

Evaluation Report

Project: Reducing Influences that Radicalise Prisoners (RIRP)

Application Reference Nr. JLS/2007/SEC/FPA/C1/001

EC Programme: Freedom, Justice and Security - Prevention of crime¹

Duration: 17 December 2007 – 31 December 2010

Content:

1	Introduction	2
2	Short description on the implementation of the project	4
2.1	Project constitution	4
2.2	Project objectives	5
2.3	Projects development	6
3	Training Pilots	11
3.1	London Probation Trust	11
3.2	Violence Prevention Network	20
3.3	Overall evaluation of Training Pilots	21
4	Conclusion	23

Bremen 21 December 2010

Eduard Matt

"This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

¹ Since the award of this grant the Directorate-General has divided into two - DG Home Affairs and DG Justice (1 July 2010). This project now officially falls under DG Home Affairs.

1 Introduction

The project 'Reducing Influences that Radicalise Prisoners' focuses on individuals who have been convicted for terrorist-related offences and looks at increasing organisational capability to engage with such offenders.

In the UK, following the 7th July 2007 bombings in London an increasing number of offenders began to be sentenced under the Terrorism Act 2006 (so called TACT Offenders). This led to discussions hoping to identify new and effective strategies for working with this group of offenders, in prison as well as in the field of resettlement and reintegration outside prison. Having a new type of extremist offender in prison and the reality of a number of these offenders being released from prison into the community (under Probation supervision), led to the need to find new ways of working with this kind of offender. This included working with them in prison (especially on the question of de-radicalisation), but included all aspects of resettlement and reintegration after release.

In the UK, there has been some previous experience in working with extremist offenders, particularly those coming from the background of the IRA. Work has also been done with right-wing offenders. In recent years however there has been an increase in extremist offenders, especially Islamist² offenders and with this particular group, there is no previous experience.

In Germany, there has also been some previous experience in working with extremist offenders – for example in the late seventies and early eighties with left wing extremism the RAF etc. Also, for almost twenty years, there has been a discussion about and policies against right-wing offenders. However there has been no discussion on specific re-integration strategies for ex-prisoners or for these types of offenders for prison or probation staff.

The goal of the project has been twofold; on the one side there is the necessity for raising the level of awareness and understanding of staff for this new topic; on the other side there should be some practical help for the staff in working with extremist, especially Islamist offenders. To achieve these goals it was planned that a training programme for prison and probation staff would be developed and piloted. The training aimed to:

1. Improve staff's understanding of Islam and the common distortions advocated by extremists
2. Improve practice skills in working with this kind of offender
3. Learn about influencing factors into radicalisation and methods of de-radicalisation
4. Identify strategies (interventions) for resettlement/reintegration.

² It is important in this discussion to clarify the terminology used. The word 'Islamist' is used in this report to distinguish the offenders convicted under terrorism charges, having a Muslim background and a sectarian use of the religion, which is not common within the Muslim community.



Before such a programme could be developed however the piece of research was to be commissioned in order to map out some of the context behind this offending group, key factors that lead to the radicalisation of an individual and methods of engagement and intervention.

The topic is, in this way of conceptualisation, a rather new and ambitious one. New approaches have been required throughout the project. There is a need to work on the problem; there are discussions and politics in the field about it. However, when the project started there had been little research, work and experience conducted on the topic. The project therefore worked on a little known, new field of work.

The following report firstly makes a short description about the RIRP project and its development - to see the implementation progress as well as the embedded discussions. It then gives an evaluation of the staff-focused training courses delivered during the project in both London and in Berlin. The report ends with some general remarks.

2 Short description on the implementation of the project

2.1 Project constitution

The project in its original context consisted of six partners:

- London Probation Trust (lead applicant)
- National Offender Management Service
- Stockwell Green Community Services
- Violence Prevention Network
- University of Bremen
- European Probation Network (CEP)

In its later stages (May 2009), the project was joined by:

- Spanish Penitentiary Institution

London Probation Trust (UK)

The lead applicant institution London Probation Trust has perhaps the most experience in the field of working with (ex-) offenders with politically and/or religiously motivated crime. The previous European project to RIRP, funded under AGIS, was based on right-wing and on hate crime offenders. Building on the learning from this project, it was decided that new approaches to working with religious violent extremists should be developed.

The intention of the project as a whole, was to pilot innovative strategies to assist with the resettlement and rehabilitation of this group of offenders through cooperating with existing voluntary and statutory groups and undertaking practical research into what work has been done to date with this offender group in the EU.

In the context of England & Wales, there has been cooperation between NOMS (formerly PsPlus), and Stockwell Green Community Services.

National Offender Management Service – NOMS (UK)

The role of the NOMS project partner was to facilitate and develop good productive relationships with relevant parts of NOMS (especially prisons); to facilitate the dissemination and sharing of best practice with sentenced 'radical' offenders and those at risk of becoming violent radicals in London and nationally, taking into account the national NOMS programme to manage the risks of extremism or radicalisation amongst offenders, led by the NOMS Extremism Unit.

Stockwell Green Community Services (UK)

Stockwell Green has experience of working with socially excluded and vulnerable individuals within the Muslim community and has for some time developed the use of

religious and social mentoring to aid re-integration. As a scholar in Islam, Toaha Qureshi from Stockwell Green was to co-develop and deliver the training pilots to staff members.

The project as a whole shows that the work on religious and ideological questions within the area of resettlement of these groups of offenders is necessary.

Violence Prevention Network (Germany)

The German NGO Violence Prevention Network (VPN) has a great deal of experience in working with right-wing offenders in prisons in Germany. They have developed prevention models for this group and are expanding their work to the topic of offenders with a Muslim background.

