



Prevention of radicalisation and extremism

Action Plan



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CONTENTS

Preface.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Initiatives.....	8
1. GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES	9
1.1 Strategic partnerships with local authorities.....	9
1.2 Skills-enhancement programmes.....	9
1.3 Better options for interventions targeting over-18s	10
2. NEW TOOLS FOR PREVENTION AND EXIT.....	11
2.1 Methods of prevention and intervention early in the radicalisation process.....	11
2.2 Enhanced online presence to prevent radicalisation	12
2.3 Stricter measures to stop recruitment to armed conflicts abroad	12
2.4 Better exit programmes.....	15
3. CLOSER INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS	16
3.1 Closer international partnerships to prevent extremism	16
3.2 Enhanced involvement in preventive work in third countries.....	17
4. MOBILISING CIVIL SOCIETY.....	19
4.1 Closer collaboration between local authorities and civil society.....	19
4.2 Greater parental involvement	19
4.3 More dialogue – more outreach	20

PREFACE

Cases of violence, arson and planned terror attacks, combined with the worrying number of young people joining extremist organisations and enlisting to fight for them abroad, prove that radicalisation and extremism remain a challenge to our security, democracy and values.

The whole of Denmark must stand together in the fight against extremism. We must, as a society, show that our way of life – based on democracy and fundamental rights – will overcome any extremist and anti-democratic alternative. We need to reach out to those who are being led astray and offer them a way back into society.

We believe that by uniting the many forces for good in Denmark, it will be possible to get people back on the right track by means of early intervention, debate, and discussion. Young people on the fringes of extremist groups have to be persuaded not to ruin their own futures, not to become marginalised, and not to turn their backs on our society.

Realistically, no matter what steps are taken, some individuals will opt out of Denmark and our way of life. They need to know that fanaticism and extremism are not welcome here. They need to know that they will feel the consequences if they break the law.

The main objectives of the government action plan are to: improve the effectiveness of preventive interventions designed to stop people joining extremist groups; help people leave extremist circles behind; make it clear that extremist and fanatical actions have consequences; and, last but not least, minimise the influence of those who spread extreme ideological propaganda, hatred of our democratic society, and intolerance of other people's views, freedom and rights.

It is important that we pay close attention to the latest trends, and devise and adapt preventive measures that reflect the challenges faced at home and abroad, e.g. how extremists use the internet to spread propaganda and recruit new followers, and the challenge posed by the number of young people who are turning their backs on democratic values by travelling to Syria, Iraq, etc. to fight side by side with violent extremists.

If preventive measures do not have the desired effect, more drastic steps will have to be taken. The government will tighten up legislation so that anybody contemplating participating in armed conflict abroad knows that there will be very clear and tangible consequences. They will not be able to leave Denmark legally, their passports will be confiscated and they will be issued with travel bans. Severe penalties will be introduced for violating travel bans – non-Danish nationals will lose their residence permits.

The new action plan should be seen in the context of the government's other preventive work, e.g. in relation to parallel conceptions of the law in Denmark and terror threats, but also in the context of general preventive strategies targeting youth crime. Prevention is a top priority in Denmark, but it is not enough on its own. It also has to be seen in the context of our ability and willingness to prosecute offenders with prison terms and possible deportation of resident aliens. In other words, it is vital that we have a strong and effective criminal justice response. With this in mind, the government will ascertain whether there is a need to amend the criminal code to reflect contemporary reality.

We are all equally responsible for the well-being and security of our society. The government and national agencies can only do so much to prevent radicalisation and extremism. To be effective, this work requires close collaboration with local authorities, civil society, parents, families and stakeholders abroad.

This plan would not have been possible without the input of a large number of researchers and people who work in this area. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them all profusely for their help.

Manu Sareen

Karen Hækkerup

INTRODUCTION

New challenges

Since Denmark published its first action plan to prevent radicalisation and extremism in 2009, the nature of the challenges has changed in a number of ways. Preventive measures need to be refined and new initiatives introduced to cope with those changes.

EXTREMISM

Extremism can be defined in various ways. In this publication, the term is used to describe groups that can be characterised by their:

- simplistic views of the world and of “the enemy”, in which particular groups or aspects of society are seen as a threat .
- intolerance and lack of respect for other people’s views, freedom and rights.
- rejection of fundamental democratic values and norms, or non-acceptance of democratic decision-making processes.
- use of illegal and possibly violent methods to achieve political/religious ideological goals.

RADICALISATION

Radicalisation is not a clearly defined concept. It is a process that takes various forms. Sometimes it happens relatively quickly, sometimes it is long and drawn-out. There are no simple causal relationships – radicalisation is triggered by different factors and leads to different forms of involvement. It can assume forms such as support for radical views or extremist ideology, and it can lead to acceptance of violence or other unlawful acts as a means to achieve a political/religious goal.

