HORIZONTAL FACILITY FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TÜRKIYE

ENHANCING PENITENTIARY CAPACITIES IN ADDRESSING RADICALISATION IN PRISONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

POLICY PAPER

ADDRESSING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN PRISONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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POLICY PAPER

ADDRESSING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN PRISONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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FOREWORD

Respected colleagues and partners,

*Thanks to you and your dedication and commitment, we have successfully completed the implementation of the Horizontal Facility regional action "Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalisation in prisons in the Western Balkans". **More than 90 activities were implemented with more than 1.500 participants from the Western Balkans**, active in the field of preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism.*
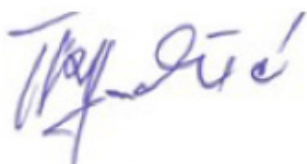
We strongly believe we fulfilled the goals set at the outset of the action. We significantly raised the awareness and understanding among the professional public on the phenomena of radicalisation and violent extremism in prisons, and enhanced culture of sharing information and exchanging experiences and good practices. Even more, knowledge and skills of practitioners who work with violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) and radicalised inmates on daily basis have further strengthened, while methodologies, tools, and approaches in working with this category of offenders improved in line with Beneficiaries' needs.

On this joint venture, when speaking of management and rehabilitation of VEPs, together we identified strengthens and weaknesses of the penitentiary and probation systems in the region, which enabled us to define conclusions and draw recommendations common for the entire region and those specific for each Beneficiary.

Therefore, this comprehensive document provides decision makers with strategies for developing tailored policies, as well as with recommendations for their implementation along with guidelines for managers and practitioners. This set of recommendations should be considered in the context of the specific characteristics of each penitentiary system in the region and the fact that these vary in terms of organisation, structure, and available resources, but also bearing in mind that this phenomenon is dynamic and prone to changes. There is no 'one-fits-all' solution, but it is certain that each Beneficiary will be able to identify recommendations and guidelines which are realistic, adaptable, and applicable to their own system.

We remain committed to ensuring longstanding stability of our societies with full respect of human rights and will keep supporting policy makers, prison managers, and practitioners in overcoming challenges when addressing radicalisation and violent extremism in prisons, while supporting former prisoners to reintegrate back into their communities.

Sincerely,

Tanja Rakusic-Hadzic
Head of Co-operation in Police and Deprivation of Liberty Unit
Council of Europe

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following policy paper provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations that have emerged from the Council of Europe's regional action "Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalization in prisons in the Western Balkans". The action, implemented in six Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, was launched in 2019 to strengthen capacities in the Beneficiaries on the management of VEPs and the prevention of radicalisation to violence within prisons.

Recognising that prisons can be incubators for violent extremist ideology but also can be institutions for reform, a number of prison authorities in Europe have established specialised prison-based rehabilitation programs for violent extremists, which have the ultimate aim of enabling these individuals to successfully reintegrate into society after their release. A number of challenges exist in the development and implementation of such programmes across Europe. Some of these challenges relate to the effectiveness of prison-based programs designed to rehabilitate VEPs in order to mitigate potential risk, and the insufficient evaluation of their impact.

In tailoring rehabilitation programs for VEPs, formulating achievable and measurable short-term and long-term objectives, as well as indicators, is crucial for monitoring progress and effectiveness. When dealing with VEPs in prisons, adopting an individual approach is key in terms of implementing rehabilitation interventions. It is important to understand the personal history, motivation, perceptions, concerns, frustration, strengths, and deficits of each VEP. In addition to internal factors, external factors such as the individual social environment and other local circumstances should also be taken into account in the provision of effective support. An individual risk and needs assessment (RNA) is therefore necessary in order to identify a tailored rehabilitation intervention. RNA tools are not intended to be predictive and require sufficient and ongoing training of staff who will be responsible for conducting assessments. Screening Tools and RNA can play a vital role in providing important information in a structured manner that can be used to plan and implement comprehensive plans for each VEP. This was the focus of Thematic Group (TG)1: Screening, risk and needs assessment.

Rehabilitation interventions designed to address the cognitive behaviour of VEPs, including addressing their tendency for black and white thinking, and other risks and needs are critical to allowing the individual to eventually reintegrate into society and behave in a pro-social manner. In conjunction with VEP-specific interventions, the inclusion of more general prison activities to support and reinforce the process of change (vocational training, educational activities, cultural activities, psychosocial interventions) are recommended.

Some interventions and activities, however, may be counterproductive for certain individuals and the risks associated with their participation need to be carefully assessed and monitored. A multidisciplinary approach should be established to ensure that the complexity of the issues underlying violent extremism can be appropriately addressed by a range of actors with complementary competencies and expertise. Rehabilitation interventions should be designed, developed, and implemented by taking into consideration local conditions, legislation, prison population and available staff. In this context one of the main objectives of the regional action is to contribute to the rehabilitation and disengagement from violence by assessing the needs, developing of rehabilitation programmes for VEPs and training of staff. This was the focus of TG 2: Rehabilitation and disengagement from violence. In order to conduct accurate assessments and implement effective rehabilitation interventions, it is vital that prison and probation staff be systematically well-trained. Training within the Beneficiaries remains mostly ad hoc, which may negatively impact the confidence and competence of staff to manage VEPs along the prison-exit

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

continuum. Basic training and awareness raising, specialised training, and implementation of dynamic security principles all contribute to successful outcomes but will require the commitment of sustained financial resources over time. The need for capacity building and training of prison and probation practitioners was the focus of TG 3.

While the interventions that take place within the prison for VEPs are undoubtedly integral to addressing the challenge of VEPs, it is equally indispensable that comprehensive preparations are made for the post penal phase during which VEPs will return to their communities. This includes developing Multi-disciplinary Teams (MDTs) who can support the implementation of exit strategies for each individual. Rehabilitation interventions should also continue at the community level. This may include ensuring that ongoing psychosocial support is made available to released VEPs, along with support for aspects such as housing, health care, and education. Developing SOPs for the post penal phase to ensure that the various actors involved after release are acting in coordination is an important step for the Beneficiaries. TG 4 focused on: preparation for release, post penal assistance and reintegration. In order to address the challenges under these four themes, the regional action provided a forum for practitioners and policy makers to meet and share information, knowledge, best practice, and experiences. This policy paper collates the challenges and practices identified throughout a number of activities and working groups, in order to identify guidance for future policy to ensure that the approach to addressing radicalisation in prisons in the Beneficiaries continues to build upon evidence-based policies and is based on effective methods that will support successful reintegration of VEPs and will reduce the risk to communities post release.

BACKGROUND

In October 2019, the Council of Europe (CoE) launched the regional action "Enhancing penitentiary capacities in addressing radicalisation in prisons in the Western Balkans" under the Horizontal Facility Program for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2019-2022 (hereinafter the action). The Program is co-funded by the European Union and the CoE and has been implemented by the CoE. Predecessor to the action was a Regional Conference held in Skopje on 03-04 October 2018 that provided a forum to prison authorities and practitioners from all six Horizontal Facility Beneficiaries from the Western Balkans (WB)[2] who discussed challenges of prevention and addressing radicalisation and violent extremism in prisons. The participants strongly welcomed an enhancement of the regional cooperation, exchange of knowledge and good practices on approaches and methodologies to address violent extremism and radicalisation in prisons and called for further strengthening of the collaboration among their respective prison services. Four key thematic areas were identified:

- **screening, risk and needs assessment and allocation practices of violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism (VERLT);**
- **rehabilitation and disengagement from violence;**
- **capacity building and training of prison and probation practitioners on addressing violent extremism and radicalisation; and**
- **preparation for release, post-penal assistance, reintegration of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs).**

[1]*Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.*

The overall aim of the project activity was to contribute to regional security by addressing radicalisation in prisons and disengaging violent extremist prisoners from violence. The main beneficiaries included the respective Ministries of Justice – Penitentiary Departments and Probation Services, whereas domestic prevention and coordination of violent extremism (P/CVE) coordination bodies, Ministries of Labour and Social Policies, Ministries of Internal Affairs and civil society organisations took the role of supporting partners.

The specific aims of the action were to: raise awareness and understanding of the process of radicalisation in prisons, encourage a culture of sharing information and good practices to ensure regular communication and sharing of know-how and best practices with other professional groups (such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)), assist practitioners in recognising signs of radicalisation and empower first-line officers with necessary knowledge and skills, and facilitate and encourage multi-agency partnership.

To fulfil these aims, four thematic regional groups were established that enabled practitioners and policy makers to meet and share information, knowledge, best practice and experiences in working with VEPs – facing similar or specific challenges across the region in prevention and countering radicalisation and violent extremism in a prison context and upon release. In addition, a set of other activities were implemented such as regional on-site visits, on-line trainings. In addition to the regional activities, number of activities were specifically designed and met priority needs of Serbia, Albania and Kosovo under the Beneficiary-specific components of the action designed for these three Beneficiaries. Furthermore, the action closely coordinated its regional dimension activities with the Beneficiary-specific approaches for Montenegro, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took place under the auspices of other country-specific projects.

POLICY PAPER STRUCTURE

This policy paper is a compendium of the findings and recommendations for the Western Balkan Beneficiaries based on 12 discussion papers that followed after each regional thematic group meeting, 32 local co-ordination fora and discussions on post-release and reintegration support to former VEPs, that encompassed more than 670 actors in society from central to local levels, direct communication and feedback from prison and probation practitioners who took part in beneficiary-specific capacity building activities and piloting activities and 26 conclusions and recommendations from the two final regional conferences[2]. Guidance for future policy is made at two levels, namely, legislative (aimed at legislative authorities, policy and decision makers) and implementation (aimed at middle and lower management, practitioners and front liners).

As a result, a robust evidence-based guidance and policies were formulated. To that end, while there is some beneficiary-specific guidance, the majority of the guidance is more broadly applicable and common to all Beneficiaries.

Considering differences between legislative and institutional frameworks of each Beneficiary and the fact that not all recommendations are necessarily applicable within the

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[2]*Regional conference "Towards improved practices in preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism in prisons and staff training in the Western Balkans" held on 17–18 May 2022 in Budva, Montenegro and the Regional conference "Towards successful management, rehabilitation and post-penal assistance to violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in the Western Balkans – achievements and the way forward" held on 04 – 05 October 2022 in Tirana, Albania.*

context of each and every jurisdiction, this Policy Paper should be used as a source of general recommendations and guidelines for policy makers and practitioners that leaves them enough room and flexibility for adaptations towards priority needs and penitentiary context specific in each Beneficiary in the Western Balkans.

METHODOLOGY

The focus of the regional thematic groups as part of this project was to look in more depth at the best practices and common challenges across the region in relation to the prevention of radicalisation and the management of violent extremism in prisons. To that end, final discussion papers from each meeting looked at shared practice in the region and the development of an inventory of what approaches are currently implemented in the region, and highlighted areas for further development along with support requirements for beneficiaries. It therefore followed that the methodological approach to this paper was to thematically 'capture' the results of these many discussion papers (12) to formulate guidance on policy and procedures in moving forward.

This paper uses a qualitative approach incorporating a thematic review of the deliverables, final discussion papers, conclusions of the final two regional conferences, evaluation reports submitted by the Grant Beneficiaries in the region on local co-ordination fora and evaluation reports on piloting of VEP-specific tools/programmes in Serbia, Kosovo and Albania. Additionally, given that some of the discussion papers dated back to 2019, to provide a more contemporary look at current practice across the WB region, questionnaires were sent to all six Beneficiaries[3] to provide an update of their current status in-terms of the full implementation of the various aspects of the project and their recommendations for future policy and planning. To that end, this report seeks to ensure that all voices have been 'heard' and provide the evidence base for future policies, legislation and decision making.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The information contained within this report results from primary data (questionnaires) and internal and external secondary data (discussion papers, beneficiary-grantees' reports, piloting evaluation papers and regional conference findings). Annex 1 contains a list of documents used for this report.

Listed below are the regional events implemented under the Action that served as a corner stone to comprehensive analysis and recommendations of this Policy Paper.

- ✓ 1st WG Theme 1 on 15-16 October 2019 CentreVille Hotel, Podgorica
- ✓ 2nd WG Theme 1 on 11 – 12 February 2020 CentreVille Hotel, Podgorica
- ✓ 3rd WG Theme 1 on 1-3 December 2020 Online
- ✓ 1st WG Theme 2 on 13-14 November 2019 Novotel Bristol Hotel, Sarajevo
- ✓ 2nd WG Theme 2 on 9-10 June 2020 via Kudo online platform
- ✓ 3rd WG Theme 2 on 13 and 14 October 2021 Hotel Ibis Styles, Sarajevo
- ✓ 1st WG Theme 3 on 11-12 December 2019 Rogner Hotel, Tirana

[3]*Serbia did not provide the project team with updated replies to the questionnaires.*

- ✓ 2nd WG Theme 3 on 6-7 July 2020 via KUDO online platform
- ✓ 3rd WG Theme 3 on 17-18 November 2021 Hotel MAK Albania, Tirana
- ✓ 1st WG Theme 4 on Hotel Holiday Inn, Skopje 21-22 January 2020
- ✓ 2nd WG Theme 4 on 4-6 November 2020 online platform
- ✓ 3rd WG Theme 4 on 21-22 December 2021, Mariott Hotel Skopje
- ✓ Regional conference: "Towards improved practices in preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism in prisons and staff training in the Western Balkans", Hotel Splendid Budva, Montenegro on 17–18 May 2022 (Themes 1 and 3)
- ✓ Final regional conference: "Towards successful management, rehabilitation and post-penal assistance to violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in the Western Balkans – achievements and the way forward", MAK Hotel Tirana, Albania 04–05 October 2022 (Themes 2 and 4).

