

EU prevention strategies

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Introduction

This working paper maps and analyses the toolbox of the EU and a handful of European countries by providing a comprehensive overview of existing measures aimed at preventing violent extremism (PVE) within and outside the EU. It lists the institutional set-up, the decision-making processes and coordinating practices at both the EU and state levels. In addition to an analysis of counter-terrorism and PVE strategies at the level of EU institutions, the toolbox of four EU member states (Germany, France, Ireland, Spain) and one former member state (UK) is analysed because of their particular experiences with and competences in the area of prevention of violent extremism.

The paper is descriptive in nature and outlines, for the EU and the five (member) states, the (1) trends and challenges of violent extremism; (2) the legal framework and core policies; (3) a domestic snapshot and (4) an international snapshot which focus on actions in the Western Balkans and the wider MENA region. While the domestic snapshot looks into which local and multi-agency structures, measures and coordination approaches exist, the international snapshot pays attention to how coordination takes place with the EU institutions, other EU member states, third countries and/or other multilateral organisations.

Overall, the PVE agenda is quite a recent phenomenon in most member states and principally aims at preventing violent Islamist extremism through community engagement. The UK has been a pioneer in developing a 'Prevent' pillar as part of its 2003 counter-terrorism strategy and has since then actively contributed to the development of an EU-level PVE framework. This EU framework has in turn pushed other member states, like Ireland and Spain, to develop their own national PVE strategies in recent years. While Germany has also over the past decade made significant strides in preventing involvement in extremism and has brought its national practices to the EU level, France has generally favoured a more securitised than preventive approach.

1. European Union

1.1. Trends and challenges



Across Europe, the link between radicalisation and extremist violence is becoming ever clearer. The live-streamed attack against a synagogue and the killing of two citizens in Halle (Germany) in October 2019 was a shocking reminder of the threat posed by right-wing violent extremism and anti-Semitism. One week prior, the killing of three police officers and another staff member in the Paris police headquarters showed that the threat from jihadi inspired terrorism remains real. The escape of imprisoned members of ISIS/Da'esh in the context of recent events in Northern Syria could have a serious impact on security in Europe.

Terrorism feeds on extremist ideologies. While radicalisation is not a new phenomenon and terrorism has a long history in Europe often linked to separatist movements, anarchism and far-right and far-left extremism (e.g. ETA, IRA, Rote Armee Fraktion, etc.), the trends, means and patterns of radicalisation have evolved rapidly since the Arab uprisings of 2011. Home-grown lone actors and (returning) foreign terrorist fighters raise security issues and specific challenges for preventive work, while the internet and social media give extremist and terrorist groups and their sympathisers new opportunities for spreading their propaganda, mobilisation and communication.

The European Union is often put under a spotlight after terrorist attacks are committed. EU institutions and agencies are called upon by member states or feel the need to show 'value' in responding to such acts of violent extremism. The EU has dynamically acquired experience in anti-radicalisation policy and has adopted a great deal of counter-terrorism legislation over the last two decades. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 has consolidated the EU's competence in this field. Full respect of fundamental rights has been at the heart of its work.¹ Over recent years it has become increasingly clear that today's security challenges – whether it is terrorism, organised crime, cyberattacks, disinformation or other evolving cyber-enabled threats – are shared threats.

1.2. Legal framework

Violent extremism can be understood as a phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence. This

¹ See, e.g., Carrera, S. and V. Mitsilegas (2017), *Constitutionalising the Security Union: Effectiveness, rule of law and rights on countering terrorism and crime*. Brussels: CEPS.



includes acts within the meaning of Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose.² Based on Article 83(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the directive replaced the EU's 2002 and 2005 cornerstone acts for member states' criminal justice responses to counter-terrorism.

Indeed, the prevention of violent extremism is primarily a responsibility of member states. Many EU countries have developed strategies, action plans and other initiatives to tackle violent extremism. A compilation of publicly available information can be found [here](#).³

Strengthening the EU's own strategic communication with common narratives and factual representation of conflicts is an important aspect of the EU's response. Developed in reaction to the 2004 Madrid train bombing, the 2005 EU Counter-terrorism Strategy recognised that the EU can provide an added value in particular by harmonising definitions of terrorist offences, facilitating exchange of information, experiences and good practices, and strengthening cooperation and increase joint capabilities.⁴ Building on a Communication of 2014 'Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response',⁵ the Commission in its European Agenda on Security of April 2015 indicated that a strong and determined counter-narrative was crucial to eliminate terrorism's support base.⁶

On 20 November 2015, following the terrorist attacks in Paris, the Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted conclusions on enhancing the criminal justice response to radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism. The Commission was asked to support the development of rehabilitation programmes, as well as risk assessment tools, to determine the most appropriate criminal justice response. The European Parliament, in a resolution on preventing radicalisation and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organisations adopted on 25 November 2015, set out concrete proposals for a comprehensive strategy to tackle extremism, including:

² Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, OJ L 88, 31.3.2017, 6–21.

³ European Commission, DG HOME, 'Prevent Strategies of Member States', last visited 24 April 2020.

⁴ Council of the EU, 'The European Union Counter-terrorism Strategy', Doc. 14469/4/05, 30 November 2005.

⁵ European Commission (2014), 'Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response', COM(2013) 941 final, 15.1.2014.

⁶ European Commission (2015), 'The European Agenda on Security', COM(2015) 185 final, 28.4.2015.



- Finalising and adopting the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) directive;⁷
- Reinforcing checks at the external borders of the Schengen Area;
- Enhancing information-sharing through Europol and Eurojust;
- Improving the judicial response to the illegal trafficking of firearms and to terrorist financing;
- Cooperating with the internet industry to remove VE-related online content.

In response, the Commission elaborated its holistic and multi-actor approach in the 2016 Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism.⁸ To support member states in their efforts to prevent radicalisation and increase resilience, both internally and outside of the European Union, the Commission identified seven areas for policy cooperation:

- countering terrorist propaganda and illegal hate speech online;⁹
- addressing radicalisation in prisons;¹⁰
- addressing the security dimension of tackling radicalisation;
- promoting inclusive society, education and EU common values;
- boosting research, evidence building, monitoring and networks¹¹;
- strengthening international cooperation on PVE; and
- enhancing the rights of and support to victims of terrorism and remembrance.¹²

By creating the appropriate framework conditions for the exchange of experiences and good practices, the Commission supports member states in the development of their PVE policies and capabilities. As such, the EU has provided both platforms and funding for those working

⁷ Directive (EU) 2016/681 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the use of passenger name record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime, OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, 132–149.

⁸ European Commission (2016), ‘Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism’, COM(2016) 379 final, 14.6.2016.

⁹ European Commission, DG HOME and DG JUST, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹⁰ European Commission, DG HOME, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹¹ European Commission, DG Research, ‘Horizon 2020’, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹² European Commission, DG HOME, last visited 24 April 2020.



in local communities to exchange best practices on countering radicalisation and preventing violent extremism.

Following the 2017 Comprehensive Assessment of EU Security Policy,¹³ the Commission established the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R) to help further developing a more impactful response to the phenomenon. The group's final report of May 2018 contains a number of concrete recommendations in priority areas such as radicalisation in prisons, countering online propaganda or supporting actors at the local level.¹⁴ The 15th Progress Report towards an effective and genuine Security Union (2018) took note of the HLCEG-R's recommendations and announced the creation of an 'EU Cooperation Mechanism', including:

- A Steering Board on Union Actions on Radicalisation composed of member states (with the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator and EEAS as observers), offering them the opportunity to be more closely involved in advising on strategic priorities;¹⁵
- A Network of national prevent policy-makers to facilitate further exchanges among member states and to discuss concrete follow up actions;¹⁶
- The nomination of a 'Security Union Task Force Coordinator on the Prevention of Radicalisation'.¹⁷

The latter will complement the tasks that the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator has been performing since being appointed in the wake of the 2004 attacks in Madrid:

- Coordinating the work of the Council in combating terrorism;
- Presenting policy recommendations and proposing priority areas for action to the Council;
- Monitoring the implementation of the EU counter-terrorism strategy;

¹³ European Commission (2017), 'Ninth progress report towards an effective and genuine Security Union COM(2017) 407 final}', SWD(2017) 278 final, 26.7.2017.

¹⁴ European Commission (2018), High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R), Final Report 18 May 2018.

¹⁵ Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹⁶ Idem.

¹⁷ European Commission (2018), 'Fifteenth Progress Report towards an effective and genuine Security Union', COM/2018/470 final, 13.6.2018.



- Maintaining an overview of all EU instruments, reporting to the Council and following up Council decisions;
- Coordinating with the relevant preparatory bodies of the Council, the Commission and the EEAS;
- Ensuring the EU plays an active role in the fight against terrorism; and
- Improving communication between the EU and third countries.¹⁸

In recent months, the EU has taken further action to close down the space in which terrorists operate, with new rules making it harder for terrorists and other criminals to access explosives¹⁹, firearms and financing²⁰, and to restrict their movement.²¹ This follows on from a Council decision in September 2016 to autonomously adopt sanctions to ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaida and persons and entities associated with or supporting them.

Since the internet has become the most significant battleground for terrorists' action, the Commission follows a two-track approach against online radicalisation where proposed rules on removing illegal terrorist content online should reinforce the voluntary partnership with the internet industry and online platforms. Essential to this is the legislative proposal to prevent the dissemination of terrorist content online, issued in September 2018,²² with safeguards that would make it mandatory for internet platforms to take down terrorist content within one hour upon receipt of a reasoned request by competent authorities, and to take proactive measures proportionate to the level of exposure to terrorist content. Interinstitutional negotiations in the so-called 'trilogues' are ongoing.

1.3. European networks

¹⁸ Website of the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) 2019/1148 on the marketing and use of explosives precursors. The Regulation entered into effect on 31 July 2019 and will apply 18 months after its entry into force.

²⁰ Directive (EU) 2019/1153 laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences.

²¹ Systematic checks carried out at the external borders using the Schengen Information System.

²² European Commission (2018), Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online, COM(2018) 640 final, 12.9.2018.



In order to strengthen cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and practices between the different stakeholders taking part in the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism, the Commission established a number of networks for cooperation and exchange:

- The EU Internet Forum brings together the Commission, member states, internet industry and the EU Internet Referral Unit of Europol. Its main objective is twofold: to reduce terrorist content and to empower civil society to offer effective alternative narratives online through the Civil Society Empowerment Programme. This voluntary partnership has been a catalyst for internet companies to act proactively to identify and remove terrorist content online, paving the way for the industry-led initiative of a ‘shared database of hashes’ and the creation of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. At the ministerial meeting of the EU Internet Forum in October 2019, member states and senior representatives of internet companies committed to collaborating under the so-called ‘EU Crisis Protocol’, which identifies thresholds for enhanced cooperation and establishes new ways to enhance crisis response. This is part of the efforts at international level to implement the ‘Christchurch Call for Action’, seeking to ensure coordinated and rapid reaction to contain the spread of viral terrorist or violent extremist content online.²³
- The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) is an EU-wide umbrella network launched in 2011 which links up more than 1,000 practitioners directly engaged in PVE and enables the exchange of experience. Practitioners include police, prison and probation officers, teachers, youth and social workers, psychologists, victim’s associations, communication experts, local government agencies and local communities. RAN delivers practical member state support in the form of workshops or advisory team deployments,²⁴ for instance to support cities and competent authorities in dealing with children who come from conflict zones.
- The European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN) is a network of 27 member states, funded by the Commission, which collaborates to share analysis, good practice and ideas on the sustainable use of strategic communications in countering violent extremism.²⁵

²³ European Commission, DG HOME, last visited 24 April 2020.

²⁴ Ibid. The number of RAN working groups, which are divided into different thematic areas of expertise: Communication & Narratives; Education; EXIT; Youth, Families & Communities; Local authorities; Prison & Probation; Police & Law enforcement; Terrorism victims remembrance; Health & Social care.

²⁵ ESCN, last visited 24 April 2020.