University of Bremen (Germany)

The University of Bremen (UoB) has access to the German justice arena, as well as to European organisations in the field of resettlement of ex-prisoners. They also have experience in work with evaluation research. In light of this they have lead on networking, gate-opening, evaluation and dissemination.

Conférence Permanente Européen de la Probation – CEP (The Netherlands)

The Conférence Permanente Européen de la Probation (CEP), also known as the European Probation Network is based in The Netherlands. This European organisation works with probation services across Europe. The CEP are an important partner for the dissemination of results, especially for the module 'staff training course'.

Spanish Penitentiary Institution (Spain)

The Spanish Penitentiary Institution was brought into the project primarily to host the first Conference which coincided with the holding of the EU Presidency. Following the conference it became an active member in subsequent project events.

The constitution of the project represents a good mix of partners, coming from the different areas; practical work, prison administration, research and European-wide work. This has enabled the development and the testing of a module for staff training as well as the dissemination work to be done from a European perspective.

2.2 Project Objectives:

The objectives of the project have been to:

1. Achieve cooperation between all project partners working in the field, undertaking practical work in the field and research about aspects which are necessary for reintegration.
2. Conduct research mapping of initiatives of best practice

3. Develop, pilot and evaluate a community based training programme to support awareness for Criminal Justice staff working with radicalised offenders
4. Develop a transferable range of training materials for use in UK and partner countries
5. To showcase and disseminate learning through transnational Conferences and partner websites

2.3 Project development³:

Due to the delay in the formal grant application, the main project work started slightly later than formally planned (13 May 2008).

Project Board meeting – London, 14 - 15 May 2008

The first meeting brought together information from all of the partners on the project details, established the partnership relationships and enabled the formulation of a work plan. The distribution of the tasks of each partner was also decided.

The first discussion showed that the problem of working with Islamist (ex-) offenders was particularly pertinent in the UK. At that time there was a great awareness of the problem in the UK, but this was not at such a level in the other European countries represented by project partners. The UK also had some previous experience with other terrorist groups (especially the IRA).

In Germany, and in the Netherlands, the awareness on Islamist offenders was not that developed. There are very few offenders of that kind in prisons in both of these countries. The focus in both was more on right-wing extremists. The discussion in criminology and in probation about Islamist terrorism is in a very early stage.

Based on past common work on hate crime and hate crime offenders, a common approach and understanding had to be developed.

At the starting point one problem to tackle was to convince the partners themselves of the existence of the problem. In Germany especially, there are very few Islamist offenders and there is little awareness about the problem of Islamist radicalisation in prison and probation services (the secret service has some expertise on the topic).

³ The project organisation has been conducted well throughout and there has been a good controlling and monitoring system, with the project documentation working very efficiently. The project meetings have been prepared very carefully. Not only the Agenda has been formulated, but every time also a Highlight Report, stating the current state of the project, what has been done, what has to be done, if there is a risk to the implementation of specific tasks and an overall evaluation of the project (project action, monitoring plan; project initiative document). The minutes of the meetings add to the documentation. The transfer of knowledge and information worked well. This means this evaluation report can be rather short about the project implementation.

See the documents concerned.

There is some awareness in prisons about the violence of right-wing offenders. However, the right-wing population has not been conceptualised under the definition of radicalisation.

In light of this, the first step for the project was to clarify the concept - the link to violence was one of the points that made clear the problematic nature of the situation. Also it was clear that a need existed to try to identify the similarities between the development and the strategies used in the work with right-wing and Islamist offenders, but, of course, also the differences.

Further into the project, the question shifted to; is there a special need for staff training in this field (or does the work with radicalised offenders belong to the normal work of the staff)? The project had to solve the task of looking at problems of violence and processes of de-radicalisation, to be able to develop a training package for staff to deal with extremist offenders.

At the start of the project the partners had to find out about the current state of affairs about the topic of radicalisation, as well as about the state of affairs of discussions in their own as well as in other European countries. The partners had to gain an overview about the discussion and problems surrounding dealing with radicalised offenders, in order to start the work for the training module.

The first task to be done had been formulated: start research.

Project Board Meeting -Berlin, 3 - 5 December 2008

At this meeting the draft paper of the research on Islamist offenders was presented by Alyas Karmani, who had written the paper concerned. Based on eight interviews with prisoners and some staff interviews, the situation and different problems were described.

There was a comparison with the German discussion. In Germany there is more or less a denial of the problem, making it very difficult to find persons who are interested in the topic within the prison and/or probation services. The German Partner UoB promised to discuss this supposition at the European Prison Regime Forum Board and in other German administration forums to find access to prisons.

There was the introduction of cooperation with a new project, TPVR (Towards Preventing Violent Radicalisation). The project has nearly the same partners (without UoB and CEP) and its focus is more on the practical aspects of the reintegration process of known radicalised individuals currently in the criminal justice system. Another proposal at this meeting was to contact other countries which have problems with terrorists and who have previous experience in working with these kinds of offenders - like Spain, France and Italy. Due to the lack of evidence based knowledge about the topic, it was deemed necessary for further research to be undertaken (literature, political field etc).

Internal meeting - London, 10 March 2009

This was a meeting of project members with NOMS members to discuss the staff training. NOMS, especially the Central Extremism Unit was interested in co-operation and they already had some experience in staff training.

Project Board Meeting – Canterbury, 5 - 6 April 2009

At this meeting, there was a concretisation of the further research, to be done by European Institute of Social Services (EISS). A short questionnaire had been designed about the awareness of the problem in European countries. The aim was to disseminate it around European Probation Services - done also with the help of CEP.

