# RADICALISATION

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## The Societal Response To Radicalisation And The Role Of The Security Environment

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

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

At the seminar, we first established a conceptual and terminological framework for studying and monitoring radicalisation and the measures against it. Prof. Iztok Prezelj, the dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, and prof. Branko Lobnikar, the vice-dean for research from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, discussed the concepts of radicalisation, de-radicalisation and disengagement. The starting point of their discussion was that terminological clarity must be ensured before the official concept and policy of monitoring radicalisation and de-radicalisation is created. The seminar continued by reviewing models of different approaches to identify and monitor radicalisation leading to violence. Prof. Janja Vuga Beršnak from the Faculty of Social Sciences, and Prof. Andrej Sotlar, Dean of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, discussed vulnerable social groups to radicalisation (with a particular focus on youth) and presented research findings on the attitude towards radicalisation and extremism among young people in Slovenia. Representative of Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency and Albert Černigoj, Head of Counter-Terrorism and Extreme Violence Department of Slovenian Police, presented Slovenia's experience in preventing radicalisation, emphasising international cooperation. The first part of the seminar was concluded by Prof. Lobnikar's presentation of the role of security and intelligence services in responding to radicalisation in the Western Balkans - results of an empirical study among stakeholders on preventing and responding to radicalisation, extreme violence and terrorism were presented.

At the seminar a wide range of state and non-state institutions that (may) deal with monitoring radicalisation and countermeasures, and the role of intelligence services within this endeavour were discussed. Rajko Kozmelj, former Director of Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency, discussed a comprehensive, whole society approach to radicalisation and the role of intelligence and security services. This was the introduction to the final part of the seminar: *Tour the table* – three to five-minute presentations of seminar participants about their experiences in responding to radicalisation. The participants presented the key

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