1.4. International snapshot

Regarding collaboration with partner countries, the EU has particular emphasis on fragile and conflict-affected countries, countries in transition and those characterised by weak governance. It is incumbent upon the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) to undertake actions to incorporate PVE strategies into traditional development cooperation tools and instruments. The EU delegations (EUDs) are also expected to promote preventive strategies and identify opportunities for the involvement of civil society organisations in PVE projects.

Addressing the foreign fighter syndrome is one of the core issues framing the EU debate on the need for a more coherent approach to the different dimensions of action underlying the internal-external security nexus. During the second half of 2014, the issue dominated the agendas of both the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council. In October 2014, the FAC adopted a 'counter-terrorism strategy for Syria and Iraq, with particular focus on foreign fighters' which sets out the following priorities²⁶:

- Prevent: Work with those third countries which are sources of foreign fighters to build their capacity regarding strategic communication;
- Protect: Build regional capacity regarding aviation security, and prevent weapons from seeping out of Syria and Iraq;
- Pursue: Improve cooperation with third countries to identify recruitment networks and foreign fighters, and strengthen border security in countries surrounding Syria and Iraq
- Respond: Build capacity in the region to respond to terrorist attacks;
- Political dialogue: Support the Iraqi authorities and the moderate opposition in Syria;
- Engagement with key partners: Engage with regional and other key partners, and support the implementation of relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions by all countries.

²⁶ Council of the EU (2015), 'Outline of the counter-terrorism strategy for Syria and Iraq, with particular focus on foreign fighters', Doc. 5369/15, 16 January 2015.



In its conclusions of 9 February 2015, the Council decided to step up external action to counter terrorism,²⁷ in particular in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Gulf and the Sahel²⁸:

- Cooperation with key partners will be strengthened;
- New projects to support capacity building will be launched; and
- Action to counter radicalisation and violent extremism will be intensified.

The 2015 European Agenda on Security (cf. Section 1) highlighted that EU actions against terrorism should address the root causes of extremism through preventive measures. In this context, it recalled the key role of RAN, stressing that – where possible – the experience and expertise gained through the Network should be mobilised in priority third countries, notably Turkey, the MENA and the Western Balkans.

The 2016 Communication (cf. Section 1) outlines the EU's approach to addressing the international dimensions of PVE. This consists of two complementary lines of action:

- Strengthening partner countries' security capacities by reinforcing cooperation with law enforcement agencies; anti-radicalisation activities, particularly in the MENA region, to emphasise the role of youth, education and socio-economic development, in line with the priorities identified in the 2015 review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).
- Supporting third countries in tackling the underlying factors of radicalisation by identifying drivers for youth extremism, empowering women, promoting community dialogue, strengthening local actors or improving the media and education capacities to counter radicalising ideologies.

The 2016 EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) highlights the Union's commitment to broadening partnerships and deepening dialogue with a multitude of actors, including civil society, in order to share best practices and to develop joint programmes on PVE and anti-radicalisation. It further reiterates the EU's aim to strengthen internal-external security links and to address the security-development nexus.

²⁷ Council Conclusions on Counter-Terrorism, Doc. 6048/15, 9 February 2015.

²⁸ Council Conclusions on the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020, 20 April 2015.



Trafficking of firearms has a critical external dimension, given that many illegal firearms in the EU have been imported from neighbouring countries where large stockpiles of military weapons remain. Those parts of the operational action plan with the Western Balkans (2014-2019)²⁹ which have been effectively implemented (e.g. exchange of information, networking) could be replicated with other neighbours, in particular in the EU's eastern neighbourhood (Moldova, Ukraine) and perhaps even countries in the Middle East and North Africa.³⁰

In the MENA region, the EU's and member states' counter-terrorism efforts to date have primarily focused on Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia through the provision of counter-terrorist assistance in areas such as security sector reform (SSR), prevention of radicalisation, including the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters and their return, critical infrastructure and soft target protection, including with regard to tourism, industry and transport.

2. France

2.1. Trends and challenges

Although France has a rich history of extreme political violence since the 1950s, with far right terrorism (OAS, 1960-1962), extreme left activists (Action Directe, 1979-1984) and different foreign groups linked to the Middle East in the 1980's (Carlos, Abu Nidal, Armenian and Kurdish groups), the scene has been dominated since 1995 by Islamic radicalism (Khaled Kelkal in Lyon and Paris). If counter terrorism intelligence institutions (under the umbrella of DGSI, the General Directorate for Domestic Security) are concerned by any kind of would be radical violent groups, the policy of prevention and counter radicalisation is exclusively aimed at Islamic radicalism (even if the term "Islamic" is almost never mentioned). From 2011 onwards all new laws and directives concerning violent extremism were done in reference to Jihadi violence. The policy of prevention makes sense only if one understands that it refers to Jihadi violence.

²⁹ Council of the EU (2014), 'Draft Action Plan on illicit trafficking in firearms between the EU and the South East Europe region (2015-2019)', Doc. 15516/14, 14 November 2014.

³⁰ European Commission, 'Evaluation of the 2015-2019 action plan on firearms trafficking between the EU and the south-east Europe region', SWD(2019) 282 final}', COM(2019)293 final, 27.6.2019.



The framework of radicalization has been relatively stable between 1995 and 2015. The actors are young men (it is clearly a youth phenomenon), with a majority of second-generation Muslims (around 70 %) and converts to Islam (around 25 %). The interesting fact is that although in 20 years one should have seen a third generation (children whose grandparents have migrated to France); it does not appear significantly in the statistics. During these 20 years, there was a clear continuity between the different waves of terrorists: each cell has been connected with an “elder” activist. The connections were quite often established in jail. The groups active in 1995-1997 were autonomous (the Roubaix “gang”, Beghal group), but from 1997 they were all connected to Al Qaeda, and from 2015 onwards to ISIS.

There is no specific sociological profile of the radicals (or more exactly they share the same profile than the social categories they are coming from: second generation Muslims or “white” middle class). The radicals did not have a past of militancy or socialization among Muslim groups or associations, nor do they have a steady religious training; many are self-taught born-again Muslims. The group of peers is the place of radicalisation.

After 2011 there has been a sudden and steady increase of women joining jihad or trying to perpetrate terrorist actions (mostly young with a greater proportion of converts than among males). After 2015 (Bataclan), there has been a clear decrease of the organisational capacity of radical militants; most of the terrorist attacks have been perpetrated by an individual with makeshift weapons (knife), and loose or no obvious connections to a centre; among them it is difficult to distinguish between militants and psychiatric cases. The challenge as defined by the authorities is how to spot in advance “signals of radicalization”, given the highly individualistic patterns of radicalisation.

2.2. Legal framework

Legislation has been evolving and increasingly tough since the 1980s:

- Special courts with a jury made of professional magistrates (“*cour d’assise pour les affaires de terrorisme*”) have been set up in 1986 to deal with leftist terrorists, following



the trial of members of Action Directe, who threatened the jury's members.³¹ The same law created a pool of anti-terrorism judges, exclusively in charge of "terrorism". In 2019, the Ministry of Justice set up a special prosecution department with national jurisdiction centralizing all the cases brought to courts.³²

- The definition of terrorism has been extended to any kind of association with criminals "in relation to a terrorist undertaking"; it suffices to have some proofs of any intention to "do something" in order to indict people, even if the intention did not materialize.³³
- The law of March 14 2011 authorizes the government to take decrees and ordinances; it has been followed in 2012 by the « *code de la sécurité intérieure* ». ³⁴ If the law never mentions explicitly Islam and may be used for other kind of terrorism, it is clear that some of its content is implicitly referring to Islam (for instance: administrative closing of places of worship are allowed by administrative decisions for 6 months: in the present circumstances, nobody could imagine a church or a synagogue being closed by an administrative decision; same thing for the deportation of a preacher).
- In July 2015 a law pertaining to intelligence gathering, (*loi relative au renseignement*) has defined the legal framework of state intelligence activities.³⁵

Regarding counter-terrorism, the DGSJ (*Direction Générale de la Sécurité Intérieure*) is in charge of anti-terrorism and of centralizing both intelligence and action. Nevertheless there are many other departments or offices in the different ministries that are in charge of intelligence gathering and prevention for the domain under the ministry's responsibility (Ministry of Justice with, among others, a penitentiary intelligence unit, Ministry of defence –military intelligence

³¹ For the present level of activities see: Gabriel Thierry, "La cour d'assises spéciale à l'épreuve du terrorisme islamiste," Dalloz Actualité, July 3, 2018, <https://www.dalloz-actualite.fr/flash/cour-d-assises-speciale-l-epreuve-du-terrorisme-islamiste#.Xor-9eozapo>.

³² "Présentation du parquet national antiterroriste créé par la loi n° 2019- 222 du 23 mars 2019 de programmation 2018-2022 et de réforme pour la justice", Ministry of Justice, accessed April 27, 2020, <http://www.justice.gouv.fr/bo/2019/20190731/JUSD1919006C.pdf>

³³ Criminal Code 421-2-1 "participation à une association de malfaiteurs en relation avec une entreprise terroriste", "Le fait de participer à un groupement formé ou à une entente établie en vue de la préparation, caractérisée par un ou plusieurs faits matériels" d'un acte de terrorisme. See: Patrick Baudouin, " Les juges anti-terroristes, La tentation de l'arbitraire ", *Après-demain* 2010/3 (N ° 15, NF), 51-53.

³⁴ "Loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la performance de la sécurité intérieure". Legifrance, accessed April 27, 2020,

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000023707312&categorieLien=id>

³⁵ "Loi n° 2015-912 du 24 juillet 2015 relative au renseignement," Legifrance, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000030933629&dateTexte=20180930>



and military police-, Ministry of education, Ministry of Finance etc.). They are all supposed to report to the DGSI and to the anti-terrorism judges.

2.3. Domestic snapshot

An entirely new path was opened from 2015 onwards. It started after 2013 under the pressure of some families whose children went to Syria for joining the Jihad; the concerned children were mainly young middle-class female converts to Islam. The families claimed that they had been “brain-washed” and need a therapy of “de-radicalization”. Although the “brain-washing theory” has been largely discredited (in part because all of the concerned women took responsibility, even limited, for what they did), the government decided to launch a policy of “preventing radicalisation”, after the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan (2015).

This policy is coordinated by the *Comité interministériel de prévention de la délinquance et de la radicalisation* (CIPDR), which is under the dual control of the Prime Minister office and the Ministry of Interior. It is an interministerial organism, meaning that it is in charge of probing and coordinating the action of each ministry on prevention. The aim is not to track actual terrorists (that is the job of the DGSI), but to detect “signals or radicalization” among people whose behaviour cannot be qualified as terrorist from a legal point of view (because they are not engaged in any kind of planning concrete terrorist actions).

The conceptual postulates of prevention and de-radicalization

Such an approach of extreme radical violence is totally new: it has never been considered for previous radicalisms (OAS and extreme left or anarchist violence). By the same token, prevention does not take into account the possible socio-economic dimension of radicalisation and rejects any political approach (while there had been negotiations in the eighties with extreme left or Middle Eastern militants). It is clear that this policy makes sense only in a context of fighting violent Islamic groups: for instance one of the means to prevent extreme radical violence, according the CIPDR recommendation, is to “enforce *laïcité*” which does not make sense for extreme right or extreme left violence. The self-presentation of the CIPDR is absolutely explicit: “The SG-CIPDR's mission is to develop, facilitate, coordinate and financially support policies to prevent delinquency and radicalization. Since November 2019,



it has also been coordinating with the prefectures the implementation of the new policy to combat Islamism and *communautarisme* (a term that refers in a derogatory manner to the way ethnic communities might live according their own rules and outside the national community). And since January 1, 2020, the Miviludes has been attached to it (Miviludes is a Committee set up under the control of the Prime Minister to fight against “cults”).³⁶

The question addressed by the policy is to understand why individuals turn to Islam-related violent extremism. Even if the authorities accept that the process of radicalisation is complex, the dominant postulate is that violent radicalization is a consequence of a previous religious radicalisation, hence the mission of CIPDR to investigate expressions of religious radicalisation in order to prevent extreme violent radicalisation.³⁷

The implementation of the policy of prevention is based on two approaches:

- addressing individual trajectories and trying to spot the “radicalization moment” or decisive moment.
- enforcing “laïcité” at a collective level to contain and curb religious radicalisation, and to subsequently promote a “French Islam” supposedly “moderate” and “liberal”.

