



# Criminal Justice Platform Europe

**Radicalisation and Violent Extremism Conference, Barcelona, 14th October 2015**

**Criminal Justice Platform/Centre of Legal Studies**

## **Workshop 2**

**Chair:** Kris Vanspauwen, Executive Officer, European Forum for Restorative Justice (NL)

**Experts Panel:** Carys Keane, National Specialist lead for Extremism, Intervention Services, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), (UK)

Julia Reinelt, Practitioner and Head of International Affairs from the Violence Prevention Network (VPN), (D)

Iliana Taneva, Secretary of the Council for Penological Cooperation (PC-CP), Council of Europe (CoE)

**Participants:** 76

**Notes:** Kirsten Hawlitschek, Executive Director, EuroPris

**Impression:** High attendance: wide range of questions to each panel member; great interest in practical and organisational implementation; positive engagement because of simultaneous translation from Spanish into English.

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### Opening statements

VPN: civic-public partnership; cooperation between public and NGO is a good and important path to address the problems

NOMS - programs are not ideologically based and they rely on other experts to deal with those issues; the programmes presented are just one of the many aspects of the work that NOMS is doing with their offenders.

### Questions from the audience

Governor of Oslo Prison: who are the VPN program professionals? How do you recruit them, how to train them, how do you cooperate with prison service?

- In-house training is provided for their trainers;



- recruitment of good trainers: trainer personality is more important than methodological details; they need inspiration and specific enthusiasm to do this job; hard to find good persons for the job; trying to find people who already work with Muslims in prison as volunteers for many years; trainers do not need to be Muslims themselves, but they need to have knowledge about Islam; it is easier for the trainers to connect with the clients than it is for prison staff to make this connection, because people often distrust the prison service;
- often they start the training of the trainers together with prison staff to make sure that they have a good cooperation and that they complement each other in their work with the offenders.

Vivian Geiran, DG Irish Probation Service: 200 people have been through the process in NOMS – how do you organize this in such a vast total prison population as is the case in England and the same for Germany? From probation perspective it is even more difficult to organize services for small numbers of clients spread over large countries.

- NOMS: have a number of structures in place: for probation and prison they have a so-called extremist lead; as soon as someone is sentenced the information immediately goes out to probation and prison services; important to keep communication lines open – specifically difficult is communication with police, when offenders are convicted for something else, because of lack of sufficient evidence, but when there is still a danger of radicalization/violence; a good communication-structure and close contacts with the police are essential.

- VPN does not work in all German federal states; but they try to be accessible and are also ready to address questions from states where they are not working.

Ada Andreas, Dutch Probation Service: In the Netherlands VERA2 is used for assessing violent extremism – what is the opinion of NOMS concerning this assessment tool?

- VERA is not up to the standard that NOMS wanted, but it is used internationally; VERA is used in Australia and Canada; but as not all extremists are violent, Canada is now reviewing the ERG system of NOMS; VERA and ERG are both used for individuals that are involved in extremism; ERG was developed for convicted individuals: case formulation approach, individual interviews and any other sources that can be accessed to find out who the individual is; conclusions are drawn from the interviews; it is a time intensive in-depth process lasting about 3-5 days and resulting in a report; pilot evaluations of ERG are currently being conducted.

Response Ada: VERA standards are still under discussion; mental health problems of extremists are, for example, not sufficiently taken into account with the VERA tool.

Katharina Schwarzl, Austrian Prison Service: AKT program of Austria is not specifically dealing with radicalisation – could the AKT trainers be trained in radicalization? How about data protection in the case of public-NGO cooperation? If NOMS uses assessment tools – are the prisoners already convicted?

- VPN implements train-the-trainer programs and could train also train the Austrian trainers; data protection is an issue – but there are strict rules; files and reports are only accessible by the trainers; no mail communication, only paper hard copies and/or using a special secured server for digital communication; data are not shared with anyone.



NOMS: how do you feedback information to prison or police?

VPN: does not give the personal files; only anonymised aggregated information; they do not report to security institutions – only if they see a serious threat of future actions; in that case they would contact security agencies; they never had a problem with staff leaking information; inmates are also not allowed to share the opening up of other participants during joint sessions with outsiders – if they would did, they would be excluded from the programme – but this happened only 1 or 2 times.

Gerhard Ploeg, Prison and Probation Service Norway: Is the development of the Council of Europe guidelines coordinated with RAN guidelines? NOMS mentioned desistance and good lives model – is it included in a structured way in their programme? In what way is probation involved in your processes and at what stage?

Ilina Taneva: CoE/PCCP (Penological Council) is in contact with RAN and the PCCP chair participated at the RAN meeting in Rome; co-chair of RAN was invited to CoE guideline drafting; regularly their news is received by CoE; CoE plans to involve RAN in the drafting of practical measures – RAN handbook is a collection of best practices on good management of radicalized offenders.

NOMS does not use the ERG assessment tool in the pre-conviction stage; good life and desistance models are structurally included in all intervention programs with the offenders; probation is the majority of their work – NOMS has individuals across the country to work with released offenders.

VPN work with both, prison and probation services; differences from state to state where they are active.

Carlos Soler, head of Rehabilitation programs, Prison Service Catalonia: how much do you include interventions on critical thinking in general and do you also measure these interventions to improve their capacity? What is the importance that you give to this intervention?

VPN general approach is that their clients should not just take over an opinion; instead they should learn critical thinking; clients are stimulated to question all kinds of issues.

NOMS: critical thinking is fundamental to their programme: perspective taking – how relevant is this in my world; integrative complexity – make judgements; increase resilience – deal emotionally and cognitively.

Harald Fosker, Prison and Probation Service Norway: CoE guidelines – what kind of specific actions can we take with the guidelines; programmes targeting anger management and critical thinking are programmes that we are dealing with for many years; all comes down to human rights and good prison management which is already in place. Who owns the offender? Prison, probation, NGO or society? Normalization – along those lines should be thought all the time, no matter if, or if not, radicalised.

NOMS: it is the responsibility of the state once the offender is convicted and the government has the responsibility to rehabilitate them back into society. Working on affecting change on how people are and how people think is a very new approach. Essential is that we want to reintegrate them back into society; therefore, good life's model is part of the normalization



VPN: cooperation with civic organizations and using a variety of approaches is important as one does not know to what kind of measure the offender will respond.

CoE: normalization is not yet defined by the CoE and also not mentioned in the guidelines separately; but it is included as a notion in the guidelines with all the proposed measures.

Nuno... Head EM Prison and Probation Service Portugal: Do you use EM at NOMS? What is the role of EM in the disengagement process?

NOMS: EM is used in the UK and it is big business. It is used with some extremist offenders that are on license in the community. And for some that are still under investigation by the police.

PRI Etab ... : Did NOMS update and develop their models and guidelines taking into account to the developments in the MENA region? And taking into account the fighters that come back from MENA region? Can anything that has been said today be of relevance for the CoE guidelines?

NOMS: there is a growing number of returnees and especially women in UK; so they indeed have to adapt to this situation and try to keep the tools updated – currently NOMS is more reactive due to the fast developments.

-Irina Taneva: for the CoE plenary meeting there are experts invited from the MENA region; young offenders should be treated separately as young offenders – not as adults.

- Irina Taneva: CoE invites practitioners to give feedback on their guidelines that are now published on the CoE/PCCP website.

**EuroPris** - European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services

**EFRJ**- European Forum for Restorative Justice

**CEP** - Confederation of European Probation

