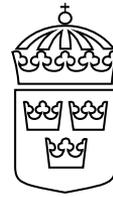


# Government Communication

## 2014/15:144



### Actions to Make Society More Resilient to Violent Extremism

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Skr.  
2014/15:144

The Government hereby submits this Communication to the Riksdag.

Stockholm, 13 August 2015

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### The Communication's principal content

This Communication provides an account of the measures the Government has implemented to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The aim of these measures is to improve our knowledge of violent extremism and develop preventive initiatives and methods. These measures will enable authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations, including faith communities, to contribute in a more coordinated and effective manner to safeguard democracy against violent extremism.

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# 1 Introduction

Democracy must be safeguarded against the threat posed by people becoming radicalised towards violent extremism and Sweden must become more resistant to this threat. There are active groups of violent right- and left-wing extremists in Sweden. In countries close to the EU and further afield, a number of armed conflicts are currently taking place that are breeding violent extremism and terrorism both within these countries themselves and outside their borders. The ongoing recruitment of Swedish people to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil/Daesh) is very troubling. What is also happening in many countries is an increased polarisation, with racist and xenophobic political parties gaining more support. The Government is of the view that these developments, not least following the terror attacks in Paris and Copenhagen in January and February 2015, demand increased awareness, knowledge and the implementation of tangible preventive measures. Consequently, the Government has decided on a number of measures that aim to strongly reinforce preventive efforts.

Violent extremism is a serious problem for democracy. The violence extremist groups use and legitimises as a political method challenges and threatens democratic society. Despite major ideological differences between these groups, there is one common element that unites them in their rejection of democratic principles and rules, which is a threat to fundamental democratic values. The violence these groups target at individuals because of their political or religious convictions, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity constitutes an attack against the principle of human dignity. This is why it is vital to use our collective powers to defend fundamental democratic values and respect for human rights. This is the most important basis of our work to reduce the breeding grounds of violent extremism.

Violent extremism in Sweden consists primarily of three identified groups: right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism and Islamist extremism. The activities of these groups undermine, challenge and threaten democracy in different ways. People who are actively involved in violent right-wing extremism commit crimes that have racist, Islamophobic, antiziganistic, anti-Semitic, afrophobic, homophobic and transphobic undertones. People who are actively involved in the left-wing extremist autonomous movement subject democratically elected representatives, civil servants and people in the right-wing extremist movement, for example, to harassment, threats and violence. When it comes to Islamist extremism, it is particularly worrying that an increased number of people have committed themselves to violent Islamist extremism and armed extremist and terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. This development contributes to threats against the security of the areas where conflict is taking place and the people there. Those who travel can also constitute a threat to Sweden through their intent and ability to commit terrorist attacks.

Efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism have high priority. Both the Riksdag and the national authorities concerned need to

have a complete picture of the measures the Government has implemented. It is their collective responsibility to denounce violent extremism and actively stand up for democratic values and respect for human rights. Responsible authorities and municipalities require knowledge if they are to counter the problems and challenges posed by violent extremist groups. Developments in this area necessitate continual and durable preventive action in order to safeguard democracy and the open democratic society.

#### *A threat to democracy and human dignity*

Human rights and democratic principles such as those laid down in the Instrument of Government and in international agreements concerning human rights are the fundamental values of Swedish society. On the basis of these principles, a democratic society is created and individuals can unite behind and accept decisions that are made and can take responsibility for one another and the development of the society they share. A democratic society is dependent on everyone respecting each other's rights and solving conflicts in accordance with the rules of democracy. In a democratic society, a diverse range of political ideologies and ideas play an important role in political dialogue. Ideologies can be strong democratic driving forces in work to promote social change. However, some individuals and groups adopt political ideologies that justify anti-democratic methods and legitimise violence as a means of achieving changes in society.

Violence and extremism are part of human history. Violent extremism in its various forms is something that Swedish society must learn to counteract and prevent. Ideologically motivated violence directed by individuals and groups against a society's institutions, its representative or individuals is a threat to democratic society and to the principles of human dignity and equal rights for all. The violence these groups are responsible for is therefore a challenge to the social cohesion of a society.

Violent extremism can take various forms, from harassing, threatening or harming other people, to supporting, planning or encouraging others to commit acts of ideologically motivated violence. This can involve vandalism, threatening behaviour, serious violent crimes, murder and terrorism.

Political circumstances, polarisation between groups, armed conflicts and war have an impact on people's readiness to sanction violence as a means of achieving changes in society. Violent ideologies function as an engine that gives a sense of purpose to individuals and groups and contribute to framing violent acts and a means by which to achieve an overarching ideological aim involving specific societal goals. A democratic society in which human rights are respected is sometimes singled out as an enemy of the particular ideal society envisaged by each violent ideology. Consequently, strengthening and defending a pluralistic, equal and democratic society must be the focus of preventive efforts.

Extremist groups who operate on the fringes of society do not generally attract the support of that many individuals, but they are of concern to the whole of society as their violence is directed at the core of the demo-

cratic system. The terrorist attacks in Stockholm in December 2010, Oslo and Utøya in July 2011, Paris in January and Copenhagen in February 2015 indicate that individuals can, within the framework of different ideological convictions and goals, commit very serious offences. As violent and antidemocratic ideologies, messages and propaganda are now spread strategically via the internet and social media, it has become easier to get hold of such material and make contact with others who are interested in or share similar perceptions.

*A National Coordinator to safeguard democracy against violent extremism*

The National Coordinator to safeguard democracy against violent extremism (in the following referred to as the National Coordinator) is the most far-reaching initiative currently underway to develop our efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The National Coordinator's task is to develop and reinforce the work taking place at the local level and ensure that there is collaboration between government authorities, municipalities and organisations, (including faith communities). In March, the Government adopted supplementary terms of reference with the aim of reinforcing the National Coordinator's work in relation to authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations. The National Coordinator is now also tasked with improving the support provided to relatives, drawing up and initiating a cohesive strategy to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, encouraging initiatives for individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements and establishing a network of experts (ToR 2015:27). Because the internet and social media are propaganda channels for violent extremist groups, the National Coordinator has tasked the Swedish Defence University with producing a report on the role of social media in radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism (Ju 2014:18/2014/1).

*Preventive measures at the local level*

Violent extremist groups can be found both in Sweden's major cities and in smaller towns around the country. It is not uncommon for different groups with the same or similar ideological convictions to support one another, for example when conducting local protests and when attacking opponents. Extremist groups may also mobilise and carry out actions in new municipalities or neighbourhoods in order to establish themselves there. Preventive measures at the local level are required as it is there that violent extremist groups act. It is important that recreation leaders, teachers, social services' personnel and the police have knowledge of extremism and can detect radicalisation and refute rhetoric that is extreme and encourages violence. Some of the National Coordinator's main duties are improving collaboration between government authorities, municipalities and organisations and educating people who come into contact with young people about violent extremism and how it can be prevented. Professionals from municipal organisations or national authorities who work with young people have a responsibility to actively promote democratic values and the dignity and rights of all people, as well as prevent-

ing violent ideologies, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. Skr. 2014/15:144

The need for knowledge about violent extremism and the ability to deal with manifestations of extremism varies between municipalities. The National Coordinator offers educational support and advice to municipalities and local stakeholders within the scope of its assignment. For this purpose, the National Coordinator has requested individual contacts in each of Sweden's 290 municipalities. In May 2015, 257 municipalities had registered a contact with the National Coordinator. In the just over 50 municipalities that have been visited, an inventory has been undertaken of the local conditions for preventive initiatives to tackle violent extremism. Proposals for adapted measures are drawn up in collaboration with the municipalities. The National Coordinator's website describes the work taking place in different municipalities through, for example, interviews with local contacts.

## 1.1 Aim of the Communication

This Communication sets out current measures to tackle violent extremism with the aim of clarifying areas of responsibility, collaboration and target groups and of improving authorities' preparedness and initiatives over the course of the period the National Coordinator's assignment runs.

When the National Coordinator's work ends in June 2016, the Government intends to address the proposals and the strategy the National Coordinator has been tasked with drawing up.

### *Evaluating measures implemented in the past*

Initiatives to safeguard democracy against violent extremism have been underway for several years. This work began in 2008 when various government authorities were tasked with surveying the extent of violent extremism in Sweden, producing examples of local preventive efforts and charting activities for those who leave violent extremist groups. On the basis of the evidence obtained, the Government drew up an action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism (Skr. 2011/12:44). The action plan contained 15 measures and has engaged several authorities in the work of producing new knowledge; this has provided a good foundation for future efforts.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management has evaluated the action plan at the behest of the Government. The Agency's report from 2015, *Safeguarding democracy against violent extremism – evaluation of an action plan*, states that the action plan narrowed down problem areas and that the measures implemented largely achieved the Government's goals. The evaluation indicates that several of the measures have continued within the scope of the authorities' ordinary work, but also that measures in some areas are missing from the action plan, for example social services and the treatment of offenders. Furthermore, the Agency was of the opinion that the Government has burdened civil society organisations with too much responsibility for implementing initiatives, for example in

terms of supporting individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements.

Based on its analysis, the Agency recommends that the Government continues to adopt a coordinated approach to these issues, that the target groups for different initiatives are made clear in future work and that collaboration and governance are developed. The Government has used the Agency's analysis as the basis when preparing this Communication. A more detailed description of the Swedish Agency for Public Management's evaluation can be found in section 5.2.

### *Outline*

This Communication contains seven sections. Section One contains the goal and focus of the work and the areas affected by measures to tackle violent extremism. Violent extremism in Sweden is described in Section Two. Section Three contains a summary of the relevant legislation. Section Four sets out the 21 measures the Government has implemented over the course of 2014 and 2015 to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. An account of the measures implemented in the years 2011–2014 can be found in Section Five, while Sections Six and Seven describe the economic consequences of the action plan and how these are to be followed up and evaluated.

## 1.2 Goal and focus

### *Goal*

The goal of the Government's measures is to make society more resilient to violent extremism. The aim of these measures is to improve our knowledge of violent extremism and develop preventive initiatives and methods. These measures will enable authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations, including faith communities, to contribute in a more coordinated and effective manner to safeguarding democracy against violent extremism.

### *Focus of the measures*

The Government's efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism are grounded in the defence of Swedish society's democratic principles and the equal value and rights of all people. The measures carried out cover the following five areas:

- *National coordination to safeguard democracy against violent extremism.* The key to successful preventive efforts against violent extremism is effective collaboration between relevant authorities and organisations.
- *Measures to safeguard democracy and the equal value and rights of all people.* Measures in this area are broadly geared towards everyone in relevant groups, such as school pupils, young people, affected professional groups and faith communities. They seek to reduce the breeding grounds of antidemocratic behaviour and violent ideologies.

These measures are also meant to reach individuals who are at risk and those who have already joined violent extremist movements.

- *Measures against identified risks.* The measures in this area seek to develop work concerning groups at risk and problems linked to violent extremism.
- *Measures to encourage individuals to leave violent extremist movements.* The measures in this area seek to develop initiatives geared towards individuals who are or have been involved in violent extremist movements.
- *Strengthened Nordic and international sharing of knowledge and experience.* Sharing knowledge and experience internationally has helped to develop the national work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. This exchange will continue.