Regarding the first approach, the role of CIPDR is to provide awareness and training to designated cadres or ad-hoc teams in the different ministries, administrations, schools, social services (hospitals), public corporations or services (RATP, SNCF, airports authorities): they are trained to detect and are requested to report signs of a possible religious radicalisation of an individual (employees or participants), including “weak” signs of radicalisation (wearing a beard or a veil, refusing to shake hands with women, avoiding alcohol, requesting a prayer room in the work place, contesting some teachings in schools, as evolution or sexual education, refusing for girls to practice sport in school etc...).³⁸ This “hunt” is made in liaison with mayors,

³⁶ “ Le SG-CIPDR a pour mission l’**élaboration, l’animation, la coordination et le soutien financier** des politiques de prévention de la délinquance et de la radicalisation. Depuis novembre 2019, il coordonne également auprès des préfetures la mise en place de la nouvelle politique de lutte contre l’islamisme et le repli communautaire. Et depuis le 1er janvier 2020, la Miviludes lui est rattachée”, see: “ SG-CIPDR, ”Comité Interministeriel de Prévention de Délinquance et de la Radicalisation, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.cipdr.gouv.fr/le-cipdr/>.

³⁷ This view is supported by many social scientists and is overwhelmingly dominant in the media.

³⁸ There is an important academic literature on this quest, often controversial. For an example of a sociological approach condoning the postulate of the centrality of religious radicalisation in violence, see: Olivier Galland



“*préfets*”, police and justice. Most of the cases reported don’t go to the courts because there is nothing illegal but could lead to a dismissal from the job and to the inscription into a special register (the famous “fichiers S” S for “*sûreté de l’Etat*”). There is consequently a permanent conflict with individual rights and more precisely religious freedom.³⁹

Since the move is recent, we do not have enough examples of court decisions adjudicating cases where a civil servant or employee has been dismissed for showing “signs of radicalization” and has sued his employers for unlawful dismissal. Nevertheless, to be registered as a “fichier S” is a mark of infamy that impacts the career of the person concerned.

Regarding the second approach, prevention is essentially based on a policy of “enforcing laïcité” and setting up a “moderate Islam”. The first is “negative”, because it essentially consists in forbidding “ostensible” or “hidden” forms or religious practice in public space (that is everything except places of worship and private home). The second approach is problematic for two reasons: it requires an active participation of Muslim believers, but also it contradicts a key principle of “laïcité”: separation of Church and State and neutrality of the State in religious matters.

Moreover, the postulate that the key of violent extremism is religious radicalisation (a code name for salafi Islam) is questionable. The idea that radicalisation might have connection with more or less legitimate grievances is dismissed as complacency for multiculturalism (the French term is “*communautarisme*”). By the same token analysing Islamic radical violence in connection with a larger framework of a fascination for violence that is also to be found in other forms of violence (from extreme right terrorism to a youth nihilism expressed in Columbine type schools massacres) is usually dismissed as a way to “exonerate” Islam.⁴⁰

and Anne Muxel (dir.), *La tentation radicale. Enquête auprès des lycéens* (Paris: PUF, 2018). For a critic by another sociologist see: Jean Baubérot, “L’ouvrage la Tentation radicale d’O Galland et d’A. Muxel: une enquête défectueuse.” *Mediapart*, April 10, 2018, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/jean-bauberot/blog/100418/l-ouvrage-la-tentation-radicale-d-o-galland-et-d-muxel-une-enquete-defectueuse>.

³⁹ On the legal status of the “fichiers S”, see: Olivier De Maison Rouge, “Quel est le socle juridique de la fiche S,” *Village Justice*, November 27, 2015, <https://www.village-justice.com/articles/Quel-est-socle-juridique-fiche.20924.html>

⁴⁰ For this other approach see Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death*, (Hurst/ Oxford University Press, 2019).



Nevertheless, there is an open debate among practitioners about the value of the “religious postulate” concerning prevention of extreme radical violence. It is a path worth to study in the future.

2.4. International snapshot

The Islamic radical violence is transnational. Although there are local specificities (a greater role of mosques in Belgium and Germany for instance), the patterns of radicalisation, as well as the increasing role of converts, are common to the concerned EU countries. There is a consensus on the immediate threat (underground terrorist cells preparing terrorist attacks; circulation of jihadis from one country to the other). This threat is dealt through a traditional and effective cooperation between police and intelligence services of different countries, which has remarkably improved: exchanging information in real time seems to work. There is also a military cooperation (France, Germany, Denmark) in fighting local jihad (Syria, Mali), although it is not clear whether they all fuel domestic terrorism (ISIS in Syria did of course, but there is no evidence of European foreign fighters in Mali).

The problem of European cooperation about prevention is two-fold:

- There is no consensus about the process of radicalisation and the role of religion in general and Islam in particular. The French policy of imposing “laïcité” does not make consensus in other countries that have a more open relationship with religion in general. What is seen as a sign of radicalism in France is not in other countries: a veiled policewoman is part of the landscape in GB, in France she would be put under arrest by her colleague. There is a need to have a common debate on the relations between religion and radicalization on one hand and the place for Islam in Europe on the other hand.
- The second issue is the weakness of the institutional European cooperation on prevention. The appointment of a coordinator for the fight against terrorism is a good point as long as the position is held by a strong personality as was Gilles de Kerchove, but this office does not have the staff and the means to play a leading role in the EU, whoever is in charge. France is part of RAND and ESCN, but the exchanges are rather informal: there are regular conferences attended by experts who expose their research, but are not mandated to set up a common policy of prevention.



3. Germany

3.1. Trends and challenges

Germany has suffered for a long time from various forms of extremism including ultra-right, far-left, and religiously inspired. However, over the past decade, it has been facing two main forms of radicalization: right-wing extremism and Islamist radicalization.

- Right-wing extremism

Germany experienced in recent years a resurgence of several forms of organized and unorganized extreme right-wing violence, including attempted murder, explosive attacks, arson or forming criminal and terrorist organizations. In 2018, right-wing violence in Germany has risen sharply, with 48 extreme acts of violence registered— in comparison to 28 in 2017 — including six racially motivated murder attempts. In 2018, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution classified 24,100 people in Germany as right-wing extremists, up slightly from 24,000 in 2017. Of those designated by the report as right-wing extremists, around 12,700 people are classified as "violence-oriented"⁴¹. In the first half of 2019, German authorities have registered 8,605 right-wing extremist offenses—an increase of almost 900 over the same period in 2018.⁴²

- Islamic radicalization

Ever since the discovery of the Hamburg-based terrorist cell at the heart of the 9/11 attacks, there has been a growing fear about the Islamic radicalization in Germany. The first main Jihadist center in Germany was the case of the Multicultural House (*Multikulturhaus*) in Neu-Ulm, where Yehia Yousef and Reda Seyam —who would later become the highest-ranking

⁴¹ 2018 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution (Facts and Trends), federal Ministry of the Interior, June 2019. Available online: <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/public-relations/publications/annual-reports>

⁴² Germany: Far-right offenses rise in 2019, Deutsche Welle, 14 August 2019. Available online: <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-far-right-offenses-rise-in-2019/a-50025070>



German in IS— assembled young supporters and encouraged them to join the war against the Russians in Chechnya⁴³.

From late 2012/early 2013, Syria has become the destination of German Jihadists. The German Federal Domestic Intelligence Service (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*) estimates that more than 1050 have tried to leave Germany for Syria or Iraq, of whom, to date, 350 have returned and 200 have died.⁴⁴ This was an enormous number when compared to the 220 jihadists who had travelled to Chechnya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia between 1997 and 2011. The emergence of the Islamic State in June 2014 added a powerful pull-factor. In the course of 2014, the number of Germans and other Europeans in IS territory rose rapidly.

Although Germany is among the European nations with the highest numbers of foreign fighters in Syria (1050), together with France (1900) and Britain (850)—the number of terror plots has not been lethal for a long time. This changed on December 19, 2016, when Anis Amri drove a truck into a popular Christmas market in the West Berlin city center, killing twelve and wounding nearly a hundred.

The newcomers represent a puzzling issue for both right-wing and Islamist extremism. Right-wing extremism has seen the involvement of individuals with no previous ties to the extreme right-wing environment in violent attacks. As a result of an intelligence analysis on the biographical backgrounds of 77 individuals, both from 16 groups and including lone actors, involved in the most recent cases of extreme right-wing terrorism, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*) found that the majority has no previous ties to the organized extreme right-wing movement⁴⁵. A similar trend can be traced in the case of Islamist violent extremism with the growing presence of recent converts to Islam that are implicated on terrorist attacks.

3.2. Legal framework

⁴³ Steinberg, G. (2017), *Islamist Terrorism in Germany: Threats, Responses, and the Need for a Strategy*, AICGS Policy Report 66, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Johns Hopkins University, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Roithmaier, K. (2019), *Germany and its Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: New Loss of Citizenship Law and the Broader German Repatriation Landscape*, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. retrieved from: <https://icct.nl/publication/germany-and-its-returning-foreign-terrorist-fighters-new-loss-of-citizenship-law-and-the-broader-german-repatriation-landscape/>

⁴⁵ Koehler, D. (2018). Recent Trends in German Right-Wing Violence and Terrorism: What are the Contextual Factors behind ‘Hive Terrorism’? *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 12(6), 72-73.



The attacks of 9/11 had an enormous impact on German counter-terrorism legislation. Shortly after the attacks, German legislators adopted two major anti-terrorism packages.

The first, enacted in November 2001, targeted loopholes in German law that permitted terrorists to live and raise money in Germany. Significant changes included (1) the immunity of religious groups and charities from investigation or surveillance by authorities was revoked, as were their special privileges under right of assembly, allowing the government greater freedom to act against extremist groups; (2) terrorists could now be prosecuted in Germany, even if they belonged to foreign terrorist organizations acting only abroad; (3) the ability of terrorists to enter and reside in Germany was curtailed; and 4) border and air traffic security were strengthened.⁴⁶

The second came into force at the beginning of the year 2002 and consisted of a general counter-terrorism law (*Terrorismusbekämpfungsgesetz*). The law focused on preventive measures, expanding the powers of the Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt*) and the Federal Office for Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*) in the field of information gathering and sharing. Initially, the *Terrorismusbekämpfungsgesetz* was only valid for a period of 6 years, but it was extended in January 2007 with the Complementary Act to the Act for the Fight against Terrorism (*Terrorismusbekämpfungsergänzungsgesetz*). It was again renewed in 2012 and subsequently updated in 2015. The current law will expire in 2021. The purpose of the anti-terror law is to amend and update multiple other legislative acts leading to around 23 changes. In essence, the act extended the competences of the bodies in charge of fighting terrorism (such as the *Bundeskriminalamt* (Federal Criminal Agency) and the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Federal Intelligence Agency)) and had particular implications on the way these agencies can process personal data of terror suspects. The amendments in 2015 further extended these competences by granting intelligence and police agencies a broader mandate for processing data⁴⁷.

3.3. Domestic snapshot

⁴⁶ Miko, F. T. and Froehlich, C. (2004), *Germany's Role in Fighting Terrorism: Implications for U.S. Policy*, CRS Report for Congress, p.4.

⁴⁷ Gutheil, M. and Liger, Q. and Möller, C. and Eager, J. and Henley, M. and Oviolu, Y. (2017), *EU and Member States' policies and laws on persons suspected of terrorism related crimes*, the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee), p.86.



Germany is a federal state. It has a federal government but is at the same time divided into 16 states, each of them having their own prime ministers, ministries for the interior or for social affairs. Although States receive funds from federal government through its different programs, the federal authority cannot impose its policies on the states. This administrative structure explains why Germany has not yet adopted a fully developed national strategy compared to other European countries such as the UK or the Netherlands. It is also the reason why Germany does not follow neither a purely state-led nor a civil society-focused approach. Even though there is an overall trend towards a more security-led approach. Nonetheless, the balance has shifted in recent years in favour of a multi-agency-approach.