METHODOLOGICAL FLOW CHART

Analysis of Thematic Group Discussion Papers

Analysis of Grantee reports and conclusions of regional conferences

Questionnaires to Beneficaries

Corresponding empirical literature and international best practice guidelines

Integrated findings and formulated policy recommendations!

THEME 1

Screening, risk and needs assessment (RNA) and allocation practices in the prisons

Analytical overview of the findings, developments and practice in the Western Balkans

At the start of the project, with the exception of *Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)* and *North Macedonia* who had developed an RNA tool (later revised), no Beneficiaries had specific screening or RNA tools for VEPs. Many had received some awareness training on radicalisation but lacked specific guidance to inform professional judgment in the area. At the end of the project, most Beneficiaries have developed and piloted both a screening and risk/needs tool in their jurisdictions with some at the stage of fully implementing both tools.[4] The exception to this is *Montenegro*, who have developed an RNA tool but who have very small numbers of VEPs and therefore have determined there is a lack of need in this area. In all other Beneficiaries both the screening and RNA tools are in use but at different levels.

A series of questionnaires were sent to Beneficiaries to provide a 'snapshot' of where they are currently with the implementation of the screening and RNA tool. Five of the six Beneficiaries replied and as seen in Table 1, the level of satisfaction and implementation of the tools ranged from excellent to neutral. Feedback from the Beneficiaries explains these numerical scores in more detail. The first finding is perhaps the most informative in that the Screening Tool is applied as per the needs of prisoners and not a general screening tool. In other words, the tool is applied to those whom it is considered necessary, rather than for its intended purpose, to screen for what is not obvious. This has been a common challenge amongst all Beneficiaries in that they only apply the Screening Tool to those who have been convicted of a terrorism offence.

Table 1. Screening and RNA - Median Score Across Beneficiaries

RNA	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Poor
Satisfaction	2	3		
Level of implementation	1	2	1	1
RNA	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Poor
Satisfaction	1	2	2	
Level of implementation		2	1	2
Transfer of knowledge to practice	1	4		
Ownership		2	3	
Usefulness of Training	2	3		

[4]*Piloting of VEP-specific tools/program was successfully completed in Serbia and Kosovo during 2021 and in Albania in 2022.*

Based on the feedback to the questionnaires submitted by the Beneficiaries concerning the use of the Screening Tool and the RNA, the following conclusions can be made: the application of the Screening Tool is rare due to the small number of inmates convicted for terrorism and is being applied as per needs of prisoners i.e., those convicted of a terrorism offence. However, all Beneficiaries recognise importance of having the Screening Tool applied as the basic tool for identifying convicts who have radical ideas, especially at the beginning of the sentence. According to laws and bylaws, certain jurisdictions are obligated to use the Screening Tool, however it is predominantly used on prisoners convicted for criminal acts of violent extremism and terrorism.

When it comes to application of the RNA, the Beneficiaries consider it necessary and indispensable, however the piloting experiences proved that it is a complex tool, and some indicated that training of prison staff is still needed in order to utilise it. Currently, both the screening and RNA tools are the tools applied only in those institutions where this category of convicted persons is serving a prison sentence and where there is a legal basis for its application (Screening Tool and RNA). This has led to a special training module for the application of the RNA tool being planned in some Beneficiaries. In general, psychosocial staff complete the RNA form and the beneficiaries consider the form used to conduct RNA appropriate.

However, information exchange between various agencies is poor and the majority have expressed the need for having more information from structures such as the State Police, CVE Centre, Prosecutor's Office. Although prison staff have undergone trainings and cascaded trainings on the subject of practical application of ST and RNA, it was highlighted that additional trainings in this area are needed for prison staff who will have to fully implement the basic tool and instrument for risk assessment in the future.

Allocation practices

The practice of allocation tends to be standardised across the WB region in that in most cases the court decides upon the allocation and categorisation of a prisoner. As such, those convicted of a terrorist offence, or a terrorist related offence, are housed in a prison with a designated unit for VEPs. However, there are some instances of dispersal, such as in *North Macedonia* and *Albania*. In BiH there has been a shift in practice from housing VEPs in decentralised manner in the Detention Facility of the Closed Type in Zenica prison to the BiH State Prison where the allocation principle is centralised.

Internationally, there is debate about the most appropriate allocation of prisoners who have been convicted of a terrorist offence, with arguments for dispersal resulting from the need to have VEPs exposed to the 'norms' of other prisoners and different ways of thinking, and to limit the control that influential VEPs may have over others within the group. Arguments for separate housing include the goal of containing such prisoners' extremist ideologies from infiltrating other prisoners. In the case of *North Macedonia*, as previously mentioned, dispersal resulted in other non-VEP inmates being radicalised.

Throughout the discussions among practitioners at the regional meetings, there was a consensus that in some cases other prisoners may not understand the differing practices of VEP prisoners, which can lead to conflict. Notwithstanding the issue of allocation of convicted VEPs, there will still be prisoners who have been convicted for non-terrorist offences, but who nonetheless hold extremist views, pointing to the need for general screening in Beneficiaries with high levels of extremism in the community.

Challenges to application of the Screening Tool

In-terms of allocation of VEPs, because the court decides upon the allocation and categorisation of a prisoner, as mentioned above, there is currently little room for choice in where prisoners are housed. VEPs are kept in separate accommodation to the general population, with most Beneficiaries agreeing that for several reasons this was their preference. For this reason, some Beneficiaries decided not to apply the Screening Tool given that VEPs were contained away from the general prison population and could therefore not 'contaminate' the general prison population. However, an issue in *North Macedonia* involving the radicalisation of prisoners perhaps serves to highlight the need for using the Screening Tool across the entire prison population, especially amongst Beneficiaries where there is a high incidence of radicalisation in the general community. In this particular incidence, the Screening Tool was not used across the general prison population, and it was therefore not known that a number of non-VEP prisoners were at risk of radicalising other prisoners. At the time of writing this report, similarly to other Beneficiaries, *North Macedonia* still only applies the tool in those institutions where VEPs are serving prison sentences. No Beneficiary applies the tool to prisoners on remand or to the general prison population at large. However, the idea of the Screening Tool is to detect what is not obvious. To that end, it is obvious that an individual convicted of terrorism may be at risk of radicalising others, though this is by no means a foregone conclusion. What is not so obvious is that a member of the general prison population, who may be convicted or in pre-trial detention for an entirely unrelated crime, may be at risk of radicalising others. As noted by Silke (2014),[5] terrorists are heterogeneous and they defy simple categorisation into one type or profile, which means they are not always easy to spot, especially for the untrained or those with little experience of terrorism. Some who are radicalised are not easy to spot even by the most trained professionals. It is not so much that Beneficiaries were unsatisfied with the Screening Tool, quite the contrary as seen in the above table, most reported being very satisfied. The issue appears to be that it does require training and time, both of which are sparse resources. In saying that, those beneficiaries who have implemented the Screening Tool have reported that it does not require a significant amount of time as it is scored on behavioural indicators and can be scored (ideally) by prison staff working with offenders on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the Screening Tool is designed to save time and resources by not carrying out a full risk/needs assessment on those who do not require one.

Training

Clearly, there is an on-going need for a more targeted approach to training staff on the signs of radicalisation, which will serve to build their confidence in using the Screening Tool. This training must be a dynamic process if it is to produce results. This is evidenced by the fact that since the start of the regional meetings, with the support of the CoE, the introduction of Screening Tool and RNA tool has increased the skills and confidence of staff in being able to identify certain behavioural indicators apparent in the radicalisation process but there is agreement across the region that there is still a long way to the balance required between individuals' rights and freedoms with concerns for public safety. Individuals are free to have extreme and even radical views (Lloyd & Dean, 2015; Smith, 2016), so long as they are not participating in or inciting violence. Future policies must balance the need for protection and counter terrorism whilst mitigating any chance of further alienating an individual or playing into an individual's reasons for becoming radicalised.

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[5] Silke, A. (2014). 'Risk assessment of terrorist and extremist prisoners,' in A. Silke (ed.), Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform, pp.108-121. London: Routledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SCREENING TOOL

A. Policy and Legislative Level

Whilst many Beneficiaries have taken ownership and implemented the tool, it is clear from the integrated findings that for some beneficiaries the level of implementation and ownership remain neutral to poor. To that end, it is important for those Beneficiaries who have not implemented the Screening Tool nor taken ownership, to ask themselves what additional measures are required to achieve this. The application of the Screening Tool represents the first stage in the fight against extremism and can almost be thought of as a **'first responder'**. The Screening Tool should be applied to the general prison population (including those in pre-trial detention), regardless of the allocation of prisoners, especially amongst the general prison population in those Beneficiaries who have a high incidence of radicalisation in the community. Just as awareness training for suicide and self-harm is included in **induction** staff, which should ideally be included in any induction training for prison staff, including those working in pre-trial detention.

Screening has significant human rights implications, but it is important to have at the forefront of any policies towards screening, that we are looking for extreme forms of behaviour. For example, what is an extreme form of religious practice? Individual assessors will have different tolerance levels for this and the guidance notes in the Screening Tool are there to reduce this level of subjectivity as much as possible. In-terms of radicalisation, recognising deviant behaviour is often carried out with a one-sided focus on personal norms and values rather than structured judgements about pathways towards risky behaviour. The Screening Tool, when used correctly, minimises individual value systems that may influence the norm for early detection[6] via a set of clear indicators. Beneficiaries need to be supported in understanding the balance required between individuals' rights and freedoms with concerns for public safety. Individuals are free to have extreme and even radical views (Lloyd & Dean, 2015; Smith, 2016), so long as they are not participating in or inciting violence. Future policies must balance the need for protection and counter terrorism whilst mitigating any chance of further alienating an individual or playing into an individual's reasons for becoming radicalised.

Whilst no recommendations are made in-terms of general policies and legislation regarding the allocation of VEPs, it should be noted that there will be prisoners who are in custody for offences not related to terrorism, but who nevertheless hold extremist views. The need for screening across the general prison population is important, especially where there are high levels of extremism in the community. If an individual scores highly on the Screening Tool and subsequent RNA, but is not convicted of a terrorist offence, there should be clear legislation and policies in place with reference to where this prisoner should be housed.

B. Implementation Level

If the general implementation of the Screening Tool happens at policy and legislative levels, it is important that all staff are trained in the basics of what to look for in-terms of behaviour of concern. As previously mentioned, management should ensure that for all new recruits to prison radicalisation awareness forms part of their induction training. The Screening Tool can be filled out anytime there is behaviour of concern, and the items are there to guide staff in determining whether the individual should be referred for a fuller risk assessment.

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[6]*Annemarie van de Weert (2022) Justice and risk assessment: the subjectivity of pre-emptive screening of radicalisation processes, Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, DOI: 10.1080/18335330.2022.2124123*

It is important that the general rules around the Screening Tool are adhered to in-terms of understanding that the prisoner does not need to be interviewed as part of the screening for radicalisation process. Therefore, any security staff can fill out the Screening Tool if they have undergone training. This will serve to save valuable resources in-terms of the workload of psychosocial staff. Additionally, the Screening Tool may be more reliable if completed by security staff as they are with the prisoner daily, so are much more likely to see changes in behaviour.

While incarcerated, radicalised persons and VEPs can find several angry, disillusioned young men and women who are in the midst of an existential crisis (Björkman, 2010) and on the verge of being easily radicalised. An effective monitoring approach is key to identifying prisoners at risk of radicalisation and, consequently, prevent them from adopting violent extremist behaviour. Hence, monitoring should focus not only on these individuals (i.e., those who are at risk) but also on VEPs and radicalised persons that work as recruiters, spreading their ideology to vulnerable prisoners.

As above, in-terms of allocation, whilst no recommendations are made in-terms of general policies and legislation regarding the allocation of VEPs, it should be noted that there will be prisoners who are in custody for offences not related to terrorism, but who nevertheless hold extremist views. At an implementation level the Screening Tool is vital in detecting such persons.

Challenges to implementation of a Risk and Needs Assessment Tool

It was agreed by all Beneficiaries whose representatives took part at the regional thematic meetings (2019–2021) that behavioural indicators of radicalisation rather than vulnerability to radicalisation should be the focus of any RNA tool, which was achieved in each Beneficiary during the action. Similarly, structuring an RNA tool to ensure its applicability in the Western Balkans region was recommended and was achieved in each Beneficiary during the action phase via an emphasis on the empirical literature (push, pull and personal factors). With the support of the CoE, an RNA tool has been successfully developed and piloted in Beneficiaries (*Serbia*, *North Macedonia*, *Kosovo*, *Bosnia and Hezegovina* and *Albania*) and fully implemented in some (*Kosovo*, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*). Results of the questionnaires indicate that the majority of the Beneficiaries were satisfied with the RNA tool, and it is used according to the available capabilities i.e., the number of trained employees in the resocialisation sector. The full implementation of a RNA tool has been problematic on several different levels, however, with two Beneficiaries reporting that the tool is not fully implemented. There are several reasons for this, the main one being that those beneficiaries do not have offenders in custody who are VEPs. However, an additional issue is training and confidence in prison staff. Whilst training of prison staff will be more fully reported under the Thematic Group heading in this area, it is important to separate out the more specialised training in RNA and the reasons why the tool has not been fully implemented for future policy decisions.