### 1.3 Areas affected by the work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism

The Government defines violent extremism as ideologies that accept and legitimise violence as a means by which to realise extreme ideological opinions and ideas. The activities and ideologies of violent extremist groups cause problems that touch on many areas.

No one is born an extremist. The foundations of a cohesive society are laid through providing good living conditions for children and young people and access to support from adults, as well as well-functioning education, employment and housing policies and good opportunities to exert influence and participate. Nevertheless, measures in these areas are outside the scope of this Communication. The areas more directly affected by measures to safeguard democracy against violent extremism are, however:

- initiatives to strengthen democracy and democratic awareness;
- initiatives to tackle racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- hate crimes;
- crime prevention;
- initiatives to tackle threats and violence against democratically elected representatives and occupational groups that are important in a democratic society; and
- initiatives to prevent terrorism.

Short descriptions of these areas are provided below.

#### *Democracy and democratic awareness*

Strengthening democracy and democratic awareness is a question of how Swedish society collectively builds basic social cohesion, security and confidence in democracy and respect for human rights. The prerequisites for people to participate in society and trust one another exist in a democratic society. Democracy involves providing the space in which people are able to criticise, affect and change society as well as offering tangible means of participation. The work to strengthen democracy requires broad support among authorities and civil society organisations at national,

regional and local levels. The support for democracy in Swedish society is reflected in, for example, public confidence in democratic institutions and participation in general elections. When individuals trust the central government and authorities, the prerequisites for decision-making to be broadly accepted in society and for social cohesion are in place.

Low turnout in elections and low levels of confidence in authorities and politicians are challenges for a democratic society. Confidence-building initiatives contribute to strengthening democracy, to counteracting polarisation between different groups in society and to preventing extremism. However, measures to strengthen democracy alone are not sufficient to counteract violent extremism, especially when the violent extremism has become organised, actively spreads propaganda and commits acts of violence. Experience from other countries and from the Government's previous action plan in this area indicates that specific, targeted initiatives are required to counter violent extremism.

#### *Initiatives to tackle racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance*

Racism conflicts with the principle of human dignity and ultimately constitutes a challenge to all the values that support a democracy. Initiatives to tackle racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance cover afrophobia, anti-Semitism, antiziganism, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia.

When it comes to organised racism, it is primarily violent right-wing extremist groups that have roots in racist ideology or National Socialism and in accordance with this assert the so-called supremacy of the white race. Anti-Semitism, antiziganism, afrophobia and Islamophobia are part of these groups' ideological convictions concerning race.

Consequently, tasks that aim to safeguard democracy against violent extremism or to counter racism also include initiatives to counter ideological notions of race and organised racism.

#### *Hate crimes*

The term 'hate crimes' is a collective name for the crimes of agitation against a national or an ethnic group and unlawful discrimination, and other crimes where a motive for the crime was to abuse a person, ethnic group or some other similar group of people because of their race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, religious belief or another similar factor. In 2014, approximately 6 270 reports of hate crimes were identified in Sweden, which is the highest level noted thus far and 14 per cent higher than in 2013. However, it is not possible to say if this increase is due to an actual increase in the number of hate crimes, to an increased willingness to report these crimes or to the justice system having become better at recognising hate crime motives. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention's annual hate crime statistics show that hate crimes with a xenophobic or racist motive are by far the most common. Measures that prevent violent extremism and racism can also prevent hate crimes.

The aim of crime prevention is to work systematically and on the basis of evidence against the causes of criminality and to limit opportunities to commit crime. Crime prevention takes place in close collaboration between central government authorities, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, associations and faith communities, primarily at the local level. The preventive efforts of law enforcement agencies are mainly focused on potential risk groups and potential opportunities to commit crime. Thanks to their unique knowledge of crime and its development in a particular geographic area, the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service, for example, can provide relevant information when producing local problem overviews. Such overviews will guide local crime prevention and local efforts to counter violent extremism. If crime prevention is to be effective and successful, all relevant stakeholders at the local level have to collaborate when producing the problem overview and when implementing the resulting measures. This creates conditions that enable central government authorities, municipal organisations and civil society organisations, including faith communities, to work together on the basis of a comprehensive perspective towards a defined goal. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention distributes information and provides qualified guidance on methods to crime prevention stakeholders to enable them to conduct effective and evidence-based crime prevention that is adapted to local circumstances.

*Threats and violence against democratically elected representatives and occupational groups that are of particular significance to democratic society*

Threats and violence against democratically elected representatives and against occupational groups that are of particular significance to democratic society are a serious problem and a threat to democracy. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention has been tasked by the Government with producing a study that charts harassment, threats and violence against democratically elected representatives. In 2013, 19 per cent of all democratically elected representatives were victims of threats or harassment as a result of their position. In total, this adds up to approximately 12 000 incidents. Over the course of the same year, 2.7 per cent of democratically elected representatives were victims of violence, damage or theft. These figures come from *The Politicians' Safety Survey – Exposure to harassment, threats and violence* (Brå report 2014:9).

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention has also conducted a review of research into the exposure to threats and violence of occupational groups of particular significance to democratic society, for example journalists and representatives of government authorities. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention report *Threats and Violence – A report on the victimization of occupational groups important to a democratic society* (Brå report 2015:12) contains an analysis of existing research and shows that several categories of staff are subject to harassment, threats and violence and that people whose work involves exercising official powers, politicians and journalists are particularly vulnerable. The Government takes the development of threats and vio-

lence against these occupational groups seriously, as this has an impact on democracy and democratic society, and intends to take action in this area within its current term of office. This work will be followed up separately and is therefore not included in this Communication.

#### *Initiatives to prevent terrorism*

Terrorism is an extreme form of violent extremism. The responsibility for countering terrorism and terrorist crime lies chiefly with law enforcement agencies. Safeguarding democracy against violent extremism also involves initiatives that counteract radicalisation and recruitment to terrorist groups and for terrorist offences in Sweden and abroad. Accordingly, stakeholders other than law enforcement agencies are also important contributors to the work of preventing terrorism; these include schools, recreation centres, social services and civil society organisations, including faith communities.

## 2 Violent extremism in Sweden

This section contains a description of violent extremist movements in Sweden. The ministerial memorandum *Violent Extremism in Sweden – current situation and trends* (Ds 2014:4) is the latest comprehensive review conducted of violent extremism in Sweden. The description of the violent political and religious ideologies in this section is based primarily on this memorandum.

#### *Three main violent extremist movements*

There are currently three main violent extremist movements in Sweden that do not accept the principles on which the open democratic society is based: violent right-wing extremism, violent left-wing extremism and violent Islamist extremism. In addition, there are extremists acting alone who may be motivated to commit violent acts by various ideologies but do not belong to established groups or networks.

It is important to understand the motives behind, and similarities and differences between, the different forms of extremism in order to make the correct type of intervention. An inclusive society with a safe and functional school system and an active employment policy are protective factors that can combat exclusion and thus reduce the risk that people turn towards violent movements. Preventive initiatives that have an impact on stereotypical norms linking masculinity with violence are also significant. A development project is currently taking place in the municipalities in collaboration with various stakeholders in society. This project involves initiatives such as violence-prevention programmes in schools. Working to prevent young people offending and being recruited to criminal groups can probably have an impact on risk factors and driving forces and reduce the risk of certain young people joining violent extremist or terrorist groups in Sweden or abroad. At the same time, many of those who choose to join violent extremist movements do not

have a previous history of criminality, are not marginalised and do not have a limited education. Consequently, the violent, often totalitarian, ideologies must also be highlighted as one of the explanations for radicalisation. A large proportion of those who are radicalised derive sustenance and legitimacy for their actions from sets of ideas that give them a sense of purpose. Some people become involved in violent extremist groups because they are looking for excitement and camaraderie. Many are radicalised when they meet someone who inspires them or because a family member such as a sibling has been radicalised. Others are radicalised via the internet. For some this takes place gradually, for others it happens suddenly. The majority of those who are radicalised and join these movements are men under the age of 25.

### *Common characteristics*

Violent political or religious extremism is often based on a black and white, conspiratorial world-view. A common element is the 'us and them' perspective in which their own ideological affiliation is depicted as good and others as less worthy or evil. Conflict with the social environment and a glorification of violence are central. Dehumanisation of opponents facilitates violence, harassment and threats against individuals because of factors such as their political or religious convictions, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and against representatives of society such as politicians, police officers and other representatives of authorities. Violent extremist groups often use war metaphors to reinforce the justification for attacking opponents. Along with war metaphors, there is also glorification of those who commit crimes. Individuals who commit ideologically motivated crimes can be seen as heroes by those in their group and also gain high status in school, at the youth club or in the neighbourhood. Some specific masculine ideals may be embraced. In right-wing extremist groups and Islamist extremism, there is material that alludes, for example, to male camaraderie and masculine ideals of strength and courage. Left-wing extremist groups also contain some individuals who praise aggressive masculinity.

### *Geographic distribution*

Violent extremist groups exist in most of Sweden. In some respects, they are concentrated in the major cities, but there are also groups that are active or have a strong base in many smaller towns. Radicalisation towards violent Islamist extremism and recruitment to conflicts abroad takes place in both major cities and many smaller towns. Where different extremist groups are located in Sweden can vary over time. Individuals can also move between different organisations. It is not uncommon for different groups with the same or similar ideological affiliations to support one another. This can take place through participation in each other's actions or demonstrations or defending one another in confrontations. It is common for politically motivated crimes linked to both left-wing and right-wing extremist groups to be committed in the same area. Some of the crimes committed by these groups are the result of clashes and confrontations between them.

The goal of violent right-wing extremism, also known as the white supremacy movement, is to create an ethnically homogeneous Sweden. This goal is the driving force behind criminal acts committed against various groups and individuals. Right-wing extremist groups believe that the human species can be divided into races, with the so-called 'white race' being superior to all the others. They have a negative view of the immigration of people they do not consider part of the white race and believe that the white race should not be mixed with the others. Furthermore, they have a negative view of people with disabilities. Some right-wing extremist groups may also talk about ethnicity instead of race and say that different ethnicities must not be mixed or have to be kept apart. Right-wing extremism includes the notion of a Jewish conspiracy and a Jewish influence that threatens the white race. In addition, there is antiziganism, afrophobia, Muslim hate and Islamophobia. The problems of society are regarded as resulting from an alleged Jewish influence and from immigration that has contributed to the multicultural society. According to right-wing extremism, contemporary society has contributed to the disintegration of nationalism and this disintegration threatens Swedish culture. Violent right-wing extremism advocates an authoritarian form of government. The heterosexual nuclear family is regarded as the central foundation of society. The role of ethnically Swedish women is considered to be bearing children and looking after the home. There is an explicit hatred of LGBT people, which is also expressed through violent crimes.

