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PREPARE PROJECT

Preventing radicalisation through probation and release

March 2019

France: a comprehensive plan against violent radicalisation with the progressive involvement of local authorities

France has adopted since 2014 a series of comprehensive policies against violent radicalisation, which concern in particular individuals who are in prison or in probation. Over the years, the role of local authorities in preventing radicalisation has been strengthened although they rarely manage directly individuals who are radicalised or in a process of being so.

by Face

Probation allows for individualised follow-up for prisoners leaving prison and mobilises many services (prison administration, justice services, etc.). As a result, it is a key moment to act against the violent radicalisation of these individuals, whether it took place in prison or on release. Local authorities have a key role to play in coordinating these different institutions. They can also use their knowledge and know-how in the field of prevention of reoffending and disengagement.

PREPARE contributes to the prevention of radicalisation through disengagement and rehabilitation programmes during release and probation, notably through multi-agency partnerships that include local authorities.

Efus coordinates this project from 2017 to 2019 with a broad partnership of local authorities and civil society organisation: City of Malaga and Generalitat of Catalonia (Spain), Rotterdam and The Hague (Netherlands), Bagnolet (France) and Vilvoorde (Belgium), Violence Prevention Network and Denkzeit (Germany), Fryshuset (Sweden), European Forum for Restorative Justice (Belgium) and Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (France).

1. National strategy and governmental plans

>>>>> *A first series of national plans against terrorist networks and for detection and care (2014 to 2016)*

1- The Plan Against Terrorism (*Plan de lutte anti-terroriste*, PLAT) of 23 April 2014

Following the terrorist attacks committed in France since the beginning of the 2010s, a first Plan Against Terrorism (*Plan de lutte anti-terroriste*, PLAT) against radicalisation and terrorist networks was adopted by the government on 23 April 2014.

Its objective was to design a global strategy to tackle the phenomenon of violent radicalisation and the fact that increasing numbers of French nationals were leaving the country to join combat zones in Syria and Iraq.

The plan included two aspects:

- The first sought to strengthen the legal framework against terrorism and Jihadist movements and resulted in the Law of 13 November 2014, which includes strengthened provisions on countering terrorism.
- The second contemplated setting up a scheme to detect as early as possible individuals showing signs of radicalisation and ensure their social reintegration.

The PLAT also led to the establishment, on 29 April 2014, of the National Centre for Assistance and Prevention of Radicalisation (*Centre national d'assistance et de prévention de la radicalisation*, CNAPR), which has a toll-free hotline. Within the Anti-Terrorist Coordination Unit (*Unité de coordination de la lutte anti-terroriste*, UCLAT), it gathers information about individuals showing signs of being radicalised, listens to families and provides them with counselling and psychological support.

In the same vein, a circular from the Minister of the Interior dated 29 April 2014 invited the Prefectures in each *département* (county) to set up two new structures:

- The Departmental Security Headquarters, which gather representatives of the security services and are tasked with evaluating, in each local authority, the level of threat posed by individuals who have been signalled through the national platform, and ensuring they are monitored by the security services.
- The Family Listening and Support Units (*cellules d'écoute et d'accompagnement des familles*), which are multi-agency bodies open to all stakeholders, whether institutional or from the volunteer sector, working locally on social issues, child protection and urban policies. They supervise the social and psychological care of individuals who have been signalled, whether by using mechanisms under ordinary law or by implementing specific schemes.

Concerning counter-narratives, the government launched in February 2015 a website titled “Stop Jihadism” whose aims are to detect indoctrination processes, counter extremist online narratives and show the reality of daily life in terrorist-controlled areas.

2- Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Terrorism (Plan d’Action contre la Radicalisation et le Terrorisme, PART) of 9 May 2016

This plan was adopted on 9 May 2016 and includes 80 measures, of which 50 were new, to “strengthen society’s capacity to prevent, detect and tackle violent radicalisation cases.”¹ These 80 measures are structured around 7 priorities:

- to detect as early as possible radicalisation paths and terrorist networks;
- to monitor, curb and neutralize terrorist networks;
- to fight terrorism in its international networks and sanctuaries;
- to strengthen radicalisation prevention schemes in order to handle cases on an individual basis;
- to develop applied research in counter narratives and mobilise France’s Muslim community;
- to better protect vulnerable sites and networks;
- to be able to react to any terrorist attack and demonstrate the country’s resilience.

The Plan Against Terrorism (PLAT) of 29 April 2014 and the Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Terrorism (PART) of May 2016 have thus set a prevention policy based on detection, training, handling in open and secure environments, and the development of research.

>>>> *Evolution of the government’s policy from 2018 onward, taking better account of radicalised individuals in prison and probation*

1- The “Prevent to Protect” plan of 23 February 2018

The plan of 23 February 2018 is in line with other government programmes on prisons, urban policy and dialogue with the French Muslim community. It contains 60 measures aimed at refocusing the prevention policy around 5 strands:

- Ensuring that “minds are safeguarded against radicalisation”
- Extending the existing detection and prevention network
- Understanding and anticipating the evolution of radicalisation
- Upskilling local stakeholders and evaluating practices
- Adapting disengagement

2- Action Plan Against Terrorism (Plan d’action contre le terrorisme, PACT) of 13 July 2018

As France remains confronted to high level of very fluid terrorist threat, the Action Plan Against Terrorism (PACT according to the French acronym) includes 32 public actions based on four priorities: to know, to curb, to protect and to repress.

¹ In France, there are 101 préfectures representing the national government in every territorial entity (the départements).

The plan's main features are as follows:

- To know: better identify and understand the terrorist threat and how it evolves by improving coordination among intelligence services.
- To curb: preventing acting-outs depends in part on anticipating prison releases and on international initiatives against terrorism funding.
- To protect: reducing risks requires the cooperation of private operators, communities and the population, notably in order to develop a common security culture.
- To repress: the creation of a national, anti-terrorist public prosecution office (parquet national anti-terroriste, PNAT) is aimed at strengthening the repression of terrorism offences.

2. Judicial and penitentiary policy regarding individuals who are radicalised or in the process of being so

First, it is important to distinguish two types of radicalised prisoners in France:

- In 2018, there were 511 prisoners in custody in France for offences linked to Islamo-Jihadist terrorism, according to the 2018 figures of the Directorate of penitentiary administration (*Direction de l'administration pénitentiaire*, DAP).
- There were 1,110 common criminals in custody who were deemed as being particularly at risk of drifting into violent radicalisation, according to DAP figures.

Indeed, the Directorate of penitentiary administration and its Central penitentiary intelligence bureau (*bureau central du renseignement pénitentiaire*, BCRP), which are both under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, are confronted to a rise in the number of inmates who are under supervision for acts linked to terrorism.

According to a Senate report (4 July 2018) titled *Terrorist threat: for a fair but firmer Republic*, French prisons are faced with “the risk of radicalisation of other inmates because of the contamination of radical ideas and the ease with which ‘competences’ can be ‘transferred’ among inmates.”

The report also notes that “the concentration of individuals who are particularly dangerous in a closed-off area can reinforce Islamist networks, encourage the planning of terrorist projects (whether or not in custody), and even acting outs.”

French authorities have taken this double challenge into account, as shown by the different national plans presented above. These plans allowed for strengthening and consolidating the detection and handling of people who are radicalised or in a process of radicalisation. However, the methodology, in particular how these radicalised people are handled, has changed many times.

In detention

Prisoners who are prosecuted for acts of terrorism are to be interned for four months in a Wing for the Evaluation of Radicalisation (*Quartier d'évaluation de la radicalisation*, QER). There are currently three QERs in France, and eventually there will be six.