The German Partner UoB by this point had enhanced contact with Spain. It also proposed holding an Awareness Seminar in Berlin.⁴

At this meeting, the option to request a six month extension of the project's duration from the EU Project Group, until the end of 2010, was discussed. It was originally to finish on 30 June 2010), but it was unanimously felt important to apply for a further six months extension in order to provide more time to complete all tasks.

The special focus of the project was discussed as part of this meeting: the focus on religion and the role of religious thought. It was seen as necessary to work on this point for the goals and implementation of the project, being the core topic for the work. The experience in this field previously had shown that both with regard to right-wing offenders and Islamist offenders, it is only possible to get through to individuals, if the trainer has knowledge and experience about the ideology or religion of the offenders. This is especially the case when working with Islamist offenders, some of whom only engage with other religious persons.

Additional project activity

In Germany, in April 2009 initial discussions were held between the UoB and the German National Probation Society about the possibility of presenting the project at their National Conference. VPN participation at the Conference was agreed upon.

On the 24th September 2009, Violence Prevention Network gave a presentation about the project and the topic at the National Conference of the German Probation Society in Berlin. Most participants found the topic interesting; some had experience in working with right-wing offenders. Most participants did not see a necessity for further training in the field. They did not perceive the work with Islamist offenders as a topic for them.

In May 2009 Spain entered the project.

⁴ Due to some organisational reasons, the first date (15/16 September 2009) had to be cancelled and the second date 01 April 2010 postponed.

Project Board Meeting – Telephone conference, 1 October 2009

A first round of feedback on the EISS questionnaire was given during this meeting. There had been no answers from France and Germany at this point. It was agreed that the report should be finished by the end of 2009. The UoB also promised to do some work on it.

The meeting also included the start of the planning of the first international Conference for the end of January 2010 in Spain.

In Germany, the Bremen partner organised a national inquiry about the knowledge on radicalisation and prevention strategies in the field (translation, distribution and evaluation of the feedback EISS questionnaire in Germany). The feedback showed that there was not a high-level of awareness about the topic and the respondents did not see further need for intervention.

Project Board Meeting – Madrid, 27 January 2010

On the meeting, all participants discussed the organisation of the future work (conferences, training courses, reporting). All participants presented the state of affairs of the implementation of the project in their country. The partners have been informed about the change in project manager and project director, about the delivery of further training courses and about the state of the research. Tasks to be done have been formulated. All have been updated for the following conference.

First International Conference - Segovia, Madrid, 27 - 29 January 2010

A 'Transnational Conference on Radicalisation in Prison and Probation' was successfully held. About 60 participants coming from a number of European Countries took part. (See the documentation of the conference)

Project Board Meeting - Telephone conference, 10 June 2010

This meeting involved a first check-up on the success of the project to date:

- The training Manual had been delivered (Working with Violent Extremist and Terrorism Related Offending. A training resource pack. London February 2010) at this time.
- Six pilot training courses for staff had been delivered.
- There had been an expert meeting in the Netherlands (dissemination of the project concept and results) on 20 May 2010
- A training course took place in May 2010, in Berlin, Germany
- The planning of the Second International Conference in October 2010 in London, UK had been started.

Project Board Meeting – London, 4 October 2010

The participants presented the state of affairs of the implementation of the project in their country. The reporting of the project and the final tasks have been discussed. The dissemination done, discussed and projected (via staff training and publications) have been presented. The last steps to bring the project to a successful close have been formulated for each partner. All have been updated for the following conference.

Second International Conference - London “Engaging with Violent Extremist Offenders in Prison and Probation”, 4 - 6 October 2010

The Second conference was successfully held. It was attended by over 100 researchers and practitioners from several European Countries. (See the documentation of the conference)

Project Board Meeting and Evaluation – Berlin, 13 December 2010

A final evaluation Board Meeting took place to formally close the project and prepare for the submission of the Final Narrative Report.

- A second training course took place in November in Berlin, Germany

Awareness Seminar on Radicalisation – Berlin, 14 and 15 December

A small group of 19 experts in the field, coming from practice, justice administrations, research and criminology discussed the topics of radicalisation and violence to find strategies to spread the discussion, to find strategies to cope with the phenomena and to find ways to involve civic society. The seminar was arranged in co-operation with the German Federal Agency for Civic Education.

Having had a difficult start, the project succeeded in opening up discussions and in implementing the project activities in an adequate and convincing way.

3 Training Pilots

The evaluation of the training courses has at its basis reports and questionnaires from the courses done by London Probation Trust⁵ and by Violence Prevention Network. Additionally there are minutes of a focus group done by the trainers themselves about the delivery of the pilots.

3.1 London Probation Trust

Staff training and the production of a guidance manual for staff working with violent extremist offenders was one of the important objectives of the Reducing the Influences that Radicalise Prisoners (RIRP) project.

There have been six pilot training courses with a total of 86 people attending. All participants were asked to complete:

1. A pre-event questionnaire (E1)
2. An immediate post-event questionnaire (E2) – filled out on the last day at the end of the training
3. Follow-up questionnaire (E3) - filled out three months after the course.

Due to some missing questionnaires there are 71 pre-event questionnaires and 77 post-event questionnaires. Altogether, there is information from 80 participants. Some participants did not fill out the questionnaires. 16 E3 questionnaires were completed and received.