German intelligence services (Verfassungsschutz), both on the federal and the state levels, have taken initially the responsibility to prevent extremism, in its violent and non-violent forms. To coordinate the efforts of the individual agencies and to provide a platform through which intelligence can be shared, the Joint Counter-Terrorism Center (GTAZ) was set up in 2004. GTAZ is not an autonomous authority but a joint co-operation and communication platform used by 40 internal security agencies.

The working group on Deradicalisation, consisting of intelligence and police personnel, was established in 2009 within the GTAZ. The working group serves as a platform for the exchange of best (and bad) practices from local and federal agencies in preventing violent extremism, and developing new policies and de-radicalization approaches.

In most cases, the leading coordinative role was taken by the federal and state authorities of the interior. One example is the “Counselling-Office Radicalisation” (Beratungsstelle) of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, which was created in 2012. This helpline encourages family members, friends, relatives, and teachers to come forward about friends or relatives who have recently become radicalized. Since the establishment of the hotline more than 4.100 phone calls have been received and more than 1100 cases have been handled⁴⁸.

In January 2015, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) initiated “Demokratie leben! (Live Democracy)”, which is an extensive funding program for initiatives against right-wing and Islamist extremism. From 2016 to 2018, its

⁴⁸ Said, B. T., & Fouad, H. (2018), Countering Islamist Radicalisation in Germany: A Guide to Germany’s Growing Prevention Infrastructure. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, p 3.



funding has more than doubled, up to a total of €120.5 million in 2018⁴⁹. This development highlights that responsibility for German prevention-efforts has increasingly begun to shift towards ministries of social affairs, both at the state and the federal level⁵⁰

The cases of Bavaria and Hamburg show two different local approaches. While the local police lead the first, the second is controlled by the local Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Integration (BASFI). In Bavaria, the police have taken a leading role as state police has set up a Competence-Centre for De-radicalisation, which is the primary point of contact for the work of the Violence Prevention Network, a civil society agent. In contrast, in the autumn of 2014 in Hamburg, a network of public authorities and non-governmental organisations established a network against religious extremism. While the police and the local intelligence agency are part of the network, the overall control of the network rests within the local Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Integration (BASFI).⁵¹

In 2017, a study identified 721 projects aiming at “the prevention of extremism or politically motivated crime”. Out of all 721 projects, 336 were state-run. This means that 47% of the total number of registered projects were implemented by state actors in direct contact with the target group. In other words, efforts are almost evenly shared between civil society and governmental institutions. Approximately one third of the total 721 projects were implemented on a state level, while projects implemented on federal, regional and municipal levels accounted for about 20% respectively.⁵²

The main challenge to Germany’s preventive measures is how to coordinate all efforts and projects to ensure that relevant information and experience is shared within the prevention community and to identify blind spots of prevention work. This indeed calls for the development of a more clearly outlined national strategy. To deal with this challenge, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth BMFSFJ and the Federal Ministry of the Interior BMI published in July 2016 a joint paper entitled “Federal

⁴⁹ Baaken, T. and Ruf, M. (2019), Germany: a hybrid model with an overall security-focused approach, PREPARE project. Retrieved from: <https://interventionen.blog/2019/05/29/prepare-a-look-at-how-european-countries-prevent-radicalisation-through-probation-and-release/>

⁵⁰ Said, B. T., & Fouad, H. (2018), Countering Islamist Radicalisation in Germany: A Guide to Germany’s Growing Prevention Infrastructure. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, p 3.

⁵¹ Said, B. T., & Fouad, H. (2018), Countering Islamist Radicalisation in Germany: A Guide to Germany’s Growing Prevention Infrastructure. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, pp.6-7.

⁵² Baaken, T. and Ruf, M. (2019), Germany: a hybrid model with an overall security-focused approach, PREPARE project. Retrieved from: <https://interventionen.blog/2019/05/29/prepare-a-look-at-how-european-countries-prevent-radicalisation-through-probation-and-release/>



Government Strategy for Prevention of Extremism and Promotion of Democracy” (Strategie der Bundesregierung zur Extremismusprävention und Demokratieförderung), provides the guidelines German authorities should consider when designing their preventative programmes.

3.4. International snapshot

The German Government is helping to develop effective operative measures to fight terrorism at the international level, while at the same time complying with the rule of law and human rights.

Germany plays an active role in the anti-IS alliance. The alliance consists of 64 partners (including the EU), and it coordinates international efforts to combat the terrorist organisation IS/Daesh. The alliance takes a comprehensive approach comprising five lines of action:

- Military actions
- Disrupting IS’s financial flows
- Disrupting the recruitment of foreign fighters
- A communication strategy
- Stabilising liberated territories

In all five areas, Germany is actively involved in the international anti-IS alliance’s corresponding working groups and has assumed a leading role in the area of stabilisation as the working group’s chair.

Germany is also engaged in a number of other initiatives in the MENA and the Balkans aimed at preventing violent radicalization:

- Germany, together with the US, the UK, Italy, is supporting the IOM (International Organization for Migration) project on preventing radicalization in Bosnia and Herzegovina. IOM has finished the inception phase of a pilot project aimed at supporting prevention in six targeted locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bugojno, Buzim, Jablanica, Prijedor, Foca and Maoca. The next phase lasts for three years, and expands into some larger locations, for example, Sarajevo and Zenica-Doboj canton. A project Steering Board with the donors, as well as other interested stakeholders, serves



as a mechanism to monitor the project, as well as to share information on PVE/CVE more generally.⁵³

- In the MENA region, Germany, together with the US, is funding the installation of the electronic surveillance system along Tunisia's border with Libya to prevent Jihadi violent attacks from the Libyan side, like what happened with the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) attack on the city of Ben Guerdane in March 2016.

Germany plays also an active role in a number of international forums for combating terrorism, including:

The European Union: as a member state, Germany has pledged to fight terrorism together with other member states and to offer their citizens the greatest possible protection. On the EU level, Germany has taken different initiatives bringing its national experience to the EU level. For example, at the initiative of Germany, an additional steering group of national anti-terrorist authorities was set up within the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), set up within Europol, to improve cross-border investigations and information processing. In 2018, the governing German Christian Democratic Party (CDU) proposed a European data platform comparable to the Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre (GTAZ), to allow for the exchange of intelligence between police and intelligence services in order to combat terrorism, organized crime, and illegal migration. Acknowledging the need to understand and demonstrate which PVE measures work as well as how and why, The German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building, and Community in cooperation with the European Commission is currently preparing "Practical Guideline for Policymakers and Practitioners for Planning, Implementing and Following Up on Evaluations in Exit / Intervention Measures". The guideline is expected to be published in 2020.⁵⁴

The United Nations: Germany has ratified and is implementing the 14 anti-terrorist conventions of the United Nations as a binding basis under international law for international cooperation in this area. The sanctions lists of the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committees of the United Nations Security Council against persons and organisations affiliated with these terrorist organisations and IS/Daesh also apply in Germany.

⁵³ Perry, V. (2016), Initiatives to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism in South East Europe. Sarajevo: Regional Cooperation Council, pp.29-30.

⁵⁴ Koller, S. (2020), Good Practices in Evaluating Tertiary PVE Programs. Berlin: German Council on Foreign Relations, p.9.



The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) plays an important role in strengthening the capabilities of its 57 participating States to respond to terrorist threats while at the same time complying with the rule of law and human rights. The German Government supports the work of the OSCE Secretariat's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which focuses on ensuring that human rights are respected in the fight against terrorism. Within the framework of Germany's OSCE Chairmanship in 2016, the German Government is also focusing on cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

4. Ireland

4.1. Trends and challenges

Ireland has not experienced a large-scale terror attack since the end of The Troubles in the late 1990s. Yet, it is facing persistent challenges with radicalisation based on both political and religious ideas. In political terms, Irish Republicanism represents a core driver of violent extremism. Traditionally prominent paramilitary groups like the Provisional IRA have ceased recruitment and violent operations in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, but so-called "dissident" Republicans have continued to perpetrate attacks across Northern Ireland from bases in Ireland. Such attacks mainly target security personnel, but also include forms of vigilante justice targeting suspected drug dealers and sex offenders in traditionally Republican communities.⁵⁵ In terms of recruitment, Republican groups primarily aim at male youths with specialized skillsets, like military experience or technical knowhow.⁵⁶ Research into violent extremist Republicanism point to significant heterogeneity among members, but emphasize factors like timing, the presence of influential individuals in certain neighbourhoods or cities, regionalism and age.⁵⁷ Similar studies discount economic factors like unemployment or the

⁵⁵ John Horgan and John F. Morrison, "Here to Stay? The Rising Threat of Violent Dissident Republicanism in Northern Ireland," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 4 (2011): 643.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 656-657.

⁵⁷ John F. Morrison, "Why do People Become Dissident Irish Republicans?," in *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, ed. P. M. Currie and Max Taylor (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 17-42. Available in digital form at <https://repository.uel.ac.uk/download/7ea8f2a49f2736a83de8cfcfd12b1e18b4e5af23dfc6cbf3f46804531d01d52d/319189/Why%20Do%20People%20Become%20Dissident%20Irish%20Republicans.pdf>, conclusion.



influence of political beliefs as core motivations, but rather a sense of adventure, involvement and status.⁵⁸

The Irish government and political parties allot relatively little focus on the security aspect of multiculturalism compared to other EU member states.⁵⁹ Irish officials cite the relatively small population and composition of its Muslim community as primary factors in minimizing radicalisation among various ethnic groups⁶⁰, but there are signs that intercultural tensions are increasing. In a series of surveys in the Muslim community conducted in 2010-2012, a third of respondents reported experiencing increased anti-Muslim hostility.⁶¹ Several anti-immigration and anti-Muslim groups like PEGIDA Ireland have gained visibility and organised campaigns against the alleged “Islamification” of Ireland, though they still lack more than marginal memberships.⁶² Meanwhile, radicalisation in the Muslim community remains an issue, with a 2006 survey showing that 28% of Muslims aged 16-26 believed violence to be sometimes justified for political ends,⁶³ while an estimated 30 to 50 Irish nationals travelled to the Middle East to join fighting in Iraq and Syria between 2011 and 2016.⁶⁴

4.2. Legal framework

Ireland has limited legislation pertaining to engagement in violent extremism, both committed inside Ireland and abroad. The Offences against the State Acts 1939-1998 contain most provisions dealing with orchestrating violent attacks. More recently, the 2005 Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) Act has detailed specific legislation on violent extremism, and support of such activities. The Act regulates Ireland’s compliance with international conventions,

⁵⁸ Ibid., 21-22; Horgan and Morrison, “Here to Stay?”, 656.

⁵⁹ Iseult Honohan and Nathalie Rougier, “Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Discourses in Ireland,” *ACCEPT PLURALISM Research Project*, European University Institute, 2010. Available at https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/19775/ACCEPT_2010-02_BR_Ireland.pdf?sequence=1, 4.

⁶⁰ Cormac O’Keeffe, “What is the reality of the threat posed by Islamic extremists in Ireland?,” *Irish Examiner*, May 2, 2016. Available at <https://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/what-is-the-reality-of-the-threat-posed-by-islamic-extremists-in-ireland-396021.html>.

⁶¹ Catherine Lynch, “Racism and related discriminatory practices in Ireland,” *ENAR Shadow Report 2011-2012*, ENAR Ireland, 2013. Available at <http://inar.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ENAR-Ireland-Shadow-Report-2011-12.pdf>.

⁶² James Carr, “Islamophobia in Ireland – National Report 2015,” in *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, ed. Enes Bayrakli and Farid Hafez (Ankara: SETA, 2016), 243.

⁶³ Honohan and Rougier, “Tolerance and Cultural Diversity”, 24.

