are very much alike as those indicated by Ada Andreas (for example control, lack of identity, the "we-us" feeling etcetera).

Several other measures/tools are available like the "Healthy Identity Intervention" (approximately 100 persons have participated in this up till now) and Mindfulness techniques.

At the moment in UK England & Wales there are 175 terrorists in prison, which means they actually committed a crime. Probably a same number is under probation. Most of the Syria offenders are in high security prisons.

Then there is MAPPA: the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements in which Prison, Police and Probation are the responsible agencies. In this process a whole range of public services have a duty to cooperate.

The first meeting of the MAPPA team should be 6 months prior to the release of the offender in order to make a good start with the case management.

The last speaker is Lucia Castellano from the Italian Ministry of Justice. She starts by saying that in her country the probation system for adults is very young, and also that they have not had many terrorist attacks until now. She acknowledges however that prison and probation should be strong partners in the fight against radicalization.

The Italian Ministry of Justice (of which the Probation Service is a part) follows the CoE guidelines, offers training courses and multidisciplinary trainings as well as individualized programmes and is leader in the DERAD project. This project is for them a large effort in the fight against radicalization and one of the aims and wishes here is to not forget to respect human rights.

In fact this had not been done in the period of the "Brigate Rosse" (Red Brigades), and this still gives quite a bad and guilty feeling.



Presentations Elaine Pressman and Maarten van Leyenhorst

For the content and the most truthful reproduction/summary of the both Elaine's and Maarten's presentation on the VERA 2R assessment tool, I refer to their powerpoint presentations that are attached to this report.

Summary of the meeting – Willem van der Brugge

Willem starts his closing words by saying that he considered the meeting very good and useful. A lot of information has been shared and "we could have talked for 2 days!" he remarked.

To conclude and summarize he mentions a few important points:

- It is very important for those working in the difficult field of radicalization/radicalized offenders to be part of a network, and also to combine this with other networks
- There are no silver bullet solutions: tools and ways of working should always be tailor made
- It is very important, but also very difficult, to share data – the question of trust and confidentiality is hard to deal with
- It is important to use instruments (tools) in the work field, in order to "speak the same language"
- Unfortunately the numbers of radicalized offenders are growing, but we can learn from (our experiences in) the past. In fact there are already several examples of best practices like Restorative Justice, mentoring and the Danish "Back on Track" programme
- Definitely very important is the multi-agency approach (like MAPPA in the UK) – it should be tried to use this as much as possible

Lastly Willem mentions that the Council of Europe has asked CEP to help them drafting a questionnaire on how education and training on Radicalization and radicalized offenders is arranged in probation. Undoubtedly (if willing of course) the members of this expert group and the planned next meetings could be very helpful in this!

A second (follow-up) meeting will be scheduled for 2017, most likely to take place in Köln, Germany.