Six courses were delivered:

	Dates	Number of Participants filling out questionnaires	Number of Participants
1	16 -18. 09. 2009	13	15
2	03 -05. 11. 2009	13	16
3	01 -03. 12 2009	11	11
4	19 -21. 01. 2010	14	14
5	03 -05. 02. 2010	13	14
6	24 -26. 03. 2010	16	16
Total		80	86

The staff training is aimed at prison and probation staff and consists of a three-day programme. On the first day, trainers give an introduction to basic and relevant aspects of Islam, while the focus for days two and three is more operational and includes discussion of definitions, case management, and risk assessments. Further topics include: pathways in and out of radicalisation; push-and-pull factors; de-radicalisation and disengagement; forms of intervention; transfer of policies; and

⁵ The evaluator attended the 5th training course.

licensing orders. The methods of knowledge transfer used are diverse, with individual case study discussions, DVD presentations, references to relevant and useful literature, PowerPoint presentations, and contributions from experts from other institutions/agencies involved in the field. The focus is not only on extremists from an Islamist background, but generally on violent extremism (VE).

The goal of the training is to raise awareness about radicalisation, as well as the capacity for risk assessment. Crucial knowledge of whom to contact for partner agency support and communication is included, as well as an opportunity to network with the other agencies and share knowledge on how to collect information. There is a focus on the need for cooperation between all institutions involved (police, prison, probation, community etc.).

3.1.1 The pre-event questionnaire (E1)

The first interesting information is the background of the training participants.

Most participants have a probation background (65 persons, about 80%), with some of these working in prisons. Staff working in prison was only represented as a minority (11 persons). Other participants working in the field who also took part included counsellors, supervisors, staff from the London Probation Trust's Central Extremism Unit etc. Some outside guests interested in the training (but did not refer to any direct work with VEs) also took part (e.g. a PHD student, guest observers from other European countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, Germany and Denmark). Therefore, not all participants worked directly with VEs.

In absolute numbers, 36 (about 50% of valid answers) documented that they work with violent offenders on a daily basis. Only two work with right-wing offenders on a daily basis, and four (5.6%) work with violent extremists from Islamist backgrounds. Six people stated that they had never worked with violent offenders, 19 had never worked with right-wing offenders, and 26 (36.6% of all answers) have never worked with violent extremists from an Islamist background.

Overall, 57% of the participants worked with violent offenders, and a further 25% expected to do so in the next 6 to 12 months. Only 15% said they never expect to work with these groups (but see above).

Regarding the questionnaire, first, the participants were asked about their knowledge about the governmental and policy aspects of the topic:

Average Score on the questions on knowledge and diversity issues		
Question	Topic	Average Score
1.1	Key government strategy in relation to Counter Terrorism	2.2
1.2	What National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is doing in response to government strategy	2.3
1.3	The implications of these developments on my practice	2.3

1.4	What is my local area/region doing	2.3
1.5	What I can do if I have any concerns	2.9
2.1	Do you have an understanding of some of the Diversity issues in working with counter terrorism	2.8
1 – I have a little understanding, knowledge/awareness; to 5 – I have well developed understanding of this and could explain it to others		

The background knowledge of the participants is rather low (all items are scored under the theoretical average level of 3.0). There seems to be a need for information and knowledge gathering also in the policy field. In this sense it is not surprising that the wishes and expectations of the training focused strongly on knowledge transfer and on practical aspects.

Typical answers to the question E1-7 (*What are you specifically looking to achieve in this training?*) were:

- *A better understanding of issues around risk assessment*
- *A better understanding of faith in relation to working with violent and Islamist extremist offenders*
- *A chance to share experiences of those who work weekly on the case management of this group of offenders*

Other answers included:

- *An increase in knowledge and understanding of some of the issues identified*
- *Better understanding of where to go for advice*
- *What is expected of me in relation to practice and public protection*
- *Understanding of how to work with offenders convicted under UK Terrorism Act legislation (TACT)*
- *A greater working knowledge*
- *Knowledge, practical skills and guidance, to feel more confident in working with this group*
- *We need never to work with 'political offenders'. There are so many potential discriminating factors and subjective feelings around the subject.*
- *To gain a background understanding of Islam; to gain an understanding of interventions; to (assume) risk assessment; the (requirement) of risk; to learn about integration back into community*

Some participants expressed a special interest in Islam, government strategies in this field, the work of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and cooperation with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) teams. The interest expressed also strongly referred to the question of risk management, formulation of interventions and case management of TACT offenders.

Being practitioners, most felt quite confident with working with these groups of offenders: The average coding of this item has been at 4.6 points out of a possible 5 points.

3.1.2 E2 – Immediate Post-Event Questionnaire

The post-event questionnaire referred to the quality of the training and the learning of the participants in the training. It formed the basis of evaluation of the training by the participants. Some results:

Part A The quality of training

Questions about the quality of training were closed and participants were instead given the option of ranking different aspects on a scale where 1=low and 6=high. The following list shows the average scores:

- E2 – Question 1: Pre-event administration: 5.1 points
- E2 – Question 2a: Achievement: 5.4
- E2 – Question 2b: Length: 5.8
- E2 – Question 2c: Appropriateness: 5.4
- E2 – Question 2d: Stimulation: 5.6
- E2 – Question 2e: Improvement: 5.5
- E2 – Question 2f: Relevance to current job: 5.5
- E2 – Question 2g: Quality of learning: 5.4
- E2 – Question 2h: Time for discussion: 5.5

Overall high scores were given, showing that the performance and the implementation of the training were highly satisfying.