⁶⁴ James Brandon, “Ireland’s Foreign Fighters,” *Terrorism Monitor* 14, no. 1 (2016): 8-10. Available at https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/TerrorismMonitorVol14Issue1_04.pdf?x17141.



including the Council of the EU's Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism, while its Part VII contains relevant provisions for enabling mutual assistance to and from other states to track at-risk individuals or suspects involved in violent extremism activity. Most of these information-sharing requests are made under the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, both outgoing and incoming.⁶⁵

Despite a growing legal framework covering violent extremism, there are no specific provisions dedicated to preventing violent extremism. The Criminal Justice Act does contain provisions duty-binding the police to gather intelligence in this regard,⁶⁶ while a 2015 amendment formally criminalised recruitment for terrorism and making public provocations to commit terrorist offences.⁶⁷ Still, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) criticize Ireland for lacking any legislation formally criminalising ethnic profiling in policing, which they consider a potential driver for radicalisation among ethnic minorities.⁶⁸

4.3. Domestic snapshot

The Irish government has directed most of its PVE efforts towards tackling ideology-based radicalisation like Islamist extremism. This is notable as security officials consider violent Republicanism a more serious security threat to Ireland. In fact, the government treats Republican dissidents as criminals acting in terms of in organized, cross-border crime networks.⁶⁹ This, as well as the largely heterogeneous composition of paramilitary Republican groups are likely factors for the lack of a dedicated prevention strategy despite persistent attacks occurring in Northern Ireland. There are, however, strategies aimed at revealing and foiling plots to perpetrate actual attacks and persecute those involved. In that regard, security officials in Garda cooperate closely with those in Northern Ireland to infiltrate extremist groups and arrest individuals with suspected involvement in violent operations. This is most clearly

⁶⁵ "Ireland," country profiles on counter-terrorist capacity, Council of Europe, April 2007, <https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/3130/file/CODEXTER%20Profiles%202007%20Ireland.pdf>

⁶⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁷ Stephen Breen, "Gardai 'monitoring 20 Irish jihadis operating in the Middle East over fears they could return home and cause carnage'," *The Irish Sun*, January 7, 2018. Available at <https://www.thesun.ie/news/2016090/gardai-monitoring-20-irish-jihadis-operating-in-the-middle-east-over-fears-they-could-return-home-and-cause-carnage/>.

⁶⁸ Catherine Lynch, "discriminatory practices", 35.

⁶⁹ United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 – Ireland," June 2016, available at https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/pages/attachments/2016/06/03/dos-terrorism_2015.pdf, 122-123.



reflected in the government’s Cross Border Policing Strategy, which lays out a framework for close cooperation between Garda and the Police Service in Northern Ireland (PSNI) in cross border operations, intelligence sharing, joint training and personnel exchanges.⁷⁰

The Irish government has put heavy emphasis on community cohesion and integration to tackle ideology-based radicalisation like Islamist extremism, with The National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) and The Migrant Integration Strategy (MIS). The NPAR enshrines the government’s strategic blueprint for managing a diverse society. It emphasizes developing “reasonable and common sense measures” to accommodate cultural diversity, provide strategic direction to combat racism and develop a more inclusive, intercultural society.⁷¹ The MIS similarly emphasizes that the main challenge in combating radicalisation is to engage with at-risk youths and encourage them to participate constructively in society.⁷² The specific community outreach focus and the government and police’s perceived success in gaining the trust of minority communities are seen as vital factors in mitigating radicalisation risks in Ireland.⁷³

The Irish national police force (Garda) reflects the NPAR and the MIS in their approach on preventing violent extremism, focusing on ensuring community cohesion and diversity.⁷⁴ By giving marginalised and minority communities a sense of having their concerns addressed and by building trust, Garda hopes to provide a sense among these communities of being a valued part of society rather than a target due to the threat of violent extremism.⁷⁵ In 2009, Garda set out its strategy to fulfil this objective in the Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan, which

⁷⁰ “Cross Border Policing Strategy 2016,” An Garda Síochána, 2016, available at <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/27925/1/cross-border-policing-strategy-2016.pdf>.

⁷¹ “Diversity Strategy & Implementation Plan 2009-2012,” An Garda Síochána, May 2009, available at <https://www.garda.ie/en/About-Us/Publications/Policing-Plans/Strategy/Diversity-Strategy-Implementation-Plan-2009-2012.pdf>, i.

⁷² “Migrant Integration Strategy 2017-2020,” Department of Justice and Equality, last modified September 28, 2019. Available at http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf/Files/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf, 8

⁷³ O’Keeffe, “Islamic extremists in Ireland”.

⁷⁴ Houses of the Oireachtas, “Community policing in Ireland,” *Spotlight*, no. 7 (2012): 1-16. Available at https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/libraryResearch/2012/2012-10-31_spotlight-community-policing-in-ireland_en.pdf.

⁷⁵ Garda, “Diversity Strategy,” i; “Statement by Ireland,” United Nations High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism, June 28-29, 2018. Available at <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/S4-Ireland.pdf>



outlined a two-pronged approach: one directed internally at the organisation itself, and one directed externally towards the general population.⁷⁶

Internally, Garda aims to ensure greater representation of various cultures and ethnicities.⁷⁷ A Diversity Management Unit (MDU) focuses on policy formulation, recruitment, retention and overall management within the police force. Externally, the Garda Racial Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO) is leading a community policing effort aimed at reaching out and maintaining contact with minority communities. The office is central to Garda's anti-discrimination and integration policy, coordinating, monitoring and advising on all aspects of policing in these communities. Through its system of over 550 Ethnic Liaison Officers, the office identifies local issues and concerns, informs minorities about the police's engagement policies, and meets and consults new immigrants to create an environment of trust.⁷⁸ In Muslim communities, they will call on mosques, go to Friday prayer, meet the imam and speak to worshippers.⁷⁹ Another crucial task of GRIDO is to provide anti-radicalisation to frontline police officers through the Community Policing Preventing Radicalisation (COPPRA) programme. Through this outreach, Garda's ambition is that the community itself will contact the police regarding cases of concern for radicalisation.⁸⁰ These two approaches were later consolidated into the more tailored Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for internal purposes, and the Diversity and Integration Strategy for external purposes. The goal is to ensure alignment and cohesive operationalisation of the two approaches.⁸¹

The police rely heavily on community outreach to gather information about radicalisation in this manner. Trust between community members and public institutions and the police is cited as an important factor in rejecting more institutionalised information-sharing channels as seen in for example the United Kingdom's Prevent programme.⁸² Still, Irish security officials are conscious of the role played by influential individuals in radicalising at-risk youths, and have invested in monitoring and restricting such individuals to minimize their ability in this regard.

⁷⁶ Garda, "Diversity Strategy," 2;

⁷⁷ Ibid., i-iii.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7-11.

⁷⁹ O'Keeffe, "Islamic extremists in Ireland".

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Diversity and Integration Strategy 2019-2021, 4

⁸² O'Keeffe, "Islamic extremists in Ireland".



At the Garda Security and Intelligence section (S&I), separate units focus on domestic and international terrorism, gathering and analysing intelligence from both Garda, intelligence officers, and informants in the Covert Human Intelligence Source.⁸³ While S&I also directs surveillance or intercepts communications of suspects, there are few such targets in practice.⁸⁴ The international unit, Counter-Terrorism International (CTI), monitors and investigates suspected terrorists from overseas, including returned fighters from the Middle East and incoming active supporters of violent extremism.⁸⁵ The international intelligence-gathering mission is coordinated with the military, including both domestic officers and those embedded in peacekeeping operations overseas.

4.4. International snapshot

The Irish government and police force are active members in a number of EU bodies, council working groups and UN-level initiatives.⁸⁶ First, security officials and police are part of intelligence-sharing networks to identify and track extremists, and potentially reject visas of these individuals.⁸⁷ Among these are the Schengen Information System and the European Criminal Records Information System. Garda is also an active participant in sharing intelligence with counter-terrorism units at Europol, in particular the Counter Terrorism Coordinator and the European Counter-Terrorism Centre, and maintains representatives in these bodies to ensure effective coordination.⁸⁸ Ireland also provides staff to the Europol Internet Referral Unit, where they help identify websites and social networking sites with materials supporting violent extremism. However, Ireland has rejected upgrading this engagement to a domestic internet supervision organ.⁸⁹

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ United Nations, “Statement by Ireland”.

⁸⁶ Council of Europe, “Ireland”; United Nations, “Statement by Ireland”; “Terrorism,” what we do, Department of Justice and Equality, available at <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/terrorism>, last visited 30.03.2020.

⁸⁷ Christine Andreeva, “EU Counter-terrorism policy after 2015,” *IIEA Emerging Voices Anthology* (Dublin, Institute of International & European Affairs, 2019): 197-215. Available at <https://www.iea.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EU-Counter-terrorism-Policy-after-2015.pdf>, 208-209.

⁸⁸ Michelle Hennessy, “How Europol is fighting a war online against Islamic extremists,” *The Journal*, December 26, 2017. Available at <https://www.thejournal.ie/europol-terrorism-online-3731878-Dec2017/>; United Nations, “Statement by Ireland”; O’Keeffe, “Islamic extremists in Ireland”.

⁸⁹ Cormac O’Keeffe, “Watchdog to police online terrorist content,” *Irish Examiner*, October 13, 2019. Available at <https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/watchdog-to-police-online-terrorist-content-956892.html>.



Beyond sharing intelligence, Ireland is active in adapting to EU policies on violent extremism. A major consideration behind the 2014 Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) Act amendment, which criminalised new activities like encouraging violent extremism, was to allow ratification of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, and to give effect to the 2008 Council of the EU's Framework Decision on combating terrorism, both of which Ireland was signatory to.⁹⁰ Irish officials have also been conscious in drawing on experience from other EU member states when designing their PVE efforts. In particular, the Garda Ethnic Liaison Officer system was designed in line with best practices from the EU.⁹¹ Garda also consulted with police forces in several countries, including Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, when drafting their Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan.⁹²

Finally, Ireland has taken a supportive role in EU-level bodies to improve legislation and strengthen cooperation. These contributions have taken the form of an explicit emphasis on community engagement as an important tool in PVE. For example, Garda has regularly shared its experiences in this regard with EU partners through the Radicalisation Awareness Network.⁹³ GRIDO also presented on community policing frameworks to senior police management, government and non-government agencies at radicalisation policing conferences in Europe.⁹⁴ Ireland was also instrumental in ensuring an essential community engagement component in the EU Strategy for Countering Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism.⁹⁵ During the Irish presidency of the EU Council in 2013, Ireland secured the support of other member states to review the strategy with an emphasis on new measures to combat the foreign fighter issue. These included community relations initiatives, media campaigns, enhanced

⁹⁰ Frances Fitzgerald, "Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) (Amendment) Act 2014 – Second Stage", Speech by the Minister for Justice and Equality, available at <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/JELR/Pages/SP14000269>.

⁹¹ Andreeva, "EU Counter-terrorism policy", 209.

⁹² Garda, "Diversity Strategy," 1.

⁹³ See e.g. Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism," *RAN Collection – Approaches and Practices* (2015), available at <http://www.interior.gob.es/documents/642012/5179146/RAN+Collection+-+Preventing+Radicalisation+to+Terrorism+and+Violent+Extremism.pdf/12527573-50b0-4126-aa68-5ddcbcd01ca5>.

⁹⁴ "Annual Report 2015," An Garda Síochána, 2016, available at <https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/publications/annual%20reports/an-garda-siochana-annual-reports/2015-annual-report-revised.pdf>, 16-17.

⁹⁵ Frances Fitzgerald, "Parliamentary Questions," Response from the Minister for Justice and Equality in Parliament, September 16, 2016. Available at <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PQ-16-09-2016-51>.



tracking of movements, engaging with third countries and engaging with internet service providers to curb extremist online content.⁹⁶

Ireland has not launched any official programs aimed at tackling radicalisation in MENA or the Western Balkans. Instead, it has declared a willingness to share and contribute resources to any UN or EU programs in this regard.⁹⁷ However, there are examples of non-governmental organisations using experiences from the Irish context in these regions. The Ireland-based Glencree Transformative Dialogue grew out of the peace process in Northern Ireland, and continues to facilitate dialogue between groups involved in violent conflict.⁹⁸ They aim to approach both individuals previously involved in violent attacks, but also young individuals at risk of radicalisation in the same community. The group has used this foundation to operate globally, most notably in Israel/Palestine.

