

# PLAN R

THE ACTION PLAN AGAINST RADICALISM

All authorities, offices and services as well as individuals attentive to the phenomenon of radicalisation, are highly urged into reading this brochure, for it explains how the different policy levels ensure the monitoring of radicalising entities by means of the Action Plan against Radicalism (Plan R) and a “chain oriented approach”.

# PREFACE

In recent years the poison spread by the terrorist organisation Islamic State (also known as ISIS) has been expanding steadily but slowly. On 22 March 2016, Belgium was hit straight in the heart. The pain and sorrow numerous families have to deal with are beyond repair.

Yet, the inhumanity and atrociousness of ISIS will not get us down, on the contrary. The French journalist Nicolas Hénin, who was held hostage by ISIS for 10 months, is right when he says that ISIS fears unity more than bombs. As long as we continue to disseminate our democratic values of enlightenment cruel madness will never take over.

Without any doubt our intelligence and security services contribute substantially to tackling this phenomenon. And after the brutal attacks in Paris and Brussels they are more determined than ever. Moreover, within the week after the Brussels attacks, the Belgian government decided to establish an inquiry commission, providing a window of opportunity for the intelligence services to thoroughly analyse and optimise their efficiency and working methods.

However, it would be a mistake to think that our intelligence and security agencies can do all the work by themselves: nipping radicalism and extremism in the bud demands a comprehensive approach of all authorities together. This approach, in which all actors are to be involved, can in fact be the added value of the new Action Plan against Radicalism (Plan R), updated by the government after the foiled attacks by the so-called Cell of Verviers.

Since the elaboration of the first Plan in 2002 ( the “Plan Mosques”) a lot has happened. While the first plan was meticulously kept secret, the updated Plan strives for maximum transparency (this brochure being a first example of it). And transparency is indeed what we need.

The updated Plan R can be a leverage in an inclusive and integrated approach

(I am aware these terms are a bit outdated, but they still accurately depict what it is all about) in which all services join forces. Although the number of partners involved is high, this should not be considered a problem, on the contrary, it may be a strength (that is, if all noses point in the same direction, which is of course, a prerequisite). In other words: in order to win this battle, all actors should work and collaborate within the framework of the same vision and the same policy.

The Local Task Forces elaborated by the Plan R are the ultimate fora to share relevant information. Meanwhile, every service recognizes that sharing judicial information with the administrative authorities is a must, so that the latter are capable of developing a “tailored approach” (binding or not). It is on the local level – the chain from the local police officer, over the judicial assistant to the counterradicalisation worker or the teacher, to name only a few – that radicalisation is to be channelled, in order to prevent it from degenerating into (violent) extremism.

The Plan R is therefore not an endpoint, but a beginning: an invitation to all offices and institutions to take up the challenge together. We owe it to the victims of the most recent attacks.

I am grateful to all, particularly to my co-workers of the Coordination Unit for Threat Assessment (CUTA), who are involved in the realisation and development of the actual Plan R. I wish each and every one of you success in realising the goals of the Plan R.

**Paul Van Tigchelt**  
**Director CUTA**

# INTRODUCTION

Radicalism and radicalisation can be approached in different ways. The approach itself depends highly on how radicalism and radicalisation take shape in our society.

***“The Action Plan against Radicalism is a plan of approach striving to restrict as much as possible the development of radicalism and extremism in our society. The method to achieve this goal is an integrated collaboration between various public services, by realising two goals: mapping out the individuals and groups with a radicalising effect on their environment, and reducing the impact of the drivers of radicalisation”.***

The Plan R can contribute to the execution of a knowledge and evidence based policy. Yet, a solid policy with regard to prevention and repression can only be developed if the partners concerned have sufficient concrete and distinct knowledge about the issue. By mapping out the phenomenon and implementing administrative, judicial and socio-preventive measures against individuals and groups having a radicalising effect on their environment, the action plan against radicalism is a key element in an efficient approach against radicalisation and extremism in our society.

## BRIEF HISTORY

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 (9/11), the intelligence services, the then *“Antiterrorist interforce group”* (Groupe Interforces antiterroristes GIA) and the Belgian Standing Intelligence Agencies Review Committee (Committee I) drew the attention on the increasing threat posed by Islamic extremism.

In 2002 the Crisis Centre of the Belgian government created, on demand of the then Minister of the Interior, two working groups aiming towards the elaboration of an action plan. By the end of 2002, the first action plan, *“the Plan Mosques or Plan M”*, came into force.

At the end of 2004 the Ministerial Committee for Intelligence and Security decided to reform the plan in order to elaborate a strategic note concentrating on specific drivers of radicalisation and on preventive, proactive and reactive measures. This is how the *“Action Plan against Radicalism”*, also known as the *“Plan R”*, originated. Also then a major component of the Plan R was related to the organisation of the information flux between the different services.