Part B The quality of trainer performance

- E2 – Question 3: How do you think the training has helped you to better identify ... persons and situations?: 5.0
 - E2 – Question 4: Trainers delivering 'Understanding Islam' – (all items) 5.5
 - E2 – Question 5: Trainers delivering probation/prison elements: (items 1-4) 5.6
 - E2 – Question 5/ Items 5: Confidence in transferring knowledge to colleagues: 4.9
- The answers on question 5 show that it is not so easy to transfer the knowledge to other people.
- E2 – Question 6 / Item 1: diversity: 5.4
- Overall experience of the course: Overall ranking (E2 – Question 13) of the training: 5.5 points out of 6.

Again, there is also a high ranking for the quality of the work of the trainers.

The reaction to the training was overall very positive. The participants appreciated the high quality of the performance as well as the knowledge they gained on the different topics. There were no differences between the different courses. The overall evaluation of the participants of the work of the trainers as well as the implementation of the course is very positive.

Part C Additional Comments

E2 - Question 7: Please comment on course

The participants had the opportunity to say in their own words what they thought of the training. Here are some remarks from participants:

- *'I found the entire content of the course to be extremely useful. The 'Understanding Islam' section was an eye opener and was particularly useful in preparing me for the rest of the course.'*
- *'Training delivered was beyond my expectations. It broadened my knowledge and understanding of Islam. Gave me an understanding why 'normal' people turn to extreme views.'*
- *'Very knowledgeable and prepared trainers'*
- *'Trainers did a very good job, good presentation skills'*
- *'Well balanced, varied presentations'*
- *'This 3 day training has been an invaluable opportunity for me to improve my knowledge and understanding of the factors behind TACT offenders and will allow me to supervise such offenders effectively'*
- *'The quality of the training was high across the board'*
- *'Fantastic course, I wish it could have been longer. Inspiring trainers, brilliant content and great stimulation of new ideas and knowledge'*

Overall, there are positive reactions to the course, referring to the quality of the work of the trainers and presenters, the amount of knowledge learned and the transfer of knowledge, both specifically about Islam and on the process radicalisation and the work with VE.

E2 - Question 8: Understanding Islam

For most participants, the part on Islam was new and inspiring. Most participants found it very relevant and useful:

- *'I now have a much better understanding of Islam which I can use as a background to further reading'*
- *'Very useful as someone who knows Muslim people but does not have a great deal of knowledge about their beliefs etc. It opened my eyes as to how similar the Muslim and Christian history is.'*
- *'Very informative, have a better understanding of the religion, made me realise that it is not as strict and repressive as I have previously thought.'*

Having had a low awareness of Islam before the training, some people missed some topics or would have found it useful if there had been more time for topics around the role of females and beliefs in relation to females; the nature of mentoring and interventions to address radicalisation; the topic of homosexuality and Islam. Depending upon participant's prior knowledge of Islam, there was a need for more details and/or for longer discussion and more information. This was managed by the trainers within the structure of the pilot training courses

Overall, all participants appreciated the presentations and the work of the trainers.

E2 – Question 9: Which parts of the event were MOST useful to you, and why?

- *'All parts were useful'*
- *'I feel the most useful aspect of the training was listening to other colleagues' practical experiences of working and case managing TACT offenders. The case studies around existing TACT offenders were also a useful experience as it allowed for debate amongst Offender Managers (OMs).'*
- *'What is Islam? Push, pull factors, pathways in, out; disengagement and typologies. All these areas have increased my knowledge. Thus contributing to more effective practice when working with TACT offenders in a context/framework that has improved my understanding and the challenges faced as a PO/OM'*
- *'Understanding Islam, an underpinning knowledge previously lacking, a new perspective; looking at typologies and understanding push/pull factors; essential for understanding pathways in and out'*

Some people simply answered that all elements of the training were useful, but others gave more details in this part of the evaluation, referring to specific areas and especially to the usefulness for their practical work.

E2 – Question 10: Which parts of the event were LEAST useful to you, and why? Where any issues not covered?

There are only a few answers to this question in the questionnaires. The responses either stated that there were none, or referred to positive elements.

E2 – Question 11: How do you intend to put what you have learned into practice?

- *"I hope to be able to share the information that I have learnt with my colleagues and be an office point of contact."*
- *"Apply greater understanding of risk management, from the London Probation Trust (LPT) guidance, work with executive office; need to ensure proportionate restrictions, agency to collect actual assessment risk rather than encourage defensive practice"*
- *"I intend placing this course onto the next team agenda at the hostel and invite colleagues to read material from training and seek training themselves."*
- *"I will be a lot more aware of push and pull factors, and will find it easier working with Muslim offenders due to a greater understanding of faith and culture"*
- *"I need to read the manual and also actively carry out my own research to gain a deeper understanding."*

The transfer of the knowledge learned seems to be a little bit more difficult. Just 'sharing knowledge with colleagues' or 'doing the work of risk assessment in a better

way' were some more general strategies. It seems that the course also made clear the complexity of the topic.

In the post-event questionnaire (E2), the question about being confident with working with this group of offenders had an average ranking of 3.9 points out of 5. So there is, in relation to the pre-event questionnaire (average score: 4.6), a small reduction of confidence. Maybe this is also a positive result of the training: it has made participants aware that work with this group is rather difficult!

Discussion and conclusions about the performance of the training courses

The following different aspects contributed to the success of the training:

1) The high quality of the performance of the training: methodology (variety of approaches, multitude of presentation styles, experts from other agencies, multi-agency approach) and especially the work of the trainers are very relevant for this high success.

2) The focus on practical issues: from their work background most participants knew what they were interested in - case management, risk assessment, interventions. By the end of the training participants were beginning to become more confident with the topic, and know more about what was expected of their work in this field. Trainers represented new strategies as well as probation and government policies, thus formulating the standard of work in this field. As these are legal requirements that participants have to adhere to in their work, knowledge of government strategies in this field was very important. These practical aspects made the training very useful for most participants. There was a strong link to their practical work.