Structured Professional Judgement

Firstly, hitherto, in most Beneficiaries when conducting risk assessments there has been a reliance and cultural expectation of obtaining some sort of 'score' that will indicate whether an individual is at low, medium or high risk. In the past decade, however, there has been a shift away from a 'score' (or more typically known as the actuarial or prediction method of risk assessment) to an emphasis on individualised structured professional judgment.

On several different levels, this has proved to be the most difficult aspect for most Beneficiaries. In other jurisdictions psychosocial staff, in particular psychologists and psychiatrists, receive extensive and on-going training (often at postgraduate level and beyond) in making structured professional judgements about human behaviour that lead to decisions about liberty or sanctions. The training that beneficiaries have received in RNA assessment during this project has understandably missed this important foundation training and leapt straight into the more specialist assessment of violent extremism. Even though Beneficiaries have been assured that the RNA tool has no predictive ability and is used to allocate individuals to the most appropriate form of treatment, this has resulted in a significant limit to their confidence levels. Structured professional judgement requires well capacitated prison staff that can process and analyse results and data they review and a continuous raising of awareness and understanding of the literature relating to radicalisation.

Information Exchange

The need for continuous improvement of inter-sectoral (internal) and multi-agency (external) information exchange has been discussed throughout the project and remains apparent today, with very little having changed in that area. Setting up a formal procedure would facilitate this process. The aim of this is to better inform risk and needs assessment procedures in prison and to increase confidence in staff that they are predicating their decision making on reliable information. This becomes even more important when prisoners do not consent to be interviewed for the purpose of an RNA assessment and staff must rely on file information. This file information is often somewhat limited resulting in precarious decision making at worst but more commonly, lack of confidence in staff or an ability to score the RNA due to lack of information. The guidance notes accompanying the RNA tool make clear that if there is insufficient information for a particular item, this item should be omitted. During the piloting phase, there were several cases amongst beneficiaries where there were so many items omitted that any decision based on the tool was unreliable. Throughout the development and piloting stage, it was consistently agreed that multiagency cooperation mechanisms should become sustainable and fully manageable by the beneficiaries. A good example of this process is in the comprehensive Case Management approach (and manual) developed in *BiH* where there are clearly defined mechanisms of information exchange between the various stakeholders. *Kosovo* has a similar approach in having a central intelligence unit and assigned person to manage information sharing. In carrying out formal screening and risk assessment of prisoners in *BiH*, assessors have access to criminal records, social history from the centre for social work, information from the penitentiary security service that complete an information questionnaire (screening) when receiving prisoners, information from the report is approved in the admission department (psychologist, pedagogue, social worker, criminologist), and data from the prison health service are all included in the data for the risk assessment process[7].

It is also important to highlight that information sharing is a 'two-way street'. This was apparent in discussions during the regional thematic meetings by attendees from outside of the penitentiary service, such as social work, security services and probation, who require information on risk and needs when an individual is to be released into the community. Due to data protection and classification requirements, prison and probation officers still lack the two-way flow of information, in numerous cases they don't receive even very basic information such as the level of radicalisation, known affiliates, involvement in war atrocities, special military skills etc.

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[7]*see Discussion Paper, Screening and RNA, December 2020 for an expanded look at issues around dynamic security.*

To avoid this shortcoming joint training activities were recommended to facilitate further cooperation, knowledge, and skills development. In essence, these organisations need to know in advance what it is they are managing and how to manage risk and cater to needs. Third party information includes court reports, prison reports and other prison documentation, police reports, assessments by prison and probation staff, etc. This is usually the most readily available information for the risk assessment process and plays a major role in informing the overall assessment.

When to Use a Risk and Needs Assessment Tool?

At any stage in a prisoner's sentence, the RNA is critical for guiding interviews and sentence planning with prisoners. This latter point is important in-terms of timing. Most Beneficiaries conduct an RNA assessment during the initial admissions stage for prisoners who have been convicted of a terrorism offence. However, the process is being (slowly) developed whereby they conduct an RNA following the results of the Screening Tool. In addition, it was concluded that the RNA should be repeated on a regular basis to continually inform the prisoners sentence plan to update any outstanding risk and needs. This has yet to be implemented but is considered best practice. At the least, a full RNA assessment should be repeated prior to release.

Information Database

It was consistently concluded that it is the best practice to have a central database where prisoner information can be accessed to inform the screening and risk assessment. In addition, it was highly recommended that security information to inform risk assessment should be analysed by a prison intelligence unit. All staff completing screening and risk should be provided with a short security report outlining any security concerns. In many Beneficiaries these issues remain outstanding.

Prisoner Engagement and Informed Consent

Prisoner engagement in the interview process has been a significant issue across Beneficiaries during the project and whilst many staff received Motivational Interviewing training as part of the initial training for the pilot, this had to be repeated in a number of Beneficiaries following the pilot. Data which underpins this report suggests that this will remain an ongoing requirement for all Beneficiaries to develop competency and skills in working with this group of individuals. However, it is also noted that to be interviewed for the purpose of a risk assessment is voluntary (carrying out a risk assessment is not) for the individual.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Policy and Legislative Level

The aim of the current project was not simply to support Beneficiaries in developing or adjusting screening and RNA tools, but to ensure these were developed from a human rights perspective. Any guidelines in policy development in this area must firstly ensure that they uphold such principles. Important amongst these, is the Right to Freedom of Thought (Article 9 ECHR), which should continue to provide the foundational guidance in the development of any risk/needs assessment of prisoners. The manifestation of extremist beliefs is not in itself dangerous.

It becomes dangerous when such beliefs or thoughts manifest into action, or the intent to act. Dissemination of all the available data suggests that a very positive aspect of the project is that the RNA tool has been designed by the working groups across all Beneficiaries to consider these important principles. In balancing the data amongst the various papers developed as part of this project, and in answer to the questionnaires sent to participants, to guide future policy in ensuring the protection of human rights, this latter point is important for Beneficiaries to ensure that RNA tools measure what they set out to measure, and continual monitoring is required to achieve this. As they stand, the RNA tools developed during this project adhere to such guidelines. They are based upon the empirical literature of push, pull and personal factors and beneficiaries should take care in further changes or development of their tools that these principles are adhered to. There should also be some provision to continually renew the knowledge base relating to these tools to ensure they are based on the latest empirical findings. Partnership with a university or academic institution would be very beneficial in this area. There is limited evidence so far that there is a continuum between radical thought and terrorist action, which in many jurisdictions has been used to underpin legislation to criminalise 'nonviolent extremism'[8]. Any changes to the RNA tools should therefore involve experts in the field.

For religiously inspired extremism, it is important not to confuse people who might have (re) discovered their faith with people who have developed radical views. Most people who convert or revert (e.g., to Islam) during imprisonment are doing so for peaceful individual motives or to bond with a group of other prisoners. However, prejudices around the linkage between religion and extremism remain present and may hamper good risk assessment. Screening Tools and RNA tools are only as good as the individual administering them, so continued training of staff and upskilling must form part of policies relating to this area. Prejudices and fear can lead to over-reporting and negative interactions which can in-turn undermine any disengagement efforts by Beneficiaries.

Ensuring the continued validity and reliability of the tools is essential in making evidence-based decisions. However, to date the tools developed under this project have no predictive ability (to be able to predict whether an act of terrorism or violent extremism may occur in the future). This was outside of the scope of this project and takes many years of statistical analysis and results, largely based on re-offending rates to be able to determine the predictive nature of the tools. At present no risk assessment tool with predictive qualities is available for VEP's. In-terms of resource management and individualised treatment planning, the tools have good utility and should be continually monitored for this fit for purpose requirement. It is important when developing policies and legislation around risk assessment that the issue of informed consent is made explicit.

Prisoners have the right to refuse to be interviewed and cannot be penalised for doing so. No inference regarding risk or dangerousness can be reliably taken from a prisoner's refusal to engage in the interview process. Some Beneficiaries have either not told the prisoner the reason for the interview or suggested a different reason in cases where prisoners refused or told other prisoners about the interview. This is a contravention of human rights and all policies going forward should reflect the need for informed consent in the interview process. On-going training in Motivational Interviewing may help to support staff in developing further skills in prisoner engagement.

[8]Rita Augestad Knudsen (2020) Measuring radicalisation: risk assessment conceptualisations and practice in England and Wales, Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 12:1, 37-54, DOI: 10.1080/19434472.2018.1509105

Given the unanimous agreement across all Beneficiaries that multi-agency cooperation is crucial in the identification and management of risks related to radicalisation, standard operating procedures would be a good starting point to ensure this process comes to fruition.

The Case Management approach adopted by *BiH* and the process adopted by *Kosovo* are good starting points for this, ensuring this multi-agency cooperation also informs the needs part of the RNA tool to ensure VEPs are provided with opportunities for rehabilitation. Within the remit of multi-agency cooperation, expertise and information can be shared, individual risks appropriately communicated, and action plans drawn up. Each participant of the thematic regional working group (WG) meeting benefitted greatly from examples given by individual beneficiaries of multi-agency working and it was agreed that this was a standard for which to work for all beneficiaries.

Whilst it will be further discussed under the training section of this report, the "Holistic Radicalisation Prevention Initiative" network for continuous training and knowledge sharing in the Balkans, Southern and Eastern European countries, the aim of which is to develop a network for continuous training and knowledge sharing in the Balkans, Southern and Eastern European countries, should be used to inform any policy guidelines, as should updated information from the RAN.

B. Implementation Level

As Silke points out, prison did not reform former al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, it did not rehabilitate him, and it certainly failed to de-radicalise him. It only succeeded in making him more dangerous" (Silke, 2014b, p. 108). To that end, Beneficiaries require systems to ensure that their practice of rehabilitation can monitor those most at risk of becoming radicalised or radicalising others. This includes dynamic security. The term "dynamic security" can be defined and understood as actions that contribute to the development of professional, positive relationships between staff members and offenders. Given this, security staff know those in their charge more so than psychosocial staff and are a valuable source of information to contribute to the RNA. The security department should provide risk assessors with a short report on any relevant factors surrounding security that might impact on their RNA score.

The intelligence required for accurate screening and risk assessment comprises the following elements: **Past** - Based on the offence and other offending, triggers & situational contexts. What are the known risk factors? This information can come from a wide variety of sources including court transcripts,security/police information, social work and criminal history. **Present** - Environmental Scan. Present behaviour, situational contexts and protective factors. This occurs in the prison environment and there is a requirement to be specific about what and why these behavioural indicators are relevant. **Decisional balance:** Given these changes and their relevance to past behaviours, what needs to be done that is functional to manage and/or mitigate this risk? Increased monitoring needs to include what it is that is being monitored. A further issue for Beneficiaries in ensuring good prison intelligence is related to Offence Parallel Behaviours (OPB). OPB occurs when an individual demonstrates a sequence of behaviours, thoughts or emotions, that resembles the behaviour thoughts or emotions that were present in the lead up to and/or during their offence (Wakama, 2008)[9]. When scoring the RNA tool, assessors should be mindful of this concept and whether any behaviours could be OPBs.

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[9]*see Discussion Paper, Screening and RNA, Dec 2020, Page 5*

Like *Albania, BiH* has suggested a more formal mechanism of gathering information, such as a central database. The established point of contact in each prison should receive training in intelligence analysis to enhance intelligence products and possibly tasking staff with additional information.

In-terms of a multi-disciplinary approach, in *Kosovo* there is close cooperation with the correctional staff, ward supervisors, ward manager, institution intelligence, in case of need, direct contact with the Director of Intelligence. There are regular monthly meetings which include the entire group that works with VEPs. Social workers fill in the data in the database which is monitored by the agencies and social officials receive information directly from the Director of Intelligence, who is also responsible for the work for this category of prisoners. Data on individual assessments of radicalisation are shared with the Director of Intelligence by email and if in doubt then this data is shared with the ward leader and the intelligence staff. This model of best practice could easily be adopted by other Beneficiaries. Enhancing intelligence capability within the prison to include analysis of the information and establishing a mechanism of communication with external agencies for further information and gathering of intelligence.

Prisoners do not have to be interviewed for the purpose of an RNA assessment. In terms of informed consent, prisoners must be told of the purpose of the interview and of the voluntary nature of participation. Whilst there is always a danger they will not engage; they have a right to know what they are being interviewed for and to refuse. If there is sufficient file information, then the RNA can be scored. If there is insufficient file information at a legislative level, this information must be filtered up so that the situation can be monitored. An RNA should follow the Screening Tool if indicated. It can be completed during the admissions phase but should also be reviewed regularly throughout a prisoner's sentence.

During the piloting phase and in discussion groups Beneficiaries unanimously reported that the process of Motivational Interviewing takes time. It is recommended that the interviewer breaks up the interview into two slots of approximately 45 minutes each. The purpose of the RNA tool is to use structured professional judgment (SPJ) to determine what level of rehabilitation efforts to introduce for the prisoner, which can be summarized in a treatment plan. Ideally, this treatment plan should be completed by a multi-disciplinary team. As such, in the implementation stage it is important to understand that completing a risk assessment and subsequent treatment plan requires time and patience. It was highly apparent during the project that often, staff were not allocated sufficient time to do this and expected to do risk assessment on top of their normal duties. To ensure the protection of human rights and accurate risk assessment, policies should reflect that staff work allocation should take account that they require time to do these assessments.

