

# Radicalisation: The Societal Response to Radicalisation and the Role of the Security Environment – Seminar Summary

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Co-organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security of the University of Maribor, and Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency (SOVA), under the framework of The Intelligence College in Europe, the 27 participants from 13 European countries attended the seminar *Radicalisation – The Societal Response to Radicalisation and the Role of the Security Environment* in Ljubljana from 15 to 16 February 2022.

As radicalisation leading to violence is becoming an increasingly significant problem in Europe, radicalisation and extremism must be systematically monitored. The participants agreed that we need to create a comprehensive social network structure that brings together several key state and non-state institutions to reduce the causes of radicalisation, identify radical behaviour and develop working de-radicalising approaches. The seminar built on the thesis that radicalisation leading to violence is a complex social phenomenon that can only be handled with a broad-based and socially-inclusive approach. Narrow or field-specific policies will only bring partial or undesirable results.

At the seminar, first, a conceptual and terminological framework for studying and monitoring radicalisation and the measures against it was established. Prof. Iztok Prezelj, the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, and prof. Branko Lobnikar, the vice-dean for research from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, discussed the concepts of radicalisation, de-radicalisation and disengagement. The starting point of their discussion was that terminological clarity must be ensured before the official concept and policy of monitoring radicalisation and de-radicalisation is created.

Prezelj defined radicalisation as a process of fundamental changing or transformation of an individual's or group's perceptions, values and behaviour in the direction of political positions and behavioural patterns that favour the use of non-democratic means and/or illegal violence for the achievement of own political, ideological, religious and other goals. It reflects political polarisation in society (in a local and global context) and leads to or results from polarising views in society (more in Prezelj et al., 2021). Unfortunately for us, radicalisation is not an absolute category, rather, it is a subjective category to some extent –

what is logical in one country may not be logical in another country (perception of “radical” and “ordinary” varies). In Prezelj’s opinion, our focus when preventing radicalisation must be on three types of individuals; the ones who have motivation and capabilities; the ones who have motives but do not have capabilities yet to start the radicalisation process; and those who have capabilities and do not have motives yet. There are four typical motives for radicalisation – succession, religious, ideological, and single-issue motivation (e.g. animal rights issues, environmental issues). Radicalisation can also be viewed as part of a process, of which the final stage is extremism and terrorism, where people want to use violence as a means to achieve their goals. With their exclusionary thinking, they are rejecting democratic conversation. During this process values/beliefs and people’s behaviour are changing. Although these are two interconnected things, it is important to understand that some people are talkers and not doers, some are doers and not talkers, and some are both. Some of them are frustrated, but they still remain passive because there are numerous legal activities they can do to address their frustrations. The problem arises when people cross the line and start using illegal means. A particularly major problem and a big challenge of a democratic society is how to find these people and how, despite having resources, not to create a “Big brother society” by controlling everybody. As an ideology, radicalism challenges the legitimacy of established norms and policies, but it does not, in itself, lead to violence. People are considered radicals when they adopt radical beliefs, which happens through radicalisation processes. This is influenced by our beliefs, our current and past behaviours and our idea of what we will become in the future, whether true or not. Individuals in radicalised groups embrace an ideology that legitimises violence to address their concerns. This violence is often directed at an out-group viewed as the culprit responsible for creating the grievance. This is best articulated in applying social identity theory to radicalisation, in which identification with the in-group combined with disidentification with the out-group are related to the use of violence against out-group members.

Prezelj presented several models of radicalisation. As most important models Prezelj pointed out the Borum’s model and Wiktorowicz’s model. Borum’s model suggests that the process of radicalisation begins by framing some unsatisfying event, condition, or grievance (“It’s not right”) as being unjust (“It’s not fair”). The injustice is blamed on a target policy, person, or nation (“It’s your fault”). The responsible party is then vilified/demonised (“You’re Evil”), which facilitates justification for aggression (Borum, 2011). Wiktorowicz’s model involves four dimensions of social influence on the individual towards radicalisation: cognitive opening, religious seeking, frame alignment, and socialisation. This process can be influenced by members of radical groups, who can speed up this process with recruitment activities. The NYPD model, Moghddam’s staircase model, and Tarnby’s 9/11 post-mortem model of radicalisation were also mentioned to explain the process of radicalisation.