Subsequently, the Ministerial Committee for Intelligence and Security approved the Action Plan in 2006 and the GIA was appointed as the qualified agency to carry out the Plan. Nowadays the coordination of the Plan R is allocated to the National Task Force (see *infra*), presided by the Coordination Unit for Threat Assessment.

After the foiled attack in Verviers in 2015, the federal government decided that the Action Plan against Radicalism needed to be updated. On 14 December 2015, the Belgian National Security Council (NSC) approved the new Action Plan against Radicalism.

# KEY ASPECTS OF THE ACTION PLAN AGAINST RADICALISM

- The Action Plan against Radicalism is a platform falling under the competence of the Belgian Coordination Committee for Intelligence and Security (CCIS).
- The purpose of the Plan R has not changed: (1) detecting radicalising (key) actors in an early stage so as to be able (2) to take the necessary measures.
- The Plan R unites all competent agencies and services in a specific and common action, respecting at all-time their respective objectives and statutory powers.
- The structures of the Plan R are strengthened (creation of the National Task Force and of Local Task Forces) and serve as a “consultation body” for specific issues like, for instance, the monitoring of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF).
- The mission and tasks of both the National and the Local Task Forces are explained and stipulated. The Local Task Forces are divided into a strategic and an operational component and the connection with the local administrative authorities and the social and preventive services is strengthened by, amongst other things, the creation of Local Integrated Security Cells (cellules de sécurité intégrale locale or CSIL).
- The Action Plan against Radicalism wants to strengthen the ties between the different policy levels. The chain oriented approach of monitoring radicalising entities and taking preventive, repressive and curative measures requires indeed an intensive collaboration between the federal government, the communities and the regions as well as the local authorities.

- By associating, on a permanent basis, representatives of the Communities and the Regions, of the Federal Public Service Justice – DG EPI (the Directorate General of the Prison Administration), of the Federal Public Services of the Interior (Directorate General of Safety and Prevention) and of the Public Prosecution Service, the integrated and comprehensive approach of the Plan R is structurally reinforced.
- The information exchange between the advisory bodies of the Plan R (NTF, LTF, working groups) and the local authorities is optimised, in the first place by creating a common and dynamic data base FTF (putting together all relevant information about the foreign terrorist fighters). The information flux towards the local authorities also provides a structural connection with the social and prevention services, by means of the Local Integrated Security Cells.
- New working groups are created with regard to the new range of competences attributed to the Plan R (Prevention, FTF, Communication, Hate Preachers, Asylum and Migration, Mosques).
- The way in which the approach and the monitoring (implementation of standardised measures combined with personalised measures) take shape is clearly defined in the Action Plan against Radicalism.



# TECHNICAL ASPECTS

## 1. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Since no official legal definition of the issues of ‘radicalism’ and ‘radicalisation’ exists in Belgium, an operational definition was developed within the Plan R structures. This definition is necessary in order to avoid confusion of the concepts and to develop one common view with regard to the concrete execution of the Plan R.

The concept of radicalism can be described as:

***“Striving to and/or supporting drastic changes in society, which may pose a threat to the democratic system of laws (goal), potentially by using undemocratic methods (means), which may harm the functioning of the democratic system of laws (effect); or, more generally stated: “radicalism is the willingness of accepting the ultimate consequences of a certain way of thinking and putting them into practice”.***

Within the scope of the Plan R, radicalism is approached as a “radicalisation process”. The notion of “radicalisation” is hence defined as follows:

***“a process during which a person or a group of persons experiences such influences that this person or this group of persons will at some point, be mentally moulded or disposed to commit terrorist acts” (act of 30 November 1998 governing the intelligence and security services – art 3,15<sup>o</sup>; non official translation).***

The definition of the Action Plan clearly indicates that the concept of radicalisation is mainly a process, determining to a large extent the position of a person towards the use of violence: radicalising individual persons and groups undergo a subtle yet progressive evolution, during which they de-

velop or copy radical ideas, opinions and views. It is a process which can lead, eventually, to extremism, and even to terrorism.

The definition used in the Plan R indicates that the Action Plan against Radicalism wants to tackle all kinds of radicalism, such as using and distributing incendiary speech, fundamentalist ideas, racist, anarchist or extremist opinions (expressing them in front of a public or inciting to). Yet, while radical acts (actions), resulting in any kind of illegal and violent actions are liable to punishment, radical views and opinions (thoughts) are not.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION PLAN

Radicalism and radicalisation can be dealt with in different ways. The approach depends on how the phenomena of radicalism and radicalisation take shape in our society. This is why the objectives of the Action Plan are accommodated to:

- accurately depict the issue and determine the right balance between a preventive approach, a disrupting approach and a repressive approach
- reduce the impact of the issue.

