



Europe's Confrontation of Religious Extremism

Case studies (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden)

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In recent years, extremism has increased in Europe. Extremists are trying to dismantle their ideas in societies and politics through different ranges of strategies, making it crucial for European states to combat extremism. In light of the wave of attacks that took place in Paris and Brussels in 2015 and 2016 and continued, European states paid attention to combat Islamist extremism and religious intolerance as forms of terrorism by amending and implementing new policies, as it became crucial for the European states and its local authorities to counter this phenomenon. In this context, most of the European governments, if not all, have announced plans and adopted different measures to combat radicalization and a series of measures to prevent terrorist threats from the bearers of extremist ideologies from Islamist and right wing extremists. The Global Terrorism Index 2020 of the Institute for Economics and Peace points that there is no other point in the past 50 years have there been more right-wing terrorist acts than the present days.

In response, the Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue issues a report entitled “Europe's Confrontation of Religious Extremism. Case studies (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden)”. The report draws on the counter measures, initiatives, and laws implemented by Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden as part of the governments’ strategies to counter Islamist’ extremism. The report reveals that all six countries recognize islamist extremism as a threat to their national security.

The report reveals the different measures adopted by each country to counter and prevent radicalism and religious intolerance; Belgium efforts are evident in the government’s implementation of a comprehensive approach to combat extremism by amending existing legal frameworks, creating new plans specifically developed to fight Islamist extremism, and racism; Denmark’s counter measures are present in the government implementation of legislations, action plans, and its multilayered and comprehensive collaboration system between its local and national authorities; in France, the measures are manifested in the state’s recent established legislation, laws as well as officials’ discourse; Germany’s measures are constructed in the government’ establishment of Committees’ of comprehensive programme, amendments of existing laws and intelligence surveillance to extremists organizations and persons; Netherlands counter measures are evident in the efforts implemented by the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service and the implementation of counter terrorism policies and strategies. Finally, the report reveals the measures implemented by the Swedish ministries to combat the threat posed by Islamist extremism.

Belgium

Belgium represents one of the most important country cases in Europe when it comes to violent Islamist radicalisation and extremism. For a long period of time, Belgium has witnessed a cycle of violent terrorist attacks. Despite a long history of forms of violent extremism, Belgium was unprepared for the attacks that took place in mid-2010s.

As a result, in the aftermath of Paris and Brussels attacks in 2015 and 2016, the existing legal framework [was amended](#) by Belgium’s counter-terrorism 30 measures, which was released in two batches, including legislative and institutional measures. It resulted in the modification of the Belgian



Criminal Code and Belgian Criminal Procedure. The attacks prompted the Belgian authorities to announce a series of 30 measures dedicated to increasing the efficiency of their fight against terrorism.

The measures targets terrorism and Islamists extremism as forms of threats. The measures have created a terrorist offence related to travelling abroad for terrorist purposes; the enlargement of cases in which Belgian nationality can be revoked; an increase in the security budget with a focus on terrorism measures; police raids and home searches were made easier, surveillance techniques were expanded; border security was tightened; and dismantling unrecognized places of worship if there are concerns of radicalisation was made easier, and closing down websites preaching hate.

Also, among those measures, is the “[Plan Canal](#)”, conceived by the Belgian Ministry of Home Affairs, which focuses on eight municipalities in Brussels and surrounding areas, intending to monitor those localities perceived as vulnerable to radicalization. It prioritizes monitoring imams and mosques and trying to eradicate the illegal economy.

The plan canal is implemented with the “National Action Plan against Radicalization” of 2005. The latter action plan aims at enhancing cooperation between the federal state and federal entities. Both plans allow detention of hate preachers, in addition to imposing house arrests and deportation. In addition to mosques, the plans also aimed at detecting and dismantling unrecognized and hidden places of worship that propagate radical or jihadist ideas. This policy also affects websites disseminating hate by shutting them down. Belgium has also established new prison sections to separate radicalized detainees from other prisoners in order not to spread their ideas.

The Brussels attacks also prompted the government to ‘take back’ the Grand Mosque, the largest mosque in Belgium, as an effort by the Belgian government to monitor and decrease extremist messaging in the country’s mosques. According to commission member Servais Verherstraeten, there is a “perception that there is something to hide in the most important mosque in the country.”