Prisoners are examined by a pluridisciplinary team of educators, psychologists, officers of the penitentiary department of insertion, and a religious leader. A written report is produced analysing their attitude. This pluridisciplinary document includes biographical elements, information about what happened during their stay in prison, how to position themselves regarding the crimes they were convicted for, and the risk and protection factors.

This evaluation is first and foremost a way for the penitentiary administration to select which detention regime is best adapted. It includes an individual support plan that takes into account security and detention imperatives and the arrangements concerning the individual.

Judicial monitoring

Upon release from prison, judges in charge of sentence enforcement (*juges d'application des peines*) who are specialised in anti-terrorism will be tasked with monitoring the individual. The objective is to prevent anyone from leaving the prison without support.

The judges can thus decide to put the individual under “judicial surveillance,” which entails a series of constraints such as the obligation to attend when summoned, or wearing an electronic geo-tracking bracelet, or having to undergo medical treatment.

Since the Law of 3 June 2016 (called the Urvoas Law), it is possible, as part of an open prison sentence, to impose on terrorist inmates that they “respect the conditions of sanitary, social, educational or psychological treatment with the objective of enabling their social reintegration and the acquisition of citizenship values; if need be, this treatment can be delivered in an adapted establishment where the inmate must reside.”

In this respect, judges can also refer recently freed individuals considered the least dangerous to the PAIRS programme, which according to the French acronym means “Programme for individual care and social reintegration” (*programme d'accueil individualisé et de réaffiliation sociale*). The individual must follow the programme, which is based on individualised support, for a minimum of six months. PAIRS was first experimented in Paris in December 2016 (then called RIVE), and is available in Marseille since October 2018. Backed by the February 2018 National Plan for the Prevention of Radicalisation, the Directorate of Penitentiary Administration is planning to make this programme available also in Lyon and Lille over the course of 2019.

Since 2018, the teams in Paris and Marseille include specialised educators, intercultural and interfaith mediators, social reintegration counsellors, and psychologists.

The “PAIRS” scheme's care methodology

The “PAIRS” scheme offers flexible monitoring that ranges from three to 20 weekly hours (vs. six hours on average with the RIVE programme before December 2018) for individuals who for most are referred as part of judicial obligations.

A diagnostic is established over the course of several months, and then individual support is offered: psychological monitoring, help to find a job, art therapy, cultural visits, etc. This scheme is carried out by the charity Artemis. Special emphasis is put on religion, and on the role of Internet and social media.

Prison overcrowding: a risk factor for radicalisation?

According to Ms Adeline Hazan, General Controller of Custody Facilities (Contrôleur général des lieux de privation de liberté*), prison overcrowding is a risk factor for radicalisation: *“The importance of prison overcrowding, which public authorities seem to be aware of although they do not offer adequate responses, has a direct impact on the way inmates are treated: promiscuity; living with people who are more or less rooted in a process of crime; the existence of kingpins who put pressure on the weakest; the absence of access to work and possibility of reintegrating. Obviously, phenomena of proselytism are rife. This causal link is insufficiently taken into account by public authorities in their reflection on radicalisation in prison.”*

* The General Controller of Custody Facilities is an independent administrative authority in charge of monitoring the treatment and transfer of people who are deprived of their freedom in order to ensure their fundamental rights are respected.

Evaluation of radicalised inmates

The penitentiary administration designed in 2016 several charts to help detect violent radicalisation, which include various indicators such as the relationship with Islam, appearance, behaviour, declarations, criminal record, psychological background, relationships outside of prison, personality, etc. Three different tools were created for prison guards, managers, and the “penitentiary counsellors on integration and probation” (*conseillers pénitentiaires d’insertion et de probation*, CPIP). This multidisciplinary scheme for detecting violent radicalisation in prison was experimented between 15 April and 30 June 2016 in some 30 prisons, with about 400 inmates.