Inter-rater reliability (two people scoring the same prisoner) is a useful method of assessing prisoner in-terms of the reliability of the tool being used, but outside of this, it is a good method of ensuring the continued upskilling of staff in-terms of risk assessment where they have an opportunity to discuss file information and the prisoner. The content of the training wears off over time, so it is important to ensure that staff have opportunities and time to keep their skills in risk assessment up to date. Building in some inter-rater reliability checks by peers is a good way of achieving this.

THEME 2

Rehabilitation, treatment and disengagement from violence of radicalised and violent extremist prisoners

Analytical overview of the findings, developments and practice in the Western Balkans

All six Beneficiaries acknowledged the gravity of the risk posed by radicalisation in prisons and the need to implement effective rehabilitation programmes to disengage and deradicalise individuals from using violence. All Beneficiaries have general rehabilitation programmes institutionalised within their correctional services. The rehabilitation programmes implemented within different prisons across the six participating beneficiaries differ, with *North Macedonia* and *BiH* emphasising a cognitive development programme component. In *North Macedonia* the cognitive development programme was piloted in three penitentiary institutions. *Albania's* general rehabilitation programme focuses on the implementation of a national education programme and other vocational skills for inmates. This is similar to the rehabilitation programme in *Kosovo* where there is a general (mandatory) programme, which includes both cognitive skills and some vocational skills training, as well as a specific education programme (optional). Beneficiaries were similar in that their efforts to tackle radicalisation were directed at disengagement from violence rather than deradicalisation and that rehabilitation efforts in development were geared towards this. The main common elements to interventions for VEPs across the region was to ensure that any rehabilitation plan is individualised to the prisoners' risk and needs. All Beneficiaries have, or are in the process of implementing, a VEP-specific RNA tool to determine the level of risk and need for each individual prisoner the inputs of which serve as a basis for development of and individual rehabilitation/treatment plan. *Albania, Kosovo* and *Serbia* have developed VEP-specific tools and individual rehabilitation programs for VEPs under the Action and have piloted these successfully. The pilots have proved the functionality and applicability of these tools and the individual rehabilitation program within their penitentiary contexts and its specificities however certain challenges to these being put fully in daily practice when working with VEPs were identified.

Challenges to application of the individual rehabilitation approach to VEPs

One of the major challenges identified by all Beneficiaries was the lack of sufficient financial resources needed to carry out rehabilitation interventions. In addition to insufficient human resources and their trainings. Participants universally acknowledged that capacity building and trainings are needed for prison staff working with VEPs. Dynamic security, which aims at building good relations between prison staff and inmates, was noted as playing a significant role in enhancing cooperation and building trust with VEPs and should be adapted in all interactions with them. It was observed that all the Beneficiaries have limited resources when it comes to the future. The development of skills and knowledge on the processes of disengagement and especially deradicalisation, particularly in relation to religious ideology for prison staff was critically repeated by practitioners as a need.

The question of how far VEPs are motivated to participate in CVE, deradicalisation, or similar types of interventions raised some key issues. In some cases, there is either an absence of or minimal desire to change. Some VEPs held complex attitudes and do not respect the legitimacy of prison authorities and law. One seemingly obvious possibility of involving imams in the process of rehabilitation was rejected by some VEPs, who protested that attempts were being made to influence their religious beliefs. It is crucial when including religious leaders in rehabilitation efforts that they are well trained. It is of key importance for such figures to understand how to interest VEPs in the process of questioning their beliefs

and in initiating inward change. Whether or not VEPs are actively resistant at this stage, the first step centred on motivation and trust was often the most difficult part of rehabilitation. Alongside this, a significant advantage might be gained by providing programmes that have a largely vocational training or work-oriented emphasis.

Common across all beneficiaries was the use of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to feed into the risk/needs and thus treatment planning for each prisoner, which is in keeping with standards of international best practice. A common view is shared that rehabilitation programmes for VEPs should not be time limited or fixed in length but should be ongoing and regularly reviewed by to determine any movement in risk and need – either increase or decrease.

All Beneficiaries supported the inclusion of vocational training as a method of building skills but also as a method of distraction from radicalised views. There was a universal consensus that any effort towards rehabilitation should include integrated services, ideally with a specialised unit co-ordinating these services both in prison and in the community. A shared understanding was to avoid the practice of directly challenging beliefs, but rather to use a motivational approach to explore the difference between the individual's core values and identity prior to radicalisation and their new identity as a result of radicalisation. Whilst there were some differences in push, pull and personal factors across Beneficiaries, most of them shared similar experiences with these factors with plans to include methods to use these experiences of the individual VEPs with different push/pull/personal factors. A further common theme was the level of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and anxiety in returning fighters, for which it was confirmed that more specialist input from psychologists and healthcare providers is required as part of the multi-disciplinary approach. It is recommended that assessment for this is standardised during the admissions period and forms part of the risk/needs assessment, particularly for identifying any responsivity factors that might impact on the individual's ability to engage in rehabilitation efforts.

Efforts to provide intervention offers for radicalised prisoners comes with a different set of challenges to managing other prisoners, because many have deeply entrenched views about the world. A common theme was the urgent need for 'upskilling' of staff to manage prisoners both in a treatment context but also on a day-to-day basis. It should be remembered that rehabilitation of prisoners is not limited to the therapy or treatment, but in an ideal environment occurs in a context in which all staff in the prison are working towards the same goal.

Among common challenges across the region was the need to increase human resources and to invest in staff training, leadership and adequate supervision of staff engaged in rehabilitation programmes. Under the duration of the Action, an individual rehabilitation methodology for VEPs was developed and piloted.[10] The skills to deliver these programmes are mandatory. Training in Motivational Interviewing is a priority training that the staff needs. An emerging topic was the potential loss over time of the knowledge imparted during the training, which may result in a lack of confidence to implement the pilot, in addition to other challenges related to reallocation of staff and staff turnover, and waning management support. This a critical aspect because the rehabilitation starts when a prisoner first enters prison, whether in pre-trial detention or sentenced. In this context, coaching sessions were received as a very good method of providing real time coaching in the utilisation of skills.

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[10]In Albania, Serbia and Kosovo VEP-specific tools/programmes were successfully piloted under the framework of the Action.

Rehabilitation capacities in Beneficiaries

Kosovo

At the beginning of the Action, in *Kosovo* three different voluntary programmes were run by psychologists, social workers and imams. The programmes targeted mental health issues, religious advice, cognitive skills building, education and vocational skills training, creative and recreation activities, and family engagement. In addition, there are three workshops where VEPs can be trained and receive a certificate in the respective vocation. Notably, the certificate does not have the prison name or logo on it, so as to reduce stigma for the VEPs upon re-entry into the workplace. Previously, VEP participation in the rehabilitation programme was discouraged by the ideological leaders among the VEP population, who pressured others not to join. Removing these high risk, highly influential individuals resulted in greater cooperation and participation of the other remaining VEPs.

Within the current Action, methodology and guidelines were developed for a VEP-specific rehabilitation programme, which were piloted in Kosovo's Dubrava Prison and the High Security Prison. This programme was piloted using a multidisciplinary approach.[11] The rehabilitation programme is split into two sections that reflect international best practice in interventions with VEPs. The first section is focused on the orientation of a prisoner to prison life, coming to terms with his/her sentence and building rapport/trust with the facilitator. The second section covers the whole process of serving the sentence (see RAN Rehabilitation Manual). Participation is preceded by a detailed assessment of risk and needs related to rehabilitation using a checklist to identify and record them. Sessions include a broad spectrum of elements and address the development of self-control, acquisition of cognitive skills, and a focus of emotional self-regulation. Overall, the facilitators were satisfied with the rehabilitation program, however they have expressed concern over how much time facilitators are assigned to run the programme on top of their normal duties. Another comment from the Beneficiary speaks in favour of the need for further training of staff to deliver such programmes, particularly because rotation/change of duty stations for the staff are frequent.

Albania

At the start of the Regional Action, in *Albania* the rehabilitation intervention programmes were in the initial stages as there had been no implementation of the programme so far. As was observed by other Beneficiaries, sentenced VEPs often do not accept the authority of prison staff, the judiciary, and other official actors. This has led to a significant need for more staff training on how to more effectively interact with VEPs, especially to motivate them to participate in the rehabilitation interventions. There were also concerns whether to include the VEPs in rehabilitation activities designed for non-VEPs.

Rehabilitation programmes in *Albania* have several interrelated objectives and methods for achieving them. They include a focus on aggressive behaviour and aggression control; development of the cognitive skills linked to this; and a motivational enhancement module to encourage engagement with the interventions. It was noted that prison staff involved in this process had varied amounts of training, and that staff are often transferred between roles, and there is no core training programme.

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[11] *The rehabilitation programme commenced late September 2021 and was supported throughout by monitoring/support visits by the local consultant in addition to coaching/support meetings with the international consultant.*

In September 2022, piloting of VEP-specific tools/programmes developed under the Action kicked off in two Albanian prisons and was successfully finalised in end of November 2022. The pilot phase confirmed the need for specific tools and programme for this category of prisoners and validated its applicability within the Albanian prison context.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the beginning of the Regional Action, in *BiH* individual planning and analysis of personality for every VEP was carried out and was divided into 8 parts: education (elementary and secondary school), work therapy, family dynamics, other activities (sport, culture), individual work (type of work with the prisoner, his opinion on the offence). Through the Beneficiary-specific project a number of documents have already been developed: Strategic Policy Document and an Action Plan for the treatment of VEPs (2020 – 2025) and Staff Management Strategy, and legal analysis and training material for application of the Case Management System Manual for VEPs. In conjunction with the CoE, the BiH prison system has developed specific guidelines on managing the VEP rehabilitation process.

This has involved the development of a total of seven treatment programmes, respectively in the areas of: motivation; attitudes, skills, problem-solving, emotion, addictions, and pre-release programmes. Whilst there was an emphasis on a cognitive development programme component, *BiH* also includes religious and sporting activities in addition to a variety of cultural activities. A full manual and case management system has been dedicated to the rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners in *BiH*. The practice in *BiH* has been quite advanced in terms of development of tools and has been active in the implementation of training and piloting in the area of radicalisation since 2018. The suite of tools and the rehabilitation programme were revised in light of international best practice. However, the challenges faced in *BiH* appear to be logistical ones in that VEP prisoners were transferred to the state prison and have not had access to any meaningful activity, which defeats the purpose and goals of the rehabilitation programme. This is due to change with a focus on more management support and implementing the case management system into the law. Interestingly, *BiH* reported that the Screening Tool picked up a prisoner who was not in custody for a terrorist offence but who was nevertheless radicalised, which is a good example of why the Screening Tool is an important part of the interconnectivity in the rehabilitation process. There is a need for additional education of staff to be able to implement the individual rehabilitation approach.

Montenegro

The Action supported development of VEP specific tools/programmes, but these were not piloted yet as there are no prisoners of this category within the penitentiary system of *Montenegro* at present. There were very few trainings for staff to implement rehabilitation interventions for this category of prisoners. In *Montenegro* there were several general programmes in use and a suite of individual programmes for use with long-sentence prisoners. The rehabilitation and treatment process follows individual needs that are identified and aimed towards reintegration. Part of this entails a process of eliciting prisoners' perspectives, and staff seek to challenge the beliefs that influenced their decisions. In pre-release work there is also a strong practical focus that includes attention given to literacy, education, and vocational training. Another major section of the work is on family relations, and particularly on the consequences of fractures in them precipitated by the prisoner's involvement in terrorist

offending. It was recognised that this poses potential problems in cases where families have supported extremist ideology, including where family members became foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). Alongside this, there is available a wide range of other programme activities, especially for prisoners serving longer sentences (which may be in the range 20-40 years in some cases). Sessions are provided on anger control, empowerment workshops, and where necessary on sexual offending. Prisoners may also access sports and cultural activities, and for some purposes there are links to local community agencies, and religious services. Attention has been given to the influence that some prisoners, notably those serving long sentences for homicides involving high levels of brutality, may have on other prisoners, and the need to develop specialised programmes for this group.

North Macedonia

The prison system in *North Macedonia* implements specifically designed rehabilitation interventions for radicalised inmates based on a draft rehabilitation methodology for radicalised persons where individualised treatment is applied, lasting for 12 months. Modules focus on developing positive relationship between VEPs and religious representatives and psychologists, narrative, learning and personal development, values and beliefs. Each module involves religious representatives, community representatives, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and is applied to low-to-medium risk VEPs. *North Macedonia* has also already developed a specific RNA which uses a list of indicators. Several interventions were at different stages of development, with some being finalised while others were still being developed. They included work on moral or values enhancement, education, and vocational training.

There is an already finalised 44-session programme divided into four modules (module 1: five months; modules 2-3-4: two months each). Some parts of this include exercises in confidence building, and narrative change towards the development of new prosocial identities. Connections with families are involved in some parts of the process. For the next phase of the process, a core focus is being placed on developing safe channels of communication between the prison and security services. Questions nevertheless also remain about the definition of individual goals as prosocial or antisocial depending on perspectives and beliefs. For the realisation of the program, the motivational interview is a key skill for staff members to develop. The intervention is variable depending on the assessed degree of risk, for Low risk = 3-4 months. Medium risk = 4-6 months. High risk = 6-12 months. In the introductory and largest part, intensive work is done on the establishment and building of connections that are decisive for the further course of the program, then three modules:

Narratives with 6 sessions; Learning and solving problems with 3 sessions; and Values and valuations with 4 sessions. The ultimate goal of the program is to help the individual reconnect with their former self so that their extreme views become less pronounced. *North Macedonia* continued to report problems in implementing the piloting stage of their rehabilitation program due to a number of logistical factors. It is important to note that there is a Screening Tool for radicalisation and this clearly should be implemented to detect signs of radicalisation before they become entrenched and problematic. Notwithstanding the logistical factors, even if only one suitable prisoner could be identified for the pilot, this would be very useful in establishing whether the program is applicable in the *North Macedonia*. Some challenges are related to the absence of support from management structures in some prison institutions

and the scarce motivation of convicted persons for inclusion in the program due to the very nature of the program, which is modified for one-on-one interaction and can last up to 1 year.

