

## EVENT SUMMARY AND CEP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

***CEP Webinar Supported by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany  
on January 27, 2022:  
“Transferring Good P/CVE Practices Across Phenomena and  
Countries”***

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Counter Extremism Project (CEP) Germany

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## EVENT CONCEPT

Practical experiences and some research studies<sup>1</sup> on knowledge exchange indicate that it seems to be difficult to transfer identified good or inspiring practices across different cultural, legal, political, and social contexts as well as from one country to another. For example, the Danish “Aarhus Model” or the Dutch “Safety House” have been serving as role models or points of orientation for many P/CVE multi-agency-approaches in the EU,<sup>2</sup> but there were rarely any actual spin offs in other countries.<sup>3</sup>

The objective of this webinar was therefore to exchange perspectives and findings on which approaches, tools or rules could help transfer good practices in P/CVE across phenomena, contexts, and countries.

Guiding questions for the webinar were:

- What are the most relevant similarities or differences between different extremist phenomena, in particular between violence-oriented right-wing extremism/terrorism and violence-oriented Islamist extremism/terrorism in the EU and beyond?
- How can good practices/lessons learned be transferred effectively across different phenomena of extremism? How can existing experiences in P/CVE of (violent) Islamist extremism effectively strengthen the prevention and countering of right-wing extremism and vice versa?
- How can good practices/lessons learned be transferred across different legal frameworks and cultural traditions?
- What are key challenges when scaling successful pilot projects into large programs and how can we overcome them?
- Which mistakes should not be repeated? In particular, how can the stigmatization of individuals or communities be avoided?
- Which opportunities and challenges does a “whole of society” approach bring to the P/CVE portfolio?

This webinar was the final event in a virtual event series during which CEP, supported by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, examined the various challenges emanating from the transnational right-wing extremist and terrorist movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Freiheit, Manuela; Uhl, Andreas; Zick, Andreas. 2021. „Phänomenübergreifende Radikalisierungsprävention – Perspektiven aus Praxis und Forschung“. In: Ben Slama, Brahim & Kemmesies, Uwe (Eds.), Radikalisierungsprävention in Deutschland, MAPEX Forschungsverbund. Online available: [https://www.mapex-projekt.de/documents/MAPEX\\_Buch\\_Radikalisierungspraevention\\_in\\_Deutschland.pdf](https://www.mapex-projekt.de/documents/MAPEX_Buch_Radikalisierungspraevention_in_Deutschland.pdf), [https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article\\_pdfs/dgap-report-2021-15-en.pdf](https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/dgap-report-2021-15-en.pdf),

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gu.se/sites/default/files/2020-03/1764750\\_korrekt-versionmixing-logics\\_digital\\_korrekt.pdf](https://www.gu.se/sites/default/files/2020-03/1764750_korrekt-versionmixing-logics_digital_korrekt.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> One challenge in the German environment for example is a certain degree of separation when it comes to contacts and information exchange between CSOs and government authorities, something that the Aarhus and the Dutch Safety House models overcome through integrated approaches. See for example: Dr. Robert Pelzer, Mika Moeller: Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Released Islamist Extremists in Germany. CEP Report, April 2020, [https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/CEP\\_Report\\_Rehabilitation\\_and\\_Reintegration\\_Aug2020.pdf](https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/CEP_Report_Rehabilitation_and_Reintegration_Aug2020.pdf)

## **EVENT AGENDA**

### **EVENT PROGRAM:**

#### **Introductory remarks**

***Dr. Hans-Jakob Schindler***

Senior Director, Counter Extremism Project

***Gabriele Scheel***

Head of Division “International Cooperation against Terrorism, Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Corruption,” Federal Foreign Office of Germany

#### **Presentations**

***Nico Schernbeck***

Violence Prevention Network (VPN), Senior Advisor on P/CVE, International Affairs and Transnational Cooperation

***Robert Örell***

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) - leader of the working group on rehabilitation; former director of Exit Sweden and Exit USA

***Hala V. Furst***

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Associate Director for Strategic Engagement, Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention

***Hamdi Addow***

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education

***Ana Izar***

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), Programme Manager

***Moderator: Alexander Ritzmann***

Senior Advisor, Counter Extremism Project

#### **Roundtable discussion**

## **EVENT VIDEO RECORDING**

Please find the event video recording here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMgGq1NecSpZHoqDeYgbCqx3hC3MZ1QMz>