A movement that at least partly has the same basic values as right-wing extremist groups is the counter-jihad movement. However, this only focuses on Islam and Muslims. The counter-jihad movement is loosely composed of various groups and individuals united by the notion that a perceived Islamification of Europe is taking place. The Swedish Security Service's assessment, however, is that the counter-jihad movement is not currently a violent movement as it does not advocate violence in order to achieve its aims, even though the movement has rhetorical elements that can also be found in other violent ideologies, for example a black and white world-view. Nevertheless, in an international perspective, counter-jihad ideology has inspired confrontations, riots and violence.

#### *Violent left-wing extremism*

Violent left-wing extremism, also known as the autonomous movement, strives, through violence, to achieve a classless society that is not governed by any authority. The only form of government that is acceptable is self-government by the people. According to the violent left-wing extremist movement, contemporary democracy is not satisfactory as capitalist forces have a hold on society. This is a barrier to achieving an ideal society, i.e. a society that is equal and classless and where people with different origins and sexual orientations will be able to live on the same terms. Violent left-wing extremist groups legitimise violence and argue that a new form of government can only be achieved through violent revolution. In the short term, the goal of violent actions may be to defend the working class from what they perceive to be various types of attack,

to dictate the terms for who will be allowed to use their freedom of expression, assembly and association, and to influence decision-making. The violent left-wing extremist movement believes that resistance to racism must be militant and that it is naive to attempt to resist those who are against democracy by democratic means. This involves threatening and attacking democratically elected representatives, representatives of authorities, businesspeople and opponents, primarily people from right-wing extremist groups. They also express anti-Zionism in their criticism of Israel's policies.

### *Violent Islamist extremism*

Violent Islamist extremism in Sweden is part of a global, violent ideology and movement, the aim of which is to confront people and countries that are regarded as unfaithful to Islam or are thought to insult Islam. The countries primarily affected are Muslim countries whose forms of government are regarded as blasphemous, for example if the regimes are considered to be corrupt or not to represent the extreme interpretation of Islam that movements such as Daesh stand for. Violent Islamist extremism makes use of takfirism, an interpretation that brands all Muslims who do not follow the extreme violent Islamist ideology as non-Muslims, in other words apostates who lose their human rights and must be taxed, converted, banished, imprisoned, enslaved or killed. This ideology forms the basis of Daesh's attacks against government forces in Syria and Iraq and against Muslims and religious and ethnic minorities in the area. Since the conflict began, an increasing number of people who sympathise with Daesh's interpretation have travelled to the region to participate in armed conflict and contribute to consolidating and building up the territory Daesh has since 2014 declared an Islamic caliphate. The United Nations estimates that more than 25 000 people from various countries have joined violent extremist and terrorist groups throughout the world and, of these, 20 000–22 000 have joined Daesh and other extremist and terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq.

Acts of violence and terror are justified on theological grounds, combined with a culture of martyrdom. Suicide attacks constitute one aspect of martyrdom. The picture violent Islamist extremism paints of the world depict a military, political, religious and cultural war that the rest of the world is said to be conducting against Muslims. This includes everything from the presence of European and American troops in Muslim countries, to injustices and offences against Islam and Muslims, for example caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. This ideology can motivate individuals and various loosely composed networks to conduct terrorist attacks in the West.

Islamophobic tensions have increased in Europe and the USA following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Islamophobic groups contribute to fuelling the notion that Islam and Muslims are under attack; this is also one of the aims of violent Islamist extremism, which thus sees its ideology confirmed. In violent Islamist extremism, anti-Semitism also acts as a catalyst for hatred of the West. Jews can collectively be taken to represent the state of Israel and an imagined conspiratorial world power that lies behind the West's supposed attacks against Islam. Islamist ex-

tremism also advocates extreme values concerning women and men. The women who join Daesh may applaud the violence, at the same time as girls and women suffer from restrictions on their life opportunities, threats and violence. Daesh also subjects girls and women to sexual violence and human trafficking for sexual purposes. Sexual violence against girls and women is used strategically or tactically to cause long-term damage to Muslim groups that are regarded as having divergent views and groups that are regarded as non-Muslims and apostate.

#### *Extremists acting alone*

Individuals who not are a part of the established extremist groups and networks may commit violent acts that are motivated by violent ideologies. They may compose their own militant ideology and strategy based on messages from different extremist groups. The suicide attack in Stockholm in December 2010 was judged by the Swedish Security Service to have been carried out by an extremist acting alone. Another example is the right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik, who single-handedly carried out the terrorist attacks in Norway on 22 July 2011. These attacks resulted in the deaths of a total of 77 people.

## 2.1 Radicalisation towards violent extremism

The majority of people find the idea of using violence or harming other people to achieve a political goal inconceivable. Obstacles such as moral values lead to mental barriers. The majority also have emotional barriers due to empathy and sympathy. People who accept or advocate the use of violence for ideological or political purposes have broken through these barriers for one reason or another. Some people who normally have barriers to carrying out violent acts can still commit ideologically motivated crimes that harm other people. One explanation is that when people experience upheavals themselves, their perceptions of what is right and wrong can change. People under the influence of strong leaders may also carry out actions they would otherwise not. Nor do extremism and terrorism arise in a vacuum. Social and political circumstances can create dissatisfaction that becomes a breeding ground for violent ideologies and extremist groups.

Those who commit ideologically motivated violent acts for political or religious reasons have gone through a process in which they have gradually come to adopt a violent ideology or accept violence as a legitimate method within the scope of a political or religious ideology. This process is called radicalisation. Radicalisation can take place through a person adopting a violent ideology that they then use to interpret the world, or by a person interpreting the world on the basis of an ideology and then adopting a perception that violence is the path to change. The adoption of a violent ideology means that a person accepts violence and sometimes also that they commit ideologically motivated crimes. A radicalised person can also become an inspiration for others or support people who commit crimes, for example by providing funding.

According to the Swedish Security Service, violent radicalisation is often the result of interaction between various factors. There are perceived injustices or offences, which may have a basis in reality. There is also a violent ideology that points out injustices, explains their causes and what should be done about them. Finally, there also needs to be a social context. Some people join violent groups because they are looking for excitement and camaraderie, others are more interested in the ideology and some end up in violent groups because other people from their family or social circle are already involved. Sometimes there is a charismatic leader, but people often radicalise one another without there being a clear leader. Radicalisation often takes place via social contacts, but can also take place through lectures and propaganda. Thanks to studies conducted by the Swedish Security Service, it has been possible to identify the push and pull factors affecting those who have been radicalised. 'Push factors' are circumstances inherent to the individual or to the situation in which they are living that may increase the likelihood of radicalisation. Examples of push factors are the search for meaning or excitement, a desire to make a difference and perceived injustices. 'Pull factors' are relationships in a group that may increase the likelihood of radicalisation, for example social interaction or friendship, meaningfulness, significance or status in the group, attractive ideological arguments, a conviction of standing up for what is good and fighting what is evil, and a sense of power or control. These push and pull factors and circumstances work together to entice an individual to join violent extremist groups and they also contribute to individuals remaining in these.

#### *Extremist messages and radicalisation via the internet*

Many extremist groups are experts at presenting their violent and anti-democratic messages on the internet and in social media. They can use these channels to distribute material and propaganda, find new contacts and maintain and reinforce existing groupings.

The Swedish Media Council was commissioned by the Government to study how antidemocratic and violent messages are conveyed via the internet and social media. The report *Violent and antidemocratic messages on the internet* (Swedish Media Council, 2013) indicated that the internet made it easier for extremist groups to distribute an antidemocratic and violent message and recruit new members. According to the Swedish Security Service, the internet is a well-integrated part of violent extremist groups' activities and can also be used to reinforce these movements. Ideological material such as images, symbols, music and films are distributed via the internet using services such as Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Ask.fm and Instagram. Like-minded people have their own opinions reinforced, contacts can be established and discussions conducted, for example on chat forums. When it comes to Daesh, Twitter was a primary channel for the terrorist group's propaganda. Daesh's violent and hateful propaganda is distributed by means such as Youtube clips, Daesh's own radio channel and its magazine Dabiq.

The fact that extremist and terrorist groups produce violent extremist information and distribute it via the internet and via social media can contribute to the radicalisation of individuals. These individuals can also

use the internet to find other people who are interested in the same violent ideological messages. People who have become interested or been radicalised via material and discussions on social media sooner or later meet other radicalised people, either via the internet or social media or in private homes, the youth club, the premises of a religious organisation or other local meeting places. Their radicalisation is further reinforced through social contact with people who share the same ideology.

### 3 Relevant Legislation

This section contains an account of some relevant legislation. The aim is to provide concise information about this legislation and also about current analysis of legislation relating to the field of violent extremism.

#### *Freedom of opinion*

In Sweden, all citizens are guaranteed their freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of assembly, freedom of demonstration, freedom of association and freedom of religion in relation to the community, i.e. the State. These freedoms of opinion are constitutionally protected through provisions in the Instrument of Government.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Instrument of Government, every citizen is protected in relation to the community from being forced to declare their opinion in political, religious, cultural or other similar respects. Every citizen is also protected from being forced to participate in gatherings for influencing public opinion or in demonstrations or other expressions of opinion, or to belong to a political association, faith community or other similar association.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes that everyone has a right to freedom of opinion and freedom of expression. This encompasses the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas with the help of all means of expression and independent of frontiers. The freedom of opinion and expression is also enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights). The Convention applies as law in Sweden.

The Instrument of Government contains provisions concerning the circumstances under which freedoms and rights may be restricted. For example, freedom of expression and freedom of information may be restricted with respect to the security of the realm, public order and safety, individuals' reputations, the sanctity of private life or the prevention and prosecution of crimes (Chapter 2, Sections 21 and 23 of the Instrument of Government).

The right to freely express your opinion must be exercised under specific responsibility with respect to the freedoms and rights of others. Free expression can, if misused, cause harm, for example by causing offence, inciting discrimination or violence, or by disclosing information that has detrimental consequences for either individuals or society as a whole.

Freedom of expression offences that can be related to violent extremism include the following: Skr. 2014/15:144

- public order offences, such as inciting rebellion and agitation against a national or ethnic group; and
- offences against individuals, such as defamation.

Freedom of expression has been presented with new opportunities, but also new challenges, by the internet and the development of smartphones.

### *Criminal law legislation*

There are several provisions in the Penal Code that may be applicable in conjunction with violent extremism, for example provisions concerning crimes against the person (violence, threats and harassment), property (inflicting damage) and public order.

Responsibility for terrorist offences is regulated in the Act on Criminal Responsibility for Terrorist Offences (2003:148) (the Terrorist Offences Act). The Act contains provisions for the implementation of the EU's Framework Decision on combating terrorism from 2002, which sets out what are to be regarded as terrorist offences. Those who commit an offence listed in the Act are considered to have committed a terrorist offence if the offence might seriously damage a State or an intergovernmental organisation and the intent of the act is to:

- seriously intimidate a population or a group of the population;
- unduly compel a public authority or an intergovernmental organisation to perform an act or abstain from acting; or
- seriously destabilise or destroy fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures in a State or in an intergovernmental organisation.

Changes were made to the Framework Decision in 2008 and these were implemented through the Act on Criminal Responsibility for Public Provocation, Recruitment and Training concerning Terrorist Offences and other Particularly Serious Crime (2010:299).