5. Spain

5.1. Trends and challenges

Spain has a long history of in-country political violence, with the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna ('Basque Homeland and Freedom' - ETA) figuring as primary terrorist adversary for over half a decade.⁹⁹ Founded during General Franco's dictatorship in 1959, the Basque separatist group carried out series of violent bombings, robberies and kidnapping. ETA killed over 850 people in 60 years of violence, before it was formally dissolved in 2018.¹⁰⁰ Due to its experience with ETA, Spanish jurisprudence, bureaucracy and police forces have a long tradition of dealing

⁹⁶ Fitzgerald, "Criminal Justice Act".

⁹⁷ United Nations, "Statement by Ireland."

⁹⁸ Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism," *RAN Collection – Approaches and Practices* (2019), available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/community_engagement_and_empowerment_en.pdf, 79-81.

⁹⁹ Fatima Lahnait, "Preventing violent extremism to counter home-grown jihadism. Learning by doing." *CIDOB Report*, February 2018, https://www.cidob.org/en/articulos/cidob_report/n1_2/preventing_violent_extremism_to_counter_home_grown_jihadism_learning_by_doing

¹⁰⁰ Luis R. Aizpeolea, "ETA releases statement announcing its complete dissolution." *El País*, May 3, 2018, https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2018/05/03/inenglish/1525349131_830131.html



with terrorist acts. However, this experience would prove not to be fully adequate for dealing with a different kind of terrorism that made its appearance since the 2000s: Islamist jihadism.¹⁰¹

In recent years, Islamist extremism has started to replace the threat of ETA in Spain.¹⁰² Spain has had to adapt from domestic localised terrorism to transnational jihadism, the latter aiming at reconquering the once Muslim region of al-Andalus. Despite its previous internal experience with ETA, Spain suffered one of the worst terrorist attacks in 2004 in Madrid, when Islamist militants linked to al-Qaeda killed 193 people and left more than 1800 injured in bombings on the city's railway system.¹⁰³ In 2017, ISIS executed two vehicle ramming attacks, which targeted the Ramblas in Barcelona and the tourist area of Cambrils. These attacks left 16 people killed and over 100 people wounded.¹⁰⁴

Overall, most cases of Islamist radicalisation in Spain have taken place in specific regions of the country, including Madrid, Barcelona, Ceuta and Melilla (two Spanish-controlled enclaves in Morocco). While before 2013 90% of radicalised jihadists were foreigners from Morocco, Pakistan or Algeria, after 2013 the number of Spanish nationals, and thus home-grown terrorism, increased significantly to 40%.¹⁰⁵ As a consequence, since 2012, Spain has started to pay more attention to the prevention of jihadist radicalisation on its own soil.

5.2. Legal framework

Given its experience with ETA, Spain's law enforcement system has long had the capacity to investigate and prosecute suspected terrorists. As it stands now, the Spanish Criminal Code (most recently amended in March 2019) outlaws any act of "collaboration with the activities or purposes of a terrorist organisation", including the glorification of terrorism on social media, 'self-radicalisation' on the internet, training remotely, operating without a clear affiliation, or

¹⁰¹ Fernando Reinares and Carola García-Calvo, "Spain's shifting approach to Jihadism post-3/11," in *De-Radicalization in the Mediterranean*. Ed. Lorenzo Vidino (Milano: Ledizioni 2018), 35-58.

¹⁰² Lahnait, "Preventing violent extremism".

¹⁰³ "Spain Train Bombings Fast Facts," CNN, last modified February 26, 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/04/world/europe/spain-train-bombings-fast-facts/index.html>

¹⁰⁴ "Barcelona and Cambrils attacks," BBC, last modified : August 27, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40964242>

¹⁰⁵ Reinares and García-Calvo, "Spain's shifting approach," 36.



travelling in support of non-state terrorist actors. The code also prohibits incitement “to incur in discriminatory acts, hate or violence”.¹⁰⁶

In a precedent-setting case of July 2017, a plea bargain initiated by the special Prosecutor for Terrorism led all the accused of a six-member terrorist cell to publicly admit to their crimes, acknowledge their moral wrongfulness, and denounce violence and terrorism as perversions of Islam, in return for their sentence to be cut in half. This innovative way in using justice sector’s tools for PVE purposes has contextual antecedents.¹⁰⁷

Spain’s criminal code follows on from the country’s post-dictatorial Constitution, which came into force in 1978 and promises the “exercise of human rights” and a “dignified quality of life for all”.¹⁰⁸ As a result, the penal code is heavily focused on the human rights of the accused – not just of the accusers – and on the values of mercy and rehabilitation. Although convicted terrorists retain primary responsibility for the compensation of victims and need to serve their punishment, the state plays a subsidiary role in providing victims’ redress where it is not available from the offender.

These notions are elaborated in the Law of Solidarity with the Victims of Terrorism, which provides the legal basis of a compensation scheme.¹⁰⁹ Article 1 states that “as a testimony of honour and recognition for harm suffered due to terrorist attacks, the state bears the payment of reparations otherwise due to the victims by the authors and [those] responsible of such acts”. The principles of social solidarity and civic responsibility feature prominently in the law. Reflecting these principles, article 2 provides that the government “will bear the burden of the relevant indemnities on an extraordinary basis”. To be sure, the Spanish government’s role is ad hoc and voluntary. A narrow eligibility test is adopted, with compensation only being available to Spanish citizens, nationals of EU member states, persons habitually residing in Spain, as well as nationals of foreign countries that have concluded reciprocal agreements with Spain in this respect.

¹⁰⁶ Código Penal y legislación complementaria, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Jillian Rafferty, “Risk and Responsibility: A Spanish Prosecutor’s Creative Approach to Fighting Terrorism”, 1 February 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Retrieved from <http://www.parliament.am/library/sahmanadrutyunner/ispania.pdf>, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Ley 32/1999, de 8 de octubre, de solidaridad con las víctimas del terrorismo, last amended on 2 April 2003.



Spain is currently in the process of improving its legal framework to directly address the flow of foreign fighters to conflict zones like Syria and Iraq; enable the government, and its special Prosecutor for Terrorism, to more aggressively prosecute suspected jihadists not already associated with criminal organisations; and prevent online recruitment.

This follows from the government's first-ever National Counter-Terrorism Strategy.¹¹⁰ Launched in February 2019, the NCTS is effective until 2023 but subject to annual review. This text, which was drawn up in line with the counter-terrorism strategies of both the EU and the UN, replaced the 2012 'Integrated Strategy against International Terrorism and Radicalisation' and adapted the government's outlook to the new threat situation formulated in the 2017 National Security Strategy.¹¹¹ In the latter document, the Spanish government identified jihadist terrorism as "one of the principal problems confronting the international community". The NCTS states that "the activity of lone actors and cells radicalised by themselves in Spanish territory" presents the greatest threat to Spain. Jihadists, particularly returning foreign fighters affiliated with ISIS and Al-Qaeda, are specifically targeted. The strategy also aims to boost the number of prison guards and support for de-radicalisation programmes.

Focused on "Preventing, Protecting, Persecuting and Preparing a response", the NCTS guides the Spanish government in the identification of extremists and the disruption of terrorist plots while protecting potential targets.¹¹² The strategy seeks to identify at-risk individuals and communities in order to deal with the root causes of radicalisation and reduce the vulnerability of potentially sensitive targets of terrorism and violent extremism. The 'persecuting' section defines the strategic lines of action for identifying and investigating terrorists and violent extremists to prevent the planning and execution of their actions, while also taking action against their support, logistics and finance networks and making sure they are brought to justice. The 'preparing a response' section refers to minimising the impact of terrorist activities, guaranteeing maximum support for the victims, repairing the damage caused and restoring normality by carrying out actions and plans for a swift recovery and extracting the lessons learned in order to prepare future responses.

¹¹⁰ La Moncloa, "Government of Spain publishes National Counter-terrorism Strategy for first time", 26 February 2019.

¹¹¹ Sito de Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, last visited 24 April 2020.

¹¹² La Moncloa, op. cit.



The Spanish government recognises that development of these four areas will require the implementation of national strategic plans in such specific areas as the fight against violent radicalisation and the financing of terrorism, counter-terrorism prevention and protection, and strengthened control of explosive precursors. Work is underway in each of these areas.

Approved by the National Security Council, the NCTS was drawn up by the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Centre for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO), with contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the European Union and Cooperation, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence and the National Security Department. CITCO, the National Police and the Civil Guard are responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Spanish Criminal Code related to terrorism.

5.3. Domestic snapshot

Measures intended to prevent violent radicalisation emerged in 2015, i.e. seven years after the EU adopted the European Strategy for Combatting Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism. At the heart of Spain's PVE approach is the country's 'National Plan for the Fight Against Violent Radicalization' (PEN-LCRV). This plan was more the outcome of influence from EU level initiatives than from a national debate inside Spain.¹¹³ Issued in 2015, this Plan consists of five guiding principles, of which domestic coordination is one:¹¹⁴

- Values of an open society: a plural society, with respect for rights and the principles of the rule of law;
- Transparency: easily understandable policies that are known by citizens;
- Unity and Coordination: a multi-agency approach, involving all affected ministries, the general public and public-private partnerships;
- Adequacy of resources: the use of existing instruments and means;

¹¹³ Reinales and García-Calvo, "Spain's shifting approach," 57.

¹¹⁴ 'Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra La Radicalizacion Violenta' (PEN-LCRV), Spanish government, 2015, http://www.interior.gob.es/documents/10180/3066463/CM_mir_PEN-LCRV.pdf/b57166c1-aaaf-4c0d-84c7-b69bda6246f5



- Evaluation, audit and control: of means and actions, prioritizing viability and sustainability.

The PEN-LCRV covers three dimensions: the *internal* dimension that deals with violent radicalisation within the borders of Spain; the *external* dimension that principally focuses on collaboration with the EU; and the *cyberspace* dimension that looks into how to prevent radicalisation online. For each of these dimensions, the plan differentiates between acting before (prevention), during (monitoring) and after (undertake action) violent radicalisation.¹¹⁵ The plan does not come with its own budget, but is dependent on contributions from the governmental departments involved.¹¹⁶

For the internal dimension, within Spain, the plan stipulates that C/PVE should be carried out at the local level, with centralized coordination via an inter-ministerial administrative structure. Concretely, the ‘National Group for the fight against Violent Radicalisation’ (GN-LCRV), a national structure of interdepartmental nature that is coordinated by the Ministry of Interior, coordinates the ‘Local Groups to fight against violent radicalisation’ (GL-LCRV). These local groups consist of local police delegates, regional police, City hall officials, judicial authority, schools, social affairs and social entities at risk.¹¹⁷

Implementation of the PEN-LCRV has been slow so far, with only some 20 Local Groups established by mid-2018. Within this framework, Malagá has been designated as a pilot city.¹¹⁸ The city has set up youth radicalisation interventions and community-based programmes to improve communication between government and non-governmental organisations.

The most concrete outcome of the PEN-LCRV is the project ‘Stop Radicalisms’, which invites Spanish citizens or residents to contact the authorities via phone or online to help detect and neutralise cases of violent radicalisation in the country.¹¹⁹ It is managed by the CITCO within

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Reinales and García-Calvo, “Spain’s shifting approach”, 51-52.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Lahnait, “Preventing violent extremism”.

¹¹⁹ Maria Lozano Alia, ‘The Spanish Approach to Preventing and Fighting Violent Radicalisation,’ European Eye on Radicalisation, December 18, 2018, <https://eeradicalization.com/the-spanish-approach-to-preventing-and-fighting-violent-radicalization/>



the Ministry of Interior. In addition, the PEN-LCRV also coordinates two programmes directed at the prevention of radicalisation in prisons, one at the national level and one in Catalonia.

Finally, civil society organisations are also working on prevention, sometimes hand in hand with the government. Their activities include awareness rising about radicalisation (e.g. in schools) and support for victims of terrorism. One key initiative is the ‘Somos Más, contra el odio y el radicalismo’ (We are More, against hatred and radicalism) initiative, which is a cooperation between different ministries, civil society organisations and YouTube.¹²⁰ The #SomosMás initiative highlights the role of minority youth leaders in countering discrimination and extremism.

5.4. International snapshot

In the aftermath of 9/11, Spain took a leading role in international counter-terrorism efforts. Spain has been a key participant of the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) established by the UN Security Council to monitor states’ compliance with counter-terrorism standards. Spain has contributed significantly to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and, in 2016, deployed over 300 troops to a military-training mission in Iraq.