One of the most urgent issues is the growing number of people leaving Denmark to volunteer for armed conflict abroad, e.g. in Syria and Iraq. Some of them return traumatised by combat. Others may pose a threat to society as a result of their combat experience and contact with militant extremist organisations abroad.

Another challenge is increasing use of the internet and social media to spread extreme propaganda and recruit followers. Extreme propaganda is no longer confined to closed discussion forums. It appears on open social media like YouTube and Facebook, and therefore reaches more people, including individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. This phenomenon has been observed on the far right, the far left and in Islamist circles.

Yet another trend is for criminals, including people associated with gangs, to have close links to extremist circles. The Center for Terror Analysis (CTA), part of the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), is aware of contacts between criminals and several Islamist groups in Denmark¹, and between criminals and right-wing extremists.² The CTA assesses that these close links between extreme groups and criminal elements may make weapons easier to come by and pose a particular security risk.

Regular discussions have been held about the role played by key figures – referred to as “radicalisers” – in the radicalisation and recruitment processes. Recent cases in Denmark indicate that these key figures do indeed exert significant

1 The Center for Terror Analysis: Danske islamistiske miljøer med betydning for terrortruslen mod Danmark (Danish Islamist environments and their significance for the terror threat in Denmark), 28 May 2014.

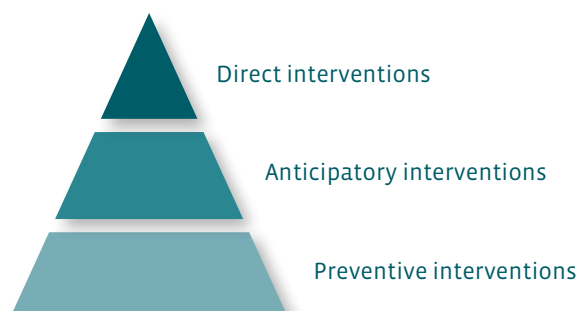
2 The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI): Antidemokratiske og ekstremistiske miljøer i Danmark – en kortlægning (Antidemocratic and extremist circles in Denmark – a mapping exercise), 2014.

influence on radicalisation and recruitment to extremist groups, and that measures need to be taken to curb their negative influence.

The stakeholders and current preventive work at national level

Danish measures to prevent radicalisation and extremism are based on the concept that prevention is possible at different levels and can involve different types of intervention. This is illustrated in the “prevention pyramid”.

THE PREVENTION PYRAMID



- 1) *General/preventive interventions* have a constructive and wide-ranging preventive aim. This involves work in day-care centres and schools, and caters for a wide audience. The main purpose is to develop social skills, critical thinking and a sense of responsibility in children and young people.
- 2) *Anticipatory interventions* target those vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment to extremist circles.
- 3) *Direct interventions* are reserved for individuals who are highly active in extremist groups or deemed susceptible to involvement in violence or other criminal acts.

Denmark has a solid, inter-agency collaborative approach to the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. The Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the National Board of Social Services, PET, the Danish Prison and Probation Service and local agencies – local councils and police districts in particular – all work closely together.

The National Board of Social Services provides advice in cases where individuals and groups exhibit signs of radicalisation, and enters into long-term counselling and partnership arrangements with local authorities that face particular problems with extremism. The board is also responsible for devising preventive measures, and generally strives to improve social programmes for young people at risk of radicalisation and extremism. PET’s Centre for Prevention also provides advice on radicalisation. It focuses on violent extremism and holds preventive interviews with people in extremist circles. In addition, PET endeavours to build up an atmosphere of trust via outreach activities that involve the community and civil society in preventive work. The evaluation of preventive measures has highlighted the importance of involving civil society and recommended that agencies work even more closely with local people who may be able to reach out to and engage in constructive dialogue with vulnerable children and young people³.

Local authority experts and the police play key roles in preventive work in Denmark as part of their general crime-prevention duties. Preventing radicalisation and extremism among children and young people is part of the “SSP co-operation”, a crime-prevention partnership involving schools, social services and the police. In every local authority district in the country, selected council employees and police officers have been trained to take part in work to prevent extremism and radicalisation. All across Denmark, regional networks of these SSP experts have been set up – in some areas called Info-houses – to which local officials can turn for advice on preventing radicalisation and extremism.

3 COWI: Evaluering af indsatsen for at forebygge ekstremisme og radikalisering (Evaluation of measures to prevent extremism and radicalisation), January 2014

These networks and the training of local experts mean that an effective system for detecting early-warning signs in time is in place, but a need has also been identified to expand these networks to include other relevant groups of experts and to make them even more effective by strengthening the preventive work done by local authorities. As well the constant need to enhance the skills of these experts, the evaluation also identifies the need to devise methods that can be deployed in specific cases of particular concern.

The partnership between the police, social services and psychiatric services, known as “the PSP co-operation” – designed to prevent crime by vulnerable people with mental health issues – already provides skills enhancement for its staff, priming them to intervene in cases where an individual exhibits signs of radicalisation. The Prison and Probation Service has also launched a range of initiatives – including a mentoring scheme and skills-enhancement programmes for its staff – with a view to preventing radicalisation and extremism among its clients.