## **SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS**

### **Gabriele Scheel**

*Head of Division “International Cooperation against Terrorism, Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Corruption”, Federal Foreign Office of Germany*

A joint international approach is needed to fight antisemitism and right-wing extremism, which is – very unfortunately – growing even 80 years after the Holocaust. Included in this effort should not only be governments but also multilateral organizations and the civil society. The new German government sees right-wing extremism as the biggest threat to democracy. Such extremist groups have been actively planning violence in the recent past in Germany. As the threat has become transnational in nature, international countermeasures, and initiatives regarding prevention and deradicalization should be taken. Consequently, one of the priorities of Germany’s G7 presidency in 2022 will be this subject. In this context, Germany e.g. supports a UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) project to elaborate a “Manual of Prevention of and Responses to “Terrorist Attacks on the Basis of Xenophobia, Racism and other forms of Intolerance, or in the Name of Religion or Belief.”

### **Nico Schernbeck**

*Violence Prevention Network (VPN), Senior Advisor on P/CVE, International Affairs and Transnational Cooperation*

VPN’s P/CVE approach to prevention, intervention, and disengagement focusses on working with radicalized people and at-risk individuals within and outside prison, supporting multi-stakeholder P/CVE work, as well as empowering practitioners in case-specific collaboration and locally-owned solutions.

The key questions concerning the transfer of good P/CVE practices are the following from VPN’s perspective:

- What are key challenges and lessons learned in programming of P/CVE interventions?
- How to effectively transfer practitioner insights from different fields of engagement to strengthen P/CVE of right-wing extremism?
- Whole-of-society P/CVE: how to make it work in practice? (Building on insights and lessons learned from working in Islamist extremism)

As far as key challenges and lessons learned in P/CVE programming are concerned one can group them in three categories: processes, actors, and resources/output.

#### Processes:

- Changing profiles and more diverse needs and risks
- Lack of access and limited entry points for intervention

#### Actors:

- Wide range of stakeholders vs. gaps of collaboration
- The security sector’s role in countering violent right-wing extremism

Resources/Output:

- Need to review gaps and blind spots of P/CVE approaches
- Investment, personnel, and consolidated learning resources

To operationalize whole-of-society P/CVE work one needs to include CSOs in multi-stakeholder work in P/CVE, bridge capacity gaps of first-line practitioners and broaden assessment and intervention planning.

**Robert Örell**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) - leader of the working group on rehabilitation; former director of Exit Sweden and Exit USA*

When looking at different extremist groups, especially Islamist extremists and right-wing extremists, we can observe similarities and differences. On the one hand, there are obvious differences in ideology and modus operandi. On the other hand, deradicalization practitioners see many similarities in the following aspects:

- Closed mentality and structure
- Invalidation of democracy and of human rights
- Validation of violence for political change and the standing of the collective above self
- In-group and out-group dynamics: a “with us or against us” stance
- Apocalyptic and dualistic worldview: always on a search for purity in order to eliminate what is seen as weak or un-pure
- Hierarchical structures

When transferring lessons learned from working with individuals from different ideological orientations much can be learned from the past work of – for example – the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), efforts undertaken in Norway since the 1990s, as well as social psychology and psychotherapy. In this context, the key element is flexibility in the approach towards a radicalized individual

Sound policies for reintegration are crucial to avoid stigmatization. By the same token, it is important to communicate these policies effectively. Furthermore, one should involve and listen to the receiving communities in order to create co-ownership in the processes of disengagement and deradicalization. Finally, valuable lessons can be learned from “Restorative Justice” and post-conflict reconciliation with the goal of creating inclusion and connection in the processes.

**Hala V. Furst**

*U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Associate Director for Strategic Engagement, Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention*

This presentation is available upon request via email to [berlin@counterextremism.com](mailto:berlin@counterextremism.com)

## **Hamdi Addow**

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education*

UNESCO's work on PVE can best be described via several pillars, which build on each other:

- Education: Global Citizenship and Peace Education; interventions in education systems
- Communication and Information: Internet and social media; media and information literacy
- Culture: Countering illicit trafficking of cultural goods; counter-narratives
- Natural Sciences: Sharing natural resources
- Social and Human Sciences: Youth engagement; sport for peace; intercultural dialogue

In this context, UNESCO aims to create opportunities, enhance resilience, and shape new narratives. These aims should be achieved through global advocacy and partnerships, development of guidance, capacity development, and technical support for Member States.