3) It was also of utmost importance that there was a mix of people, some already working with VE and some who will do it in the future. As a result, this was firstly an opportunity to learn about what works and how, and have this confirmed by experienced participants. Secondly, there was a detailed exchange of knowledge and experience between the participants themselves.

3.1.3 E3 Questionnaires

The planned third questionnaire, three months after the completion of the course had a low response rate. Only 16 questionnaires were filled out and most are not very detailed. Therefore it is not really possible to say anything about long lasting effects of the training course; rather it is only possible to give some illustrations, ideas and reflective thoughts.

Most of the respondents still had an overall positive attitude about the course. The focus on practical aspects has been appreciated, because it helped them in their work and it made their assessments more analytical, evidential and therefore defensible. They also appreciated the knowledge they gained from the course, especially on TACT Offenders, on Islam, MAPPA and networking.

One respondent saw the danger of conflating the religion of Islam with violent extremism. An external participant appreciated the course very much because, working at an interface (in this case probation – court), the person found it very important to know about the procedures and to have background knowledge and to know the participating network in this field of work.

E3 - Question 8: "Since you attended the course, have you reflected on it and thought of how it might be improved?"

"The course is an excellent foundation for working with Extremist offenders and this has also been the feedback I have received from officers in my team who have attended the training. The course itself may not need to be improved (although a good balance of people from different agencies may benefit seeing things from different perspectives), however a secondary training could now be established with a view to developing the work i.e. consultancy/buddying work". #5

The use of the course for participants has been to understand the concept of working with VE and the networking approach.

E3 - Question 5: "Since you attended the training, which aspects of the course had most impact on your practise?"

"All of it was very helpful. The one day input by external partner on Islam – and the difficulties he had experienced getting concerns taken seriously prior to 9/11 was salutary. The case studies provided concrete examples of how partnership working makes a difference and hearing offender managers views/experiences which inform how they can best be supported by the agency to effectively undertake this work has informed some of my subsequent work on the tool kit. It was also reassuring to see some of the 'tools' used in offender management with TACT offenders – which have been used in different contexts over many many years but reinforce that Probation have the skills required but need partnership work to address faith related issues." #6

One participant missed concepts for the work with offenders in prison;

"I found this to be one of the most challenging and interesting courses I have attended. Gave me thought for personal reflection and professional practice." #14

Due to the low response rate, there can be no evaluation of a long lasting effect of the training course. But the examples show that there is some.

3.1.4 Feedback of trainers:

Not only the participants gave a feedback to their courses, the trainers themselves did so as well.

In the feedback given by the trainers, they focused a lot on the new and dynamic subject matter. The course had needed to be adapted to cater for ongoing developments in institutions and organisations working together with them, or in the political field. For example NOMS strategy was constantly developing: in September 2009 their risk assessment model was a very basic idea, but by March 2010 it was being rolled out across the organisation; the risk assessment tool (OASys) was significantly developed, including the risk of suicide assessment, which is different with this group of offenders; and licence conditions changed over time which were reflected in the different sessions.

Another aspect of the implementation of the training course the trainers focussed on was the possibility and necessity of the adaptation of the training course to newly gained knowledge. Many participants in the courses did have previous experience in working with the target group and such experience could be used in further training sessions. For example the first course was delivered to a set of highly experienced Offender Managers. The trainers were able to use the knowledge and experiences of these OMs to feed into future sessions. One example of such a change was bringing in information on how to use OASys for risk management.

To make the training informative and instructive, the trainers also saw the need for some changes to its implementation. Also for them, the mix of presenters coming from different institutions, was an enhancing aspect:

“It was good to have a variety of presenters and presentations throughout the three days. The first session had very few external speakers. This changed greatly over the period and by the end there were approximately three or four external presenters.”

“The speakers were from a variety of different partner agencies. This allowed the delegates to see the relationships that had developed over time and reflected the multi-agency approach, demonstrating the need for constant and dynamic communication between all agencies. It was also good for participants to meet the agency representatives directly, to network and know who to contact directly in the future if they needed.”

Some thoughts for further improvement were to include more representatives from the community; and also an academic input could have improved the training course. The trainers also thought that the duration of three days is too long and that the learning effect of such a length of time is probably low. Furthermore, the trainers express that to work with TACT Offenders, it is necessary to have some special competencies and qualifications. They do not think that all members of staff automatically have these skills. Lastly, the trainers proposed that only those people working with offenders should participate at the course, not external participants.

Overall, the trainers showed a highly self-reflective and critical view of the course, showing effects and possible improvements for future versions. The training focus is strongly on the practical issues, performance and content which criminal justice staff

are require in their work. They did not speak, therefore, in great detail about its European or multi-agency dimension beyond their operational requirements. They did acknowledge however that the network approach makes it necessary to take into account the particularities of the different institutions in working with VEs.

3.2 Violence Prevention Network (VPN)

The German partner VPN had to adapt the training course to the German situation and to give training sessions rather than a whole programme.

The main difficulties revolved around the organisation of the training due to the lack of interest in prison and probation services in Germany. However after some networking a prison in Berlin showed interest in the course. They have a number of Muslim prisoners and they had the impression that there are changes in this population. Prison staff had formulated problems with adult Muslims; they saw some fundamental religious tendencies and problems of recruitment in youth prison and wanted to know more about it. They created a working group in prison on that topic. There was therefore a very practical interest in working on Muslim offenders. A referral was subsequently made to the Violence Prevention Network and two training courses were delivered:

	Dates	N of Participants Filling out questionnaires	N of Participants
1	26 th and 29 th May 2010	8	13
2	25 th /26 th November 2010	10	11
Total		18	24

The first training session was held over two days in Berlin, in May 2010. Participants had various backgrounds ranging from prison officers to prison staff (psychologist, social work) and other trainers. Altogether 13 people took part and eight filled out an evaluation questionnaire.