The Action Plan against Radicalism can therefore be defined as:

***“The Action Plan against Radicalism is a plan of approach striving to restrict as much as possible the development of radicalism and extremism in our society. The method to achieve this objective is an integrated collaboration between various public services, by realising two goals: mapping out the individuals and groups with a radicalising effect on their environment, and reducing the impact of the drivers of radicalisation”.***

The Plan R can contribute to the execution of a knowledge and evidence based policy. Yet, a solid policy with regard to prevention and repression can only be developed if the partners concerned have sufficient concrete

and distinct knowledge about the issue. By mapping out the phenomenon and implementing administrative, judicial and socio-preventive measures against individuals having a radicalising effect on their environment, the action plan against radicalism is a key element in an efficient approach against radicalisation and extremism in our society.

### *3. FRAMEWORK AND ELABORATION*

The objectives of the Action Plan against Radicalism imply an integrated and common approach that is supported by a National Task Force and by several working groups (permanent, theme-based or ad hoc). Each working group is coordinated by a pilot service. Additionally, Local Task Forces<sup>1</sup> were set up in order to ensure an efficient interaction with the field work . Eventually the goal is (on the national as well as on the local level) to:

- create a forum for information exchange between the different services involved
- ensure the treatment of all this information by common agreement
- propose, in consensus, appropriate measures

Within the framework of an integrated and comprehensive approach of the issue, the Action Plan against Radicalism should be geared to the Action Plans elaborated by the Belgian Communities and Regions. Subsequently, the whole concept should be integrated in the Framework Memorandum Integral Safety.

### *4. THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE*

The National Task Force (NTF) is the strategic policy body of the Action Plan (coordination on national level). The National Task Force is hence charged with the general management and the continuous monitoring of the Action Plan against Radicalism.

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*1 More explanation in GPI78 from 21/01/2014.*

The NTF gathers every month and is presided by the CUTA. The State Security (VSSE), the military General Service for Intelligence and Security (SGRS), representatives of the federal and the local police, the FPS Foreign Affairs, the FPS Justice – DG EPI, the Belgian Financial Intelligence Processing Unit (CTIF-CFI), the FPS Interior, the Belgian Immigration Office and the Directorate General Crisis Centre are the permanent members.

Since 15 October 2015 also the Public Prosecution Service, the representatives of the Communities and the Regions as well as the representative of the Directorate General of Safety and Prevention (under the FPS Interior) participate in the National Task Force.

Every decision by the National Task Force is made by the consensus principle. The hierarchic structure between the National Task Force, the Local Task Forces and the working groups focuses on coordination and at all times respects the singularity and the internal regulations and functioning of the participating services.

The National Task Force is accountable to the Coordination Committee for Intelligence and Security and to the Strategic Committee of Intelligence and Security. In this context, the NTF draws up an annual report with regard to the activities of the different working groups. Furthermore, the NTF is entrusted with passing on all proposals and/or adaptations that need an official approval of the government.

## *5. WORKING GROUPS*

The National Task Force stipulates which working groups are created, which are maintained and which are to be dissolved. Each working group is coordinated by a pilot service charged with assembling all partners involved so as to make sure all scheduled tasks are dealt with.

The field of competence of a working group concerns specific phenomena, trends, or issues. The permanent working groups are charged with radicalisation on the Internet, in prisons, on the radio and on television as well as with prevention. The theme-based working groups deal with the phenomena Salafism, right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism and trends in Asia Minor and in the Caucasus. The ad hoc working groups are responsible for the issue of problematic radicalisation in the areas “Hate preachers”, “Mosques” and “Asylum and Migration”. The working group Foreign Terrorist Fighters finally, has been created in the framework of the Memorandum of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice with regard to the information exchange about and the monitoring of Belgian Foreign Terrorist Fighters (21 August 2015).

The purpose of the working groups is on the one hand to come to a continuous collaboration between all the services concerned and on the other hand to build up a specific knowhow about drivers of radicalisation. The working groups compile an annual progress report on the collaboration, the evolution of the activities and the assessment of the measures and propositions made to reduce the impact of radicalisation.

Permanent working groups	Theme-based working groups	Working groups created on the basis of the FTF Memorandum	Ad hoc working groups
Prisons	Salafism	FTF	Hate Preachers
Radio & Television	Right-wing extremism		Asylum & Migration
Prevention	Left-wing extremism		
Communication	Asia Minor		
	North Caucasus		

The aim is to allow for a certain degree of flexibility in the way certain themes are dealt with, in function of the situational evolution and the image of the issue.

## 6. THE LOCAL TASK FORCES

In order to enhance (and ensure) the interaction with the local level, several Local Task Forces (LTF) were created.