These measures amply demonstrate the complex nature of the risk group, which ranges from highly vulnerable youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds to apparently well-adjusted adults and young people in work or education⁴. As a consequence, preventive measures have to be wide-ranging enough to reach out to the various different types of individuals who may be at risk. The evaluation has identified a particular need for interventions that target people over 18, an area in which current legislation is inadequate.

Denmark works closely with its international partners on prevention, and has for many years played a role in international efforts to prevent extremism and terrorism, for example by promoting democracy and respect for human rights in third countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-ordinates capacity building in partner countries and is e.g. responsible for initiatives under the auspices of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund⁵.

Key priorities

Based on national and international experience, the evaluation of existing measures and CTA’s analyses of the challenges posed by extremism, the action plan identifies four key priorities:

1. **Greater involvement by local authorities** so that they recognise signs of radicalisation and take the necessary preventive action – including for people aged 18 or over.
2. **New tools for prevention and exit work** that focus on the prevention of online radicalisation and recruitment to armed conflict, as well as exit strategies for individuals in need of support to leave extremist groups.
3. **Enhanced international partnerships**, including capacity building in third countries to help them prevent extremism.
4. **Mobilising civil society** to involve relevant stakeholders in preventive work, including efforts to minimise the negative influence of “radicalisers”.

The action plan is designed to improve the work done to prevent people from joining extremist groups; to support those who are already part of these groups but want to leave; to make it clear that extremist actions have consequences; and, last but not least, to minimise the influence exerted by key figures involved in attempts to radicalise and recruit.

The government will follow these preventive measures and new initiatives closely. They must be revised constantly so that they reflect sound, up-to-date intelligence and target specific challenges.

4 Ibid.

5 Read more about the Peace and Stabilisation Fund on um.dk

INITIATIVES

PRIORITY 1 – GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Initiative 1: Strategic partnerships with local authorities

Initiative 2: Skills-enhancement programmes

Initiative 3: Better options for interventions targeting over-18s

PRIORITY 2 – NEW TOOLS FOR PREVENTION AND EXIT WORK

Initiative 4: Methods of prevention and intervention early in the radicalisation process

Initiative 5: Enhanced online presence to prevent radicalisation

Initiative 6: Stricter measures to stop recruitment to armed conflicts abroad

Initiative 7: Better exit programmes

PRIORITY 3 – ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Initiative 8: Closer international partnerships to prevent extremism

Initiative 9: Greater involvement in preventive work in third countries

PRIORITY 4 – MOBILISING CIVIL SOCIETY

Initiative 10: Closer collaboration between local authorities and civil society

Initiative 11: Greater parental involvement

Initiative 12: More dialogue – more outreach activities

1. GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1.1 Strategic partnerships with local authorities

Local authorities and police districts play a key role in local efforts to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Each local authority and police force has trained experts, networks and Info-houses that provide advice locally. VISO⁶ also offers advice in both individual and group cases. PET's Prevention Centre provides advice in cases involving violent extremism.

Some areas still need support to establish systematic local prevention and build up effective Info-houses or networks of experts trained to handle specific cases. Several educational institutions that have encountered radicalisation among their students have also requested assistance on how best to cope with such cases. As a result, new initiatives are needed to reinforce the work done by local authorities and educational institutions.

The purpose is to keep the focus on enhancing preventive measures by using effective methods, and to support effective Info-houses and regional networks of experts capable of dealing with specific cases.

Initiative 1: Strategic partnerships with local authorities

- The National Board of Social Services and PET will enter into strategic collaborations with local police districts that face particular challenges with extremism. The National Board will provide advice on the implementation of local prevention strategies and initiatives, with a particular focus on inter-agency partnerships. It will also support knowledge sharing between local authorities via network meetings.
- The National Social Appeals Board will conduct a legal and social-work assessment of individual cases of radicalisation. This will improve knowledge of individual processes and underlying risk factors. The knowledge will then be shared and used in a targeted fashion in prevention work.
- The National Board will support educational institutions in drawing up initiatives and action plans for tackling radicalisation or other challenges posed by extremism. This will be done in partnership with civil society, local authorities, police districts or other stakeholders.

1.2 Skills-enhancement programmes

Frontline staff who work closely with individuals in the community – teachers, SSP consultants, job-centre staff, workers in after-school centres, residential social workers and employees of the Prison Service – all play an important role in prevention. Their close contact with individuals in the local community can mean they are the first to notice changes in behaviour that may indicate radicalisation.

This makes it important for staff groups who are in close contact with children, young people and adults to have knowledge and understanding of radicalisation, as well as access to and knowledge of relevant supportive and preventive interventions and other responses.