People who filled out the questionnaire had the following backgrounds; three were prison officers, four were other staff in prison (psychologist et al.) and one external trainer. All had previous experience with extremist offenders, all of them had worked with right-wing offenders and all but two participants had experience in working with offenders with a Muslim background. The staff came from an adult prison.

The training course was done by five experts - two Imams, a non-Muslim scientist on Islam and two trainers from VPN.

The second course took place end of November 2010. This time, the participants worked in a youth prison. Eight of them worked as prison officers, two worked in social service of the prison and one in the school. The course was delivered by a trainer from VPN and an Imam. Ten questionnaires were filled out.

The training course was adapted from the London one. There was a transfer of knowledge about the basics of Islam, their situation, development, migration, religion etc. Furthermore there was training in communication and working with such offenders.

The evaluation questionnaire also had to be adapted to the German situation, because questions concerning the political and policy background would not work in Germany due to a lack of a formulated and published concept of these politics and policies. For this reason there was a shorter version of questions taken from the E1 and E2 questionnaires.

The participants gave high scores on questions on the performance of the course and the quality of the trainers. Due to the small number of questionnaires, the average rating must be assessed rather carefully (range of scoring: 1=low; 6=high). The average score of the usefulness of the training for the work was 4.2; for the quality of the training: 4.9 and for the work of the trainers of the course: 5.2. (There were no differences between the courses).

All participants found the course very interesting and stated that it would help them in their practical, operational work. There was especially a desire for more practice - especially in forms of argumentation with Muslim offenders. Some examples:

E2 -Question 7: Most useful aspects of the course concerning the topic of Islam:

- *“More examples and historical material”*
- *“Got new insights and information”*

E2 – Question 9: Most useful aspects of the event:

- *“Reflection about the contributions of the Imam; to work in small groups about attitudes to Islam and Islamist offenders”*
- *Possibilities for asking personal questions about the topic; the co-operation and work with the Imam, the possibilities of exercises”*

E2 – Question 10: Least useful aspects of the event

- *“The part of exercises could have been longer”*

E2 – Question 11: *“How do you intend to put what you have learnt into practice?”*

- *“Ways of communication with extremist offenders, the special role of honour for these offenders”*
- *“Integration in daily processes; sensitised for the problems of prisoners, better coping with Muslim offenders“*
- *“To inform colleagues and to talk with inmates“*

There was also the proposal to extend the course from two to three days. Someone else asked for the topic of cooperation between the different institutions concerned, to be highlighted more.

The average score to the item: *Would you recommend this course to other colleagues?* was high (5.5 out of 6 in the adult prison and 5 out of 6 in the youth prison). The confidence in working with this kind of offenders after the course was assessed with an average score of 3.5 (out of 5). The overall rating of the course was 5.2 (out of 6 points). The scores were slightly better in the session course attended by staff from the adult prison.

The participant evaluation of the course demonstrates a high level of interest in the topic and a useful adaptation to the participants' practical work. It shows high satisfaction with the performance and high success in learning.

3.3 Overall evaluation of the Training Courses

The training courses both in London and in Berlin were a great success, not only due to good performance, but also due to the fact that the focus of the course is on practical aspects. This helps participants in their daily work with extremist offenders. The participants can also link their experience to the content of the training course making them active participants. The examples from practice given by trainers and participants means that the 'reality on the ground' can be evaluated.

The differences between London and Berlin come into play due to different external conditions. In Germany the focus is on communication and interaction - there is no national or otherwise policy strategy in working with this kind of offender, there are no diagnostics or assessments done in a specific and standardised way with offenders and there are no specific plans for intervention. The focus therefore is on daily face-to-face work with offenders and due to this the participants gain from learning more on methods of communication and argumentation with this kind of offenders.

In England & Wales the situation is very different. The participants additionally have to learn about governmental policy strategy on terrorism, how to deal with new legislation, about the specialised work with TACT-Offenders, how to monitor the licence conditions, how to work with new partners and the professional standards formulated by their department in working with these offenders. A quote from one of the participant summarises this well: *"I need to have that knowledge base"*.

For the English participants the training course also has the task of socialising them into the (standardised) procedure for working with this kind of offender. Different aspects come into play - multi-agency approach; religious and social mentoring; methods of communication between different agencies and departments; risk assessments (Beliefs – Intent – Motivation – Capability); knowing, who is responsible for what, and knowing who can help; to estimate the possibilities of interventions etc. In the probation service they have to learn about the implementation of licence conditions in these cases, formulate individual interventions and find adequate ways for the offenders to integrate. Another aspect is community work - integrating ex-

offenders in social networks, which is an important aspect of the resettlement process. Furthermore, there have to be interventions; a one-to-one conversation as a way for de-radicalisation.

Therefore, in England, the training is itself an action of networking, a way of distributing knowledge and strategies and policies of the department to all institutions concerned (different departments in probation, prison, et al.). This means the course is itself a multi-agency approach and a way to learn about multi-agency working.

The evaluation of the training courses shows on the one side the usefulness and necessity of staff training. Staff can use it in their daily practical work and it helps them to deal with this kind of offender. This works within the different circumstances in London and in Berlin. However on the other side, the implementation of the training shows the necessity of adaptation to the particular situation if it is to be used in other countries. To implement the training in other countries one has to take into account the local situation (offenders concerned, national politics and legal framework etc). The implementation of the course in Germany by VPN shows that such an adaptation can be done successfully.

