



Press Release

Luxembourg, 29 May 2018

EU action against radicalisation addresses Member States' needs, but shortfalls in coordination and evaluation remain, say Auditors

EU support for Member States in their efforts to combat radicalisation is addressing their needs, but there are some shortfalls in coordination and evaluation, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. The Commission cannot demonstrate how effective EU-funded counter-radicalisation actions actually are, say the auditors, which means there is a risk of lessons not being learned for the future.

Member States are responsible for their own national security, including the fight against terrorism. They are in charge of designing and implementing measures to tackle radicalisation, where people embrace extremist ideologies and behaviour that could lead them to commit acts of terrorism. The majority of suspects involved in the recent terrorist attacks in Europe were European citizens who had been radicalised. The European Commission supports the Member States in their efforts and helps to ensure the exchange of good practice.

EU support for Member States in their fight against radicalisation is financed by various funds, such as the Internal Security Fund, the Horizon 2020 Programme, the Justice Programme, Erasmus+ and the European Social Fund.

"The Commission has coordinated support across its different departments and developed a number of synergies. But there is scope for improvement," said Jan Gregor, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the report. "It has no complete overview of EU-funded actions and the EU funds used do not have indicators or targets to measure success in addressing radicalisation."

The auditors found that the Radicalisation Awareness Network, which connects psychologists, teachers, social workers, police, prison and probation officers across Europe working with those vulnerable to radicalisation, was not used to its full potential. Its achievements were often measured in terms of activity (e.g. meetings held or documents produced) rather than effectiveness (e.g. knowledge acquired, impact on participants' work).

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' special report. The full report is available at www.eca.europa.eu.

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The EU Internet Referral Unit managed by Europol flags online terrorist content and alerts service providers such as YouTube, Google, Facebook and Twitter. However, the auditors noted that EU statistics do not show the impact of EU action on the prevalence of terrorist propaganda on the internet. Sometimes, propaganda material that had been removed is simply uploaded again or moved to other platforms (known as the “whack-a-mole” effect).

The audit work included visits to national authorities in Belgium and France in order to assess the relevance and added-value of the support they receive. The auditors recommend that the European Commission should improve the way it coordinates its actions to address radicalisation, increase practical support to practitioners and policymakers in the Member States and improve its framework for assessing results.

Notes to Editors

The ECA presents its special reports to the European Parliament and Council of the EU, as well as to other interested parties such as national parliaments, industry stakeholders and representatives of civil society. The vast majority of the recommendations we make in our reports are put into practice. This high level of take-up underlines the benefit of our work to EU citizens.

Special report 13/2018 “Tackling radicalisation that leads to terrorism: the Commission addressed the needs of Member States, but with some shortfalls in coordination and evaluation” is available on the ECA website (eca.europa.eu) in 23 EU languages.