Spain recognises the importance of international cooperation and information-sharing in preventing terrorism. Spanish police have worked closely with security forces in Morocco, Germany, and other countries to dismantle transnational jihadist networks. Spain also helped found the Global Counter-terrorism Forum (GCTF). The GCTF has a long-term goal of reducing vulnerability to terrorism by creating a comprehensive approach to countering radicalisation and recruitment, preventing terrorist attacks, and prosecuting the perpetrators of terrorist acts. Spain has also been a long-time member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an inter-governmental body that works to promote polices that combat money laundering and terrorist financing, and the Egmont Group, a global association of financial intelligence units.

¹²⁰ “Quiénes somos?”, Somos Más, accessed April 27, 2020, <http://www.somos-mas.es/quienes-somos/>



Since 2004, Spain has been a member of an informal working group on jihadism known as the ‘5+5’. This unofficial network consists of defence ministers from Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. The group exchanges information on threats posed by Islamic extremism and foreign fighters in the region. The Spanish Civil Guard also utilises Europol information to combat terrorism and organised crime.¹²¹

Until Autumn 2019, Spanish agents in Syria were participating in Operation Gallant Phoenix, a US-led operation to identify European foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. US forces launched the mission in 2015 from a base in Jordan to gather evidence such as fingerprints and computer files in formerly ISIS-held territory in order to identify foreign fighters.¹²² The goal was to then bring charges against the individuals if and when they return to their home countries. Spain was one of 21 countries reportedly participating in the mission until President Trump ordered the withdrawal of US troops from Syria in October 2019.

Spain has been committed to the Sahel for years and it has intensified its efforts in the region in general and in Mali in particular, where it actively supports the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed in 2014 between the government and rebel groups. As such, it participates in all the European Union’s civil and military missions in the region (EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Mali, and EUCAP Sahel Niger).¹²³ Spain is the largest financial contributor to EUTM Mali. In 2018, Spain took command of the mission, training and advising the Malian military. Furthermore, the Spanish Guardia Civil leads the EU’s GAR-SI Sahel project, to create gendarmerie units in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger. Alongside France, Spain also actively participated in Operation Serval and is currently still cooperating with the French operation Barkhane, which has taken over from the previous operation.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Europol (2018), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019.

¹²² Oscar Lopez-Fonseca, “Spain helping US identify European jihadists in Syria”, *El Pais*, 4 March 2019, retrieved from https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2019/03/04/inenglish/1551688284_818633.html.

¹²³ See <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/PoliticaExteriorCooperacion/Africa/Paginas/Sahel.aspx>, website of the MFA of Spain. Last visited 27 April 2020. Spain is also part of the [Sahel Alliance](#). Launched in 2017, the alliance currently comprises 12 members: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. It aims to coordinate and deliver aid more rapidly and effectively in the five countries of the Sahel.

¹²⁴ See, generally, David Garcia and Ramon Pacheco Pardo (eds.), *Contemporary Spanish Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge 2014.



EUCAP Sahel Niger is the only CSDP operation which has counter-terrorism explicitly written into its mandate.¹²⁵ The crisis in Mali, the instability in Libya and Boko Haram terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin are all threats to Niger's security and development. In addition, the country is faced with the illegal trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings that serve to some extent in funding terrorist groups who use Niger's vast desert regions as trafficking routes or safe havens. EUCAP Sahel Niger contributes to the development of an integrated, coherent, sustainable, and human rights-based approach among the various Nigerien security agencies in the fight against terrorism and organised crime. Nearly 130 international experts, the majority of whom are from European security forces and justice departments, including from Spain, are permanently deployed in Niamey. Spain wants Niger to establish an embassy in Madrid.¹²⁶

6. United Kingdom

6.1. Trends and challenges

The United Kingdom (UK) suffers from persistent instances of violent extremism across several regions. It reported 60 failed, foiled or completed attacks in 2018, more than double that of France, the EU member state reporting second most attacks.¹²⁷ In 2017, the UK was one of only five European countries to report an increase in violent extremism.¹²⁸ One survey indicated that around 10% of the British population have either been the victim of such violence or know somebody who has.¹²⁹ The government attributes intercultural tensions in the domestic population as the core driver for radicalisation, citing Islamist and right-wing extremism, including neo-nazism, as the foremost sources of violence.¹³⁰ Data shows an annual increase in

¹²⁵ Council Decision 2012/392/CFSP of 16 July 2012 on the European Union CSDP mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger), OJ 2012 L 187/48, 17.7.2012.

¹²⁶ Pascale Joannin, 'The Common Foreign and Security Policy under test in Niger', Fondation Robert Schuman, European Issue No. 536, 18 November 2019.

¹²⁷ Europol, "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019," The Netherlands, 2018. Available at https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat_2019_final.pdf, 12.

¹²⁸ Mark A. Bellis and Katie Hardcastle, eds., "Preventing violent extremism in the UK: Public health solutions," Public Health Wales & UK Faculty of Public Health, 2019. Available at https://www.fph.org.uk/media/2475/preventing-violent-extremism-in-the-uk_public-health-solutions-web.pdf, 3.

¹²⁹ Mark J. Penn, "Views from around the globe: countering violent extremism," *CSIS Countering Violent Extremism survey*, 2016. Available at <https://www.csis.org/analysis/survey-findings-global-perceptions-violent-extremism>, 9.

¹³⁰ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," *Command Paper (Cm 9148)*, October 2015. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470088/51859_Cm9148_Accessible.pdf, 9-10.



hate crime of 18% in 2010-15, with the London police reporting over 60% annual rise in anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic hate crime.¹³¹ Radicalisation in Muslim communities are a particular concern, with the government paying close attention to the prevalence of foreign fighters. An estimated 850 British individuals travelled to join fighting in Syria by 2016/17, one of the highest rates in Europe.¹³²

Despite the attention given to Islamist or right-wing extremism, Republican extremism remains the most active driver of violent extremism in the UK. Researchers have noted the general lack of attention to persistent attacks in and around Northern Ireland by the national government or public, reflected in limited media coverage.¹³³ A hypothesis attributes this discrepancy to the perceived global ideological threat from Islamist extremism compared to more nativist Republicanism. Despite the Good Friday Agreement from 1998, so-called dissident Republicans continue to orchestrate attacks against primarily security personnel in Northern Ireland.¹³⁴ In fact, Europol categorized 56 out of 60 recorded attacks in the UK in 2018 as separatist or ethno-nationalist.¹³⁵

In terms of recruitment, these extremist individuals and groups all target youths. Using social networking sites to spread extremist materials remain a primary channel for extremists to influence at-risk individuals across the country,¹³⁶ but the government has also noted an increasing infiltration of the public school system. A 2014 survey found that extremists had joined school staff, invited extremist speakers to class and intimidated staff unwilling to support extremist views.¹³⁷

6.2. Legal framework

¹³¹ Home Office, “Counter-Extremism Strategy,” 11.

¹³² Bellis and Harcastle, “Preventing violent extremism,” 3.

¹³³ Mary J. Hickman et al., “‘Suspect Communities’? Counter-terrorism policy, the press, and the impact on Irish and Muslim communities in Britain,” (London Metropolitan University, 2011), available at <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/8735/1/suspect-communities-report-july2011.pdf>, 3; Aaron Edwards, “When Terrorism as Strategy Fails: Dissident Irish Republicans and the Threat to British Security,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 4 (2011): 326.

¹³⁴ Edwards, “Terrorism as Strategy,” 325.

¹³⁵ Europol, “Terrorism Situation,” 13.

¹³⁶ Edwards, “Terrorism as Strategy,” 324.

¹³⁷ Home Office, “Counter-Extremism Strategy,” 13.



The UK boasts a comprehensive legal framework handling prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism. The most specific provisions are found in counter-terrorism legislation, most recently in the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. New provisions in this legislation made several parts of the government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) statutory duties for the public sector, including local authorities, schools, health and social workers, prisons and probationary bodies. Duties include notifying police and sharing information about individuals at risk of radicalisation or those already radicalised, in addition to a mandated responsibility to intervene and provide support to these individuals.¹³⁸ The government has itself introduced new powers aimed at limiting extremist access to youths, by permitting the police to ban extremist organisations that promote hatred, restrict harmful activities of the most dangerous extremist individuals, and restrict access to premises repeatedly used to support extremism, though any action under these rules are subject to approval by a High Court.¹³⁹

There are further legal duties for comprehensive safeguards that include protection against radicalisation. The 2004 Children Act introduces duties for a range of organisations and individuals to ensure the welfare of children through their social service functions, where radicalisation is seen as a form of abuse or exploitation.¹⁴⁰ Further duties to safeguard youths have been introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children and Wales Keeping Learners Safe, the latter of which specifically includes advice on handling radicalisation.¹⁴¹

6.3. Domestic snapshot

The UK government considers extremist ideology itself to be the most acute target for preventing violent extremism. They point to its ability to solidify and enlarge alienation, separation and isolation between communities, allowing alternative narratives, structures and

¹³⁸ Home Office, "Channel Duty Guidance," *statutory guidance*, London, 2015. Last updated December 19, 2019. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf, 2-5.

¹³⁹ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," 34-35.

¹⁴⁰ Home Office, "Channel Duty," 4; Department for Education, "Working together to safeguard children 2018," *statutory guidance*, London, July 2018. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf, 8

¹⁴¹ Home Office, "Channel Duty," 4.



authorities to become prominent.¹⁴² However, there are ongoing discussions regarding the focus of PVE efforts. While the national government and security officials emphasizes the dangers of extremist ideology, frontline workers and local authorities allot more importance to socioeconomic factors.¹⁴³

The UK Counter-Extremism Strategy reflects this ongoing discussion in its four areas of interest. While these areas encapsulate both the importance of ensuring community cohesion and policing extremists or at-risk individuals, they exhibit a priority on the latter: First, countering extremist ideology online and elsewhere. Second, partnering with those opposed to extremism. Third, creating new police powers to cover full range of extremist behaviour. Fourth, build cohesive communities by understanding and addressing the underlying factors that alienate and isolate individuals from the state and society.¹⁴⁴ The PVE strategies of Greater London and UK health officials, meanwhile, rather advocate a universal approach that covers the whole population and emphasizes the role of policy areas like education, integration and community engagement rather than targeting certain ideologies or communities.¹⁴⁵ Northern Ireland represents an exception in this regard due to its challenges with separatism in the form of extremist Republicanism. Over the 2000s and 2010s, there has been a persistent trend with increasing devolution of political and policing powers to the local government, including the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2007. Several initiatives like the District Policing Partnerships (DPP) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) aim to engage with and address community safety and policing issues at the community-level, while the partnerships have been expanded to allow Sinn Fein members since 2007.¹⁴⁶ Despite these initiatives, a sizable minority in Northern Ireland, particularly in Belfast, remain ambivalent about engaging with the state or police force.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Home Office, “Counter-Extremism Strategy,” 12.

¹⁴³ Paul Thomas, “Failed and Friendless: The UK’s ‘Preventing Violent Extremism’ Programme,” *The British Journal of Polices and International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2010): 442-458. Digital version available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/8949/1/Paul_Thomas_Failed_and_Friendless_PVEpdf.pdf.

¹⁴⁴ Home Office, “Counter-Extremism Strategy”.

¹⁴⁵ Greater London Authority, “The London Countering Violent Extremism Programme Report 2018-19,” June 2019. Available at https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cve_strategy_20_8_19.pdf; Bellis and Hardcastle, “Preventing violent extremism,” 5-6.

¹⁴⁶ John Topping, “Community Safety: A Decade of Development, Delivery, Change and Challenge in Northern Ireland,” *Research Report to Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium*, April 2012. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/John_Topping/publication/309456650_Community_Safety_A_Decade_of_Development_Delivery_Change_and_Challenge_in_Northern_Ireland/links/5810fa0a08aea04bbcb4c58/Community-Safety-A-Decade-of-Development-Delivery-Change-and-Challenge-in-Northern-Ireland.pdf, 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.