In his conclusion, Prezelj presented the paradox of radicalisation. As a social force, radicalisation is a logical social response to deep problems or rather a solution to problems. On the one hand, it represents a threat to national security, and on

the other hand, it brings people together and leads to socio-political changes. For example, history tells us that 500 years ago, liberalism was a threat to the existing order; the same also goes for communism, antiglobalism, anarchism, etc. Today, radicalisation is taking power, and it is becoming normalised and modernised.

Lobnikar continued on the topic of the conceptualisation of radicalisation. In his view, If we want successfully react on radicalisation and terrorism it is important that we fully understand all the notions of this phenomenon because without understanding the process, we cannot fix it. Although terms like radicalisation, extreme violence, extremism, and terrorism are commonly used today, they are individual phenomenon representing different concepts. Radicalisation challenges the legitimacy of established laws and policies but it does not lead to violence. In today's society, radical views are common, especially in politics – if you are not radical, you are not heard. This ideology denies individual freedom and equal rights and represents a threat to society. Violent extremism is the opposite of society's core values and principals and it is regarded as the willingness to use violence or support its use. The reaction on these actions has to be understood when understanding radicalisation, extremism, and individual violent extremism. First, we must understand the complex relations between radical values and radical behaviour. Individuals do not necessarily join extremism groups because they hold extremist views; they sometimes acquire this views because they have joined these groups for other reasons. Some individuals distance themselves from the group and its violent means but retain their radical views on society. The relation between radical values and radical behaviour is complex and multidimensional. We have to develop different approaches to react to these different types of behaviours we face. When talking about reaction on these behaviours, Lobnikar emphasised at least three core actions that must be mentioned. First is counter-radicalisation, which we understand as a prevention strategy to prevent violence and radicalisation. Here non-violence still prevails, but there is a risk of radicalisation and violent extremism. Proactive initiatives are needed to reduce the potential risk for radicalisation. Counter-radicalisation strategies and policies are the most important, but they are almost always absent from the political point of view because it is never the right time to react. Waiting to react until it's too late is, in Lobnikar's opinion, the first failure in contemporary society we make. The second important actions are de-radicalisation strategies, targeting already radicalised individuals and groups with high risk for violence. It is a process of letting go of radical thoughts. The concept of de-radicalisation can be most broadly described as activity of encouraging individuals to adopt moderate, non-violent views. When dealing with someone who is already violent, eliminating them or imprisoning them is not always an option. If we decide to imprison them, we need to consider what actions we will take, to give them a chance to shift their violent thinking toward more nonviolent thinking. De-radicalisation has to be differentiated from the third action – disengagement. Disengagement describes changing an individual's behaviour to withstand the violence and to withdraw from a radical group. Because changing people's minds is very hard, we can change their behaviour instead of changing their minds. This is, from society's point of view, good enough. We can generalise that disengagement

is the first and very crucial step in the process of de-radicalisation. Both de-radicalisation and disengagement usually involve interventions (e.g. by state or local authorities) to promote democratic values and encourage the reintegration of radicalised individuals. Lobnikar further briefly explained the possible ways or means to achieve disengagement. Disengagement can be voluntary, involuntary, or both (which is most common). Push factors for individual disengagement are usually connected with different kinds of disillusionments (disillusionment with the goals of group, violent methods, with the leaders, social relations within the group, ...). A push factor is also a loss of position or station in the group, the person cannot take the pressure anymore or there are competing loyalties between groups or family obligations. Pull factors usually derive from the availability of an exit from underground life. There has to be the possibility for the person to get out (amnesty or reduced sentencing for crimes committed, education and job training, economic support for person and family, establishing a family, longing for peaceful and ordinary life, etc.). Besides individual de-radicalisation and disengagement, a collective disengagement also has to be met. Extremist groups and campaigns come to an end because of the defeat by repression – the capture or killing of the leader or the capture and imprisonment of (core) members. Here the intelligence agencies and the police play an essential role. Loss of public support is also important, failure to transition to next-generation or simply closing down/disbanding the group or surrender to authorities. There can also be a transition to a legitimate political process, often involving negotiation with governments, readjustment of goals and ideology, abandoning violent methods, amnesty or reduced sentencing. The last possible reason for collective disengagement is the end by victory – the achievement of the group's aims and coming to power.