With respect to criminal responsibility for actions in conjunction with an armed conflict, Swedish law contains several provisions that may be applicable. The Act on Criminal Responsibility for Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes (2014:406) came into force on 1 July 2014. The Act criminalises not only consummated crimes, but also the ancillary crimes of attempt, preparation and conspiracy to commit genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Failure to report a crime is also criminalised. Swedish courts are authorised to adjudicate a crime pursuant to the Act, regardless of where and by whom such a crime has been committed (universal jurisdiction). If an act cannot be considered a crime in accordance with the Act, the Penal Code's general provisions may instead be applicable.

In addition, there is the Terrorist Offences Act, which may also be applicable when an act has been committed in connection with an armed conflict. The Terrorist Offences Act also penalises not only consummated crimes, but also attempt, preparation and conspiracy to commit such crimes, as well as failure to reveal them. Universal jurisdiction applies to crimes pursuant to the Act.

All in all, this means that there are now plentiful opportunities to take legal action against those who in various ways participate in armed conflicts for any crimes that are committed.

In December 2014, the Government appointed an inquiry on the implementation of certain penal law commitments in order to prevent and combat terrorism (ToR 2014:155). An Inquiry Chair has analysed the need for legislative amendments in order for Sweden to comply with the obligations of criminal law provisions imposed by UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) on such matters as measures to prevent people from travelling abroad with the aim of committing terrorist acts or of providing or receiving terrorist training. The Chair reported back on this assignment in June 2015 and provided proposals for new criminal provisions concerning, for example, terrorism travel and receiving terrorist training. The Chair's report *Criminal law measures against terrorism travel* (SOU 2015:63) is being processed by the Government Offices. On 17 June 2015 the Government adopted supplementary terms of reference for this inquiry (ToR 2015:61). The Inquiry Chair's remit now also includes analysing the need for further criminalisation in order to prevent and preempt people from engaging in armed conflict abroad within the framework of a terrorist organisation and considering whether the criminal provision on unlawful recruitment should be clarified, expanded or changed in any other way. The Inquiry Chair's report is to be presented by June 2016.

## 4 Measures to safeguard democracy against violent extremism 2015–2016

This communication aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the Government's measures to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. This includes clarifying the basic premises, target areas and target groups for this work.

There is a need for target group-focused, long-term measures within the scope of each authority's area of responsibility, along with coordinated initiatives at national, regional and local levels in order to develop this work further. Civil society organisations, including faith communities, are important stakeholders in this process.

### 4.1 Basic premises

#### *Collaboration between authorities and within the Government Offices*

Collaboration is vital to a collective, clear and effective agenda in the work to prevent violent extremism and terrorism. Sharing information and experiences among all the national authorities involved plays an important role in developing this work further. Questions concerning the prevention of violent extremism will also be highlighted in the consultations that take place between the Government and civil society organisa-

tions, including faith communities. The Government Offices will continue to participate in the National Coordinator's reference group, which will regularly gather together the national authorities concerned. The Government also intends to intensify the sharing of information and experiences among affected departments in the Government Offices.

#### *Local efforts and local collaboration need to be supported*

The need for knowledge about violent extremism and the ability to deal with manifestations of extremism vary between municipalities. Extremist groups can mobilise and swiftly establish themselves in new places. Many of the local stakeholders required in the effort to safeguard democracy against violent extremism are found in municipal organisations such as schools, youth clubs and social services. The Police Authority has entered into collaboration agreements with the municipalities in most places in Sweden. Thanks to their unique knowledge of crime and its development in a particular geographic area, the Police Authority and the Security Service can provide relevant information in producing a collective overview of local problems. This overview will guide local crime prevention and can also contribute to local efforts to counter violent extremism. Collaboration between the Police Authority and municipal stakeholders is thus incredibly important. If crime prevention is to be effective and successful, all relevant stakeholders at the local level have to work together and contribute to producing overviews of problems and implementing the resulting measures. This creates conditions that enable central government authorities, municipal organisations and civil society organisations, including faith communities, to work together on the basis of a comprehensive perspective towards a defined goal. The National Coordinator is specifically tasked with offering and supplying expert support to municipalities and other local stakeholders who identify problems with violent extremism. The National Coordinator is also expected to take specific account of crime prevention taking place within the scope of existing collaboration forums.

#### *Respect for fundamental democratic principles*

The primary aim of work to prevent violent extremism is to reinforce and safeguard democracy and the open pluralistic society. This work must be undertaken with respect for fundamental democratic principles such as freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, freedom of association and freedom of religion. Individuals who feel that their fundamental rights are being violated or feel they have been singled out as a result of their political opinions, their religious convictions or their ethnicity can lose their faith in democracy. If prevention is to be successful, it must be, and be perceived to be, non-discriminatory and legally sound.

#### *Gender perspective*

Violent extremist groups are primarily composed of boys and men. Extremist groups or individuals in these groups may, for ideological reasons, be opposed to gender equality and the rights of women and girls. It is therefore important that efforts to prevent violent extremism have a gender perspective. Furthermore, it is important that norms, values and

attitudes that interact and contribute to the growth of violent political or religious extremism are effectively countered.

*Spreading knowledge with the aim of developing initiatives*

Affected staff from authorities and municipalities and county councils must have knowledge about violent extremism and about which initiatives may prevent the problems that exist locally. Staff from schools, youth clubs, social services, special residential homes for young people, the Police Authority and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service must have access to information, at the same time as their own experience from encounters with problems related to violent extremism should be made use of. Relevant staff members who currently lack the tools to work with prevention must have access to these.

Every authority's responsibility needs to be clarified and collaboration needs to be developed in order to prevent violent extremism at local, regional and national level. Civil society organisations, including faith communities and local crime prevention councils, should be involved in this work. To support this development, the National Coordinator has been tasked with drawing up and initiating the implementation of a cohesive strategy to safeguard democracy against violent extremism (see section 4.4.4).

The measures the Government has initiated with the aim of safeguarding democracy against violent extremism have a common goal of making society more resilient to violent extremism. There are no strictly defined boundaries between the different target areas, for example initiatives for individuals at risk can be undertaken in all areas. The measures implemented have to be knowledge-driven, which means they are to be based on knowledge about:

- violent extremism;
- the best available evidence, with 'evidence' here denoting the aggregate and best available factual basis;
- the needs and desires of the target group; and
- the expertise and experience of different occupational groups.

## 4.2 Focus of the measures

The measures the Government has implemented as a complement to the National Coordinator's remit aim to improve knowledge about violent extremism and to develop preventive initiatives and methods. Authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations, including faith communities, have to be able to safeguard democracy against violent extremism in a more coordinated and effective way.

The Communication's measures are distributed among the following areas.

*National coordination to safeguard democracy against violent extremism*

The key to successful preventive work against violent extremism is knowledge, division of responsibility and effective collaboration between the relevant authorities, municipalities and county councils. This is par-

ticularly relevant to central and municipal authorities and services such as youth clubs, schools, social services and the Police Authority, the special residential homes for young people and the Prison and Probation Service. Collaboration is necessary in order to build up an effort that safeguards democracy. This is required if it is to be possible to counter the emergence, establishment or spreading of violent extremism. It is also required in order to make initiatives possible for people who are at risk of joining or have already joined extremist movements and those who have left such movements. This involves creating a shared view of local problems and their causes and more effectively taking advantage of the available knowledge and experience in order to make the preventive effort enduring and knowledge-based (Measures 1, 2, 3 and 4).

*Measures to safeguard democracy and the equal value and rights of all people*

Measures in this area are broadly geared towards everyone in relevant groups such as school pupils, young people, affected professional groups and faith communities. They primarily aim to promote democratic awareness and the equal value and rights of all people and thus to influence individuals with the goal of minimising the breeding grounds for antidemocratic behaviour, violent ideologies and radicalisation. These measures are also meant to reach individuals who are at risk or those who have already joined a violent extremist movement. The National Coordinator's task of implementing targeted educational initiatives is to be adapted to local needs and may be, for example, both basic and specialised (Measures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

*Measures against identified risks*

Measures in this area seek to develop work concerning groups at risk and areas where there are identified risks and problems linked to violent extremism (Measures 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15).

*Measures to encourage individuals to leave violent extremist movements*

The measures in this area seek to develop initiatives for individuals who are or have been involved in violent extremist movements and aim to make it possible to deal with ideologically convinced individuals and reduce individuals' risk of relapsing into ideologically motivated crime (Measures 16, 17, 18 and 19).

*Strengthened Nordic and international sharing of knowledge and experiences*

The international collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experiences has helped to develop national work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. This collaboration will continue (Measures 20 and 21).

## 4.3 Target groups

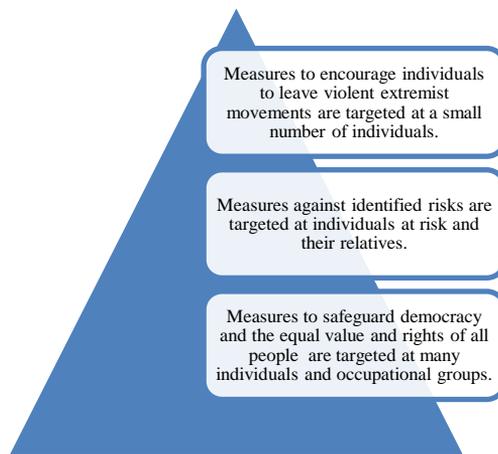
### *Target groups for the measures*

Measures to safeguard democracy and the equal value and rights of all people are broadly geared towards everyone in relevant groups, for example pupils, young people, affected occupational groups and all faith communities.

Measures against identified risks target girls, boys, young women and young men who are at risk of becoming involved in or have joined violent extremist movements, as well as the parents, siblings and other relatives affected by this problem.

Measures for individuals who are involved in or want to leave violent extremist movements involve developing tangible initiatives for those individuals who have already been radicalised, for example in special residential homes for young people.

### 4.3.1 **Figure showing the internal relationship of the target areas and target groups**



The pyramid illustrates how the target areas and target groups relate to one another. Measures to safeguard democracy and the equal value and rights of all aim to reach out to many people. They also aim to develop an understanding of violent extremism within the scope of existing organisations such as schools and youth clubs. Measures against identified risks specifically target people at risk, such as relatives or people who have already developed risky behaviour in relation to violent extremism. Measures to encourage individuals to leave violent extremist groups will affect the small number of individuals who have already been radicalised and who require initiatives to help them leave violent extremist groups. The National Coordinator's remit and intensified Nordic and international sharing of information and experiences encompass all target areas.

## 4.4 National coordination to safeguard democracy against violent extremism

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National coordination is required in order for this work to be undertaken effectively. In addition, collaboration between government authorities, county councils, municipalities and civil society organisations, including faith communities, is necessary in order to expand and stimulate efforts to address opinions and actions that conflict with the fundamental values of democracy, to ensure that the dignity and equal rights of all people are respected and to work towards gender equality in society. Such efforts can help to minimise the breeding grounds of violent extremism. Several authorities are responsible for implementing initiatives to ensure such a development. There is also a need for specific initiatives to develop the authorities' efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. Because no single authority has overall responsibility for this work, in 2014 the Government gave this remit to a National Coordinator (ToR 2014:103). The national coordinator's remit continues until June 2016.