After Belgian Muslims played primary roles in major terror attacks in November 2015 and March 2016, Belgian officials accused the mosque’s imams of espousing radical messages by spreading Wahhabi Salafism, which the government stated played a role in spreading violent radicalism. “The concession will be terminated immediately ... in order to put an end to foreign interference in the way Islam is taught in Belgium,” the Belgian government said in a statement.

Moreover, in the 2018 UN conference on “Strengthening international cooperation to combat the evolving threat of terrorism”, Belgium referred to the issue of violent extremism on a national level, concluding that signs of radicalism shall be captured in an early stage and to be transmitted to the police services. Belgium highlighted the importance of municipalities to set up antenna. The antenna is a specialized taskforce where all safety services are represented and where potentially dangerous citizens are closely monitored even if they haven’t committed a crime yet. In Belgium’s statement, the government also referred to the idea of brain washing through online media, leading the government to create a special unit within the Belgian police force solely dedicated to track, trace and ban hateful



and inflammatory online messages. Belgium also revealed its work on creating “counter narrative” as an alternative for jihadist propaganda.

As part of the government plan to track radical ideas, the Brussels suburb of Molenbeek, one of 19 municipalities, has specifically come under scrutiny, and is known for a set of conditions believed to be conducive to radicalization. As of 2017, Molenbeek housed 49 terror suspects per 100,000 people. The ratio in the rest of Belgium was three out of 100,000. In the same year, Molenbeek housed 26 times as many mosques per 100,000 people than the rest of Belgium, and more than twice as many foreign residents per 100,000 people than the rest of Belgium, as a result the Molenbeek government has taken several steps to fight radicalization in the suburb. Authorities have increased monitoring of extremist messaging in mosques. At least five mosques and schools have been shut down since 2016. Some groups in Molenbeek have sought to fight radicalization by breaking down preconceptions about Muslims. Authorities have also increased the number of surveillance systems and the number of officials monitoring suspected extremists.

Moreover, as part of the government plan to combat religious intolerance, the ministerial committee for intelligence and security decided to reform Plan R. to concentrate on radicalisation and penetrate and preventive and proactive measures, which came into force in 2006, and then was revised after 2015 attacks.

In order to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, Plan R. aims to detect radicalizing actors in an early stage so as to be able to take the necessary measures, while the Brussels Region, the Flemish Community and the French Community have drawn up their own action plans which are carried out in coordination with Plan R. Regions have also developed their own similar plans, with the two not necessarily coinciding. In 2015, the Flemish parliament established its own committee, the Committee for Combatting Violent Radicalisation (CCVR). Two services were created by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation: a support and resources centre (CREA) with responsibility for support and training regional service providers; and the Center for Help and Support for anyone concerned by Extremism and Violent Radicalism (CAPREV), established to support young people and adults who had been radicalized, drawing on experts across several fields, and with a focus on disengagement and reintegration.

Also following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, The National Security Council, headed by the Prime Minister, was created to coordinate the overall intelligence approach. The government also focused on developing plans to address radicalization in prisons and for combating violent extremism in the Brussels Canal District.

Denmark

In contrast to many EU countries, Denmark has less experience of Islamists and extremists violence. However, there is a growing concern by the Danish government to the threat posed by cyber security in instigating violence, hate speech and terrorist attacks by Isis and foreign fighter’s returnees. In response to these threats, Denmark has engaged its policy, legislation and services, in a comprehensive



multilayered and integrated system. The Danish government identifies that extremist terrorist threat in the west stems from individuals and small groups who are inspired and radicalized online but carry out their attacks independently.

Over the past decade, Danish authorities have identified Islamist extremist ideology as a serious and imminent threat. In particular, authorities have been concerned by the threat from [al-Qaeda](#) since the publication of controversial cartoons in 2005 and 2008 by CTA

Right-wing extremism poses a challenge for the country. PET, Denmark's intelligence agency, has dedicated additional resources to monitor the spread of right-wing propaganda. In, 2020, PET raised the terror threat in Denmark from "reduced" to "general" given the growing threat of European right-wing extremists throughout the world. Anders Henriksen, the head of the Center for Terror analysis, states "the most likely right-wing terrorist attack in Denmark is an attack carried out by a solo terrorist or a small group." Denmark's right-wing extremist have multiple objectives, with their primary motivation of restraint the spread of Islam in Denmark, along with other objectives such as curbing immigration and confronting political opponents considered responsible for non-Western immigration to Europe, particularly left-wing politicians and groups. Within the overall assessment of the terror threat to Denmark, the Centre for Terror Analysis clarifies that the terror threat from right wing extremism is a threat to Danish interests and security.