Lobnikar concluded that radicalisation and violent extremism require effective criminal justice actions against those who incite others to violence and seek to recruit others, and comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach. Countering extremism was traditionally an exclusive task for security sectors agencies. However, in the light of current international initiatives more preventive and soft-oriented approaches to prevention are being developed. Shared responsibilities and multi-agency cooperation play an important role in this endeavour. Sometimes we need to take time and an analytical approach to understand things. Sometimes it is boring, it involves listening to professors, reading books and articles and also involves thinking, but it is the best way of the beginning of the process of de-radicalisation and disengagement and it is a pre-requisite for a free and secure society.

In the context of radicalisation, we must pay particular attention to those who are most at risk of becoming members of radicalised groups. Associate Prof. Janja Vuga Beršnak from Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, presented the topic of vulnerable social groups to radicalisation (with a special focus on youth) and the perceptions of the radicalisation in the school hallways.

International research shows that youth is one of the most vulnerable social groups to radicalisation. The educational system is established to start with secondary socialisation of youth at as early age as possible. It has an important role, as it designs the system values, promotes social responsibilities, prevents

stereotyping and discrimination, it serves as a source of knowledge and democracy and promotes active citizenships. In Slovenia, a quarter of the population is under 26 years of age and approximately 10% are young adults between 15 and 26 years old. The majority is included in primary schools and about one fifth is in high school. More than 80% of the 0-5 year olds are included in the childcare system (preschool). This data indicates that the education in Slovenia is financially affordable and brings together youth of various social, national and ethnic background. The school system can be understood as one of more powerful tools of our state in preventing radical views and reducing the probability that the individual will become radicalised later in life. Vuga Beršnak believes the school system should be the main part of preventing radicalisation on strategic and operational levels.

To analyse perception on radicalisation in school environment, a multi-method research design was used. Twenty-three interviews with slovenian experts were conducted, in pre-covid times. On strategic level, representatives of National educational institute of Slovenia, National office of Youth, and Ministry of interior participated, and on the operational level, interviews were conducted with headmasters, school workers, representatives of NGO's and psychologists. Main questions were: What is the perception of radicalisation and the response of educational system in Slovenia?; Which groups are most vulnerable?; How well do they recognise the risk factors for radicalisation so they can take appropriate actions?

Study showed, that the combination of social, personal and biological factors, can be used as early warning indicators for youth radicalisation. The key is the intertwining and interrelations between various factors on different socio-ecological levels triggering the process of youth radicalisation. Many other authors found that important factors which can lead to radicalisation are gender and age. Joining terrorist groups are mostly young males in their early 20s. Social risk factors are socio-economic status, isolation, challenges in the formation of social identity, feelings of personal and social uselessness, the rejection by group and peer pressure. In combination with personal factors they can trigger radicalised response. Those factors are personal identity – identity forming, identity gap, unstable personality, moral imperative, narcissistic personality type, proving oneself, education and mental health. Vuga Beršnak stressed that we should also pay attention to the consequences of physical and social distance during lockdown in the past years due to Covid-19 pandemic and the effect of that on mental health of young adults.

Findings within the Slovenian educational system showed, that the most vulnerable in the Slovenian youth are individuals with identity issues, emotionally unstable persons, minorities, foreigners and persons deprived of language, socially excluded youth and youth with poor education outcomes, individuals with low self-esteem, low family social status and youth living in radicalised family environments. School workers defined the groups, potentially vulnerable to radicalisation only by mentally recalling vulnerability factors for youth violence. Hence, the important finding is that they are not well equipped to recognise nor prevent radicalisation. The youth has recognised the

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increase of radical opinions on social media during the pandemic. Social media, physical distancing and rebellion against the government have contributed to that. The youth sometimes notice the radicalisation on school hallways and even feel threatened by it, but on the other hand, school workers seem to remain ignorant about that and do not recognise radicalisation as a problem. Three social levels are key in recognising and preventing radicalisation among youth: school workers, family, and friends. In Slovenia, the three-generational family model is well embedded in society and therefore, an extended family presents a potential for preventing or recognising the radicalisation among youth. Family can represent the pillar of resilience or be the source of the problem.

Vuga Beršnak concluded with the observation that in the Slovenian case, the welfare state with low social and income differences, a good public education system and a wide network of extracurricular activities available to the majority of youth, are leaving less space for radicalisation and might be understood as good preventive practices.

