

ECA: Commission To Better Measure Effectiveness of EU Action Against Radicalisation

News

Thomas Wahl

On 29 May 2018, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published [its special report No 13/2018](#), which looked into the EU's action against radicalisation, i.e., the phenomenon of people embracing extremist ideologies and behaviour which could lead them to commit acts of terrorism. The EU supports the fight against these forms of radicalisation with numerous actions. They are characterised by being performed across many policy areas; involving many stakeholders at the local, regional, national and European levels; and by being financed via various EU funds (e.g., the Internal Security Fund, the Horizon 2020 Programme, the Justice Programme, Erasmus+, and the European Social Fund). The ECA auditors primarily looked at three aspects:

- Relevance of support from the Commission;
- Synergies between the actions financed;
- Effectiveness and value for money.

The ECA report found that the Commission essentially addressed the needs of Member States, but there were some shortfalls in coordination and evaluation. The report describes the following, *inter alia*, in detail:

- Some exceptions were identified where needs had not been sufficiently addressed;
- Support generally brought benefits to Member States acting at the European level;
- Commission coordination has resulted in synergies between its actions;
- For a long time (until 2017), however, there was no framework for coordinating all EU actions addressing radicalisation;
- The mapping of actions already started has not taken into account actions managed by Member States in their national programmes;
- A core project of the EU action, i.e., the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), is not being used to its full potential. RAN connects practitioners around Europe – psychologists; teachers; social workers; police, prison, and probation officers – who work directly with those vulnerable to radicalisation; it aims at empowering front-line practitioners when countering radicalisation;
- The Commission has assessed the effectiveness and value for money of its anti-radicalisation policy insufficiently, e.g., by not having broken down the overall policy objectives into more specific and measurable objectives or by not providing for indicators of the funds used in order to measure success;
- Achievements of specifications are often measured in terms of the amount of activity instead of effectiveness.

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ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>



The auditors criticise that the Commission is at risk of not taking into account useful lessons. In general, the ECA report recommends the following to the Commission:

- Improving the framework for overall coordination of actions addressing radicalisation;
- Increasing practical support to practitioners and policymakers in the Member States;
- Improving the framework for assessing results.

The report also includes the replies from the Commission to the ECA evaluation in an annex.

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The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



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