Serbia

With the support of the CoE, *Serbia* has developed tools for screening, risk and needs assessment of VEPs and an individual rehabilitation methodology. The staff was trained and have successfully piloted the rehabilitation methodology in the Detention facility in Pozarevac. The rehabilitation program was well received, however several challenges to its full application in practice were singled out. The program is flexible in its structure and content, which makes it very suitable for adjustment towards the individual treatment plan. It is possible to focus more or focus less on certain contents and adjust the rhythm and dynamic towards individual needs of an involved prisoner, which gives it a significant advantage when compared to stricter structured programs which are less sensitive towards the individual needs of prisoners. The program encourages: communication between the implementer and prisoner, building of a working alliance, development of openness and trust, and at the relation/integration level, it forms a basis for possible change with a prisoner. Challenges concern the organisation of the work within prison and necessity for preparation and planning of the sessions and the program. It is necessary that the one leading the program possesses knowledge on Motivational Interviews and working with resistance. As in other Beneficiaries, a significant challenge is also how to motivate VEP to engage in the rehabilitation program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REHABILITATION AND DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIOLENCE:

A. Policy and Legislative level

It is important to formalise cooperation between prisons and relevant local partners, including religious counsellors.

It is crucial to establish uniform procedures on how to work with radicalised prisoners - more precisely, prisoners convicted of terrorism, as well as guidelines for resocialisation and post-release assistance.

Strong multiagency and cross border cooperation is required to increase the sustainability of the reintegration process, especially in the cases of FTF returnees.

For effective rehabilitation of VEPs during the sentence and after release, cooperation and trust building between all the relevant stakeholders is strongly recommended.

Recommendations for further harmonisation of the approaches and practices across the region should be developed.

Given the drop off in the training effect due to waning management support, refresher training needs to be considered. Management support needs to be consistent and visible.

The approach to the rehabilitation of VEPs across the region is a holistic one and encompasses the need for vocational, religious, educational and occupational aspects.

A general consensus should be established that "learning by doing" is the best way forward in

increasing confidence and familiarity with the rehabilitation process.

It should be considered that maintaining trained, specialised staff and reducing staff replacement is precondition for sustainability of results. Staff training, rotation and turnover have a crucial impact on the rehabilitation process and disengagement of VEPs. This affects safety and security aspects and prison management in general. Staff motivation and confidence to implement rehabilitation interventions with high risk VEPs is critically important.

Western Balkan Beneficiaries should ensure continuous and sustainable application of the rehabilitation interventions beyond project framework accompanied by applicable evaluation mechanisms to measure effectiveness of implemented interventions.

Rehabilitation and reintegration of VEPs needs to be understood as a task of a diverse group of professions. Partner organisations should be granted access to prison to start the rehabilitation process as early as possible. This helps build trust and supports the sustainability of the exit-continuum. It is crucial that the transition period be supported by strong mechanisms and uniform procedures for multiagency cooperation.

Regional cross-border cooperation, both in-person and online via the collaboration platform, should be supported in order to exchange good practices, experience, challenges and solutions between prison practitioners in the Western Balkans when dealing with VEPs and new phenomena in prisons.

Universal human rights must be upheld at all times and under all circumstances. Failure to do so is highly likely to undermine rehabilitation, both by making the VEPs less likely to cooperate with prison authorities and by reinforcing existing extremist views against the state.

There should be a good working relationship between the prison intelligence unit and their police counterparts, as well as with those in other intelligence and security agencies.

Various measures and protocols should be implemented to facilitate the exchange of information and intelligence including formal agreements, regular meetings between partners, "real-time" systems to monitor individuals of concern and clear processes for staff members to communicate concerns.

Multi-agency arrangements should focus both on security and rehabilitation efforts and facilitate opportunities that can help to change an individual's interest and involvement in extremism.

Agencies and organisations should share understanding and use the same language, concepts, and tools to manage extremist offenders and prevent violent extremism.

Restorative justice processes, reconciliation, and other mediated interventions starting while violent extremist prisoners are still in prison can help them find their place in the community.

Engagement with local communities and community leaders should be prioritised for the reintegration of VEPs. When selecting civil society organisations (CSOs)/NGOs or individual practitioners, it is important to consider their track record, their network and reputation within the community as well as their funding structure.
A gender perspective needs to be integrated and policy and practice relating to interventions

for female offenders should be developed, improved and strengthened. It is vital that more focus is directed at adapting interventions to the specific needs of female offenders. Women make up such a small minority of most prison populations, and as a result prison policies and staff often lack an awareness of gender and fail to account for the unique needs of female prisoners. This is especially valid in the context of returning women from war zones.

Communities and CSOs must also be prepared in advance for the release of women from prison into society, so that they can offer appropriate support. This is a key element for to the successful long-term reintegration of women, who face different challenges than male offenders.

B. Implementation level

When designing rehabilitation interventions, it should be taken into consideration that "one size does not fit all". The applicability of interventions to the domestic context and ongoing assessment of progress made are both key to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of VEPs and radicalised prisoners. Therefore, it is not expected that a model from one Beneficiary can be implemented identically in other Beneficiaries. However, there are significant similarities amongst the six Horizontal Facility Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans, rendering a cooperative approach that includes the sharing of best practices and lessons learned likely to be useful to all six beneficiaries.

Targeted interventions should be delivered based on individually assessed risks and needs and should have clear, justifiable objectives and outcomes. Special attention should be given to the management of group dynamics, as ideologues within the group might discourage low or middle risk individuals from taking part in the rehabilitation programmes.

In the absence of significant skills training, there is also a real risk that group work could serve as an opportunity to further radicalise prisoners – creating a 'them and us' environment.

Interventions should be based on evolving knowledge and understanding about current best practices and principles for effective interventions.

Targeted interventions should be delivered based on individually assessed risks and needs and have clear, justifiable objectives and outcomes.

Screening/RNA and Rehabilitation are interlinked, which means that rehabilitation cannot be seen in isolation. It should be part of the treatment paramount and "case management".

VEPs should be encouraged to engage in comprehensive rehabilitation programmes which address their behaviour associated with offending. The programme should aim to reduce reoffending by engaging and motivating, coaching and responding to individual need and building on continuity. It supports offenders developing skills in setting goals and making plans to achieve these without offending.

An effective dynamic security approach can increase the willingness of VEPs to take part in rehabilitation, as well as render the rehabilitation programmes more effective due to the higher levels of trust and information sharing between prison staff and VEPs.

A combination of surveillance, dynamic security, and risk and needs assessment is required when dealing with VEPs. Prison staff need to be aware of the limitations of each and develop an individualised approach with the inmate that is based on transparency and trust.

Training of prison staff is crucial to become self-reflective on the practitioners' role in the rehabilitation process, but also to gain awareness of religious, geopolitical and cultural factors in order to target the personal motivation for commitment and change.

Promoting positive staff-prisoner relationships and healthy prison climates is a pre-condition for reducing risk around radicalisation and contributing to rehabilitation and reintegration.

The staff should receive training on cultural and religious sensitivity in order to be aware of radicalisation processes in order to prevent distrust and suspicion towards religious representatives.

As a part of the rehabilitation process it is important that trust is in place between religious representatives and other staff members. Respected religious leaders from the local community should be consulted and allowed to hold services within the prison.

In order to support rehabilitation efforts, religious leaders should promote positive dialogue with VEPs, with a view to calling them to the truth, establishing proof, refuting doubt, rejecting unsound opinions, differentiating between truth and falsehood, showing the strongest arguments in controversial issues, or narrowing the gap of disagreement.

Family members and peers are part of the rehabilitation process, and it is vital to enhance the cooperation and support provided by them. In this context family visit should be encouraged, after assessment of the risk.

Research on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programming should be encouraged. There are many weaknesses in how the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes is assessed, and these could be strengthened through evidence-based research on risk assessment tools, recidivism and the elements of rehabilitation programming itself. Collaboration between researchers and practitioners should be encouraged, to examine the challenges and trends of radicalisation from a variety of informed perspective.

In order to legitimise the outcomes, rehabilitation programmes should be tested empirically regarding their applicability and efficiency.

THEME 3

Capacity-building and training of prison and probation practitioners

ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS, DEVELOPMENTS AND PRACTICE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

A professional, competent and well-trained prison and probation staff is a prerequisite for successful prevention and management of radicalisation and violent extremism. It was discussed during all three regional meetings dedicated to the capacity building and training of prison and probation staff in the Western Balkans implemented under auspices of the Action. Recognising, confronting, and defeating hateful ideologies in prison custody and probation would be inefficient if there is no close and enduring cooperation between all stakeholders in the process of managing VEPs throughout the system and through the "gate" back into the society. For the time being, training capacity within the Beneficiaries is not systematic, nor sustainable, but mostly ad-hoc and donor driven. When it comes to capacity building and training structures regarding VERLT, the prison services in Beneficiaries in general already have some established structures and capacities available, as opposed to the respective probation services which are predominantly underdeveloped. However, when it comes to advanced training structures, there is a common region-wide lack of systematic advanced training capacities, both in prison and probation services. All the Beneficiaries started to implement different programmes and activities in order to reduce the negative effects of violent extremism. Awareness raising initiatives, basic programmes, the establishment of different specialised expert groups took place. Steps were also taken to initiate relationships with NGOs and religious communities.

PRISON AND PROBATION TRAINING CAPACITIES IN BENEFICIARIES

While the prison systems in three of the Beneficiaries have designated training centres— *Kosovo* (Kosovo Academy for Public Safety), *North Macedonia* (the Training Centre) and *Serbia* (Penological Academy)¬—the other three Beneficiaries lack such specialised training centres. In *Albania*, general ongoing training activities include certain elements that are applicable to VEPs too, such as defensive factors, verbal and non-verbal communication, and topics related to group influence, diversity, prison environment, frustration. Specific basic trainings or advanced trainings on radicalisation were delivered on ad hoc basis by different donors. Under the auspices of the Action, a limited number of the prison and probation practitioners in Albania received training on application of the VEP-specific tools and an individual rehabilitation program for radicalised and violent extremist prisoners.[12] In addition, some prison and probation staff completed the tutored HELP online course on Radicalisation Prevention.[13] When speaking about the probation setting in *Albania*, there are no basic nor advanced trainings on radicalisation and violent extremism. There is a plan for introduction of a module on these topics within the general basic training for probation officers. In BiH, all types of training activities take place within the capacity of individual prisons according to a central Annual Training Plan. The Law on the Execution of Criminal and Misdemeanour Sanctions in BiH prescribe the obligation to hold regular trainings for all prison staff. The Law on Execution of Criminal and Misdemeanour Sanctions of the *Republika Srpska* prescribes the obligation of the Minister of Justice to, in order to improve domestic practice and its harmonisation with international standards in the field of execution of sanctions, adopt the Framework Plan and Program for Professional Development and Training of Employees.

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[12]The training was organised from 14 to 17 June 2022 in Tirana, Albania.
[13]HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) on-line course Radicalisation Prevention was launched in March 2021 in all 6 Beneficiaries and was implemented for limited number of prison staff and probation staff.

The program framework is based on international standards, conventions, norms and other acts adopted in this field (manuals, guidelines, collections of papers, etc.). It is recognised that there is a need for systematic training activities, and there is a strong commitment to the development and introduction of continuous and advanced training initiatives for specialised staff. The prison service piloted a basic training on radicalisation and violent extremism for 95 practitioners. The participants were very satisfied with the initiative; however, this training is still not implemented in prisons. The basic training curricula encompassed understanding of the term radicalisation, domestic legal frameworks related to this field, recognising the signs of radicalisation, communication with VEPs, cooperation between services and multi-agency cooperation.

The specialised trainings have not been introduced yet in prisons. These activities are envisaged under CoE project in the upcoming period. There were joint training activities organised together with Social Welfare Centre and Agencies for Law Implementation within the CoE project/s. Current annual training plans can differ from prison to prison. There is no centralised probation service in *BiH*.

In *Kosovo*, several correctional staff, social workers and intelligence staff have been trained by ICITAP and OSCE. Apart from that, the probation service has no continued basic nor advanced training that covers aspects of radicalisation. There were only ad-hoc training activities, carried out by external providers (CoE, EU, ICITAP, American Embassy, Kosovo Centre for Security Studies). The trainings were focusing on: database management, returning FTFs, re-socialisation of radical inmates, countering extremism and the role of first-line officers. The staff of the unit for the management of extremist prisoners), the Intelligence Unit, the social, correctional, and mental health officials, who work directly with VEPs in Dubrava and the High Security Prison, were initially trained by ICITAP, continuing with trainings of others, including the CoE projects.