National and international experience also shows that mental-health issues can constitute a risk factor for radicalisation. On occasion, staff in the psychiatric services have failed to notice signs of vulnerability or of actual radicalisation. Staff groups in contact with people with mental-health issues need to know about radicalisation. Similarly, the Prison and Probation Service needs to do more, because clients in its institutions can be particularly vulnerable to radicalisation.

Finally, the evaluation of existing preventive measures⁷ and the recent trend of individuals travelling to Syria and Iraq also highlight a need to raise awareness of radicalisation among seemingly well-adjusted young people, e.g. those in

6 Den nationale Videns- og Specialrådgivningsorganisation på det sociale område og i specialundervisningen (The National Organisation for Knowledge and Specialist Consultancy).

7 COWI: Evaluering af indsatsen for at forebygge ekstremisme og radikaliserings (Evaluation of measures to prevent extremism and radicalisation), January 2014.

some form of education programme. Staff in schools and colleges are in close contact with children and young people and may encounter signs of extremism. There is a need to furnish them with the relevant knowledge so that early interventions are possible.

In general terms, all of the initiatives in this area aim to enhance the skills of staff groups and facilitate early interventions.

Initiative 2: Skills-enhancement programmes

- The National Board of Social Services and PET will expand existing skills-enhancement programmes throughout the country, including for PSP consultants and Prison Service staff.
- The National Board of Social Services and PET will expand skills-enhancement programmes to include certain employees in new groups of professionals, including residential social workers, job-centre staff, selected teachers, trainers and vocational education counsellors, after-school centre staff and social workers dealing with traumatised and vulnerable asylum seekers.
- Along with the Danish Rectors' Conference of University Colleges, a study will also be conducted of whether there is a need to develop teaching modules, other courses or continuing-education programmes to improve the competences of teachers and social workers to prevent extremism.

1.3 Better options for interventions targeting over-18s

The Social Services Act gives local authorities a range of options for working with children and young people under 18 who are at risk of radicalisation. Several options are open to them: e.g. assigning a regular contact person to the young person or the whole family, taking the young person into care, or offering counselling and mentoring following a child assessment.

This is not the case with adults. Local authorities can provide advice to over-18s who request it, but do not have a mandate for outreach work, for example. Nor are they able to make interventions or initiate exit programmes, e.g. via mentoring schemes. Local authorities need a wider range of options for dealing with over-18s.

The aim is to allow them to do outreach and contact work and provide the requisite support for over-18s who are at risk of radicalisation or want to leave extremist groups.

Initiative 3: Better options for interventions targeting over-18s

- A bill will be put to parliament to amend the Social Services Act, empowering local authorities to conduct outreach work targeting individuals over 18. The local authorities will also be given the option of initiating specific measures to prevent radicalisation and to run exit programmes for people who need help to leave extremist groups.
- General guidelines will be drawn up describing the options available to local authorities to intervene in cases of radicalisation and extremism under the Social Services Act and other relevant legislation.

2. NEW TOOLS FOR PREVENTION AND EXIT

2.1 Methods of prevention and intervention early in the radicalisation process

Experience in Denmark and elsewhere suggests that the methods and tools available to prevent various forms of risk behaviour are also effective in preventing radicalisation and recruitment to extremist groups. As a result, general crime-prevention methods are often used in preventive work in Denmark, e.g. the Prison Service has a mentoring scheme for inmates and prisoners on remand who are at risk of radicalisation and extremism. The National Board of Social Services works closely with local authorities that face particular challenges with extremism, and has devised and tested a range of methods involving mentoring and dialogue with groups of young people at risk (peer-to-peer dialogue).

DERADICALISATION – BACK ON TRACK

With funding from the European Commission, the Prison Service and the Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs ran the pilot project Deradicalisation – Back on Track (2011–2014).

The aim was to design and test a mentoring scheme specifically for inmates at risk of radicalisation and for people accused or convicted of terrorism or hate crimes. The scheme was designed to help these individuals leave criminal and extremist groups as part of general efforts to prevent and combat crime-related extremism.

One important element of the project was the special training programme that provided mentors with the skills and tools to deal with this target group.

There is a need to refine these methods and spread them to a wider range of local authorities and other stakeholders. There is also a need to continue to devise new methods of helping individuals free themselves from extremist circles.

The aim is to improve early intervention, provide professional help and support for young people and others at risk of radicalisation, and to prevent crime related to extremism.

Initiative 4: Methods of prevention and intervention early in the radicalisation process

- Local-authority staff already involved in mentoring will form the basis for a national corps of professional mentors. Local authorities will be able to call upon the corps if an urgent need arises to mentor an individual who is at risk of radicalisation or who already has links to extremist groups.
- Experience with peer-to-peer dialogue about stereotypes of “the enemy”/extremism, identity and positive types of relationships with other people will be shared around the country, and groups of young people will be trained in running discussions and workshops with other young people.
- This work will draw on and refine the Prison Service’s experience with mentoring, including targeting clients who are at risk of radicalisation.