Denmark's most notable anti-extremism and anti-terrorism legislation can be found in its two Anti-Terror Packages from 2002 and 2006. Following the February 2015 attacks in Copenhagen, Denmark approved legislation that allows the government to issue travel bans for Danish nationals and to repeal residence permits of foreigners who pose a risk to the country. A December 2016 law allows authorities to sanction and ban religious leaders from entering the country if they "pose concern for public order."

Danish authorities have also initiated various counter-extremism and de-radicalization programs to fight religious intolerance. In February 2018, Denmark's National Center for the Prevention of Extremism issued a handbook that would provide municipalities the necessary tactics and methods to prevent radicalization and extremism.

Also in 2016, Denmark published its national action plan to counter and prevent extremism and radicalism, and due to the new challenges facing the Danish society, the government allocated funds to support new initiatives. The new initiatives in the plan outlines enhanced policing efforts, countering propaganda and preventing online radicalization, addressing foreign fighters and returnees, targeted criminal intervention programs, preventing radicalization in prisons, day-care and school programming, and strengthening outreach to local communities.

Moreover, the Danish effort to prevent extremism and radicalisation is based on interagency collaborations across a wide range of sectors, involving both local and national authorities employing different types of interventions to address various target groups. In 2016, the former Liberal government, the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Liberal Alliance, the Alternative, the Radical Left, the Socialist People's Party and the Conservative People's Party entered into an agreement



on the implementation of the 2017 rate pool for foreigners, integration and housing. The agreement allocated funds for the implementation of a total of 9 initiatives divided into four focus areas: Strengthened national efforts, strengthened municipal efforts, prevention of online radicalization and prevention of radicalization in day care, primary and lower secondary education.

France

In response to the terror attacks that France has been experiencing recently, especially the two brutal recent attacks that shocked France; the beheading of Samuall Patty, the teacher who showed his pupils cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed and the stabbing to death of three people in a church in Nice. Accordingly, the government has launched what it calls an unprecedented action against “Islamist separatism”.

As a way to combat the extremist ideology that take place on the French territory and to tackle the root causes of jihadist violence and religious intolerance in response to a wave of attacks that has seen more than 250 people murdered since 2015, the French national assembly submitted a bill, on the 16th of February, to protect the country from the dangers of what the government calls “Islamist separatism”. However, the French president’s office said the bill “is not against Islam. It is against people who in the name of a wrong or reconstructed vision of a religion behave in a way contrary to the republic”. The bill titled as “*Supporting respect for the principles of the Republic*” covers most aspects of the French life, and it is intended to protect French core values. Macron himself identified the law to be “one of the most radical decisions taken since the laws of 1882”.

The draft bill was introduced by President Macron last year after a series of attacks by radical Islamists rocked the country, it was also introduced on the 115th anniversary of the law that enshrined the separation of state and church in France on the 9th of December and was approved by the lower house. The bill basically aims to reinforce the legal tools available to the government to curtail extremism from taking hold in the French society.

According to Macron, ‘Islamist Separatism’ counters and rejects the basic values of the French society in the form of rejecting secularism, equality between the sexes and other core values of the French society.

The bill aims to reinforce France’s historical tradition of discouraging any behavior that seeks to enforce religious views in the public; the interior minister said the bill is “an extremely strong secular offensive”, “it’s a tough text but necessary for the republic”.

The bill as explained by Macron is manifested in four core pillars to counter extremism “Islamist separatism”. First, in regards to associations, the law strengthens the state control measures and power to dissolve associations that deems to spread messages that contradict the principles of the republic. The law also requires associations to sign contact with government to uphold respect and demonstrate commitment for the republican values and principles in order to receive state subsidies. It also imposes constraints on associations funding, any French association with religious ties that receive foreign funding will have to provide strict accounting to the government. The law requires associations to



declare and have their accounts certified on donations that exceed 10,000 euros as a way to repress religious funding under article 126. In addition, the law allows the state to dissolve association if it infringed on the French principles.