The LTF are operational consultation platforms on policy level for police and intelligence services in a certain geographic area: policy-oriented on the level of the judicial districts and operational on (supra) local level. They ensure the monitoring of radicalising persons and groups on the local level and propose measures to reduce the impact they may have. At all times, the LTF respect the priorities and regulations stipulated by the NTF.

The purpose of the Local Task Forces is to

- exchange and discuss information, intelligence and analyses;
- coordinate the plans to collect information and the concrete activities of information gathering established by the different services and monitor the execution of these plans and activities. This includes formulating proposals to add or delete entities (entries) in the electronic file Joint Information Box (see *infra*);
- determine which entities (entries) must be given priority treatment;
- give support to the frontline police officers, who are likely to be confronted with the issue of radicalisation yet do not possess the necessary knowledge about the phenomena;
- propose preventive and disruptive measures and follow them up;
- maintain structural and/or punctual contacts with the local authorities and their offices.

The LTF are also used as consultation bodies with regard to the Foreign Terrorist Fighters issue. However, efforts are being made to prevent that prospective attention for radicalisation is not reduced to only plain reactive (repressive) monitoring of people and organisations known in this context.

## *7. THE LOCAL INTEGRATED SECURITY CELLS*

In order to execute in depth all objectives of the Action Plan against Radicalism and to ensure the connection between the actors involved, and to maintain the consistency between preventive, repressive and monitoring measures, a consultation body on the level of the local authorities (municipalities) was absolutely necessary. On the basis of and through the Memorandum of 21 August 2015 with regard to the FTF issue, mayors were asked to set up “local integrated security cells”, ensuring the information exchange between the social and preventive services, the LTF and the administrative authorities.

## *8. THE JOINT INFORMATION BOX*

The Joint Information (Box JIB) is an electronic file comprising all “radicalising entities” (entries) identified as “to be monitored with priority”. These entities can either be persons or groups. The decision whether an entity has to be added to or deleted from the JIB is always taken by the National Task Force following the principle of general consensus.

The purpose of the Joint Information Box is to

- visualise quantitative and qualitative trends and evolutions;
- optimise the information exchange and collect knowledge with regard to the entities;
- create the conditions to draw up analyses on the radicalising and radical entities;
- map out the phenomena within the scope of radicalisation;
- manage the actions and measures taken against the entries in the JIB and be able to provide an overview of the obtained results.

## *9. THE COMMON DATABASE FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS*

In the framework of the concrete monitoring of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) a dynamic and common database has been created, comprising individual assessments for each FTF. Thanks to these assessments (filing cards), all information on a particular FTF will be available to the services in real time. Every service, including at the local level, can consult the files and add new information to it.

## *10. MEASURES*

In order to put a stop to the radical influence of entities identified within the scope of the Action Plan against Radicalism, a series of measures is being developed. These measures do not only relate to the repressive apparatus, but also include disruptive and preventive measures.

The preventive and disruptive measures are mainly meant to prevent as much as possible that entities radicalise other people or groups, whereas the repressive part rather aims at punishing administrative or judicial offences. The measures are in fact an important part in the achievement of the goals of the Plan R.

## *11. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY*

The current communication strategy defines the external communication of the Belgian authorities with regard to the “trigger events” and with regard to the Action Plan against Radicalism.

The CUTA is assigned as reference body with regard to the daily external communication in the communication strategy of the Plan R. This certainly does not mean, however, that other services or authorities are not allo-



wed to communicate about the Action Plan. On the contrary, the current strategy aims at the harmonisation of all external communication on the topic by the different partners involved.

As soon as the CUTA has identified a trigger event, the Crisis Centre creates a communication line. This working method has already been used several times, amongst others on the occasion of the release of the film "The Innocence of Muslim" and "The Innocent Prophet", the publication of the Charlie Hebdo cartoons,...

At this moment, the Action Plan against Radicalism is working at a broader and more general communication strategy.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the framework of the elaboration and implementation of the Action Plan against Radicalism, our special thanks go to our partners:

- the Public Prosecution Office
- the Belgian State Security
- the Military General Service for Intelligence and Security
- the federal and local police forces
- the FPS Foreign Affairs
- the FPS Interior
  - o the Directorate general of Safety and Prevention
  - o the Belgian immigration office
  - o the Directorate General Crisis Centre
- the FPS Justice
  - o Directorate general EPI
- CTIF/CFI
- The representatives of the Communities and the Regions

All authorities, offices and services as well as individuals attentive to the phenomenon of radicalisation, are highly urged into reading this brochure, for it explains how the different policy levels ensure the monitoring of radicalising entities by means of the Action Plan against Radicalism (Plan R) and a “chain oriented approach”.

For all complementary information and to order this brochure, please contact the CUTA (OCAM/OCAD) - Rue de la Loi 22 - 1000 Bruxelles (Belgium): +32 (0)2/235.56.11