Under the roof of the Action, there were training-of-trainer (ToT) sessions[14] organised for prison professionals that were followed by a series of cascade training sessions for staff from all detention facilities in *Kosovo* on the topic of application of VEP-specific tools/programmes and their application in practice. There are no systematic advanced training activities carried out in the Beneficiary. As for the probation settings, there are no systematic training activities carried out here either. In addition, all available training activities were donor driven. Concerning training capacities for the probation professionals, the Probation Service was able to deliver some ad-hoc trainings on VERLT topic but there are no proper training programmes in place on radicalisation and violent extremism. In *Montenegro*, the national coordination body manages all radicalisation-related issues. There is a basic training scheme which consists of two main components: recognition of early signs of radicalisation, which is aimed at prison staff, healthcare staff, educators, labour providers, security sector and covers definitions, historical background, profiling of terrorists and preventive structures, and a training on the use of the Screening and RNA tool. The topics addressed through the trainings are definition of the term extremism, collection of data on possible radicalisation, use of the Screening Tool and RNA tool, and procedures in case radicalisation is detected. There are no systematic advanced training activities carried out in the Beneficiary.

[14]*The ToT took place from 01–04 March 2021 and the four-cascade peer-to peer sessions entitled "Prevention of radicalisation and rehabilitation of prisoners" took place from April to June 2022 in several locations in Kosovo.*

Joint activities were conducted with CoE, OSCE, and the National Operative Team (NOT) for prevention of violent extremism that leads to terrorism. Joint ad-hoc trainings were conducted with certain NGOs, state agencies, and members of the NOT. In North Macedonia, about 300 staff members have already participated in the basic awareness raising activity. The basic training for violent extremism is implemented both in the Initial Training Programme and in the continuous training programme of the Prison Police and the Department for Resocialisation. The curriculum of the Basic Training includes fundamental issues related to the concept of radicalisation, signs of radicalisation and the Screening Tool, understand the functioning of the multifunctional teams in the institutions and standard operating procedures for preparation for release and post-penal assistance. Specialised training is also existent, so far about 30 experts participated.

The programme focuses on excessive use of the risk assessment instrument, the utilisation of the Screening Tool, the design and implementation of the Individual programme for the treatment of radicalised convicted persons, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for preparation for release and post-penal acceptance of radicalised inmates. Joint training activities were organised with the participation of the Office of the National Coordinator for Combating Violent Extremism, Centres for Social Work, National Security Agency, Employment Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs-Public Safety Bureau and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. There is an intention to introduce and implement a multi-layer training structure for prison staff: Basic level, intended for Prison Police, instructors, health personnel as well as technical staff, Advanced level, intended for the re-socialization sector and Training for management staff (basic level). When it comes to the probation setting, 2 new probation offices were opened, soft transition for post-release period is needed, no protocols are in place how to proceed and share necessary info among stakeholders.

In *Serbia* 170 prison practitioners mainly (out of which some 20 % probation staff) took part in capacity building activities implemented under auspices of the regional Action and also through its Beneficiary-specific component for Serbia. These included: on-line tutored HELP course Radicalisation Prevention, ToT on assessment and management of VEPs and application of VEP-specific tools/program, the Training for Prison Managers in Serbia on Radicalisation and Violent Extremism, Right-wing extremism and VEP-specific tools/program, the cascade peer-to-peer raising awareness sessions on Preventing radicalisation and rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners in *Serbia*. Prison staff from two selected detention facilities in which piloting of VEP-specific tools/program was conducted[15] took part in 3 online coaching sessions on how to use VEP-specific tools and how to apply the individual rehabilitation methodology.

Staff members, who work for the Special Unit at Prison Pozarevac (where this subset of prisoners is allocated) have to undergo a training activity prior their appointment (the length varies between 6-12 hours), the training is mainly security oriented, it includes: introduction to terrorism and extremism, procedures, legal frameworks, special safety and security measures and crisis management (urgent situations). There are no systematic advanced training activities carried out in the Beneficiary. When it comes to probation setting, there are no basic or advanced trainings in this field.

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[15]*Piloting of VEP-specific tools/program was implemented from September to December 2021 in the Detention Facility in Pozarevac and County Prison in Belgrade.*

Limited number of probation staff has attended CoE HELP online course Radicalisation Prevention and have attended thematic regional meetings implemented under the regional dimension of the Action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING OF PRISON AND PROBATION STAFF

A. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE LEVEL

Secure additional resources (human, financial, organisational) for dealing with VEPs.
There is a need for setting up a centralised training and support unit/facility for prison and probation staff. Having an independent training academy "gives weight" to the training curricula / capacity-building activities and to the whole organisation in general.

There is a need for introduction of a sustainable and continuous in-house training system (basic and advanced) using a multi-layer structured approach, through careful pre-assessment/ scanning of knowledge and training needs for different professionals.

Professional structured judgement requires well capacitated prison staff that can process and analyse results and data they come to in terms of screening and risk and needs assessment instrument. Continuous raising of awareness and understanding of the prison front liners on radicalisation.

Enhance the sense of ownership, the staff members and especially the management should understand their role in disengagement from violence and reintegration process.

Training should become donor-independent and programmatically planned as per available internal resources.

Annual training plans should not differ from prison to prison, instead, unified structure among the different penitentiary capacities should guarantee the same professional content.

There is a need for continuous improvement of inter-sectoral (internal) and multi-agency (external) information exchange and setting up of a formal procedure that would facilitate this process, with aim to better inform risk and needs assessment procedures in prison. The multiagency cooperation mechanisms should become sustainable and fully manageable by the Beneficiaries.

There is a need for enhanced strategic human resource management planning, when it comes to selection of staff who will be working with VEPs, already at the recruitment stage, and there is a need for systematic solutions mechanisms to ensure staff support (supervision, psychological support, mentoring, etc.) and its well-being.

Make timely steps to remedy understaffing if it occurs in any relevant prison sector.

Invest in local expertise and know-how in order to provide a stable professional background for training and education, by doing so the services shouldn't rely only on international experts.

Specific measures and programmes should be put in place with aim to further enhance skills, integrity and motivation of prison staff working with VEPs.

Continuous empowering of capacities of prison officers, rehabilitation and treatment staff, with due respect of the dynamic security approach, is pivotal to success of the process of VEPs' disengagement from violence.

New emerging tendencies should be taken into account when upgrading the basic and advanced training programs for practitioners, having in mind the latest developments in Europe and wider, and the dynamic (changing) forms of the phenomena of radicalisation and violent extremism.

There must be an appropriate balance between a human rights-based model that respects international norms for managing extremists and assertive, robust action to counter both hateful ideologies and those who wish to spread them in custody to threaten order and security in institutions by subverting their legitimacy.

Effective pro-social relationships between uniformed corrections staff and VEPs creates a virtuous circle of intelligence gathering, trust building and pro-social modelling. It should be encouraged, but managers must also be mindful of the significant degree of psychological support and supervision such an approach will require to prevent staff burn out, conditioning and even corruption.

Courses should be very interactive and practical, they can combine e-learning (on-line) and face-to-face approaches, use case studies of real first-liners, (group) assignments, audio-video materials (incl. social media approach and effective online campaigns) and developed toolkits.

Basic VERLT training should form part of the induction training curricula and the annual training activities.

On-site coaching mechanisms and mentoring schemes are recommended.

Beneficiaries to consider close cooperation between stakeholders on a national, regional, entity and local level.

Consideration should be given to the establishment of centralised "Extremism Units", which can provide expertise and input where needed (as the recent ICSR 2020 report points out a creation of such units on a European level: "…It is neither reasonable nor practical to expect all prison officers to have an up to date and sophisticated knowledge of extremist movements ").

Consider close cooperation among themselves across the region and enhanced cooperation with other European countries (particularly in the area of selection, training and deployment of specialist VEP case workers).

Maintain professional networking as a great additional value.

Setup a "VEP best practice" forum or platform (to encourage and facilitate the sharing of ideas

and strategies in the region and beyond).

Introduce special preparatory course for management (at least basic level) to further understand radicalisation and violent extremism.

Improve management's dedication for the treatment of the VEP population.

Secure additional resources (human, financial, organisational) for dealing with VERLT topic (special remuneration for front liners to be considered).

Include management in the activities of the local MDTs.

Raise awareness in the general public by regularly publicising efforts and achievements regarding the VEP population.

Provide basic training on religious practices to staff, as the religion can play a key role in disengagement/deradicalisation.

Understand and implement clear definitions in terminology of VEPs, as to avoid or minimise effects of stigmatisation, prejudice as well as differentiate between radicalisation, "normal" religious practices etc.

Understand and practice elements of dynamic security by all staff in order to establish a positive environment, thus the notion of dynamic security should be an integrated part of training.

B. Implementation level

Develop and cascade a multi-level training structure with basic and advanced content for all staff members.

Include training activities in the annual training plan and apply a uniform format for local implementation.

Introduce a pro-active communication structure with the co-ordination of the central penitentiary system hierarchy.

The inter-sectoral cooperation and inter agency cooperation should be fostered. Prison management have continuous cooperation with security agencies, but without any special standardised protocols.

Improve ownership with local initiatives.

Independent prison facilities should establish positive working relationships with local NGOs and religious communities in order to maintain local support upon release.

Design and regularly update a prison-specific training manual on radicalisation.

Extend the support for ex-radicals in the local communities.
Collect Beneficiary-specific case studies and include them in the regular training activities.

Additional trainings are needed for prison staff on issues including risk assessment, rehabilitation interventions, and preparation for release and reintegration, and especially on indicators of radicalisation.

Carry out the process of security vetting of all staff working with VEPs Further consideration should be given for regular (annual or bi-annual) security vetting throughout their conduct, since colleagues are openly exposed for being radicals themselves.

The local Annual Training Plans should be based on real needs and the necessary resources should be allocated. Furthermore, in line with the Council of Europe Guidelines regarding recruitment, selection, education, training and professional development of prison and probation staff "In-service education and training should be provided to all staff and should include refresher courses on different priority topics and/or additional training on newly emerging topics."

Introduce ways of motivating inmates to take part in the existing rehabilitation programme.

Identify radical leaders and isolate them from the group of followers in the individual prison facilities in order to facilitate a positive environment.

Organise an induction training for the newly appointed prison governors in order to understand their roles and duties.

Establish a functioning MDT in each prison where VEPs are allocated in order to stop negative trends around radicalisation.

Set up an independent panel of professionals, that could provide continuity in activities regardless of the change of prison management.

THEME 4

Preparation for release, post-penal assistance and reintegration back into society

Analytical overview of the findings, developments and practice in the Western Balkans

The aim of the regional thematic group related to preparation for release, post–penal assistance and reintegration of VEPs in the Western Balkans Region was to establish what is going on in the region, challenges, and good practice examples and at a broader level, to establish what Beneficiaries are doing during the pre-release period, what is available in the community after the release, how these services are accessed and the principles/mechanisms of referral and information exchange. It is important to note that the focus of these meetings and discussions were not limited to returned FTFs but also to 'home grown' radicalised persons and making suitable provision for them in-terms of their rehabilitation and reintegration needs. For some Beneficiaries, they may be releasing prisoners to communities where they are likely to be further influenced by or to continue spreading extreme ideologies. In 2020, the common challenges across the region with regards to release and post-penal period were:

- Lack of sufficiently developed exit strategies and specific pre-release programmes
- Insufficient inter-institutional cooperation during preparation for release
- Lack of well-designed protocols and operational procedures that would raise the awareness among all relevant stakeholders and contribute towards more holistic approach towards VEP reintegration
- Human resources deficiency, both in terms of numbers, as well as specialised trainings, inside prison, as well as outside in the community social care services.

One of the main issues that arose in the meetings was that there have been a limited number of VEPs released from prison across the region to date. Therefore, data and baseline knowledge surrounding the needs of such persons was lacking. However, during the project there had been significant improvements in many Beneficiaries in establishing policies and protocols for the release of VEPs into the community in addition to some Memoranda of Agreement with external providers. Two years on, it is useful to compare where Beneficiaries are now in relation to these challenges and what legislative and policy changes need to happen for the sustainability of goals in the future.

Data from questionnaires sent to Beneficiaries are outlined in the table below. Five Beneficiaries responded directly to the questionnaires, and one responded with qualitative comments but no quantitative data. In addition, feedback from Beneficiaries is presented below.

It is an interesting finding that in-terms of preparation for release, beneficiaries are at different ends of an evenly distributed scale and a similar situation exists with the management of reintegration (post penal assistance). It is likely that beneficiaries will not be able to take full ownership of these aspects until their processes and procedures are progressed further.

Median Score Across Beneficiaries – Pre-release and Reintegration

Preparation for Release	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Poor
Preparation for Release	1	1	2	1
Management of Reintegration	2		2	1
Transfer of Knowledge	1	4		
Usefulness of Training	1	4		
Ownership		2	3	

GOOD PRACTICE

We have prepared an SOP for post-penal assistance, and it was piloted during August 2022. We are planning to pilot another convicted person in another institution so that later implementation will begin in institutions where there is this category of convicted persons.

This prison population is being treated within the prescribed legal procedures. VEPs can be included in the pre-release programme which is implemented in the institutions.

A good standard is applied for the preparation of radicalised prisoners as multidisciplinary team meetings are organised on a monthly basis where prisoners are discussed, [and] a pre-release plan is prepared for those who are about to be released. The plan is recorded in the database […] also all security agencies are prepared for his release, while the probation service [are notified] in cases of conditional release.

The division for prevention and reintegration is in the phase of creating the SOP for this process, while the exchange of information is excellent and the management from the central level is good, but it will be challenging when the Municipality will take the role for this category. The support given to us by the Council of Europe with trainings and meetings have improved the understanding of the needs before the release and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners.

CHALLENGES

There are no significant activities apart from the routine ones, upon release. There are no standard operating procedures for the post-penal phase.