2.2 Enhanced online presence to prevent radicalisation

Individuals and groups increasingly use social media as a platform to spread extreme propaganda, recruit new followers and plan and co-ordinate actions and activities.

Extremists used to pass on material in closed web forums, and the content often very directly advocated political violence and terrorism. In recent years, the trend has been for propaganda to be spread on big social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook⁸. The providers generally have policies that restrict the content that can be shared on social media, but extremist groups go to great lengths to stay within the rules so that providers cannot close their accounts or remove material. In other cases, material is only removed once it has been online for several days and spread widely.

Although elementary schools, youth-education programmes and upper-secondary schools teach a critical approach to digital communications, extreme messages on social media often go unchallenged.

Greater use of the internet by extremist groups means that local authorities have to know more about what they are doing. They also need to forge international links to counteract the spread of extremist material online. Digital literacy and a critical approach to online material also need to be fostered in young people.

The purpose of the new online initiatives is to learn more about how extremist groups use the internet, to encourage children and young people to adopt a more critical approach to online propaganda, and to help civil society present constructive alternatives to extreme messages.

Initiative 5: Enhanced online presence to prevent radicalisation

- PET will monitor the use of the internet to radicalise and recruit. The knowledge gained will be used to ensure that those who work within the existing crime-prevention network have the skills required to meet the challenge.
- A strategic international partnership will be launched to prevent online radicalisation, including more systematic collaboration with international internet providers.
- Relevant members of civil society, including family members of radicalised young people and former members of extremist groups, will be trained to engage in the debate, e.g. via online campaigns that question extremist propaganda and present alternative world-views.
- Online educational material will be developed, e.g. about source criticism, digital literacy, propaganda techniques and conspiracy theories, for use in primary and secondary schools and after-school day-care centres.

2.3 Stricter measures to stop recruitment to armed conflicts abroad

International conflicts and war zones are important topics in extremist circles in Denmark and in the rest of Europe. Several people with links to extremist groups in Denmark have either visited training camps or engaged in combat abroad. The number of young people travelling from Denmark to other countries to join militant armed insurgencies has increased in recent years. Syria and Iraq are the latest and most striking examples, but people from Denmark have also been to Afghanistan and Somalia.

PET, the National Board of Social Services, the police and local authorities have focused on young people planning to travel to war zones and built up positive experiences of how to approach them. This is not enough on its own. Some young people will still want to go.

⁸ The Center for Terror Analysis: Vurdering af terrortruslen mod Danmark (Assessment of the terrorist threat against Denmark, 24), January 2014, the Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI): Antidemokratiske og ekstremistiske miljøer i Danmark – en kortlægning (Anti-democratic and extremist circles in Denmark – a survey), 2014.

THE AARHUS MODEL: INTERVENTIONS TO STOP PEOPLE TRAVELLING TO SYRIA

In late 2013, the City of Aarhus and East Jutland Police drew up a contingency plan to intervene and stop people travelling to and from Syria. It targets individuals in the Aarhus area who are thinking about joining an armed group abroad or returning from a war zone. The efforts do not include people already in Syria or neighbouring countries.

The contingency plan is based on international research that indicates that visiting a war zone significantly increases the risk of radicalisation. The plan is put into practice whenever parents, relatives or others inform the Info-house of their concerns.

The purpose is to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. Three types of intervention are used:

- Individual guidance and advice to people who are thinking about going to Syria to fight or have returned from there. After-care for returnees – this can include debriefing, consultations with psychologists, medical care, dialogue with a mentor and exit programmes.
- Individual guidance and advice to relatives of people who are thinking about going to Syria to fight or have returned from there. They can be addressed individually and in networks.
- Dialogue and work on the local community, e.g. at public meetings.

CTA assesses that the conflict in Syria has become a platform for radical groups, which actively facilitate travel from Denmark to Syria. Extremists use social activities, lectures and teaching as means to attract young people⁹ They also recruit inmates and clients in the Prison and Probation Service's institutions, e.g. criminals with gang links.

The rise in the number of young people leaving the country for Syria and Iraq is of concern because spending time in war zones and among militant insurgents presents a number of risks both to the individual concerned and to Danish society. Initiatives are needed that address this challenge in a robust manner.

The aims are to prevent people from leaving and fighting abroad, and to ensure that local and national authorities have the best tools with which to intervene early and in the right way, both before people travel and when they return home, as this will reduce the risk of further radicalisation or of them recruiting others to follow in their footsteps. It should be possible to revoke passports and residence permits to stop people travelling to war zones. Of course, this would be subject to legal safeguards, including access to legal review, so that Denmark complies with its international obligations.

9 The Center for Terror Analysis: Danske islamistiske miljøer med betydning for terrortruslen mod Danmark. (Danish Islamist circles and their significance for the terror threat in Denmark), 28 May 2014.

CONTINUATION OF CURRENT WORK TO PREVENT THE RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO FIGHT ABROAD

PET works with the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) and other official bodies to investigate cases where individuals continue to receive benefits while in Syria.