In regards to education, the legislation restricts home schooling only to medical and health reasons, as Macron finds homeschooling to be a reason behind spreading radical ideas, “you find out that their education consists of prayers and certain classes”. Accordingly, school will be mandatory for all children over 3 years. The legislation also ends the ELCO teaching system which provides for the teaching of languages and cultures of origins, which is provided by teachers from native countries from Algeria, Morocco and Turkey.

The third pillar focuses on the enlightenment of Islam in France. The bill aims to restructure Islam in a way to adapt to the French society, according to Macron “We can speak of an Islam particular to France. We must help this religion to structure itself in our country so that it is a partner of the Republic on matters of shared concern”. I hope, I believe – to build a form of Islam in our country that is compatible with Enlightenment values. An Islam that can peacefully coexist with the Republic, respecting all the rules of separation and calming all voices”.

Specific measures of the bill crack down on practices such as virginity certificates, polygamy, or arranged marriage. In the case of polygamy, the bill stipulates under article 14 “No residence document can be issued to a foreigner who lives in France in a state of polygamy. Any residence document held by a foreigner in such a situation is withdrawn”

In addition, doctors’ examination of girls virginity tests will be condemned to be illegal as it is enshrined under article 225 - 4 – 11 “The fact of making offers or promises to a person, of offering him any gifts, gifts or advantages or of using pressure or constraints of any kind against him so that he submits to an examination for the establishment of a certificate of virginity is punishable by one year of imprisonment and a fine of 15,000 euros”.

The bill will also end the consular system which is the training of imams in foreign countries, and in return, the state will give trainings for imams in order to uphold Islam full compatibility with the republic’s values, and curb the spread of radical ideas in France.

The fourth area relates to public services. The bill manifest under article 433-3-1 that “any attempt or act of intimidation against any person participating in the execution of a public service mission, in order to obtain for oneself or for others a total or partial exemption or a differentiated application of the rules which govern the functioning of the said services to be punished with five years in jail and a €75,000 fine.”

The bill also focuses on online hate speech under article 223 - 1 - 1. The legislation created a new crime, article “The act of disseminating information about someone's private, family or professional life that makes them identifiable with the aim of endangering their lives will now be punishable by three years in jail and a fine of up to €45,000”. The approved law expands the state powers and attempts to uphold and requires all citizens and organizations to commit to the state values.



Although that the word Islam or Muslims is not explicitly mentioned throughout the text; most of its legislation refer to practices that does not confine with some Muslims. The bill is originally proposed as a tool to be utilized by the state to fight all forms of extremism, especially the one provoked by Islamists. For example, the Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the bill "provides concrete responses to... the development of radical Islam, an ideology hostile to the principles and values on which the Republic is founded", also the prime minister Jean Castex has referred to the fundamentality of the text as a mean to defend France's principles, "It is a text that seeks to protect all our citizens — it is a text in line with the great tradition of the founders of our republic".

In addition, as part of the government battle against religious intolerance, in particular, Islamist extremism, the Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin revealed last month the government plan to inspect mosques and 76 prayer halls suspected of radical teachings as part of a crackdown on Islamist extremists, and if any was found to promote extremism they would be closed down.

Further measures were installed by the government actions to curb down the dissemination of violent Islamists actions or any form of extremists ideas. In 2020, France's constitutional court, [struck down](#) key provisions of a [bill on online hate speech](#) known as the "[Loi Avia](#)", and it was adopted by the French Parliament on May 13, 2020, after a [long legislative process](#). The bill aims to to fight hate speech on high-visibility social media platforms and search engines, such as Facebook or Google, by mandating that they remove "clearly illegal" hateful content within 24 hours of being notified of it. This was to apply to content violating "human dignity" or inciting hatred, violence, or discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, and any failure to remove content within 24 hours could lead to fines of up to 200,000 euros.