Continuing on the topic of perception of radicalisation in the school environment, Associate Prof. Andrej Sotlar from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, presented empirical research on the attitude towards radicalisation and extremism among young people in Slovenia.

As a part of the research project *Radicalisation and Comprehensive Countermeasures in the Republic of Slovenia*, a study was conducted among students of the University of Ljubljana (defence studies) and the University of Maribor (criminal justice and security studies) in 2019. The purpose of the study was to find out which forms of radicalisation are perceived by students as the most present and most dangerous and which institutions could/should prevent radicalisation and extremism in Slovenia. A total of 565 surveys were included in the final analysis. The majority of respondents were between 19 and 24 years old, 52% were female. The key findings suggest that students do not know (too) much about radicalisation and extremism, while they believe that we pay too little attention to this phenomenon in Slovenia. In their opinion, right-wing extremism is the most presented in Slovenia, followed by left-wing extremism, religious extremism and environmental extremism, while religious extremism is the most dangerous, followed by right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism and environmental extremism. The most present forms of religiously oriented radicalisation in Slovenia are related to the Roman Catholic religion, and to the same extent to Islamic radicalisation. If any, the Islamic extremism is the most dangerous, while Roman Catholic extremism and Orthodox extremism are not considered really dangerous. The development of extremism is largely influenced by the promotion of hatred by political leaders, followed by religious or other ideological indoctrination of people and propaganda of religious leaders. Media reporting and propaganda spreading on social networks (Facebook, Twitter) are important factors for influencing the formation/emergence of extremism. The most vulnerable groups to radicalisation and extremism are members of religious communities, people who are socially endangered, adolescents, asylum seekers, prisoners, members of marginalised ethnic groups and members of fans clubs, while soldiers and police officers do not belong to vulnerable groups. The

most responsible for the appropriate response to radicalisation are the media, the education system, the government and religious organisations, only then come the police and the intelligence services. The most responsible institutions – political parties, politicians, the media, the government, religious institutions and local authorities – do very little for preventing radicalisation. Police officers, intelligence services, armed forces and health services do more for preventing radicalisation but may have a lesser impact on individuals.

The seminar continued with a representative of the Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency (SOVA) presenting the agency's role in countering radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. SOVA is the central civilian intelligence and security service responsible for internal and external security. Agency's mission is to collect and evaluate information and provide intelligence from abroad, relevant to safeguarding the security, political and economic interests of the state and also to provide intelligence on organisations, groups and persons who constitute or could constitute a threat to national security, through their activities abroad or in connection with foreign entities ("Zakon o Slovenski obveščevalno-varnostni agenciji (ZSOVA-UPB2)", 1999). The aim of intelligence activities is early detection of radicalisation, extremist and terrorist activities and terrorist threats against Slovenian interests and to disrupt these activities and threats in the early stages.

According to the agency, the biggest security threats in Slovenia and Europe continue to be self-radicalised individuals who are ready to commit acts of violence under the influence of extremist propaganda (e.g. religious extremism, right-wing and left-wing extremism), operatives of terrorist groups sent to European countries to establish a terrorist network or attack, and returnees from Syria and Iraq battlefields that continue to defend the ideas of radical Islam and support violent jihad. In the past years, other single-issue extremism were at the forefront – anti COVID-19 and anti vaccination extremist activities. Nonetheless, current terrorist threat level in Slovenia is low. The agency highlighted the importance of the Counter-terrorism group, consisting of the national security and intelligence services of the EU member states, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, which was established in the wake of the 2011 terrorist attacks in the United States and provided an informal platform for countering terrorism.

The agency is the leading government's Interdepartmental Counter-Terrorism Working Group, and the agency's director was appointed national coordinator for the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism. The tasks of this group include formulating opinions and proposals for coordinated action of state bodies in the field of counter-terrorism, preparing reports and assessments of the threats to the Republic of Slovenia from the perspective of international terrorism and, if necessary, preparing other documents in the field of terrorism and other forms of violent extremism. The representative of SOVA concluded that counter-terrorism and counter violent extremist coordination system is well-devised at the national level, but it needs a constant upgrade. Cooperation with other national authorities and foreign partner services is of great importance, as well as coordinated activities of the entire community (local communities, school system, health system, social services etc.), not just intelligence and security bodies. This is necessary to

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develop mechanisms for the timely detection of radicalised individuals and those responsible for radicalisation.