### 4.4.1 The National Coordinator to safeguard democracy against violent extremism

**Measure 1:** The Government has tasked an inquiry chair, as National Coordinator, with improving collaboration between authorities, municipalities and organisations at national, regional and local level with respect to efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The National Coordinator will take action to improve our knowledge of violent extremism and develop preventive methods.

The National Coordinator's main task is that of engaging and involving affected stakeholders at local, regional and national level, for example social services, schools, youth clubs and civil society organisations, including faith communities, as well as facilitating the development of local forms of collaboration between stakeholders with the aim of safeguarding democracy against violent extremism. The coordinator is also to create procedures for the sharing of experiences and information among affected stakeholders and to provide examples of and disseminate information about successful measures at national and local level aimed at minimising the breeding grounds of violent extremism.

### 4.4.2 Reference group of national authorities and others

**Measure 2:** The Government has provided the National Coordinator with the task of establishing a reference group containing representatives of various authorities, civil society organisations and experts from universities and research institutions. The reference group is to meet regularly with the aim of sharing knowledge and information. The National Coordinator is to consult with the reference group on issues concerning the development of activities and methods, how

preventive efforts can be followed up and evaluated, and how the co-ordination of efforts to prevent violent extremism can be pursued in the long term.

Safeguarding democracy against violent extremism encompasses everything from broadly targeted general initiatives, such as those in schools, to initiatives for those individuals who have committed crimes and are now within the correctional care system. Authorities that currently lack the tools and knowledge to take action should develop these for their own activities and for the groups of staff they are responsible for. In addition, because authorities have varying remits and areas of responsibility in terms of work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, effective collaboration is required in which each stakeholder plays their part. It is through this type of collaboration that a cohesive effort can become complete.

A number of authorities have significant roles in work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. Consequently, the Government has given the National Coordinator the responsibility of establishing a reference group containing representatives of various authorities, civil society organisations and experts from universities and research institutions. Just such a reference groups was established in autumn 2014 and comprises the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, the Living History Forum, the Swedish Defence University, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, the Swedish Migration Agency, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities, the Swedish Police Authority, the Government Offices of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the National Board of Institutional Care, the Swedish Media Council, the National Agency for Education, the Swedish Security Service and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

#### 4.4.3 National network of experts

**Measure 3:** The Government has tasked the National Coordinator with establishing a network of experts whose knowledge and contacts can benefit the development of preventive efforts at national, regional and local level.

When working to tackle violent extremism, it has proven valuable to the development of concrete initiatives to gather together the expertise of relevant practitioners in a trans-sectoral network. One example is the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN, see Measure 21). There are people at the local level, in authorities, in municipalities and in organisations and faith communities who have knowledge about violent extremism and how it can be prevented. There are also people who have left violent extremist movements who have knowledge about, for example, radicalisation processes and who can support people who want to leave these movements. This knowledge and expertise has

to be taken advantage of and used in the National Coordinator's effort to provide general support to authorities and municipalities that deal with this problem locally.

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#### **4.4.4 Cohesive strategy to safeguard democracy against violent extremism**

**Measure 4:** The Government has given the National Coordinator the task of drawing up a cohesive strategy to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The National Coordinator is instructed to initiate the implementation of this and to consult in this respect with the authorities and municipalities involved.

It is vital that authorities and municipalities act on the basis of their area of responsibility and strengthen collaboration in order to make the tangible efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism knowledge-based and allow them to become effective and enduring. The municipalities have a very important role to play in this work. Initiatives must be intensified and adapted to local needs as it is at the local level that radicalisation takes place. It is also particularly important to include organisations and faith communities that have a proximity to the individuals and groups concerned. Consequently, the National Coordinator has instructions to draw up and initiate the implementation of a cohesive strategy to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The National Coordinator also has to take specific account of crime prevention programmes within the scope of existing national and local collaboration forums and planned crime prevention programmes.

#### **4.5 Measures to safeguard democracy and the equal value and rights of all people**

Safeguarding democracy and the equal value and rights of all people and countering radicalisation towards violent extremism requires knowledge and preparation, primarily among those people and different groups of staff who come into contact with young people. Relevant groups of staff such as youth club leaders and teachers need to be able to identify symbols and rhetoric that can be linked to violent extremism and need to have tools they can use to work preventively and challenge violent extremist opinions. Young people must also have knowledge about democracy, democratic principles and the dignity and human rights of all, as well as media and information literacy that gives them an awareness of and knowledge about how information can be biased and exploited by racist organisations and violent extremist groups in order to spread propaganda.

Different groups of staff need to be able to deal with the anxiety and fears that children, young people and parents may have as a result of violent extremism. The attributes of some extremist groups, for example the way they dress, may contribute to increased fears and anxiety.

A process that aims to safeguard democracy against violent extremism should also both prevent the circumstances that can contribute to radicalisation, such as discrimination, racism, threats and hatred, and counter the ideological, political and religious ideas that legitimise violence as a political method for changing society.

#### **4.5.1 Basic and specialised educational initiatives targeting occupational groups at the local level**

**Measure 5:** The Government has tasked the National Coordinator with implementing targeted educational initiatives for relevant occupational groups at the local level.

Educational initiatives are a central and integrated part of the prevention of violent extremism in several European countries, e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom. Greater knowledge of how different forms of violent extremism can be prevented creates improved conditions for initiatives at an early stage, as well as improved opportunities for collaboration. The Government has given the National Coordinator responsibility for designing and implementing educational initiatives targeted at relevant occupational groups at the local level (ToR 2014:103). Furthermore, the Coordinator is responsible for developing and updating the digital educational resource *Samtalskompassen* by collecting research and knowledge about violent extremism and effective methods of prevention.

#### **4.5.2 Extension and development of the campaign No Hate Speech Movement**

**Measure 6:** The Government has commissioned the Swedish Media Council to develop the campaign No Hate Speech Movement so that it also includes initiatives to safeguard democracy against violent extremism by improving the media and information literacy of children and young people. The campaign is to be specifically focused on improving the ability of children and young people to use their freedom of expression and to respect human rights, increasing participation in democracy and stimulating criticism of sources and the independent critical appraisal of what appears in the media. The aim of this assignment is to prevent racism, sexism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and to safeguard democracy against violent extremism.

Violent extremist groups use the internet and social media to distribute propaganda and other materials that glorify and reinforce norms relating to masculinity and violence, violent ideologies and terrorism. It is important that Sweden is equipped to deal with such propaganda and anti-democratic messages when they are distributed online.

The freedoms of opinion are constitutionally protected through provisions in the Instrument of Government. It is important to protect the role

the internet plays in strengthening democracy. Accordingly, one aspect of work to prevent violent extremism is providing children and young people with media and information literacy and the ability to question gender stereotypical norms relating to masculinity and violence. Media and information literacy is a tool that allows antidemocratic and violent messages to be questioned and critically appraised. The Government believes that the best way to address such propaganda is with knowledge, even when it is distributed online.

Within the scope of the Government's past measures to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, the Swedish Media Council has conducted a survey of antidemocratic messages on the internet and produced a digital educational resource, *Media and information literacy for me*, that aims to make young people more resistant to antidemocratic and violent messages on the internet and in social media. Having been commissioned by the Government, the Swedish Media Council has distributed this educational resource nationwide over the course of 2014 and 2015 (Ju2014/4192/D). A report on this assignment was published in June 2015 (Ku2015/01783/D).

In June 2013, the Government tasked the Swedish Media Council with implementing the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement in Sweden (A2013/2317/DISK). The aim of this campaign was to raise awareness of xenophobia, sexism and similar forms of intolerance on the internet, and also to mobilise people in order to promote human rights, democracy and gender equality online. In March 2014, the Swedish Media Council was commissioned to extend the campaign and to implement specific initiatives against xenophobia (A2014/1205/DISK). The Council of Europe's campaign ended in December 2014.

As preventive efforts to tackle racism, sexism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance are vital and the campaign No Hate Speech Movement is an established nationwide platform, the campaign is being extended in Sweden over 2015 and 2016. At the same time, the Government has tasked the Swedish Media Council with developing the campaign so that it also encompasses measures to safeguard democracy against violent extremism (Ku2015/01869/D).

### 4.5.3 Improve knowledge of racism and other forms of historical and contemporary intolerance

**Measure 7:** The Government has tasked the Forum for Living History with implementing a major educational initiative about different forms of historical and contemporary racism and intolerance. The aim of this action is to contribute to the creation of an equal society characterised by respect for the dignity and human rights of all and to promote democracy.

In a society in which every individual feels safe, involved and has the power to influence their own life, there is a greater likelihood that mutual respect and a sense of solidarity will develop between people, counteracting violence, antidemocratic acts, polarisation and racism. The National

Agency for Education has an ongoing remit to implement educational initiatives in schools concerning xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance over the course of 2014–2017 and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society allocates central government funding to civil society organisations for activities that tackle racism.

Because this work needs to be reinforced further, in January 2015 the Government tasked the Forum for Living History with implementing a major educational initiative about different forms of historical and contemporary racism and intolerance in the period 2015–2017 (Ku2015/219/KA). The Forum for Living History is to base the implementation of this assignment on the reality of children's and young people's lives in contemporary Sweden. This assignment will be implemented in collaboration with the National Agency for Education. The goal is to reach out to all pupils in compulsory and upper-secondary school in Sweden. The assignment encompasses racism and similar forms of intolerance such as afrophobia, anti-Semitism, antiziganism, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia and will be informed throughout by a gender perspective. On 25 June 2015, the Government decided that the target group for this initiative will be expanded. The Forum has now been tasked with reaching further groups, in addition to compulsory and upper-secondary school pupils. The Forum is also to work to ensure a wide geographical distribution.

#### **4.5.4 Strengthen faith communities' work with democracy, focusing on women and young people**

**Measure 8:** The Government has tasked the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities (SST) with broadening and deepening the dialogue with faith communities, with the aim of stimulating their work with democracy and democratic awareness. The Commission is to develop this dialogue to include a broad spectrum of communities and groups within these communities, with a specific focus on women and young people.

Faith communities are important stakeholders in civil society, for example in terms of social work and involving children and young people in social activities. In addition, faith communities play an important role in crises and many people turn to them for support and solace. Faith communities and SST are important sources of information for understanding cultural and religious patterns and can act as a counterbalance to destructive actions committed by people who believe they are acting in the name of their religion.

SST has been tasked by the Government with implementing an expanded dialogue with faith communities about the expansion of democracy in the period 2012–2014 (Ju2011/8862/D). Within the scope of the assignment, SST has carried out conferences, study days, idea seminars and consultations with various faith communities and educational associations. SST has also produced support material for the faith communities: *Democracy needs us – a resource for working with democracy and hu-*

*man rights in faith communities*. In implementing this assignment, SST has identified a need to reinforce this work further to reach out to women and young people specifically.

