

Profile “Violence Prevention Network”

Violence Prevention Network e. V. is an association comprised of experienced experts who have been successful in the prevention of extremism and deradicalisation for a number of years. Through its work with those at risk as well as those who have been radicalised in the fields of right-wing extremism and religious extremism, the Violence Prevention Network team has acquired expertise in the field of working with criminal offenders motivated by ideology and religion over a number of years and this expertise is recognised throughout Europe. Over 100 people currently work for Violence Prevention Network e. V. in eight federal states. In addition to the traditional approaches of the prevention of radicalisation, intervention and deradicalisation, the entity has also increasingly been working in the field of the internet and social media since 2016.

The goal of the prevention work is to communicate with young people who might be at risk of becoming religiously or politically radicalised at an early stage and involve them in an inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, as well as to use workshops to expand their knowledge, such as about Islam, but also about democracy and human rights. The internet and social media activities take into account the fact that the internet is a key catalyst in radicalisation processes. In this context, it is necessary to test and establish innovative methods of addressing and contacting people who are at risk, as well as to examine the methods of intervention. The combination of online and offline measures is a fundamental aspect of the programme. Another important component of prevention is the further training of multipliers (teachers, specialists in child and youth services, police, etc.) so they can learn how to deal with extremism at school and work.

The ‘Deradicalisation in Prisons’ intervention programme is targeted at violent offenders in prison whose crimes were motivated by extremism. Several months of deradicalisation training and up to one year of subsequent stabilisation coaching after their release enable participants to be reintegrated into the democratic community after their time in prison. Furthermore, as a short-term measure, it offers tailor-made workshop courses for detainees at risk of radicalisation as well as specialised training for prison staff.

Deradicalisation starts when the degree of radicalisation is very advanced and the risk exists that young people will be a danger to themselves and others. Examples of this include travelling to a war zone and/or returning, e.g. from Syria, or planning attacks on, for example, refugee accommodation. In addition to the work with the radicalised individuals themselves, the deradicalisation work also includes their parents and relatives. The reintegration work supports people who

have already expressed the desire to reintegrate and to leave the extremist environment.

With the method of Verantwortungspädagogik® (Education of Responsibility), Violence Prevention Network has identified a way to address people who have affiliated themselves with anti-democratic structures without humiliating these individuals, thus facilitating their return to the democratic community. Violence Prevention Network works to ensure that people have the tools and resources available to reflect on and overcome their previous behaviour patterns. The goal is to enable them to live a life in which they do not harm themselves or others.

Violence Prevention Network receives the majority of its budget from European Union funds, federal and state funds and donations.