These charts are meant to be discussed during the “Unique multidisciplinary committee” meeting (*commission pluridisciplinaire unique*, CPU) on “dangerousness and vulnerability”. The multidisciplinary evaluation made at this meeting is meant to spot as early as possible vulnerable inmates, those who are in a process of radicalisation, and those who are already radicalised and are trying to recruit in prison. The committee evaluates the level of risk and recommends adapted handling of the concerned individual(s).

The target population is very diverse: apart from people in prison for acts linked to Islamist terrorism, the phenomenon can concern very exuberant people who actively promote Islamic extremism, or on the contrary people who dissimulate their radical discourse. Such dissimulation techniques require meticulous observation.

Support pairs

As part of the penitentiary strand of the January 2015 Anti-Terrorist Plan (PLAT), it was decided to create 50 positions of specialised educators and psychologists who intervene in pairs. This is meant to increase pluridisciplinarity and to improve the handling of radicalised individuals or those in the process of being so. These professionals under contract, who report to their respective inter-regional direction of penitentiary services, work inside the prisons and in open environments and cooperate with penitentiary integration and probation officers as well as with the surveillance staff.

Following up on offenders after they are released

The main challenge for the French penitentiary administration in the coming years will be to monitor terrorists once they are released. The evolution of the external threat will depend on the way in which the release from prison of terrorists, returnees and radicalised inmates is managed.

Release schedule of offenders jailed for acts of Islamist terrorism

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
18	23	16	25	17

Source: Directorate of Penitentiary Administration

3. Examples of good practices of prevention and care

In the main, local initiatives taken in France fall into three main categories:

- raising awareness and training local stakeholders and partners from the volunteer sector;
- detecting weak signs and identifying the relevant individuals;
- managing people under supervision.

>>>> *Raising awareness and training partners in the volunteer sector*

In Chalon-sur-Saône (in the eastern part of France), there is since 2018 a municipal unit on radicalisation, which contributes to detecting weak signals.

In Sarcelles (near Paris), the global prevention programme's objectives are to raise awareness, inform and train. The municipality set up a resource centre on the prevention of radicalisation.

The city of Orléans set up a scheme to monitor individually young radicalised people. Furthermore, parents can attend group sessions where they can share their concerns with other parents and thus feel less lonely.

Strasbourg was the first French municipality to designate a Deputy Mayor in charge of preventing radicalisation. The municipality has a plan focusing on five areas, which notably foresees building pluridisciplinary local networks where all stakeholders can discuss and exchange information on young people who have dropped out of school, or of their sport club, or more generally seem to be socially and emotionally adrift.

>>>>> *Detection of weak signals and identification of individuals*

The county (*département*) of Val-de-Marne has been working since 2015 on evaluating minors who have been signalled, in particular in the area situated around Orly airport.

More broadly, the contribution of counties to handling minor returnees in cooperation with the youth welfare system and the Juvenile Protection Service is particularly important.

The county of Ardennes set up a procedure whereby all the information concerning an individual that is spread across various departments is centralised in one single file.

>>>>> *Handling of monitored individuals*

In Colmar (in the eastern part of France), a programme was set up to handle people at risk of radicalism who have committed a criminal offence. It is promoted by the General Prosecutor Office as an alternative to prosecution, or in case of prosecution.

Centre for Action and for the Prevention of Individuals' Radicalisation (Centre d'action et de prévention contre la radicalisation des individus, CAPRI) – Bordeaux

The Centre for Action and for the Prevention of Individuals' Radicalisation (CAPRI according to the French acronym) was created in 2015 with the support of the Prefecture of Bordeaux. With four full-time employees, this centre has a pluridisciplinary approach to radicalisation and works with psychiatrists, psychologists, legal experts, and religious leaders. The fact that it takes religion into account, following in this respect the British model, is another specificity, which some criticise.

CAPRI is funded by the Prefecture, the Interministerial Committee for Crime Prevention (*Comité interministériel de prévention de la délinquance*, CIPDR), local authorities (municipality of Bordeaux, Departmental Council of Gironde, Regional Council of Nouvelle Aquitaine) and the Juvenile Protection Service. Its offices are provided in kind by the Bordeaux Metropole.