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The Government tasked SST in December 2014 with widening and deepening its dialogue with faith communities, with the aim of stimulating their work with democracy and democratic awareness, focusing specifically on women and young people (S2014/8833/PBB). SST is to continue to develop this dialogue to include a broad spectrum of communities and groups within these communities.

#### **4.5.5 Support for activities that counteract anti-democratic behaviour and radicalisation**

**Measure 9:** The Government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) with allocating central government funding to organisations and municipalities for activities that counteract antidemocratic behaviour and radicalisation and links to violent extremism.

Preventive efforts addressing individuals before they join a violent extremist group or develop an ideologically motivated propensity for violence are required. Civil society organisations are often the stakeholders in society that first highlight new problems and develop new activities. For example, this is the case for the work against right-wing extremism, with the Expo foundation having investigated and disseminated information about organised intolerance and right-wing extremism since 1995 and the Teskedsorden and Fryshuset foundations having conducted preventive work since the end of the 1990s. When it comes to radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism, the National Somali Association and Järva Islamic Association have received funding from the Swedish Inheritance Fund to develop activities. Because civil society organisations are important stakeholders in preventive efforts, they should be able to apply for central government funding to undertake such activities.

Since 2012, MUCF has allocated funding to civil society organisations for preventive initiatives to combat violent extremism. In December 2014, the Government gave the Agency a continued remit to allocate funding within this area in the period 2015–2018 in accordance with the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities to Safeguard Democracy (2011:1508).

#### **4.6 Measures against identified risks**

Measures in this area are targeted at identified risk groups or at areas where there are identified risks and problems linked to violent extremism. There is currently a broad lack of support for girls and boys, young women and young men who are at risk of becoming involved in or are already involved in violent extremist groups and their relatives. It is especially vital to develop efforts to reduce the number of individuals

who join armed terrorist and extremist groups abroad or receive terrorist training abroad.

#### 4.6.1 Improve the support provided to relatives

**Measure 10:** The Government has tasked the National Coordinator with improving the support provided to relatives.

Work to support relatives at the local level needs to be developed. Those relatives who are affected when an individual becomes involved in a violent extremist movement need support and assistance to deal with this. Relatives can also be important in local preventive programmes to counter radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremist groups in Sweden and abroad, for example by providing relatives with support in how to motivate an individual not to join.

In March 2015, the Government tasked the National Coordinator with improving the support provided to relatives by actively assisting with advice and training for government authorities, municipalities, organisations and faith communities (ToR 2015:27).

#### 4.6.2 Pilot project involving a nationwide telephone supportline

**Measure 11:** The Government has decided that the National Coordinator will give an established voluntary organisation the task of implementing a pilot project involving a nationwide telephone supportline to which relatives, municipalities, organisations and others can turn to obtain information, advice and support on issues concerning violent extremism.

There is currently no specifically identified national actor to which worried relatives can turn for advice and support when they discover that someone in their circle is at risk of being drawn into or is already actively involved in a violent extremist movement. Relatives may, for example, require support and advice for dealing with a situation in which someone has travelled or intends to travel abroad to get involved in armed conflict. Municipalities, organisations and authorities may also need a nationwide actor to consult with when problems arise. One further target group can be individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements.

The Government has tasked the National Coordinator with investigating the prerequisites for a pilot project involving a nationwide telephone support hotline (Ku2015/01564/D). Based on the National Coordinator's analysis and because it is vital that the telephone supportline becomes operational as soon as possible, the Government has made the assessment that the most appropriate actor to implement a pilot project of this type is an established voluntary organisation that has documented experience of providing support and advice to individuals via telephone, email, online chat or other online technologies, and experience of collaborating and cooperating with national and local authorities. An additional reason why

a voluntary organisation is judged most suitable is that it is independent of central, regional and local authorities. Skr. 2014/15:144

On 13 August 2015, the Government decided that the National Coordinator will commission an established voluntary organisation to implement a pilot project involving a nationwide telephone support hotline (ToR 2015:86). The term telephone supportline also encompasses other contact channels such as email, online chat and other online technologies.

#### **4.6.3 Draw up guidance for social services in cases that concern violent extremism**

**Measure 12:** The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with drawing up guidance for social services' work with children and young people who are at risk of becoming or are already involved in violent extremism. These young people's own experiences and needs, as well as those of their relatives, are to be the basis of this process.

Social services come into contact with girls, boys, young women and young men who are at risk of becoming or are already involved in violent extremism, for example through concerns being reported by parents or authorities within the scope of their reporting obligations. There has been a lack of guidance for social services personnel in these cases and this situation needs to be improved.

In April 2015, the Government commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to conduct a survey of social services' experiences of this problem on the basis of, for example, reported concerns, and of the methods used to make contact and provide support to children and young people who are at risk of getting mixed up in violent extremism, as well as their relatives (Ku2015/0135/D). As the majority who are involved in these activities are young people, this assignment focuses on the social services' work with people under the age of 18 and on young adults. The survey will involve investigating and making an assessment of social services' collaboration with other stakeholders such as schools, local crime prevention councils, the Police Authority, the Security Service, the Prison and Probation Service, the National Board of Institutional Care and civil society organisations. The National Board of Health and Welfare will also gather information about how social services work on these issues in selected other countries, for example Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The National Board of Health and Welfare will compile examples of effective methods and forms of collaboration from both Sweden and abroad that have emerged from the survey and distribute this material via its website.

#### 4.6.4 Develop a gender perspective in the work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism

**Measure 13:** The Government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) with supplementing the resource *No reason to wait – Handbook for violence prevention work with children and young people* with information about violent extremism.

In March 2011, the National Board for Youth Affairs (now the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society) was commissioned to conduct a review focusing on attitudes and values concerning gender equality, masculinity and violence (U2011/2232/UC). The study *Young people and violence – an analysis of masculinity and preventive activities* (National Board for Youth Affairs 2013:1) demonstrates that the risk of violent or abusive actions increases for young men aged 16–25 who both agree with stereotypical assertions about gender roles, e.g. “gender equality between guys and girls is not important”, and with stereotypical assertions about masculinity and femininity. According to the review of research presented by the Agency in the report *Groups, masculinity and violence* (MUCF, 2014), group affiliation is of significance to constructions of masculinity and violence. Research points out how violence can be used against someone in the presence of a group with the aim of achieving masculine status, and how loyalty to a group may require such action. Consequently, the group, as an arena for constructions of masculinity, is important to efforts to prevent violence. This primarily applies to young people and boys, partly because the group is especially significant during this stage of life, and partly because boys are thought to construct masculinity with more aggressive and sexist elements in a group context.

Within the scope of this assignment, MUCF, together with Unizon and Men for Gender Equality, produced a handbook, *No reason to wait – Handbook for violence prevention work with children and young people* (2014). The aim of this handbook is to create an understanding of and facilitate the development of evidence-based violence prevention practices with a gender perspective for children and young people in Sweden.

There is a need to reinforce the gender perspective in work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The Government has tasked MUCF with supplementing this handbook with information concerning violent extremism (Ku2015/01868/D). The aim of this assignment is to complement the work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism with a gender perspective and, by using the handbook *No reason to wait*, make this area visible to municipalities and others who use the handbook in their efforts to prevent violence. The material produced by MUCF also has to be able to support the organisations that apply for central government grants from MUCF for activities that safeguard democracy against violent extremism.

#### 4.6.5 Develop the support provided by faith communities to parents, young people and relatives

Skr. 2014/15:144

**Measure 14:** The Government has tasked the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities (SST) with developing, in consultation with those faith communities that want to develop their efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, the support these communities provide to young people, parents and relatives.

Faith communities often have the legitimacy and knowledge required to address many of the issues young people, parents and others who belong to a faith community may have with respect to violent extremism. It is important that faith communities can obtain support from central government authorities to develop this work.

In December 2014, the Government tasked SST with stimulating, in consultation with those faith communities that want to develop their work against violent extremism, the support these communities provide to young people, parents and relatives (S2014/8833/PBB).

#### 4.6.6 Develop and disseminate knowledge and methods

**Measure 15:** The Government has commissioned the University of Gothenburg to develop and disseminate knowledge and methods for reducing the recruitment of people to violent ideologies and movements and to racist organisations.

In a joint statement, the University of Gothenburg and Kungälv Municipality have requested funding to establish a resource centre for studying and working on issues related to various forms of racist or violent ideologies and movements (U2015/1523/UH).

In order to combat the recruitment of people to violent extremism and racist organisations, society must understand the contributory causes at both the individual and the structural level. Knowledge and methods that are scientifically based are thus required. The Government has therefore commissioned the University of Gothenburg to develop and disseminate knowledge and methods for reducing the recruitment of people to violent ideologies and movements and racist ideologies.

#### 4.7 Measures to encourage individuals to leave violent extremist movements

The measures in this area aim to develop initiatives that are targeted at individuals who are or have been involved in violent extremist movements, with the aim of reintegrating them into society, allowing them to see the consequences of violent actions and activities, and ensuring they refrain from violence. These initiatives can involve investigating, adapt-

ing the range of services offered and measures such as mentors, support workers or educational support. It is especially vital that initiatives are developed for those who may have taken part in armed conflict for extremist or terrorist groups abroad. Relevant actors at the local level need to develop their work with these individuals. The Police Authority and the Security Service, among others, can in some cases provide relevant information for putting together local problem overviews that will guide local crime prevention and local efforts to counter violent extremism. In cases involving people being prosecuted, initiatives to help these people leave violent extremist or terrorist groups may be required. Consequently, the special residential homes for young people and the Prison and Probation Service have to develop preventive measures targeting individuals who are or have been members of violent extremist movements.

#### **4.7.1 Develop local initiatives for individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements**

**Measure 16:** The Government has tasked the National Coordinator with supporting relevant actors as they develop their work with individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements.

There are few local organisations that can identify and take care of individuals who need support and assistance to leave violent extremist movements. There is a lack of services for individuals who want to leave violent left-wing extremism or Islamist extremism. It is primarily civil society organisations that have developed such services and these focus on those who want to leave right-wing extremist groups. Additional actors need to work with initiatives that help people leave violent extremist movements. These services need to be expanded and local efforts involving these individuals need to be developed. Organisations and faith communities with knowledge of these issues need to be involved in this work.

In March 2015, the Government tasked the National Coordinator with supporting relevant actors to develop their work with people who want to leave violent extremist movements and individuals who return to Sweden and are suspected of having participated in armed conflict in other countries (ToR 2015:27). In June 2016, the Coordinator will submit a proposal as to how relevant actors can best organise this work.

#### **4.7.2 Grants for services that support individuals who want to leave extremist movements**

**Measure 17:** The Government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) with allocating central government grants to services that support individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements.

The Government's assessment is that there needs to be an opportunity for organisations to apply for funding to develop services that support individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements, as organisations have unique opportunities to create trust among individuals who may have a low level of trust in the authorities. In terms of support for individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements, organisations' opportunities to provide support constitute an important alternative to the initiatives government authorities and municipalities are able to implement.