Moreover, the legislative system in France is still concerned about the republic's fight against Islamist extremism. On the 10th of February 2021, Marine le Pain proposed a bill to the national security assembly aimed at combating Islamist ideologies, whereby she criticized the bill presented by Emmanuel Macron as it didn't directly tackle the problem of Islamism. Also, on the 9th of February Emmanuelle Menard proposed a law against Islamism.

The preceding measures adopted by the French government and the increasing extremist discourse by government officials reveal the republic's practices in combating religious intolerance and Islamist extremism. The French efforts are only part of the European countries fight in combating extremism.

Germany

Islamists extremism, as well as right wing extremism, are currently posing multiple challenges and threats, in Germany. These issues are considered key priorities in Germany's foreign policy as it threatens the core values of foreign policy, human rights, democracy and freedom. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas stated that "right-wing extremism is toxic for our democracies".

Anti-Muslim and Islamophobic attitudes are widely spread in Germany; they have even strongly intensified in parts of the population. In recent years, with the PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamicisation of the Occident) demonstrations that took place in Germany and affected the European



world, it has become quite clear, that anti-Muslim and hostile attitudes are far spread not only in extreme right wing circles, but are largely adopted by all strands of German society, threatening the German's cohesive and multicultural society.

In 2020, The German Internal Intelligence Service released its annual report on organizations that pose a threat to the state's internal security, identifying the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hezbollah as main threats.

The German Federal Office of the Protection of the Constitution (BFV), has warned of the imminent danger posed by the organization and designated the Brotherhood as "totalitarian." The country's intelligence service concluded that the Islamist organization poses "a greater threat to democracy than terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda or the ISIS..." Additionally, the BFV, stated that the Brotherhood is a threat to the constitutional and democratic principles of the state

In order to confront the threat posed by radical Islamists organizations, in february 2021, German police carried out raids in 26 locations across Berlin and neighbouring Brandenburg state following the banning and dissolution of a radical Islamist group in the capital. Berlin's Senate interior department said it had outlawed Jama'atu Berlin, "a young and very radical jihad Salafist" association, also known as Tauhid Berlin, saying the group was advocating terrorist attacks. The number of Salafists in Germany rose to a record high of 12,150 in 2019, the domestic intelligence agency said in its annual report last year, more than tripling since 2011. "The danger of Islamist terrorism remains high," Geisel said on Thursday. "Today's ban is another building block in the resolute fight against violent extremism."

In the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, 109 mosques are under constant intelligence surveillance. The government also believes that 70 of these mosques are Salafist, and 16 of them under the Muslim Brotherhood's extremist influence.

In addition, the government proceeds with its efforts to counter religious intolerance and all forms of extremism. In 2020, the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, has set up a Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism. The Cabinet Committee presented an extensive list of measures to fight racism and right wing extremism by providing more than one billion euros over the period 2021-2024. The committee presented a list including 89 measures to be adopted in combating racism, right wing extremism and anti-Semitism. The list of measures was created by representatives of civil societies from migrants' organizations, science and research communities as well as representatives from the federal states.

The measures aim to generate and spread awareness of racism phenomenon that is affecting the German society and improve state structures to combat right wing extremism through the cooperation with security authorities, judiciary, and civil society actors. The measures also aim to extend the work of the government within the society to prevent right-wing extremism and racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and all other forms of enmity against people, and to further develop political education and work to promote democracy. Additionally, the measures highlight the need of supporting victims of racist discrimination and ensure their protection. It also works toward recognizing the vitality of



diversified society to ensure equal opportunities for all people especially for those with migrant backgrounds.

The committee further announced that it will focus on expanding international youth exchange programmes, strengthening education and teaching values at German schools abroad and partner schools, and expanding international visits to memorials. The reappraisal of colonialism will also be strengthened through new international initiatives such as joint textbook projects and the expansion of the “kulturweit” volunteer programme. Another key priority presented by the cabinet is the planned expansion of existing international networks in international academic cooperation in the field of research on racism, antisemitism and right-wing extremism. The Federal Foreign Office will also continue to take action against targeted disinformation, which exacerbates societal divisions and can thus fuel racism and right-wing extremism.