A programme implemented in the Mulhouse judiciary jurisdiction

A programme for managing violent radicalisation drafted by the Colmar Appeal Court together with the Mulhouse Regional Court was handed to the association Accord 681, which works with offenders. This

programme, which targets offenders, was put in place after it appeared there was numerous cases of radicalisation in the judiciary jurisdiction (50 arrests following the January 2015 attacks, but also school dropout and illegal Koranic schools, with ongoing criminal proceedings).

The objective of the programme is to handle cases of violent extremism independently from the question of religion. The programme thus monitors individuals who adhere to Jihadist violence as well as those from the extreme right.

>>>>> *The increasingly important role of local authorities*

Although local authorities were in the past restricted to “eventually provide services in the area of social support,”^[3] the Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Terrorism (PART) of 9 May 2016 seeks to strengthen the partnership with them. For example, it suggests that local authorities should be represented within the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalisation (CIPDR according to the French acronym). It also suggests creating within the CIPDR's General Secretariat a unit responsible for coordinating and supporting local activities, to which local authorities can send requests.

Indeed, the plan recognises that local authorities can contribute in two ways:

- by detecting and signalling “situations of radicalisation”
- by contributing to the social handling of people in a process of radicalisation and their family.

Local authorities, in particular communes and departments, can intervene in three essential areas that cover primary, secondary and tertiary prevention^[4]: the signalling scheme, the scheme for the handling of individuals independently from the police and the justice system, and the exercise of their authority in terms of common law.

Furthermore, as per a circular of the Ministry of the Interior dated 13 November 2018, exchanges between prefects (*préfets*) and mayors on radicalisation are being strengthened. The circular stipulates that prefects will inform mayors, if they so request, on the level of threat in their municipality. It also sets up local interlocutors within the state administration that mayors can contact to report in real time any situation of suspected radicalisation, and from whom they can also get feedback.

The prefect is also authorised in certain situations to personally give the mayor confidential, nominal information, for example to alert them on a civil servant who seems at risk of being radicalised, or on the risk of granting subsidies to a suspicious association or business.

A charter is signed between the prefect, the mayor and the Public Prosecutor to guarantee the exchanges and the work carried out by the police, the gendarmerie and the intelligence agencies remain confidential.

>>>>> *Practitioners who take part in the “listening and support units” that manage individuals who are radicalised or in a process of radicalisation*

According to a study carried out in the first semester of 2016 by the General Secretariat of the CIPDR^[7] in all of France's 95 counties (*départements*), the prefectural units gathering practitioners involved in the practical handling of individuals who are radicalised or in a process of radicalisation involve the following bodies:

Decentralised state administrative authorities: the National Education system, the national police, in particular the intelligence services, and the national gendarmerie are in most cases involved in the monitoring units. Furthermore, representatives of the Prefect (*préfet*) and of the Regional Health Agencies (*Agences régionales de santé*, ARS) as well as the Departmental Directorates of Social Cohesion and Population Protection (*directions départementales de la cohésion sociale et de la protection des populations*) are present in half of the territorial departments.

Departments of the Ministry of Justice: several departments of the Ministry of Justice (public prosecutors, Juvenile Protection Service, and the Prison Rehabilitation and Probation Services) contribute to the monitoring units, in particular to ensure good coordination in cases that are already handled by the justice system. Similarly, specialised aides have been recruited by the specialised, inter-regional jurisdictions and the main Regional Courts (*tribunaux de grande instance*) to work jointly with prefectural units and local partners in countering radicalisation.

Local authorities: the Departmental Councils have contributed to the monitoring units ever since these were created, and in particular to the handling of minors. There are protocols for the exchange of information on minors between the monitoring units and the intelligence units. As for the communes, a third of those surveyed contribute to a monitoring cell and their role in care schemes tends to increase. Indeed, this falls within the remit of their local crime prevention strategies.