Since 2012, MUCF has allocated funding to civil society organisations to prevent violent extremism. In December 2014, the Government gave MUCF a continued remit to allocate funding to services that support individuals who want to leave violent extremist movements to cover the period 2015–2018, in accordance with the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities to Safeguard Democracy (2011:1508).

#### **4.7.3 Survey methods and working practices that aim to prevent violent extremism in the special residential homes for young people**

**Measure 18:** The Government has commissioned the National Board of Institutional Care to conduct a survey of methods and working practices that can be used in work to prevent violent extremism in the Board's special residential homes for young people.

Experience from other countries indicates that institutional environments may be a breeding ground of radicalisation. In Sweden, there are examples where the grounds for someone being taken into care pursuant to the Care of Young People (Special Provisions) Act (1990:52) have been violent religious extremism or that young people are sentenced to institutional care for offences linked to extremism.

In April 2015, the Government commissioned the National Board of Institutional Care to conduct a survey of methods and working practices that can be used in work to prevent violent extremism in the Board's special residential homes for young people (Ku2015/0136/D). Within the scope of this commission, the Board is to gather information about how work to prevent violent extremism is conducted in systems for care of young people in a selection of other countries. The Board is to produce a compilation of the examples of methods and working practices that are used in Sweden and abroad that have emerged in the survey.

#### **4.7.4 Survey methods and working practices that aim to prevent violent extremism in the Swedish Prison and Probation Service**

**Measure 19:** The Government has commissioned the Swedish Prison and Probation Service to conduct a survey of methods and working practices that can be used in work to prevent violent extremism among

the Service's clients. This survey is also to encompass methods and working practices that can be used in work with clients who are already members of, or are linked in some other way to, violent extremist movements.

In other European countries such as France, prisons have been identified as an environment in which there is a risk of individuals being recruited to violent extremist and terrorist groups. There are a number of factors within the Swedish Prison and Probation Service that aim to reduce this risk, for example expanded intelligence activities, relatively small prison units, a conscious strategy for the placement of inmates and staff who work close to inmates on a day-to-day basis. In spite of these protective factors, inmates in remand facilities and prisons, as well as the Service's clients who are on probation, may be subject to detrimental influences both within the Service's facilities and from the wider community. In order to address this, it is important that the Prison and Probation Service has the methods and knowledge required to prevent radicalisation and to deal with individuals who are on the path towards radicalisation or have already joined violent extremist movements.

The Government has commissioned the Prison and Probation Service to conduct a survey of the methods and working practices that can be used in its work with clients who are in remand facilities, in prisons or on probation and who are members of, or are in some other way linked to, violent extremist groups (Ju2015/05232/KRIM).

## 4.8 Intensified Nordic and international sharing of knowledge and experience

The international collaboration and sharing of knowledge that Sweden participates in with respect to the development of initiatives to safeguard democracy against violent extremism have contributed to developing the national work. Several countries, such as Denmark, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have been working to develop measures for longer than Sweden has and thus constitute an important source of information about how initiatives can be developed. Furthermore, international collaboration on the prevention of violent extremism has increased in intensity in recent years due to the serious rise in violent extremism and terrorism in Syria and Iraq and the increased number of individuals who have joined these groups. The Government intends its work to safeguard democracy against violent extremism to involve regular dialogue and the sharing of experience at various levels with different countries.

### 4.8.1 Nordic knowledge and experience exchange

**Measure 20:** The Government intends to intensify Nordic knowledge and experience exchange.

Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are grappling with similar challenges from extremist groups, for example the distribution of extremist propaganda on the internet and crimes targeting religious minorities. In recent years, the Nordic countries have also developed their preventive programmes against violent extremism. Extensive work has been undertaken in Norway following the terrorist attack in 2011, for example in terms of the support provided to victims of terrorism. Local initiatives have been developed in Denmark, for example the ‘Århus Model’, which involves collaboration between government authorities, faith communities and various occupational groups, with the aim of preventing recruitment by extremist and terrorist groups abroad and undertaking initiatives for those who return having participated in such conflicts. In Sweden, the Government has appointed a National Coordinator with the aim of reinforcing and developing efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism.

In 2015, the Nordic governments have established a joint Nordic network that will promote cooperation between Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland with the aim of exchanging knowledge and experience concerning the prevention of violent extremism. In January 2015, a joint non-binding statement of intent was adopted by the responsible ministers in Oslo (Ku2015/352/D). The statement of intent means that frequent network meetings and also joint projects such as surveys and analyses may take place in future.

#### 4.8.2 International knowledge and experience exchange

**Measure 21:** The Government intends to continue participating in international networks with the aim of obtaining knowledge about the initiatives employed by other countries.

Violent extremist groups exist and act in a global context. This applies not least to the problem of people travelling abroad to fight with terrorist groups. For this reason, it is important to observe preventive efforts taking place in other countries and the central role of prevention in relation to legislation and combating crime.

Since 2008, Sweden has been represented in the Policy Planners’ Network on Countering Radicalisation and Polarisation (PPN). The aim of this network is to promote the exchange of experience between civil servants from the ministries responsible in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Canada. The Government Offices and representatives of the authority or organisation affected by the current agenda participate in these meetings.

Swedish experts on issues of violent extremism from authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations are also included in the European Commission’s Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), the remit of which is to help those who come into direct contact with problems relating to violent extremism in their day-to-day work to develop preventive efforts. This network aims to simplify the sharing of experiences and working methods in order to counter various types of radicalisation.

Because RAN creates a trans-sectoral sharing of experiences between various occupational groups that work with preventive initiatives, it has become an important actor in terms of knowledge about the prevention of violent extremism. Swedish participants include staff from Fryshuset, Hjälpkällan, the Swedish Defence University, the Prison and Probation Service and the City of Gothenburg.

The Government intends to continue participating actively in international knowledge and experience exchanges in the course of 2015 and 2016.

## 5 Measures Implemented 2011–2014

The Action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism (Skr. 2011/12:44) was adopted on 8 December 2011. The following reports and surveys formed the basis of this communication:

- the National Council for Crime Prevention’s survey of left-wing and right-wing extremism in the report *Violent political extremism in Sweden – Antidemocratic groups on the extreme right and left* (Brå 2009:15);
- the Security Service’s description of violent Islamist extremism in the report *Violent Islamist extremism in Sweden* (Swedish Security Service, 2010);
- the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions’ collection of examples of preventive work in the report *Local initiatives to counter violence-promoting political extremism – a collection of examples* (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010); and
- the National Board for Youth Affairs (now the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society) survey of activities to help people leave extremist groups in the report *Activities to help people leave extremist groups – the National Board for Youth Affairs’ analysis and proposals regarding how society can support young people who leave extremism behind them* (National Board for Youth Affairs, 2010).

### 5.1 Action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism 2012–2014

The aim of the Action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism was to safeguard and strengthen democracy and thus make Swedish society more resilient to violent extremism. In addition to initiatives against violent extremism, the action plan contained initiatives concerning xenophobia and conditions for democratically elected representatives. Over the course of 2012–2014, SEK 62 million was allocated to these initiatives. In addition, Fryshuset’s programme Exit, which is for individuals who want to leave right-wing extremist groups, has received

annual government funding of SEK 1.8 million since 2010. The measures in the action plan had the following six goals: Skr. 2014/15:144

- Awareness of the values on which the democratic system is based is to increase.
- Awareness and knowledge of violent extremism is to increase among government authorities, municipalities, civil society organisations and the enterprise sector.
- Mechanisms and structures are to be developed or established to enable government authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations to more effectively collaborate on prevention.
- Efforts to prevent individuals joining violent extremist movements and to help individuals leave such movements are to be intensified.
- Efforts to minimise the breeding grounds of ideologically motivated violence are to be intensified.
- European and global efforts to prevent extremism are to be developed further through international cooperation and information-sharing.

### **5.1.1 Summary of measures implemented in 2014**

This section contains an account of the measures and related assignments that the Government has given to various authorities in the period 2012–2014 with the aim of developing efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. The measures relating to xenophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (Measures 4 and 7) are included in the Government's initiatives to tackle racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and will be addressed within the scope of this work. Measures relating to support for research into the threats to democracy (Measure 8) and a study of conditions for democratically elected representatives (Measure 12) are not included in this account, as they are not specifically related to initiatives to counter violent extremism.

#### *Support to civil society for activities that promote democracy*

The National Board for Youth Affairs (now the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society) was tasked in 2011 with allocating funds to civil society organisations for activities that reinforce young people's democratic values and allocated approximately SEK 6 million to various projects (IJ2010/2203/DEM). The task of allocating funds to activities that promote democracy was then inserted into the action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism and continued until the end of 2014 (Ju2011/8862/D). A total of some SEK 10 million was allocated to 23 projects in the period 2012–2014, in accordance with the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities that Promote Democracy (2011:1509).

#### *Expanded dialogue with faith communities regarding work to promote democracy*

In 2012, the Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities was tasked with initiating an expanded dialogue with faith communities regarding work to promote democracy (Ju2011/8866/D). A report on this assignment was published in December 2014 (Ju2012/8068/D). Within

the scope of this assignment, the Commission has produced the resource *Democracy needs us – a resource for work with democracy and human rights in faith communities* (Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities, 2014).

*Methods and working materials for reinforcing young people's democratic values*

The Forum for Living History was tasked in 2012 with distributing methods and working materials for reinforcing young people's democratic values (Ju2011/8866/D). The Forum produced 22 workshops for teachers that are available on its website. The target group for this material is teachers of pupils in compulsory and upper-secondary schools. A final report on this assignment was published in 2014 (Ju2012/8068/D).

*Digital educational resources for compulsory and upper-secondary schools to safeguard democracy against violent extremism*

In 2013, the Forum for Living History was tasked with producing a digital resource for use in compulsory and upper-secondary schools based on witness testimony from the Holocaust, the crimes of communism and other crimes against humanity (Ku2012/1318/KA). The aim of this assignment was for this resource to contribute to improving the democratic awareness of young people. In 2014, the Forum was tasked with working to ensure this resource was distributed and made use of in compulsory and upper-secondary schools (Ku2013/2081/KA). A final report on this assignment was published in December 2014.

*Knowledge development concerning methods of preventing extremism*

In 2012, the Government commissioned an inquiry chair to:

- produce educational resources concerning methods of preventing violent extremism;
- promote collaboration and information-sharing regarding prevention between municipalities, government authorities and civil society organisations;
- work towards widening preventive efforts in order to address different forms of extremism; and
- submit proposals regarding how future preventive efforts can be improved and organised at the local level (ToR 2012:57).

A report on this assignment was published in December 2013 in the official report *When we care – proposals concerning collaboration and education in order to more effectively prevent violent extremism* (SOU 2013:81). The report proposed that a national coordinator be appointed with the aim of coordinating efforts to prevent violent extremism at the national level. According to the inquiry, the national coordinator's role should be to build up and run a collaboration model for the prevention of violent extremism along the lines of the SSP model in Denmark (SSP stands for Schools, Social services, Police).