The National Board of Social Service has produced materials that inform parents of worrying signs that may indicate that a young person is considering fighting abroad and that offer advice about where to seek help. Courses have been held for local-authority staff about involving parents in preventive efforts. Several local authorities have set up parent networks that provide psychological support to parents whose children have gone abroad.

In each police district, information meetings are held about the challenges of recruitment to armed conflicts, and public meetings are held in local communities. This work will continue in the form of local workshops and conferences for local authorities, the police, the Prison Service, parent groups and other members of civil society.

The police and the prosecution service investigate whether there are grounds to initiate legal proceedings against individuals who return from war zones. Regardless of whether or not charges are brought, appropriate after-care will be provided for those suffering from trauma and psychosocial problems and to prevent further radicalisation, etc.

To help traumatised returnees and to help them leave extremist circles, PET has supported local, acute after-care response units in Aarhus, Copenhagen and Odense.

Initiative 6: Stricter measures to stop recruitment to armed conflicts abroad

- A bill will be presented to parliament to amend the Passport Act. This will allow police to issue travel bans and to revoke the passport of any individual suspected of planning to join an armed conflict abroad. Police decisions will, of course, be subject to judicial review.
- A bill will also be presented to parliament to amend the Aliens Act, e.g. introducing legal consequences for aliens residing in Denmark who travel abroad to join an armed conflict. Standard rights of appeal will apply.
- Stricter rules will be introduced for issuing passports to refugees from war zones and imposing travel restrictions on them. Standard rights of appeal will apply.
- The Standing Committee on Criminal Matters will be asked to consider whether the current Criminal Code provides sufficient scope for discouraging recruitment to and participation in armed conflicts like those in Syria and Iraq, and to propose – if deemed relevant – the introduction of new offences to discourage potential recruits.
- A national rapid-response unit will be set up, consisting of employees from PET, the National Board of Social Services and local authorities, to deal with potential recruits to armed groups abroad. The team will provide a fast and effective response in order to advise local authorities dealing with immediate problems.
- An information campaign will be launched for parents concerned that an under-age child might try to forge a parental consent form in order to obtain a passport, letting them know that they can request that the Citizens Service notes this in the national passport register. Parents will also be told how to instigate an international search if they are concerned that their child might have travelled to Syria or another conflict zone.

2.4 Better exit programmes

Early interventions to prevent extremism are not enough on their own. They must be complemented by exit programmes for people already involved with extremist groups and seeking help to leave them.

Breaking free of an extremist group can be difficult, because extremists often isolate themselves from other social networks and therefore from initiatives designed to help them break out of their lifestyle. Individuals who opt to leave extreme groups may also put their own safety at risk.

EXIT FRYSHUSET

EXIT is run by the Swedish NGO Fryshuset, which helps people break free of extreme right-wing groups. The intervention is based on the idea that often people join extremist groups not because they believe in far-right ideology, but because they seek a sense of community, meaning and identity.

Individuals have to sign up voluntarily to take part in EXIT. Each client is assigned a coach. Several of the coaches have been involved in extreme right-wing groups in the past. The coach questions the client's world-view, e.g. by familiarising them with alternative approaches and perspectives. Clients also receive other forms of social care, e.g. help with addictions, finding a new home, forging new social contacts, etc. The EXIT process lasts an average of six to nine months, but is always tailored to the individual client.

Read more at www.exit.fryshuset.se

The point of an exit programme is to enable the client to start a new life, to cope with external factors such as making a new circle of friends, finding a job or a place to stay, or entering education. Some clients also need help to question their world-view and adopt a more constructive attitude towards society. The exit interventions need to be refined so that it is flexible enough to adapt to individual circumstances and needs.

New exit initiatives are designed to help people leave extremist groups, rehabilitate them and reintegrate them into society.

Initiative 7: Better exit programmes

- An exit centre will be set up for a four-year trial period, during which individuals seeking help to leave extremist groups will receive advice and guidance as well as help with finding a job, education, etc. The exit centre will work closely with local authority exit interventions.
- PET's exit interviews targeted individuals who are involved in violent extremism but have not yet been convicted. These interviews will now be extended to include people from extreme political movements. The exit programme will also be reinforced, linking them more closely to local authority rehabilitation and social-work programmes.
- The Prison and Probation Service and PET's exit interventions for people convicted of extremist crimes, including terror offences, will be continued and extended. Inter-agency partnerships will be bolstered so that clients will be able to make contact with other relevant rehabilitation initiatives upon their release.
- The National Board of Social Services will support inter-agency efforts by local authorities to help people leave extremist groups via counselling and by setting up a local-authority network at police-district level.

3. CLOSER INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

3.1 Closer international partnerships to prevent extremism

The challenges posed by extremism are international, so it is important that national prevention campaigns share information and experiences about what works. Partnerships should not be restricted to our immediate neighbours in the EU – prevention in third countries is also important to Denmark and to Danish interests at home and abroad.