Networks of practitioners and volunteer associations: a great diversity of stakeholders (family allowance funds, job centres, specialised prevention, Youth Job Centres, associations for victim support, youth centres, parenting networks, associations against sectarianism, etc.) operate in a number of fields such as psychology, social work, the professional field, education, support to parenting, and victim support. They offer support to families who are often at a loss when faced with a case of radicalisation or psychological support to individuals who have been signalled. They also contribute to the social and professional reintegration of such individuals.

Faith leaders: as of yet, not many contribute to the monitoring units (only in 17 territorial departments) even though the Circular of 29 April 2014 calls on prefects to associate them.

>>>>> *Governance of such initiatives*

The Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalisation (CIPDR)^[9] is responsible for implementing at national level the policy on preventing radicalisation. Set up in 2006, the CIPDR^[10] is tasked with designing the government's policy on the prevention of crime and radicalisation and to ensure

it is implemented. It is managed by a General Secretariat, whose staff is now about 30 (vs. about 10 in early 2015), headed by a General Secretary.

Regarding its action on the prevention of radicalisation, the CIPDR is responsible for organising training sessions for the radicalisation advisers appointed in the various governmental departments and also for practitioners in the volunteer sector, in local authorities and in other services.

The CIPDR allocates grants through the Interministerial Fund for the Prevention of Crime (*Fonds interministériel de prévention de la délinquance*, FIPD) to volunteer associations both at national and local level. It is also tasked with evaluating the overall scheme for handling radicalised individuals (through volunteer associations and government services) and evaluating good practices.

>>>> Evaluation

The evaluation of the various initiatives carried out to date is very empirical. Indeed, two parliamentary reports^[11] call for establishing comparisons between French and foreign experiments and for creating a national evaluation protocol for local initiatives as well as for reflecting on how to roll out at national level the most promising ones.

[1] In France, there are 101 *préfectures* representing the national government in every territorial entity (the *départements*).

[2] Plan d'action contre la radicalisation et le terrorisme (PART), Prime minister, Press release, 9 May 2016.

[3] "Local authorities and the prevention of radicalisation," Office of local authorities and decentralisation, Report by Senators Jean-Marie Bockel and Luc Carvounas, April 2017, p. 51.

[4] Tertiary prevention encompasses programmes targeting already radicalised people or having already committed violent acts, and is handled by the judiciary authority.

[5] In French *contrat de ville*: a contract between the local authority and the central government as well as local partners and representatives of civil society that encompasses a number of aspects of local life (such as housing, jobs, etc.). These 'contracts' concern mainly deprived neighbourhoods.

[6] Muriel Domenach, CIPDR General Secretary, in *La Gazette des Communes*, 10/10/2016.

[7] Survey mentioned in the Report titled "Le désendoctrinement, le désengagement et la réinsertion des djihadistes en France et en Europe" (Dis-endoctrinating, disengaging and reintegrating Jihadists in France and Europe) by Senators Esther Benbassa and Catherine Troendlé, July 2017, pp.25-26.

[8] Instruction N°SG/2016/14 of 8 January 2016 on the framework of intervention by the Regional Health Agencies regarding radicalisation phenomena.

[9] The CIPDR is presided by the Prime minister or, by delegation, the Minister of the Interior.

[10] The CIPDR's composition, mission and organisation are defined in articles D. 132-1 to D. 132-4 of the internal security code.

[11] "Local authorities and the prevention of radicalisation" (*Les collectivités territoriales et la prévention de la radicalisation*), Senatorial Delegation on Local authorities and Decentralisation (*Délégation sénatoriale aux collectivités territoriales et à la décentralisation*), report by Jean-Marie Bockel and Luc Carvounas, Senators, April 2017; "Dis-endoctrinating, disengaging and reintegrating Jihadists in France and Europe" (*Le désendoctrinement, le désengagement et la réinsertion des djihadistes en France et en Europe*) by Senators Esther Benbassa and Catherine Troendlé, July 2017.