In 2011, the Swedish Media Council was commissioned to conduct a study looking at how young people can be made stronger and protected against the influence of antidemocratic messages distributed via the internet (Ju2011/6776/D). An account of this assignment can be found in the report *Violent and anti-democratic messages on the internet* (Swedish Media Council, 2013).

The Council was subsequently tasked with developing a digital educational resource with the aim of improving young people's media and information literacy so as to counter violent extremism (Ju2013/3289/D). In June 2014, the Government instructed the Council to distribute this digital resource, *Media and Information literacy for me* nationally (Ju2014/4192/D). A report on this assignment was published in June 2015 (Ku2015/01783/D).

#### *Systematic review of violent extremism in Sweden*

In 2013, an inquiry chair was commissioned to compile a report concerning violent extremist movements in Sweden (Ju2013/4417/P). A report on this assignment is contained in the Ministry memorandum *Violent extremism in Sweden – current situation and trends* (Ds 2014:4).

#### *Prevent individuals from joining violent extremist groups and help those who want to leave such groups*

The National Board for Youth Affairs (now the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society) was tasked in 2012 with allocating funds to civil society organisations for activities that prevent violent extremism (Ju2011/8862/D). This support would be allocated to activities that prevent individuals from joining violent extremist movements and provide support to individuals who intend to leave such movements. A total of approximately SEK 11 million was allocated to 24 projects in the period 2012–2014, in accordance with the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities against Violent Extremism (2011:1508) (since 1 January 2015, the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities to Safeguard Democracy).

#### *Study of preventive initiatives against extremism in other countries*

In 2011, the Swedish Defence University was commissioned to undertake a study highlighting examples of successful efforts to prevent violent extremism in other countries (Ju2011/8862/D). There is an account of this survey in the report *Prevention of violent extremism in third countries – measures to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones* (Swedish Defence University, CATS, 2013).

#### *International collaboration and international information sharing*

Since 2008, Sweden has participated in the Policy Planners' Network on Countering Radicalisation and Polarisation (PPN) – an intergovernmental network that was created in order to systematise the exchange of information about the prevention of violent extremism. The following coun-

tries are part of this network: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain and Canada. The network is led by the independent think-tank the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD).

Sweden also participated in the EU's trans-sectoral network the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), which was established in 2011. This network exists to provide assistance to those who come into direct contact in their day-to-day work with problems relating to violent extremism in their preventive work and to make it easier to share experience and good working practices for countering different types of radicalisation. RAN is one aspect of the preventive measures in the EU strategy for combating radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism.

#### *Successful methods for preventing violent right-wing extremism*

Between 2012 and 2014, the Government Offices, together with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), undertook an EU project with the aim of countering and preventing right-wing extremism. Ten countries participated in this project (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Germany) and shared their experiences of preventive programmes and support for those who leave extremism. The website [www.thefreeinitiative.com](http://www.thefreeinitiative.com) contains material including the following:

- country reports with information and analyses of right-wing extremism in the ten participating countries;
- methods for dealing with specific challenges; and
- case studies of initiatives to counter right-wing extremism.

### **5.1.2 Specific information about the grants provided to civil society organisations**

The Government's assessment is that civil society organisations, with their various activities, can reach individuals and groups that have a low level of trust in the authorities. They are also able to offer flexible solutions and solutions adapted to the situation in a way that is different to that of government authorities and municipal services. It is therefore of vital importance that organisations have the opportunity to apply for central government grants for activities that can prevent violent extremism. However, the Government has found that the two previous forms of central government grant in the action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism during 2012–2014 overlapped.

It has not been possible to link the activities created thanks to support from the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities that Promote Democracy (2011:1509) to the work to prevent violent extremism. Because specific initiatives are required in order to counter violent extremism, the Government chose to discontinue central government grants for activities that promote democracy and instead extend the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities against Violent Extremism (2011:1508) to cover the period 2015–2018. The Government also changed the name of the Ordinance to the Ordinance on Central Government Grants for Activities to Safeguard Democracy.

## 5.2 Results of the Swedish Agency for Public Management's evaluation of the action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism

Skr. 2014/15:144

In 2014, the Swedish Agency for Public Management was tasked with evaluating the action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism. This assignment included:

- evaluating the extent to which the aim of the action plan has been achieved, and whether the measures have been suitable and have been implemented by the appropriate and relevant authorities in a satisfactory way;
- analysing the effects of the measures at national and local level and among civil society organisations, as well as assessing how many individuals and which target groups, particularly young people, have been reached by the work undertaken within the scope of the action plan and how the target groups have participated in the design of the initiatives;
- investigating whether and how the authorities and civil society organisations concerned have benefited from the measures in the action plan; and
- submitting recommendations for future work.

This assignment also involved evaluating those measures implemented that specifically related to violent extremism. The action plan's measures to tackle xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, support for research into threats to democracy and studies looking at conditions for democratically elected representatives are not included in the evaluation.

The Agency for Public Management's overall assessment is that an action plan is an effective way to systematise this type of work. The action plan contributed to concretising and narrowing down the problem area of violent extremism. However, according to the Agency, several parts were missing, for example a target group analysis. There were also too few measures and actors. There now follows a summary of the Agency's analysis and recommendations.

### *Advantages of the basic premise of safeguarding democracy*

The Agency emphasises that the action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism differs from many of those found in other countries. One difference is that it encompasses the three most prominent violent extremist movements in Sweden, not simply one group. The action plan focuses on the democratic problem of violent extremism, while the work of many other countries only targets violence and terrorism. The Agency's assessment is that there are benefits to framing the action plan in this way, for example this approach has probably reduced the stigmatisation of those who are in or close to these movements.

### *The measures have contributed to the objectives*

The majority of the measures the Agency has evaluated have contributed to their particular objectives. They have thus also contributed towards the

overall goals of the action plan. Nevertheless, it is unclear to what extent the goals have been achieved and there are limited opportunities to determine what actual effects the action plan has had. The Agency concludes that many of the measures have been incorporated into the ordinary activities of the authorities and organisations concerned.

*Additional actors and measures are required*

The Agency argues that the action plan contains too few initiatives and too few actors in relation to its aim. In other countries there are examples of additional measures that Sweden can use as inspiration for further efforts. The measures do not appear to be a cohesive and systematised way to approach the problem in question. Several other countries' action plans include, for example, support for parents and other family members, which is only indirectly encompassed by the Swedish action plan through MUCF's support to certain civil society organisations.

*The local perspective needs to be developed*

Practical efforts to prevent violent extremism must take place at the local level. The measures in the action plan primarily involved measures at the national level. Despite the action plan stating that authorities and relevant societal actors, particularly those at the local level, must have the tools and resources to prevent violent extremism and that the work requires widespread support in the community, the Agency's assessment is that this did not place sufficient emphasis on local efforts. The Agency also believes that too much responsibility for developing initiatives was placed in the hands of civil society organisations.

*Need for detailed target group analysis*

The Agency emphasises that the action plan lacks a detailed analysis of the target groups. It is not possible to determine whether the measures are to reach out to all citizens, all young people, young people at risk or those who are already convinced radical extremists. The Agency argues that there are good grounds to assume that these different groups are susceptible to different types of measures. The absence of a specific recipient for both the action plan as a whole and the individual measures means that the goal is unclear.

*Develop coordination and governance*

During the implementation of the action plan, no formal network for coordinating this work was established within the Government Offices. Nor has there been any formal collaboration between the authorities involved. The Agency believes that this has affected the conditions for governing this work in an effective way, for example with respect to dealing with proposals for development that have been received and analysis of the measures' results. According to the Agency, the unit within the Government Offices that has been responsible for the measures in the action plan has had a role that is far too hands-on. The Agency indicates that the authorities should have been given a clearer responsibility

for collaboration or that an individual authority should have been given explicit responsibility for coordination. Skr. 2014/15:144

*The Swedish Agency for Public Management's recommendations for future work*

The Agency was instructed to submit recommendations for future work. As the evaluation took place in parallel with the National Coordinator's assignment, the Agency's recommendations concentrate on proposals regarding the Government's management.

- *Continued need for an action plan.* A number of measures have been implemented at the national level and at the instigation of the National Coordinator, but there are still measures that have been implemented in other countries that have yet to be tried in Sweden. Some of them have involved, for example, prison and probation services, the care of young people and social services.
- *The advantages of governing authorities through an action plan are thus still relevant.* The Agency recommends that a systematic summary and action plan be drawn up. This is to function as a complement to the National Coordinator, which will primarily work to stimulate local initiatives. This summary could be a separate action plan or incorporated into a plan for overall work to promote democracy, such as the latest democracy communication.
- *An action plan must be preceded by a target group analysis.* In order for an action plan to be effective, the measures should be adapted to the target group. A general effort to promote democracy can reinforce society as a whole's resistance to extremism, but is hardly as effective against those who have already placed themselves outside the democratic social order. Other types of measures are probably required in order to reach young people who are on the path towards radicalisation or mistrust the established authorities. The Agency recommends that the work to draw up a new action plan be preceded by a target group analysis.
- *Work on a new action plan can begin, but should be coordinated with the results from the National Coordinator.* The National Coordinator's work will be concluded by 15 June 2016, at the latest. The Agency recommends that work on a new action plan should be coordinated with this work. This is because the National Coordinator, whose remit primarily concerns local efforts, is very likely to identify requirements for nationwide measures.
- *Structure for governance of work based on the action plan.* Efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism require coordination between the national and local levels. However, this is not sufficient; it is just as important for there to be horizontal collaboration within the Government Offices and coordination between the authorities involved. The Agency recommends that issues concerning governance and collaboration be prioritised in future work. The Agency's assessment is that there are strong grounds to establish an interdepartmental working group on this issue. One possible solution for the coordination of authorities may be to establish a council for the relevant authorities, with a secretariat to back this up.

## 6 Funding and economic consequences

The Government has at its disposal within Expenditure Area 1 – Governance, Appropriation 6:1 General Elections and Democracy. The various commissions for national authorities that are included in this Communication are primarily funded using this appropriation.

The exceptions are the following:

- the National Coordinator to Safeguard Democracy Against Violent Extremism’s commission, which is funded from the Government’s inquiry budget within Expenditure Area 1, Appropriation 4:1 The Government Offices of Sweden etc.;
- the Forum for Living History’s commission, which is funded from Expenditure Area 17, Appropriation 8:5 Forum for Living History;
- the Government’s support for the University of Gothenburg, which is funded from Expenditure Area 16, Appropriation 1:5 Development of the School System and Other Educational Organisations;
- the Swedish Media Council’s commission, which is partly funded via Expenditure Area 13 – Integration and Gender Equality, Appropriation 2:2 Measures against Racism and Discrimination etc., Appropriation Item 5 for fiscal year 2015, as well as Expenditure Area 13 – Integration and Gender Equality, Appropriation 3:1 Special Gender Equality Measures, Appropriation Item 12 Gender Equality Initiatives Subsequent to a Government Decision.

## 7 Follow-up and evaluation

When the National Coordinator’s work ends in June 2016, the Government intends to address the proposals and the strategy the National Coordinator has been tasked with drawing up. The Government also intends to simultaneously follow up all measures in this Communication with the aim of assessing their effects and the need for new measures.