4 Conclusion

The development of the project has been slow and difficult, due to lacking awareness and the denial of the importance of the topic at the beginning. However, it succeeded in creating awareness about the topics covered. In co-operation with partners from Germany, The Netherlands, and in the course of the project, from Spain, the European discussion and dissemination has been fostered.

The implementation of the project has been done during a time of general change around the topics of radicalisation and terrorism. There have been, shortly before and during the course of the project some developments in other fields, both in research and literature⁶, conferences⁷ on the topic and, especially in the UK, developments in

⁶ See f.e.: *Bjørge, Tore, John Horgan (2009) (eds.): Leaving Terrorism Behind. Individual and Collective Disengagement.* London; *Brandon, James (2009): Unlocking Al-Qaeda. Islamist extremism in British Prisons.* London; *Bundesministerium für Inneres (2008) (Hrsg.): Violent Radicalisation. Recognition of and responses to the phenomenon by professional groups concerned.* Handbook. Wien; *Demant, Froukje; Willem Wagenaar; Jaap van Donselaar (2009): Deradicalisation in practice.* Ms. Leiden [online]; *Hamm, Mark S. (2009): Prison Islam in the age of sacred terror.* In: *British Journal of Criminology* 49, S. 667-685; *ICSR - International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (2008): Perspectives on Radicalisation and political violence. Papers from the First International Conference of Radicalisation and Political Violence.* London; *Neumann, Peter R. (2008): Joining Al-Qaeda. Jihadist Recruitment in Europe.* London; *NYPD (New York Police Department) (2007): Radicalization in the West: The homegrown threat.* Ms., NY; *Precht, Tomas (2007): Home grown terrorism and Islamist radicalisation in Europe. From conversion to terrorism.* Research Report. Kopenhagen; *Michael Emerson (Hrsg.): Ethno-Religious Conflict in Europe. Typologies of Radicalisation in Europe's Muslim. Communities.* Centre for European Policy Studies. Brussels,

the political and legal frame. The work of the project was undertaken both against this background and also contributed in a modest way, to these national and international developments.

In England, the policy against terrorism was formulated under the Terrorism Acts (2000 and 2006) and through the Contest Strategy in 2006. More focussed on anti-terrorist strategy; Contest 2 was part of the first United Kingdom National Security Strategy (in act: 24.03.2009). In February 2007 NOMS formed their Central Extremism Unit (NOMS did some staff training in this field since 2006).

All these developments contributed to the successful development of the project. Also the extension of the project network, the inclusion of the new partner from Spain, added to the overall success.

However both the awareness process and the inclusion of some realms needs further work and there are still difficulties in getting the involvement of prison staff. Most work is done with probation staff.

An overall evaluation has to take into account that the project has worked on different aims and goals. At least three levels can be distinguished:

Level 1: The work of staff with offenders

The face-to-face interaction and communication with radicalised people, forms of contact and dealing with them; evaluation of behaviour, risk assessment, forms of intervention, strategies of de-radicalisation and the support and fostering of exit and desistance. This is the topic of the training course.

Level 2: The development of strategies of de-radicalisation

Development of intervention strategies, de-radicalisation programmes, policies, and measures of working with violent extremist in prison and probation. The topic of 'what works' has to be taken into account: the measures and interventions should be adequate and should be evidence based. In England, there is a nationwide implementation of these strategies based on governmental policy. In other countries, especially in Germany, the accomplishment of the work is more on an individual basis, dependent on personal engagement by staff. There are no national standards. This is the field of awareness raising and dissemination.

Level 3: Policy

The third level is one of policy and legislation. The project does not work on this level. However of course, on the one side it has to take this level into account. On the other side, the work and results of the projects can have influence on the national policy and legislation.

⁷ see f.e. the Seminar 'Prison Service on Twin Tracks: against Radicalisation, for Rehabilitation, Uppsala, Sweden, 28th and 29th of July 2009

Overall the project has been very successful in the development of an overall strategy by taking into account the different experiences and results from different prevention approaches. The central aspects are single case orientation, religious and social mentoring, community involvement and aftercare.

In combining research and training courses, different views and inputs have been gained, the push and pull factors have been identified and practical and workable intervention strategies formulated.

In the course of the project as well as in the training courses it became clear that a great lack of knowledge about Islam exists (as a problem for practical work). An important aspect moving forward therefore, is to train and to inform people within criminal justice services about Islam. Further, there is also the need to train and inform staff of how to cope, interact and constructive dialogue with extremist individuals. Furthermore, the work on reintegration is done through a multi-agency approach, taking into account the existing networks and the legal framework. The networks had to be created as well as working in networks being learned

The references to the practical aspects of working with extremist offenders, networking, the legal framework, institutional developments and broader political policies make it difficult to transfer the project results to other European countries. There needs to be adaptation to the particular (organisational, political, legal) situation of the country, in order for it to be effective there

The transferability of well planned and constructed training for criminal justice staff working in this area with radicalised offenders has been shown by the successful completion of this project: It focuses on needs of knowledge (Islam, violent extremism; multi-agency work etc.), responsivity (there should be a link between the training to the practical work of the participants), skills (assessment, intervention planning, communication with extremists), as well as on the embeddedness of the course within regional and/or national strategies on the work against extremism. While the situational and structural circumstances have to be taken into account (networking, working with local community groups, possible integration of the Muslim community, working with an Imam etc.) in individual countries as well as their legal framework, have naturally to be taken into account, there is a degree of transferability of approach and content which is valid between EU countries.