

Council Conclusions on Radicalisation in Prisons

Thomas Wahl

News

At its meeting on 7 June 2019, the home affairs ministers/ministers of the interior of the EU Member States adopted [Council conclusions on preventing and combatting radicalisation in prisons](#) and on dealing with terrorist and violent extremist offenders after release. The Council pointed out that effective measures in this area must urgently be taken, because of the growing number of terrorist offenders and offenders radicalised in prison and because a number of them will be released in the next two years.

The conclusions were based on Member States' responses to a questionnaire on policies for the prevention and countering of radicalisation in prisons, discussions at the working level of the Council, and Member States' written comments. Member States have been, *inter alia*, invited to further develop specialised interventions for dealing with terrorist and violent extremist offenders as well as with offenders assessed as in risk of being radicalised while serving time in prison.

The Commission has, in particular, been invited to support several activities in the Member States, such as the development of tools and practices for risk management, the implementation of training programmes for relevant professionals and practitioners (prison staff, probation officers, the judiciary, etc.), de-radicalisation, disengagement and rehabilitation programmes for terrorist and violent extremist offenders, etc. Support may also include the work of third countries and partners, especially neighbouring regions, such as the Western Balkans, the MENA-region (Middle East and North Africa), and the Sahel in order to prevent radicalisation in prisons.

Good practices on addressing radicalisation in prisons and dealing with terrorist and violent extremist offenders after release have been annexed to the conclusions. Good practices include, for instance:

- Swift information exchange among relevant stakeholders and development of dedicated strategies;
- Setting up of specialised and multidisciplinary units responsible for countering violent extremism and radicalisation in prisons;
- Comprehensive training programmes for prison and probation staff;
- Implementation, if necessary, of special measures for individuals convicted of terrorist offences, based on a risk assessment;
- Measures encouraging inmates to disengage from violent extremist activities on a case-by-case basis and support for religious representatives to provide alternative narratives;
- Education, training, and psychological support after release as well as further monitoring of radicalised individuals who are considered to pose a continued threat.

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