There is no interaction with other institutions for the exchange of information in the "Threshold of Release" phase of these prisoners.

The penitentiary system in the country has no responsibility in pursuing the case after release. It is not applicable in our country.

The information is transmitted at the level of the penitentiary service and the probation service. There is no interaction with other institutions.

The curriculum handled by the CoE is very selective and necessary, but the level of application in our country is not in accordance with practice and many of the legal provisions.

In the area of information exchange, there is a slight improvement after holding the 6 forums that were realised in the past period, which deepened the cooperation between the concerned institutions, and on the basis of those forums, more frequent coordination meetings between prisons [are taking place].

Pre-release guidance (SOP non-existent) are aimed at all categories of prisoners, not just [VEPs].

From the perspective of external institutions, the communication system between the prisons and external organisations is understood, but more training is required for prison staff to understand the

whole reintegration process and how it begins from point of admission to prison.
There is a team who will be in charge of this issue [VEP release], however there are no verdicts for this criminal offence, hence we cannot establish if the existing procedures are functional.

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

Participants were asked what measures they needed to take to ensure full ownership and sustainability of the tools introduced. The themes that emerged tended to be related to the need for on-going training and human resources in addition to closer cooperation between agencies and the issue of information exchange:

Further capacity building of the prison system and institutions within a community is needed.

Within the framework of the activities that we have carried out so far, there is a readiness at the national level since June 2017, the National CT and P/CVE coordination mechanism was formed. National strategies and action plans for the fight against violent extremism and the fight against terrorism were also drawn up.

To establish better and more functional cooperation with institutions that can provide support to VEPs.

One of the measures that is needed are continuous trainings of the existing prison staff, as well as increasing the financial resources for the sustainability of the Training Centre.

In order to properly apply the tools/programme and SOPs we need to increase human capacities in our institutions.

It is necessary to include other additional officials in the training for screening and risk assessment.

To include as many actors and professionals from the relevant fields as possible.

It is of particular importance because we have common cases with all the countries of the region and the sharing of the achievements of the representative countries allows you to understand the possibility of providing services for this category and the advancement of cooperation with the countries of the region and the sharing of their challenges facilitates so as not to be mistaken!

It is clear from the above data that whilst there have been improvements, many of the issues uncovered during discussions at these regional thematic meetings, reported in the follow up discussion papers remain. Broadly speaking, these can be divided into certain categories, such as legal and institutional frameworks, institutional cooperation, set procedures and activities for pre-release, and more centralised approaches to information sharing.

Challenges

Legal and Institutional Framework for Preparation for Release

The legal and institutional framework for preparation for release varies considerably across the region. The type of preparation for release, the time frame and any through care processes have been the subject of much discussion. *Kosovo* could be an example of good practice in

establishing effective ways in information sharing and cooperation among the different agencies including the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), the P/CVE Coordinator, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the *Kosovo* Police (KP), and the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA), which all cooperate in sharing of information and coordinate by meeting regularly. This is important as various organisations in the community need to know what level of risk they are monitoring. For the remaining Beneficiaries, the need for adaption of a legal framework in order to proceed with sharing information between related entities, was highlighted. Most of these Beneficiaries responded that information is shared in paper and/or electronic form. The example from Kosovo provides that a database is one key channel through which updated information is regularly shared. As soon as information about a release date is made known by the courts to KCS, they notify the KP, KIA, and the MIA and upload the information into the database. A release plan is developed at least 3 months prior to the release date. Additionally, the KCS Director himself is also advised on how to share information effectively with external institutions.

Serbia also demonstrates effective practice in that it has a specific department dedicated to pre-release: 'Team for Support and Protection', which provides counselling and referral services to relevant agencies. However, in line with other beneficiaries, they have expressed frustration at the level of information exchange between agencies.

Awareness and Training

Beneficiaries agreed that VEPs are stigmatised in the community and their path to successful reintegration is significantly more problematic than that of the general offender population, requiring a much higher level of support. It was also unanimously agreed that working with the VEP's family was an important factor in the resocialisation process, but that the family could also be an enabling factor for VEPs to return to further terrorist activities, therefore an understanding of the family dynamics was crucial. Again, *Serbia* gave some good examples of the way in which they have worked with the families of the general offender population prior to prisoners' release and how this led to an increase in their understanding offended to relevant state bodies in the wider community. There was a consistent consensus amongst Beneficiaries that all staff working with VEPs, including those providing services in the community, required much more education and training in respect of paths to radicalisation and a general awareness training. To that end, *Serbia* provided some good examples of extending their practice outside of correctional and police settings to include educational awareness brochures for schools and on the level of other state bodies. They have developed a specific training programme for police which is to be further extended to the wider community.

Preparation for Release

Whilst there has been improvement in the provision of pre-release planning during the project, as it stands many Beneficiaries still do not have formal pre-release plans, a pre-release programme or processes prior to the individual's release. In the course of the regional thematic discussions, it was agreed that preparation for the eventual release of prisoners should start on admission to prison. In terms of rehabilitation planning, it was agreed their risk and needs would be significantly different on admission (point A) to release (point B). Some Beneficiaries highlighted that the activities in preparation for release did not differ for the group of VEPs in comparison to other prisoners, but all Beneficiaries agreed that some specific activities would be beneficial to further support the VEP towards release.

To date, only *North Macedonia* have specific pre-release SOPs in place. *Albania* is in the process of developing their pre-release programmes for the general prison population, but have no specific pre-release programmes for VEPs. A similar situation exists across all other Beneficiaries. Whilst some have case management approaches etc, a specific pre-release manual with clear guidelines, activities and protocols for VEPs is lacking. Further, whilst tools and interventions are partly available, they are not often accessible in a manual-form and often not tailored specifically for VEPs needs.

Probation

In many Beneficiaries, under the current applicable legislation, the probation service in general is only involved if the prisoner is conditionally released. Outside of that they have limited involvement with prisoners. For example, in *Albania* Under Article 59 of the criminal code the individual assumes responsibility not to commit an offence whilst on probation, but it is not clear how this is enforced. Similarly, in *Kosovo*, the probation service is responsible for conditionally released prisoners, although there is a reintegration programme in the Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalised Persons, which includes the services provided by the respective institutions and the responsibilities of each of them. Activities are included in the work plans of the Division because the activities change based on the situation. Whilst there are not specific programmes per se, in Kosovo an individual supervision plan for each prisoner is developed which includes reintegration activities and family reunification.

BiH does not have a probation service. A similar situation exists in *Montenegro*. *Serbia* provides an example of best practice in that the probation officer becomes involved in the transition of a prisoner into the community at approximately one year prior to release and at the latest three months prior to release when the preparation stage begins. The probation services to released prisoners are general, with no specific services for VEPs, but it is reported that the individual needs of a VEP would be considered when developing a release and reintegration plan. These could include, but not limited to family reunification, religious activities and work-related needs. Like other beneficiaries, in *North Macedonia* the probation service becomes involved with prisoners who are being conditionally released into the community. At that stage, an individual programme is prepared based on a risk/needs instrument.

In summary, whilst there has been some movement during this project, there remains a lack of clear protocols, between both the penitentiary and the probation service, as well as social work centres and the probation service. Conditional release of VEPs is an example of such a lack of protocols across the region and more emphasis needs to be placed on the question of under **what 'conditions'** is a VEP considered safe for early or conditional release. As mentioned earlier in the risk/needs assessment section of this report, it has no predictive qualities and therefore conditional release decisions cannot be made on the basis of this alone.

Centres for Social Work and Social Care

Some beneficiaries highlighted the vital role of their "Centres for Social Work", especially the significant role they play in providing post penal assistance to released offenders. It was agreed that the Centres, which are governed by the respective Ministries of Labour and Social Development, are also important in order to strengthen the community and the resilience concomitant with the prevention of radicalisation in the community.

In many cases the social service has only been included when mandatory measures have been required by a court or when juveniles have been involved. In many Beneficiaries, the law on Social Services means there is no specific financial support or other benefits (such as social housing, social enterprises, etc.) for released convicts, let alone VEPs, apart from those stipulated by law for vulnerable individuals in need of social care assistance.

There is evidence that penitentiaries are informing social care centres when a prisoner is going to be released *(BiH)*, though there are no formal legal provisions for this and in most cases, no Memoranda of Cooperation. It appears that it is often the case that prisoners turn to the social work centres on their own initiative rather than formal referral. In *Kosovo*, Centres for Social Work are involved in the early stages for preparation for release and there is a contact person in the prison system who coordinates contacts, which is good practice. Similarly, whilst they have limited numbers of VEPs in *Montenegro*, a Team for Assistance Protection (TAP) has been formed with the aim to support prisoners with extremist behaviour on release from prison. In *North Macedonia* the Law on Social Protection means this process happens after a prisoner is released from prison and if there is need of social assistance, but there are no provisions for VEPs. Similar, in Serbia Centres for Social Work are not systematically involved.Interestingly, during the course of the project it was suggested by WG members representing the social care aspect in Serbia, that a separate service within the Probation service and MoIA should be established, which will unite other relevant institutions (i.e., local self-government, education, information, health care, culture, etc.), with aim to create joint measures and develop programmes to support released prisoners. This would contribute to harmonised, continuous and comprehensive approach towards deradicalisation of former prisoners, once released. This latter point would indeed be an example of good practice and something to aim for.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRE-RELEASE AND POST PENAL ASSISTANCE

A. Policy and Legislative Level

There is a lack of coordinated and specific guidelines relating to both pre-release and post penal assistance. At the most basic level, when the prison door is opened, prisoners need to know where they are going, how they are going to get there and who is going to pay for it. It is therefore imperative that legislation and policies about 'who does what, when and where' between the various agencies are drawn up as soon as is practical.

It is a genuine concern that the probation service only become involved with a VEP if they are subject to conditional release. This omits VEPs who may serve their whole sentence before being released into the community and will therefore not benefit from structured support for transition into the community. The empirical literature shows that transition into the community, either on early release or after serving the sentence, is a high-risk situation that needs to be managed carefully. For those on conditional release, this may be provided by probation services in cooperation with other actors. Among the support that should be made available, both to those on conditional release and those not, is ongoing support from social workers, psychologists, and other actors who can support their reintegration processes.

From both a human rights and risk assessment perspective, Beneficiaries need to be very clear what they mean by the term 'conditional' and a set criterion for this must be made explicit. For those beneficiaries that offer conditional release for VEPs (Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia) the VEPs' eligibility for this privilege is evaluated based on their cooperation with

the prison staff and participation in a rehabilitation programme. The decision is not made based on formal assessment of their **risk to the community**, which should be done in cooperation with the relevant external agencies, especially security services who may have information that the penitentiary service is not privy to. Therefore, it is essential that Memoranda of Cooperation are developed that consider the working relationship between the various organisations, roles and responsibilities and protocols for release or early release of a VEP into the community.

A further problem that tends to compound this issue is that unlike other jurisdictions whereby the main role of the probation service is to provide the supervisory and risk assessment of persons in the community following release from prison or as an alternative sanction to prison, the probation service is either in its infancy or has been established to only supervise those with early or conditional release from prison. In many beneficiaries the systems that are required for community supervision on release from prison are in their infancy or early stages of development. These need to be developed further looking at systems from other jurisdictions and the roles and regulations of the probation services. It is recommended that a WG be set up for this sole purpose. Serbia provided a good example of this in having systems in place between the prison and probation service for transition from prison to the community.

The discussion papers reflected the concerns of some participants regarding direct release from high secure settings to the community. In many jurisdictions, a 'step down' process whereby prisoners are accommodated in less secure conditions during the pre-release period is seen as essential in successful transition from secure conditions to the community. In-terms of managing risk and needs, this should further drive policies and procedures in releasing VEPs.

Given the needs presented by VEPs in the penitentiaries, it is essential that Centres for social work to be involved in preparation for the release of VEPs and in the preparation of an Individual Plan for each VEP, as part of a wider comprehensive system that ensures coordinated holistic approach. Future policies and legislation need to cater for this important component in transitioning VEPs into the community.

Notwithstanding data protection laws, there needs to be an adoption of **clear procedures** and **guidelines** on inter-agency information sharing, specifying the obligations and duties of all relevant actors in the area of post-penal assistance and the development of special teams for the reintegration of VEPs. These should encompass agreements that refer to the actions of all relevant actors in the chain of protection and reintegration of former prisoners, but also to provide the necessary assistance and support to family members.

Policies surrounding risk and needs should be detailed in relation to the release of VEPs. It should be noted that VEPs present with different needs and risk in relation to the general offending populations, so it is important to go through existing policies and legislation to ensure these reflect the risk and needs posed by VEPs. For example, when the custodial sentence length comes to an end, what is the length and level of community supervision required to manage the risk?

Given that the period following direct release from prison is a high- risk phase for many prisoners (not just VEP's), in many jurisdictions there is a preference for releasing the prisoner early so that they are able to receive support during this high-risk phase and, in some cases (for high risk offenders), be monitored under more realistic circumstances. For example, this forms part of the MAPPA (Multi Agency Protection) process in the UK and has been discussed during the regional

working groups. Some thought should be given to adopting a similar process to ensure both the VEP's risk and needs can be managed during their transition from custody to prison.