The core of UNESCO's work in this field is the prevention of violent extremism through education. The reasons for this approach are the following: schools are places of socialization, teachers have a significant impact on students, and young people are vulnerable to extremist messages and propaganda. Therefore, the role of education is to create the conditions that make it difficult for violent extremist ideologies to proliferate and to develop learner's resilience to violent extremist messaging. However, it is important to have in mind essential human rights concerns in these processes, such as stigmatization, students as suspects, and the rights of the child.

"Global Citizenship Education (GCED)" is UNESCO's response to these challenges. It works by empowering learners of all ages to understand that these are global, not local issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies. GCED is a strategic area of UNESCO's Education Sector programme and builds on the work of Peace and Human Rights Education. It aims to instil in learners the values, attitudes, and behaviours that support responsible global citizenship: creativity, innovation, and commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development.

**Ana Izar**

*United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), Programme Manager*

The United Nations 2016 “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism” recognizes the importance of engaging civil society in P/CVE efforts. The Plan highlights the importance of including civil society organizations in developing national P/CVE plans and presents these recommendations.

**UN PVE PLAN OF ACTION**

The UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was presented to the General Assembly in early 2016

1. CONFLICT PREVENTION
2. GOOD GOVERNANCE
3. ENGAGING COMMUNITIES
4. EMPOWERING YOUTH
5. GENDER EQUALITY
6. EDUCATION
7. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

**THE SEVEN STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS OF THE UNITED NATIONS PVE PLAN OF ACTION**

**Key Messaging**

*Key recommendations of the PVE Plan is for Member States and regional organizations to consider developing their own National and Regional Plans of Action.*

The Global P/CVE Programme of UNOCT aims to build the capacity of Member States, regional organizations, United Nations entities, and civil society organizations to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism, and to become more resilient to terrorist threats, through integrated capacity-building packages.

In this context, the UNOCT P/CVE team uses evidence-based knowledge to deliver resilience-focused programmes in strategic communications, policy assistance, education, human rights, gender, youth empowerment, and mental health. The “new frontier” prevention efforts explore the intersection of violent extremism with climate security and video games.

With respect to engaging civil society, the P/CVE programme focuses on gender, youth, and human rights. It pays attention to promoting inclusive approaches that are sensitive to age, gender, human rights, and dynamics of local context, underpinned by robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks. It also emphasises sustainability, whereby youth, women, communities, and civil society are empowered and invested in as partners and co-developers of P/CVE policy and programming and not merely as passive beneficiary or vulnerable groups.



## **CEP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Next to significant differences between extremist ideologies and organizations, there is a significant amount of relevant similarities, especially between Islamist extremists and right-wing extremists. Some key similarities and components can be summed up as:

- A) Opposition to universal human rights and equality before the law.
- B) Claiming the in-group is superior to out-groups.
- C) Apocalyptic narratives of existential threats that supposedly legitimize violence.
- D) The promise to followers of a “better” life and society, including a status upgrade of the individual compared to their perceived status quo by downgrading others (psychological functionality of extremist narratives).

To foster the likelihood of effectively transferring good P/CVE practices from one extremist phenomenon to another or between different (local) contexts, the following recommendations should be considered:

- 1) Regularly organize in-depth exchanges on transferability between government and non-government actors who work practically on both phenomena or who have experience transferring good practices from one local context to another (within or across countries).
- 2) Develop a toolkit / set of criteria and indicators that help identifying how likely the transferability between phenomena and/or contexts are by analysing
  - existing evaluations to specifically identify and highlight what makes a specific practice a good practice,
  - relevant legal frameworks (e.g. data sharing regulation),
  - the perception of different government and non-government actors by the local target audiences (e.g. role of law enforcement).
- 3) Put a special focus on avoiding the stigmatization of target groups and individuals and listen to and work (as close as possible) with effected communities/target groups in order to create co-ownership of P/CVE practices. At the same time, do not provide a stage or legitimize actors/groups who subscribe to the above-mentioned key components of extremism (A to D), even if they appear less extreme compared to the originally designated target group.