The government considers the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights in our partner countries one of the most effective, long-term ways of countering radicalisation and extremism. It not only benefits the people of the countries concerned, but also helps to promote global – and therefore our own national – security.

Deeper and closer international collaboration is needed to improve knowledge sharing and keep Denmark up to date with international trends and challenges relating to extremism and how to prevent it.

The initiatives aim to improve knowledge-sharing between countries on topics such as research and practical tools, and to encourage closer collaboration on the development and testing of specific interventions so that prevention measures remain targeted and optimised at all times.

INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

Policy Planners Network (PPN)¹⁰ is a network of civil servants from various European countries that face the same challenges from radicalisation and extremism and proactively seek to prevent them. PPN addresses topical issues and challenges, and commissions studies and reports.

The EU Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)¹¹ shares practical experiences of prevention work and targets frontline workers. RAN is divided into working groups that focus on specific themes such as exit programmes, prison initiatives and online radicalisation.

The group of like-minded countries consists of a number of EU countries that meet to discuss ways to address the challenge posed by people signing up to fight in Syria and Iraq. The group discusses issues like information-sharing and monitoring travel patterns.

Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)¹² is an informal alliance of 30 Western and non-Western countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and Pakistan. Denmark is an active participant. Originally a joint US-Turkish initiative, GCTF focuses strongly on preventing violent extremism.

One result of its work is the independent **International Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism¹³ (Hedayah)** in Abu Dhabi. Qua its geographical location, Hedayah has considerable potential as a tool for promoting partnerships to prevent violent extremism.

Under the auspices of GCTF, Denmark has entered into a partnership with Burkina Faso to lead a regional process to strengthen community involvement in prevention work in the Sahel and West Africa. One outcome of this is an action plan for the prevention of violent extremism in the Sahel region. Denmark is supporting two pilot projects in Burkina Faso that aim to put into practice parts of the action plan. Part of the Danish stabilisation programme for the Sahel region is a special focus on supporting initiatives that counter violent extremism.

10 Read more about PPN on strategicdialogue.org

11 Read more about RAN at ec.europa.eu

12 Read more about GCTF on thegctf.org

13 Read more about Hedayah at hedayah.ae

Initiative 8: Closer international partnerships to prevent extremism

- The Nordic countries will work more closely together by setting up a new ministerial network for the prevention of radicalisation. Denmark will also continue its involvement in international forums such as PPN, RAN and GCTF.
- Denmark will continue to enhance international partnerships by working more closely with Hedayah and researchers at home and abroad, and by allocating funds for national and international research projects.

3.2 Enhanced involvement in preventive work in third countries

In Denmark and elsewhere, there is growing recognition that effective prevention requires that traditional intelligence gathering and policing efforts are coupled with a wider-ranging, more inclusive approach that addresses the underlying causes of radicalisation and builds broader social coalitions against violent extremism. This is particularly true in countries where there is a lack of trust between different demographic groups or between communities and the authorities.

DANISH EFFORTS IN THIRD COUNTRIES

Denmark supports international work to prevent violent extremism by working with international bodies such as the EU and the UN.

Denmark also supports various activities in Syria, e.g. helping to counter the influence of extremist groups. Denmark's "Syria Programme" aims to promote the moderate Syrian opposition, e.g. by supporting civil society and helping build up legal and police systems in opposition-controlled areas. Opportunities for further anti-radicalisation initiatives are continuously under consideration.

In Afghanistan, Denmark will continue its efforts to prevent the spread of international terrorism, including by helping with long-term training programmes for the Afghan police and defence forces. Another element of the Danish strategy in Afghanistan is to undermine support for the insurgents via education and job-creation programmes for young men.

In Pakistan – particularly in the border areas with Afghanistan – Denmark counteracts radicalisation by supporting basic education, human rights, regeneration and stabilisation. Denmark is also involved in public diplomacy work designed to convey a more subtle and positive image of the country. One objective of these initiatives is to lessen the threat of terror attacks against Denmark.

Denmark supports efforts in Indonesia to counter terrorism by providing assistance to a specialised police-training centre. Denmark also supports efforts to combat radicalisation via a good governance programme that seeks to spread democratic values and tolerance through the police, religious institutions, schools, etc.

The countries in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region face a variety of security challenges, and several have experienced terror attacks. In partnership with the authorities in the country and with support from the Peace and Stabilisation Fund, PET has launched a pilot capacity-building project aimed at preventing radicalisation and violent extremism in Kenya. The project is the first in which an intelligence agency operates alongside official bodies in another country on preventive work. In practical terms, PET works on issues concerning knowledge transfer from an EU country to a third country.

It is useful to share with third countries the principles and methods that underpin prevention work in Denmark. In a number of these countries, the conditions and frameworks for preventive work differ greatly from those in Denmark, of course, but the main principles are transferrable, provided that a close working relationship is established with local agencies and stakeholders. In recent years, the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund has been the main tool for supporting interventions aimed at tackling radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism. There is a need for the Fund to continue with this work.