Hate speech still constitutes an issue for the federal government as it instigates violence. In 2020, Germany was marked as the state of hate by UK advocacy group Hope not Hate. In addition, the BfV President Thomas Haldenwang, clarified that in 2019, there were 32,080 right-wing extremists in Germany compared to 24,100 in 2018. Of these, 13,000 people can be classified as violence-oriented. The BFV statistics also reveal that Compared to 2018 (19,409), the total number of right-wing extremist criminal and violent offenses rose by 9.7% to 21,290 offenses.

Accordingly, the federal foreign office announced the expansion of its cultural programme and education policy to combat right-wing extremism, racism and antisemitism. Also, as a way of countering religious intolerance and combating hate crime by the government, a regulating online hate speech law known as the Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG) has been amended, which was originally introduced in 2017 to regulate and remove unlawful content that incite violence.

The February 2020 amendment provides measures to combat them more intensively and effectively. The draft also expanded the criminal code to include offenses and threats that disturb public peace, and to punish those who disseminate insulting writings. The Bundestag has adopted the amendments of the Network enforcement Act and applied it since January 2021. According to Reuters, the law requires internet companies to remove offensive content within 24 hours, or to face up to 50 million euros in fines. The NetzDG aims to counter 22 different online offences, including cyberbullying, disinformation, child sexual exploitation, defamation, and terrorist use of the internet. The German Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection, Christine Lambrecht, said “With the reform we are strengthening the rights of users of social networks. We make it clear: reporting channels must be easy for everyone to find and easy to use. Anyone who is threatened or insulted on the Internet must be able to report this to the social network simply and straightforwardly. Furthermore, we are simplifying the enforcement of information claims.”

In addition, the German domestic intelligence agency has put the opposition Alternative for Germany (AfD) party under observation, as it spread radical and extremist rhetoric.



Also in the government efforts to curtail any terrorist threat or attack, the cabinet adopted multiple measures for stricter arms control in 2019. Before obtaining a firearms license, authorities will in future have to check with the intelligence services, to ascertain whether any information about the individual is available that would preclude issuing a license. This is to ensure the members of unconstitutional associations are no longer able to acquire weapons. Extremists who are already in possession of a weapon can also be required to surrender the weapon on the basis of intelligence service information.

Despite Germany's effort and initiatives taken by the government to foster peaceful coexistence and limit extremism, the number of attacks by extremists in Germany is rising as well as the far right rhetoric.

Netherlands

More than ever before, right wing extremism and movements are increasing on Dutch territories, leading to the encouragement and glorification of violence since 2015. The Dutch government outlines that Jihadism along with terror threats posed by right and left wing extremists pose the main sources of terrorism to the state. According to the Netherlands's General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) report in 2018, anti-Islamic ideology became the primary ideological driving force for groups and individuals within the right-wing extremist movement generated from far right groups campaigns and rhetoric spread online and offline. The AIVD refers specifically to right-wing extremism in the following ideas; xenophobia, hatred of foreign influences or cultures, and ultranationalism. The AIVD reveals the government concerns toward the threat posed by right wing extremism to the democratic legal order.

Additionally, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism Terrorist, Threat Assessment for the Netherlands 2019, states that "the threat level for the Netherlands remains at 4 ('substantial') on a scale of 1 to 5, which means that there is a real chance of an attack in the Netherlands".

Following the Paris and Brussels attacks in 2015 and 2016, the Dutch Senate passed three new bills designed to strengthen existing counterterrorism legislation in 2017. The first bill allows the government to revoke Dutch citizenship without a court order for anyone "16 years of age or older who voluntarily enters the armed services of a state involved in combat operations against the Kingdom or against an alliance of which the Kingdom is a member; ...[or] if it appears that he has joined an organization that is on a list of organizations participating in a national or international armed conflict and that poses a threat to national security." The second bill allows the government to impose a six month ban on any citizen, preventing their ability to leave the country or meet with specified people, or visit specific places as determined by the government. The third bill amends the Dutch Passport Act, which allows authorities to impose travel bans on suspected criminals. With the new amendment, a travel ban now results in immediately nullifying that person's passports and identification card.

With regard to developments in the field of right wing extremists' attacks that took place worldwide in 2019, the AIVD gave presentations to the police, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), knowledge institutes, and others in order to confront forms of terrorism. The goal was to create



awareness of radicalization and extremism, which can lead to terrorism. Within this context of investigations into extremism, the AIVD issued 10 intelligence reports and 1 official report.