Albert Černigoj, Head of Counter-Terrorism and Extreme Violence Department of Slovenian Police, presented Slovenia's experience in preventing radicalisation, emphasising international cooperation. Černigoj spoke on trends, challenges and opportunities that we face and have as a community in fighting/preventing/oppressing terrorism and radicalisation. In recent years, well-structured and state-supported terrorist organisations are more and more replaced by lone actors, individual jihadi people, travelling terrorists, etc. Sophisticated, well-organised terrorists attacks have been replaced with simple actions. The two main challenges, we are facing on the European level, are political and social polarisation. When defining who terrorists are today, experience show, that terrorists are loners, isolated, excommunicated, people with no future and more and more often these are very young people. Several studies show that in the EU over 50% of operatives previously had mental issues. Today's challenge is finding a way to be more efficient in preventing and stopping terrorism and radicalisation. It is obvious we have to go beyond the traditional approach. Černigoj pointed out that tackling terrorism is much more than just preventing the plot. The important thing is to define the early stages, when radicalisation is taking place. On EU level, each year a list of thematic priorities for prevention of radicalisation is defined. Recent strategy focuses on six priorities. First, the spread of extremist ideologies and polarisation have to be monitored, as they have a crucial impact on radicalisation processes. While we have a pretty good understanding of religious motivated radicalisation and right-wing radicalisation, EU is currently facing the challenge how to address other kinds of radicalisation, such as anti-vaccination and anti-government radicalisation. The second key area, where EU actions will strengthen, are prisons, rehabilitation and reintegration. EU prisons are full of highly radicalised people. Best approaches regarding management and risk assessment of radicalised inmates and terrorist offenders need to be defined, as well as to provide support to training of professionals involved in this field and more tailored guidance on rehabilitation and reintegration of radical inmates, including after release. The third priority is the management of foreign terrorist fighters, to identify, detect and prosecute them through the establishment of best practices. Fourth thematic priority is online/digital radicalisation. The spread of radical ideologies accelerates through the use of online propaganda, with the use of social media. Terrorists and violent extremists increasingly make use of the internet to disseminate their extremist ideologies, so the main challenge is, how to use the same tool (the internet) against them. Supporting local actors for more resilient communities is the fifth priority in preventing radicalisation. Our cities need to have better access to funding, guidance and training to address current challenges and to increase their resilience. The sixth EU priority is to continue to support and strengthen international cooperation with key third countries, including exchanging information and ensuring the integration of this information in the European security networks.

Slovenia is developing a multi-agency approach, of which the core is the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy, based on prevention. Černigoj believes

prevention programs must address diverse contributing factors, including different stakeholders such as governmental policy-makers, police organisations, intelligence agencies, health care personnel, schools, social services agencies, etc. (more in Prisljan et al, 2018). While we are still struggling to have decent coordination between these stakeholders and prevention programmes on the local level, we are already trying to take first steps at the national level. We are not there yet, but we do have a solution, to bring this strategy to life.

The first part of the seminar was concluded by Lobnikar's presentation of the role of security and intelligence services in responding to radicalisation in the Western Balkans. Results of an empirical study among stakeholders on preventing and responding to radicalisation, extreme violence and terrorism were presented. The aim of the study was to analyse the issues they face in the area of Western Balkans and the perceptions of different stakeholders from eight Balkan countries about the effectiveness of preventative actions to identify key areas for improvement. The importance of the results of this study is reflected in the fact, that these were not just the lay opinions, but the opinions of expert stakeholders, people from security services, people from policing – criminal justice system, local authorities, governmental authorities, etc. Questionnaires were distributed to participants at workshops, altogether 407 respondents were included in the analysis, carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina (52), N. Macedonia (49), Serbia (35), Kosovo (27), Albania (42), Montenegro (35), Slovenia (59) and Croatia (108). The data were collected during training courses, which were carried out in the EU-funded First Line Project's scope on preventing radicalisation. Participation in the survey was voluntary and participants anonymity was guaranteed. Respondents were asked to assess the presence of various types of radicalisation in their local environments, to assess the extent to which various stakeholders could successfully prevent radicalisation through adequate and professional conduct, and evaluate the actual impact of prevention. The study results showed that respondents perceive radicalisation inspired by religion (most often referenced to Islam and partly to Orthodox radicalism) and by nationality or ethnic origin as the most frequent types of radicalisation in Balkan countries.