The aim of the initiatives in this area is to enhance our partners' capacity to link traditional counter-terrorism with early preventive measures.

Initiative 9: Enhanced contribution to preventive work in third countries

- In the light of developments in recent years – including in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region and Syria/Iraq – the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism will be a key priority for the Peace and Stabilisation Fund when planning its budget for 2015–2017.
- Denmark will continue to implement the recommendations contained in the GTCF action plan on the prevention of violent extremism in the Sahel region and to expand activities in Kenya.

4. MOBILISING CIVIL SOCIETY

4.1 Closer collaboration between local authorities and civil society

Apart from dialogue with civil society under the auspices of PET's outreach work, Danish efforts to prevent extremism are largely embedded in existing agencies. Civil society has not been involved to any great extent and there has been no fixed model for doing so.

Experience from the United States and Sweden indicates that systematic collaboration between local authorities and civil society provides a boost to endeavours to prevent radicalisation and extremism. This means that there is untapped potential in Denmark and room to develop strategic partnerships between official agencies and civil society.

Some local authorities in Denmark have positive experience of direct dialogue between officials and groups that have been a cause of concern among the local community. The idea is to establish a general understanding that concerns must be discussed – and solutions proposed – for specific local challenges.

There is a need to share information about existing dialogue initiatives and to help civil society play a more active role in rejecting extremism and promoting an alternative, more positive sense of community.

The aim of the new initiatives in this area is to strengthen civil society and provide local authorities with additional options for collaboration on effective and co-ordinated prevention work.

Initiative 10: Closer collaboration between local authorities and civil society

- The National Board of Social Services will help local agencies draw up strategies to involve civil society.
- As part of efforts to counter the negative influence of extremists, the National Board will offer skills-enhancement and capacity-building programmes to local associations and experts to help them counter and challenge images of “the enemy” and make a positive contribution to local communities.

4.2 Greater parental involvement

Parents and relatives are often the first to notice when a young person's behaviour suddenly changes and he or she exhibits signs of radicalisation. The change may take the form of seeking out a new social circle with an extreme political or religious ideology, and manifest itself in the young person frequenting propaganda sites online or expressing fascination with or admiration for political/religious violence, etc.

Several local authorities have positive experience of working closely with parents to help them play an active role in prevention work. Some local authorities have even established formal networks where parents of young people who may be at risk of recruitment by extremist groups meet and provide mutual support. It would be useful to share these experiences with other local authorities.

In several specific cases that local authorities and police districts have dealt with, it was the young person's parents or close relatives who first approached the authorities to voice concern. In other cases, parents may need to be made more aware of circles that may constitute a risk of radicalisation and recruitment, and advice about where to turn for support if they are worried about their child.

The aim of the new initiatives in this area is to provide parents and others with knowledge, guidance and support if they are worried that their child, relative or friend is in danger of being radicalised or recruited by an extremist group.

Initiative 11: Greater parental involvement

- A national hotline will be set up for concerned parents and other relatives, offering advice and information and details of where to turn locally for support if they are worried that their child/relative is at risk of radicalisation.
- The National Board of Social Services will train selected local authority employees in family-oriented parental coaching and setting up networks for relatives, in order to support families with children and young people who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

4.3 More dialogue – more outreach

Through its outreach work, PET has established contact with a wide range of key figures in civil society and built up confidence in – and a greater understanding of – the idea that preventing radicalisation and violent extremism is in everybody’s interest. The work aims to equip local communities to stand up to those who advocate violent extremism and other crimes that polarise local communities and cause insecurity.

The evaluation of the outreach programme shows¹⁴ that it has helped to build trust between vulnerable local communities and PET, and also improved the knowledge base for PET’s preventive work against violent extremism. The evaluation also identified areas where more can be done, including more systematic outreach and dialogue with groups who may be most vulnerable to radicalisation.

The new initiatives in this area aim to engage and involve relevant members of civil society, including helping them to counteract attempts to radicalise people in local communities and helping them to curb the influence of “radicalisers”.

Initiative 12: More dialogue – more outreach

- PET’s outreach work will be intensified by involving new stakeholders in the dialogue, including interest groups, associations, religious figures and social housing networks. This will help prevent recruitment to extreme right-wing, left-wing and Islamist groups, provide greater support for dialogue with vulnerable groups who are at risk of radicalisation, and curb the negative influence of so-called “radicalisers”.
- PET’s outreach programme will be extended to include people and groups who have insight into and are able to exert influence on extremist circles, including individuals and groups whose personal networks can help minimise the influence of the radicalisers and others who advocate violence or other criminal acts.

¹⁴ COWI: Evaluering af indsatsen for at forebygge ekstremisme og radikalisering (Evaluation of measures to prevent extremism and radicalisation), January 2014.

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