In addition, in 2019, the government established the National Cryptostrategy as a form of countering the dissemination of radical ideas. This strategy details how reliable means of security for very sensitive information will become available and how to deal with the very vulnerable supplier base of these means of security.

In the country's effort to counter terrorism, the government adopted the Dutch counterterrorism policy, which is based on the Dutch National Counterterrorism Strategy (2016-2020). The strategy connects all governmental partners in the joint approach to extremism and terrorism in the Netherlands. The focus is on an integrated approach combining preventive measures with counterterrorism and judicial efforts. The national CT strategy continues to be based on the 'broad approach'. The broad approach is translated into an integrated local approach, with important elements including the multidisciplinary discussion of casuistry, actively involving communities and keeping vulnerable groups and individuals 'on board'. Networks are identified and undermined wherever possible.

Combating terrorism remains high on the agenda. In 2019, the government planned to further focus on deradicalisation and reintegration as a top priority in the government's agenda. Not only because of the expected return of combatants, but also to counter the 'home grown' radicalization of Dutch residents.

The Dutch [National Counterterrorism Strategy 2016-2020](#) outlines the broader counter terrorism strategy of the Netherlands for the current period. It identifies 5 intervention areas as means to counter terrorism: acquiring information, preventing, defending preparing, and prosecuting. For each of these areas, multi-agency structures are in place to ensure cooperation between different partners and government levels, including local governments and municipalities.

Furthermore, as part of the government efforts threats to counter extremism on a national level, Rotterdam has applied 'Rotterdam approach to radicalization' program from the period of 2015-2018. The programme includes projects and initiatives to combat radicalisation, extremism and polarisation and to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable groups have been facilitated. The programme also invests in citizenship education within Rotterdam's education sector, including elements such as critical thinking, reflection and the importance of democracy are all part of these education campaigns. These elements are preventative factors that help to combat radicalisation processes and to strengthen resilience against extremist ideologies.

The Rotterdam approach to radicalization was modified to cover the period of 2018-2022, focusing on a wider approach to radicalization, extremism and polarization. The new programme is based on three strategic pillars. First, Identification, to identify radicalisation processes and violent ideologically-driven behaviours in early stages. Second, prevention, to prevent people from gravitating towards violent ideologies. Finally, Intervention and Reduction, to act and intervene



Sweden

The Swedish government states that “there are three extremist scenes in Sweden: violence-promoting Islamic extremism, the white power movement and the autonomous movement”; however, the Swedish Security Service, points that the greatest threat of terrorism in Sweden stems from Islamic extremism, specifically “violence-promoting Islamism, or so-called al-Qaeda-inspired groups.”

In 2021, the government adopted several measures in its continuous effort of combating racism and different forms of hostility and hate crime. The ministry of employment revealed the measures that are being carried out within the context of the national plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime, which the Government first adopted in 2016. The plan takes an integrated approach and comprises strategies and measures to prevent and combat racism and hate crime through improved coordination and monitoring, more education and research, increased support to and deepened dialogue with civil society, strengthened preventive measures online and a more active justice system to combat hate crime.

In 2020, the government invested in the budget bill to make Sweden safer and more secure entailing that in the Budget Bill for 2021, the government will continue to strengthen the judicial chain through important investments in the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. The ministry of justice also revealed that preventive efforts to combat violent extremism remain a priority in 2020. The government proposed to allocate more funds to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention. In addition, the Swedish Government set up the Centre for Preventing Violent Extremism at the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention in 2018.

In light of the terrorist attacks that took place, the question of identity resurfaced in Europe, along with the right-wing voices that demanded the necessity of introducing new laws to curb down the growing threat imposed by radical Islamists. Hence, countering and preventing extremism, in particular the religious extremism, became a vital policy for nation states as well as for international organizations, leading states to counter all forms of extremism by adopting different strategies. However, despite the strategies implemented by the above mentioned states, they still suffer from violent and terrorist attacks conducted by extremists Islamists. To be successful in combating all forms terrorism, a close and strong cooperation between the UN and its member states and other international organizations and forums is vital.