Apart from religious leaders and the media, respondents believe that intelligence services and specialised police units are also extremely important in preventing extremism, which means that they were, in fact, emphasising the role of governmental institutions. Respondents also believe that police officers, working in special police units and officials of intelligence services are the most efficient stakeholders when it comes to the prevention of radicalisation, followed by police officers in local environment. They agree, that all stakeholders could do a lot more on preventing radicalisation, than they actually do and they are aware, that something has to be done, but they are not doing enough. Lobnikar pointed out that it would be ideal if we could solve everything when doing a prevention, but that is not possible. That's why we need to set priorities in our prevention strategies. Thinking that Western Balkan is unified area and that one solution fixes all problems, is wrong. In different countries, there are different priorities. That is why the multi-stakeholder approach has many benefits. It offers more accurate risk and assessment of needs, more systematic management of cases,

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better understanding between professionals and greater efficiency in processes and resources.

Rajko Kozmelj, former Director of Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency discussed a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach to radicalisation and the role of intelligence and security services. The absence of unified definition of radicalism and radicalisation leads to the lack of understanding of this phenomenon. The word *radical* has always been a contested term. To understand radicalism only as a bad thing is short-sighted, however, there is no place for violence in democratic societies. There is no synonym between violence and radicalism – being radical does not mean being violent, in some cases being radical means being different, generating or provoking development. From Kozmelj's perspective, different people have different views in society, which can still be acceptable. Then we have those individuals with more extreme views, that are not acceptable to society. They are diminishing human rights and constitutional order. These individuals require society's attention in the earliest stages of their detection. Having different views can lead to activism – misdemeanours and other activities which trigger or support progressive changes. The next step might be violent extremism or terrorism. Some mechanisms of response to the radicalisation process are Whole-of-Society-approach, the multi-agency approach and P-R-A (Prevent-Refer-Address). The whole society approach is an approach to prevent/counter violent extremism that leads to terrorism, that envisions a role for civil society actors and other non-governmental actors and relevant government actors across sectors in the prevention of violent extremism. In addition to this, the multi-agency approach means working in collaboration across organisations to enhance services to meet complex needs, where a variety of stakeholders (schools, social workers, police, etc.) cooperate to prevent radicalisation. The Prevent-Refer-Address approach is a comprehensive multi-level policy solution in preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. The main elements of P-R-A are the inclusion of all relevant authorities, both at state and local levels, including those who have not traditionally been involved in the counter-terrorism related domain, namely educational and health authorities, civil society and NGO partners, academia, religious communities, law enforcement, prison and probation, local communities, family affairs and social welfare, etc. P-R-A partner then implements measures to prevent further radicalisation or referred individual cases, after recognising root causes and instrumental factors which may lead to violent extremism. The last step of this approach is to address the referred radicalised individuals to disengage, de-radicalise, and re-integrate and rehabilitate them. Kozmelj concluded that delivery of efficient and coordinated early prevention measures where they are most efficient, i.e. in the local community and raising awareness, are crucial in preventing radicalisation.

At the seminar a wide range of state and non-state institutions that (may) deal with monitoring radicalisation and countermeasures, and the role of intelligence services within this endeavour were discussed. This was the introduction to the final part of the seminar: *Tour the table* – three to five-minute presentations of seminar participants about their experiences in responding to radicalisation. The participants presented the key challenges for intelligence services in identifying and

responding to radicalisation leading to extreme violence and the most important things they have learned in responding to radicalisation and extremism in their environment. They emphasised that radical individuals are getting younger and radicalised groups are moving online which makes it very difficult to infiltrate these groups. During Covid-19 pandemic, the number of radicalised groups increased, mainly due to social isolation. The most common challenges present right-wing, left-wing and Islamic extremism. Intelligence agencies are primarily concerned with how to identify the next platform where radicalised groups come together and how to de-radicalise individuals of this groups. An example of good practice was also presented – more and more countries are increasingly focusing on proactive community policing, thus improving the process of information gathering. Participants concluded that monitoring radicalised groups and their movement is extremely important to prevent the escalation of radicalisation into extremism or terrorism. It is necessary to engage all community stakeholders to curb this issue, such as schools, NGOs, social work centers and others. The key is to share information and transforming this information into new knowledge and skills that can be used in the fight against this social phenomenon.

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