All relevant stakeholders, including social care centres, should proceed according to common procedures and joint guidelines on multi-agency information sharing, specifying the obligations and duties of all relevant actors in post-penal assistance and the development of special services for the reintegration of prisoners, including VEPs. There are some best practice models given above that could be incorporated into such procedures. There is sufficient evidence from all beneficiaries to suggest the urgent need for legislation and policies for resources and training on social and child protection for employees in all social services, including the local self-government, education, healthcare protection and others, with focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration needs of former VEPs and their families.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the focus on families has been missing in much of the legislation for VEPs. In all the suggestions for improvements, it is important to have clear guidelines and procedures regarding how to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented measures.

B. Implementation Level

First and foremost, it needs to be noted that the pre-release period requires a substantial amount of work for existing staff if it is to be done effectively. Coordination both internally and externally, risk assessments, skills training and other activities take time and resources. Staff cannot be expected to do this on top of their normal workload and this needs to be reflected in policies for human resource management and assigned staff to such roles. Ideally, each penitentiary would have an assigned pre-release department where such activities occur. Obviously if numbers are low, the amount of time a staff member is assigned to this department would be pro-rata. At a local level, the evidence would suggest that when a VEP is to be released from prison, clear and detailed guidelines in the form of SOPs need to be developed to reflect the immediate needs (accommodation, transport, health, employment etc) to longer term reintegration needs. These guidelines should ideally reflect the prisoner's last 6 months in prison and who is going to do what, when and why:

- Conducting analysis of individual needs, risks and resilience factors;
- Identifying available financial, mental, physical and social capabilities and resources;
- Setting up realistic goals for the post-release period;
- Highlighting any particular risk factors that stand out;
- Developing proposals for dealing with triggers that might cause significant stress and potentially result in a regression to old negative patterns;
- Planning steps necessary to provide guidance in support of functional integration;
- Implementing basic orientation on relevant support structures, and sometimes – depending on the amount of time spent in prison – basic reorientation in a substantially changed outside environment.

The available evidence suggests that VEPs require a specific pre-release manual (like the one applicable for the general prison population) relevant to their needs. This should be developed by Beneficiaries outlining the content of such a course including skills training and preparation for release sessions with prisoners.

Modules such as communication skills, educational awareness, vocational skills, job seeking skills and other relevant content. The pre-release period should start at least 6-months prior to release and Memoranda of Cooperation should be developed with providers of community services who could facilitate some aspects of this course, get to know the prisoner, and provide education to the prisoners on what is available in the community to meet their needs. The pre-release planning should also involve an updated risk/needs assessment process.

In relation to the above, it is strongly recommended that Beneficiaries look to the concept of 'exit' programmes. Exit programme is a collective term refers to programmes and interventions aimed at disengaging violent extremist/terrorist offenders. Exit programmes can be offered by NGOs or governments, or in combination. The programmes are intensive (6 months to 3 years), involving a range of interventions and forms of help for those exiting extremist groups. A variety of programmes being run within and outside of Europe were presented to the thematic regional meetings.

It has been seen as best practice in some Beneficiaries who have developed a special co-ordinator on releasing VEPs and it is recommended that one should be appointed in each penitentiary institution. The system in Kosovo is a good example. The social reintegration of VEPs requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, with strong coordination among the different stakeholders involved. In an operational context, to be prepared to support the VEP immediately after release, partner organisations should be provided with early access to prison to start the rehabilitation process as early as possible and to build a stable relationship with the inmate. The collaboration between all actors (state and non-state) is crucial in term of sharing of information, public and political support during the resocialization. The multiagency cooperation could be encouraged through more seamless transfer of knowledge between all actors, from practitioners to policy makers and researchers and vice versa. Access to prisoner information on a central database is a good starting point for this process and is something Beneficiaries should aim for.

ANNEX 1
Joint Framework Curricula for Basic and Advanced Training of P&P Staff

BASIC TRAINING		
ITEMS	**CONTENT**	**TARGETED TRAINEES**
definition of radicalization/ extremism/terrorism	Provide detailed definitions of the relevant member state and how to apply the terms.	all staff members, including managerial level and prison governors in particular
legal framework (national, international)	Introduction of the applicable legal framework regarding radical inmates and groups.	
signs of radicalisation	Introduction to the different visual and behavioural signs of radicalisation (including: clothing, signs, flags, verbal expressions, books, tattoos, etc.).	
what to do/reporting	Provide detailed description of what signs to report, when to report it and for whom, also establish a unified and clear reporting system. Information about regulations and processes to follow when radicalisation and/ or extremist behaviours have been observed, including the professional mandate of the staff member, lines of reporting and processes for feedback on the reporting.	
understanding the work of the Multi-Disciplinary Treatment Teams (MDTTs)	MDTTs have a key role regarding the targeted local interventions, staff should be aware of its mandate, members and competences in order to support their work.	
the importance of intersectoral cooperation/competences	Staff members should understand that they all have a role in deradicalisation, different sectors meet the inmates in different circumstances, thus have the opportunity to observe them in their different roles. Regulation on the sharing of information.	

awareness raising/trends and numbers	Introduction of national and international trends regarding radicalisation. General knowledge of different ideologies and extremist worldviews.	
basic interviewing techniques	Staff members should be equipped with the basic tools for engaging in dialogues with radical inmates. (what to say and what to avoid)	
religion	Information related to the difference between moderate religious behaviour and indications of radicalisation.	
preparation for release	Basic knowledge of aftercare and post-release interventions.	
special needs of vulnerable groups (women, juveniles)	Certain sub-groups need special interventions, due to their special needs, staff should be aware of these special characteristics.	all staff members, including managerial level and prison governors in particular
returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)	FTFs have undergone special preparation, they might have combat experience and most have suffered from PTSD. Staff should be aware of this additional information.	
the importance of information exchange	Understanding the importance of information exchange during the design and implementation of interventions.	
Standard Operational Protocols (SOP)	Staff should be aware of the existence and the content of radicalisation specific internal documents and SOPs.	
prevention	Information about the approaches staff can use in their day-to-day roles to help develop offender resilience against violent extremism.	

BASIC TRAINING		
ITEMS	**CONTENT**	**TARGETED TRAINEES**
in-depth knowledge of religion, ideologies, groups	Understanding the different forms of religious, political or ethnic radical movements (Far-left, Far-right movements, Islamism, Salafism, Takfir ideology, etc.)	
working alliance & Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)	Introduction to CBT and specialized cooperation structures including peers, religious representatives, NGOs etc.	
management and organisation of the R/VE population	Understanding motivational factors and effectively build upon the individual pull/protective factors.	
special interventions and programmes	Thorough understanding of the interventions and systematic thinking. Delivery of specific de-radicalisation and disengagement interventions. Techniques that can be used for difficult conversations in order to facilitate disengagement and de-radicalisation	Staff members continuously working with radicals: - educators / instructors - psychologists /social workers - medical staff - designated security personnel; - others
working with individuals and families	Introduction to special interventions with the involvement of family members.	
information management	Working with sensitive and/or classified information.	
safety and security	Management of risk factors posed by radicals (including SOPs for special events, self-defence, use of force, special intervention techniques, hostage negotiation, etc.).	
monitoring & evaluating	Preparation of complex assessments prior conditional release, home leave. How to deliver and correctly interpret risk assessment approaches specifically pertinent to violent extremism.	

ANNEX 2
Pre-Release Check-List

MANAGEMENT

- Establish Pre-Release Department
- Establish a Team of Case Managers
- Appoint a Case Manager to each radicalised prisoner **6-12 months** prior to release

PRE-RELEASE DEPARTMENT (CASE MANAGER)

- Develop individualized exit programme for each prisoner
- Contact external organisations for the prisoners identified needs
- Arrange pre-release meetings with external organisations 3-months prior to prisoners release
- Liaise with the different departments in the penitentiary to collate information on the prisoner's risk and needs.
- Ensure up to date information on the prisoner's risk and needs is available at the pre-release meeting. These include security, health, psychosocial, vocational, housing and social needs.
- Liaise with the Treatment Department for pre-release activities
- Arrange Multi-Disciplinary pre-release meetings
- Liaise with the Health Care Department for discharge report and ensure contact is made with community based mental health teams where appropriate
- Liaise with community addictions services
- Liaise with family members
- Collate final report from the Resocialization unit
- Collate discharge report from healthcare and give to the prisoner
- 2-5 days prior to release, inform the Centre for Social Services
- 2-5 days prior to release inform local police and relevant security services

RELEASE DAY

- Court papers are checked to ensure correct release date
- The prisoner is examined by the doctor
- Does the prisoner have transport to where he/she is going?
- Does the prisoner have civilian clothing?
- Does the prisoner have adequate funds to support him/herself for a few days?
- The prisoner's identity is checked against court papers
- Does the prisoner have identity documentation?
- Give prisoner the appointment with the local social worker
- Paperwork is checked with the Case Manager
- The prisoner is released

ANNEX 3
Example Regime

The following is an example regime that could be adopted to gradually orientate the prisoner to the new reality of prison life and putting their time to purposeful use throughout the sentence. These activities are explained in more detail below.

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning		Orientation Emotional Check-in. Individual Treatment Session	Orientation Emotional Check-in Cultural – educational activities	Orientation Emotional Check-in.	Orientation Emotional Check-in. Emotion regulation	Orientation Emotional Check-in. Religious activities	Creative activities	Outdoor activities
		Outdoor activities	Outdoor activities	Sport	Sport	Sport	Sport	Sport
Afternoon			Educational activities	Work	Work	Outdoor activities	Outdoor activities	Outdoor activities
		Sport/Art Therapy	Motivational interview	Outdoor activities	Individual Treatment Session	Mindfulness	Work	Creative activities

The purpose of activities for violent extremist prisoners is that they are rehabilitative in themselves and serve as a distraction from an ideology (something neutral) and method of developing rapport with members of staff in a non-confrontational way. These activities should comprise:

- Education activities
- Work or vocational engagement
- Religious activities
- Organised use of free time (e.g. exercise, sports, creative groups, etc.)
- Specific individual treatment sessions with a treatment officer. treatment programmes.

a) Educational activities

Whilst many VEP's are well educated, educational activities still have an important role in the process of disengagement from violence if they are 'neutral and aimed at broadening the prisoners' views and detracting from ideologies - developing critical thinking skills vs concrete thinking.

b) Sports and physical activities

Sport and physical activities are important in any rehabilitation regime but for VEP's these offer an opportunity to develop pro-social team skills, empathy, rapport with sport instructors and a non-confrontational way of developing a sense of humanism in VEP's. Sport and physical activities are also important for stress and anxiety reduction in VEP's (reduced cortisol levels and increased serotonin levels) and as a result, they are thus more likely to engage in individual treatment sessions.

c) Cultural activities

The aim of cultural activities is that they should be informative and enable VEP's to think about themselves and others differently. Using the library, having a specific topic group to introduce ideas and values of other cultures are simple, yet effective ways in which to educate VEP's on other cultures in a non-challenging way.

d) Work engagement

Engaging in work or vocational activities is an important part of the rehabilitation process and results in a sense of purpose and agency. Spending hours on end with nothing to do results in boredom and increased anxiety and frustration, which does little to encourage disengagement from violence. The work of violent extremist prisoners in prison must be purposeful and where possible, increase the ability to gain purposeful employment on release from prison.

e) Religious activities

Many VEP's have a fixed or 'convenient' view of their own religion or ideology that allows for justification of future use of violence against another group or religion. The purpose of religious activities should therefore be to educate the VEP.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Discussion paper from the 1st WG Theme 1 on 15-16 October 2019 CentreVille Hotel, Podgorica
- Discussion paper from the 2nd WG Theme 1 on 11 – 12 February 2020 CentreVille Hotel, Podgorica
- Discussion paper from the 3rd WG Theme 1 on 1-3 December 2020 Online
- Discussion paper from the 1st WG Theme 2 on 13-14 November 2019 Novotel Bristol Hotel, Sarajevo
- Discussion paper from the 2nd WG Theme 2 on 9-10 June 2020 via Kudo online platform
- Discussion paper from the 3rd WG Theme 2 on 13 and 14 October 2021 Hotel Ibis Styles, Sarajevo
- Discussion paper from the 1st WG Theme 3 on 11-12 December 2019 Rogner Hotel, Tirana
- Discussion paper from the 2nd WG Theme 3 on 6-7 July 2020 via KUDO online platform
- Discussion paper from the 3rd WG Theme 3 on 17-18 November 2021 Hotel MAK Albania, Tirana
- Discussion paper from the 1st WG Theme 4 on Hotel Holiday Inn, Skopje 21-22 January 2020
- Discussion paper from the 2nd WG Theme 4 on 4-6 November 2020 online platform
- Discussion paper from the 3rd WG Theme 4 on 21-22 December 2021, Mariott Hotel Skopje
- Conclusions from the final regional conference: "Towards improved practices in preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism in prisons and staff training in the Western Balkans", Hotel Splendid Budva, Montenegro on 17–18 May 2022. (Themes 1 and 3)
- Conclusions from the final regional conference: "Towards successful management, rehabilitation and post-penal assistance to violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) in the Western Balkans – achievements and the way forward", MAK Albania Hotel Tirana, Albania 04 – 05 October 2022. (Themes 2 and 4).
- Evaluation report on piloting of VEP specific tools/program in Serbia
- Evaluation report on piloting of VEP specific tools/program in Albania
- Evaluation report on piloting of VEP specific tools/program in Kosovo
- Evaluation report on piloting of VEP specific tools/program in BiH
- Final evaluation reports on implementation of local co-ordination fora in BiH, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania (implemented from June 2020 – June 2022)
- Replies to tailor-made Questionnaires submitted by the Beneficiaries

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