Preventing radicalisation and violent extremism is a cornerstone in British counter-terrorism policies. The Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) lists preventative measures, Prevent, as one of four pillars. Prevent is divided further into three phases: tackling the causes of radicalisation and challenging extremism online and offline, early intervention of at-risk individuals, and finally rehabilitation of radicalised individuals.¹⁴⁸ The national government emphasizes the role of local authorities and police in coordinating a multi-agency approach that also includes civil society and the private sector to implement Prevent.¹⁴⁹ Efforts in tackling the causes of radicalisation and early intervention of at-risk individuals were first tested in pilot projects and then became statutory duties for all relevant public bodies under the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. Prevent and Channel, respectively, duty guidance documents emphasize Islamist extremism as the most significant threat to society, but also mention extreme right-wing movements, again a clear reference to extremist ideology.¹⁵⁰

Under Prevent, frontline workers like school staff, healthcare and social care workers are required to receive training to identify and tackle “radicalising influences” in their communities.¹⁵¹ The intention is to safeguard at-risk individuals from becoming radicalised by restricting extremist access to them and offering support to the individuals themselves. Workers are required to share information about cases of concern with police and local authorities. Meanwhile, local authorities are required to assess the local picture by using multi-agency networks to gather and share information, including with the police, coordinate intervention if necessary, and monitor the impact.¹⁵² At the national level, the Home Office gathers information from the local Prevent bodies, police and intelligence agencies to monitor and enforce implementation in conjunction with the Prevent Oversight Board.¹⁵³ The government is aiming to expand coverage of Prevent, with over 7000 individuals referred through the

¹⁴⁸ Home Office, “CONTEST – The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism,” London, June 2018. Available at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/716907/140618_CCS207_CCS0218929798-1_CONTEST_3.0_WEB.pdf, 32

¹⁴⁹ Home Office, “Counter-Extremism Strategy,” 14-15; Home Office, “CONTEST,” 32.

¹⁵⁰ Home Office, “Channel Duty,” 3; Home Office, “Prevent Duty Guidance,” *statutory guidance*, London, March 12, 2015. Last updated April 10, 2019. Available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>.

¹⁵¹ Home Office, “Prevent Duty”.

¹⁵² Home Office, “CONTEST,” 32.

¹⁵³ Home Office, “Prevent Duty”.



Programme in 2017/18. In 2014, they introduced legal duties on public bodies to review any reported concern about persistent anti-social behaviour, while the Extremism Community Trigger similarly mandated police and local authorities to review fully any complaints about extremism.¹⁵⁴

The government has also instituted a number of efforts to confront, challenge and limit extremism online and offline. Providing a compelling alternative narrative to extremism by empowering civil society commentators is seen as an important element in Prevent.¹⁵⁵ The Home Office is engaged in organizing a national network of anti-extremist commentators to empower them to get their message out, with the Prime Minister's Engagement Forum being one such high-profile arena where commentators can meet, exchange and discuss experiences, and inform policymakers.¹⁵⁶

There are also efforts to restrict extremists' access to at-risk individuals. The Disclosure and Barring Service gathers and shares information about individuals to current and future employers so that these can identify extremists and stop them from working with youths, while there are plans to introduce an automatic barring of individuals with a conviction or civil order in relation to extremist activity.¹⁵⁷ There is also an ongoing effort by police and security organs to monitor websites and social networking sites to find and remove extremist materials.¹⁵⁸ The UK government removed over 300,000 pieces of violent extremist material in the period 2010-2018.¹⁵⁹ However, the government is facing a challenge in mobilizing communities and civil society to cooperate in this effort. A 2015 report stated that charities were largely quick to take their websites offline when notified of materials promoting extremism or hate, but that they were slow to implement policies designed to exclude such content.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," 35.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 23-24 & 31.

¹⁵⁶ Prime Minister's Office, "Prime Minister: 'I want to build a national coalition to challenge and speak out against extremism,'" news story, October 13, 2015. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-i-want-to-build-a-national-coalition-to-challenge-and-speak-out-against-extremism>.

¹⁵⁷ *CBS The Screening House*, "Government Investigates Extremism Infiltration into Public Sector," December 1, 2019. Available at <https://cbscreening.co.uk/news/post/extremism-public-sector/>.

¹⁵⁸ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," 24.

¹⁵⁹ Home Office, "CONTEST," 31.

¹⁶⁰ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," 15.



When local authorities identify a specific individual as particularly vulnerable towards radicalisation, they will refer the case to the Channel programme. The 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act made the programme a statutory duty, and mandates that both local authorities and police must be involved in handling each case.¹⁶¹ After referral, a Channel panel made up by a relevant multi-agency group shall develop a specific and appropriate support plan tailored to each individual case, to intervene in the radicalisation process, though participation by the individual is voluntary.¹⁶² There is active screening of panel participants to ensure that no individual or organisation holding extremist views or support violent extremist activities participate. Unlike in Prevent cases, the police take on the coordinating role rather than local authorities, requesting information on the individual from frontline workers and other panel participants, upon which they will make an assessment to the panel.¹⁶³

6.4. International snapshot

The UK has been a very active contributor to EU legal frameworks on PVE. Overall, it considers its preventative efforts a case of best practice and a model for other governments, however it is interesting to note that its international focus remains on implementation in the UN and the British Commonwealth.¹⁶⁴ In the aftermath of the London attacks of July 7, 2005, the UK began simultaneous efforts domestically and in the EU to introduce new counter-terrorism legislation. In the second half of that year, the government took advantage of its council presidency term to draft and propose an EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy.¹⁶⁵ The strategy was heavily modelled on the UK's own CONTEST, and similarly built on four pillars with the first being preventative measures targeting radicalisation and recruitment by extremist organisations.¹⁶⁶ While the proposal did not immediately lead to new policies, but it helped consolidate and re-orient the EU's debates and legal frameworks to account for a broader

¹⁶¹ Home Office, "Channel Duty," 7.

¹⁶² Ibid., 5.

¹⁶³ In 2018, there were new pilots aimed at increasing the role of local authorities in the Channel programme, see Home Office, "CONTEST," 31.

¹⁶⁴ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," 18.

¹⁶⁵ European Parliament, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism," Study for the Libe Committee, Brussels, January 2017. Available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583124/IPOL_STU\(2017\)583124_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583124/IPOL_STU(2017)583124_EN.pdf), 45-46.

¹⁶⁶ European Parliament, "Policies on Counter-Terrorism," 16; Council of the European Union, "The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy," Brussels, November 30, 2005. Available at <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204>.



approach to tackling violent extremism, most specifically by including PVE measures.¹⁶⁷ This strategy has been followed up by concrete initiatives for specific issues under PVE.

One area where the UK has been particularly active is pushing for international coordination in challenging and restricting extremism online.¹⁶⁸ First, it has been instrumental in setting up the EU Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU), which has been modelled heavily on the UK Internet Referral Unit (UK IRU), the task force in charge of detecting and taking down extremist materials from websites and social networking sites.¹⁶⁹ The UK continues to share its experiences actively with other governments on this online policing activity through a network of overseas Counter Terrorism and Extremism Liaison Officers.¹⁷⁰ The UK IRU has also appointed a Liaison Officer to provide a dedicated operational channel of communication with the EU IRU to ensure a coordinated effort.¹⁷¹ In addition to restricting extremist content, the UK has also been active in supporting civil society to push alternative narratives to challenge those of extremists. For example, they proposed establishing a network of mainstream voices to counter extremist networks, an initiative that aspires to go global after initial stages in Europe.¹⁷² Other initiatives have aimed at strengthening communication, coordination and information-sharing among EU member states. The UK has for example been proactive in organising informal work sessions on strategic communication over counter-terrorism.¹⁷³

The UK government is devoting significant resources to combating radicalisation in adjacent regions to the EU. The country is a leading member of the global coalition to defeat Daesh in MENA, and plays an active role in coordinating the coalition's five-pronged approach, which

¹⁶⁷ Raphael Bossong, "Assessing the EU's Added Value in the Area of Terrorism Prevention and Violent Radicalisation," *Economics of Security Working Paper 60* (Berlin: German Institute for Economic Research, January 2012). Available at https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.399445.de/diw_econsec0060.pdf, 4.

¹⁶⁸ Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," 18.

¹⁶⁹ Home Office, "Roots of violent radicalisation," London, June 2012. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228597/8368.pdf, 10.

¹⁷⁰ Home Office, "violent radicalisation," 10.

¹⁷¹ Europol, "EU Internet Referral Unit – Year One Report," The Hague, February 22, 2016. Available at https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/eu_iru_1_year_report_highlights.pdf, 4.

¹⁷² Council of the European Union, "The EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment – Implementation report," Brussels, November 23, 2007. Available at <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&t=PDF&gc=true&sc=false&f=ST%2015443%202007%20INIT>, 5-6.

¹⁷³ Council of the European Union, "EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy – Discussion paper," Brussels, May 14, 2009. Available at <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209717%202009%20INIT>, 6.



emphasizes stabilisation efforts and countering extremist messages in addition to the military response.¹⁷⁴ In addition to this coalition, the UK is active in channelling public funds towards programs in MENA aimed at strengthening governance and trust in public institutions as measures to mitigate radicalisation risks in marginalised communities, for example through the Westminster Foundation for Democracy.¹⁷⁵ To support these efforts, the British Council is active in organizing hearings, study trips and reports to provide recommendations to policymakers on potential measures from the UK.¹⁷⁶ The British Council also work with MENA governments to share PVE experiences and improve governance as well as run programs directed at individuals there. The Young Arab Voices program, for example, aims to empower youths in critical thinking by creating a platform for fair debates and promoting youth ownership of ideas and policy initiatives.¹⁷⁷

7. Conclusion

The core target of PVE strategies in the European Union, especially since 2011, is Islamist extremism. While some attention is being paid to right-wing extremism (Germany, UK) or republican extremism (Ireland, UK), the war in Syria and the rise of ISIS has turned attention in Europe mainly towards religious violent radicalisation. This is not necessarily in line with reality: in the UK, for example, most attacks are executed by non-religious groups. Nonetheless, Islamist jihadist ideology is generally perceived as the core driver of violent extremism.

¹⁷⁴ “UK action to combat Daesh.” Government of the United Kingdom website. Accessed on April 27, 2020. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/daesh/about>.

¹⁷⁵ British Council, “Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA – Evidence Session,” 20 March 2017, available at https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_uk_supporting_mena_to_build_resilience_to_radicalisation.pdf, 6-7.

¹⁷⁶ British Council, “Building Young People’s Resilience to Violent Extremism in the Middle East and North Africa,” November 2017. Available at https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/3502_bc_appg_inquiry_report_06.pdf?_ga=2.142560050.128030831.1587983457-727247637.1587983457.

¹⁷⁷ Claire Spencer, and Saad Aldouri, “Young Arab Voices - Moving Youth Policy from Debate into Action,” *Chatham House Research Paper*, May 2016. Available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2016-05-13-young-arab-voices-spencer-aldouri.pdf>.



Counter-terrorism strategies that put prevention at their heart are rather recent in most countries. The UK has been a pioneer and has provided a major push for the EU-level counter-terrorism framework of 2005, which included a 'Prevent' pillar. Countries like Spain and Ireland, on the other hand, have principally pushed their PVE agenda forward at the national level in the aftermath of intergovernmental EU initiative. Germany, in turn, has developed its own PVE strategy over the past decade and has actively exchanged practices at the EU level, while France has favoured a more securitised rather than preventive approach.

Overall, the local level is at the heart of preventive strategies that aim at non-occurrence of violent extremism: civil society and frontline workers (schools, social care staff...) are key and operate often side by side with local security forces and local authorities. While governmental actors generally see extremist ideology (and religion) as a core driver of radicalisation, civil society tends to highlight the importance of socio-economic factors in fostering an 'enabling environment'.

The external-internal nexus is clearly understood in the PVE strategies of most EU countries. This nexus has become increasingly clear with the phenomenon of foreign fighters returning home. While most PVE initiatives are coordinated both intra and inter EU countries, there are also initiatives that aim at PVE cooperation with non-EU countries in the Balkans and, even more so, in the wider MENA region.



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