



**PERICLES**

Policy recommendation and improved  
communication tools for law enforcement and  
security agencies preventing violent radicalisation

# Consultation of families of radicals

Symposium Crisis, Disaster and Trauma Psychology

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# Context

- Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group The Netherlands
- TERRA 2012-2014
- EU Pericles
- EU FAIR
- EU COHeSION

- Holding organisation for experts in psychotrauma after persecution, war, aggression, violence, disasters and other shocking events
- Diagnostics and mental health care
- Research and knowledge institutes
- Academy for education and training
- Consultancy

- Literature review on radicalisation
- TERRA Toolkit
- Train the trainer program
- Lesson material for highschoools TERRA UCARE
- Evidence based policy advise for governments

[www.terratoolkit.eu](http://www.terratoolkit.eu)

# Pericles

- Tools for law enforcement agencies and families
  - Cyberspace detection system
  - Vulnerability assessment tool
  - Family care package
  - Training skills and competence tool

# Pericles

- Needs assessment to underpin the tools
  - Questionnaires for LEA's (500)
  - Interviews with former radicals and convicted terrorists (50)
  - Interviews with families of former radicals (50)

# Interview with families

- Families of radicalised youngsters
- What do they notice of the radicalisation process
- What could they do as a family
- Where could they go for help and support

# Interviews

- 4 families in Denmark
  - 2 mothers: both sons were killed
  - 1 brother: status of the brother is unknown
  - 1 sister: status of the sister is unknown



# Radicalisation process

- Very young 15-18 years (1 from 12 on)
- Radicalisation in the social circle
- Systematic recruitment
- Radicalisation was not recognized until the point of leaving for Syria
- Travel arrangements and strict instructions by recruiters

# Help and support

- Great dissatisfaction
- 2 families with immigrant background reluctant to contact the police to voice their concerns
- 2 families actively seeking cooperation with the police
- No actions stopping the family member to travel to Syria, no attempt to locate them
- No information sharing, only information asking

# Interviews

- 4 families in The Netherlands
  - Family 1: father reports that his daughter left in 2013, who now has 2 little children, in refugee camp, ex-wife left with their son, who has been killed a few months later
  - Family 2: 1 daughter left with her husband (Egyptian) and 4 children, is still in Raqqa
  - Family 3: 1 son, (autistic) left in 2015, probably taken by a recruiter to Mosul, they recently learnt that he has been killed
  - Family 4: 1 daughter, married in Raqqa, now has 2 children, her husband is missing

# Radicalisation process

- The theme of radicalisation was and remains somehow taboo within families.
- Families were not familiar with the process radicalisation and its signs.
- Families were not expecting that their children will radicalise.
- Families were not able to recognise the signs of radicalisation, lack of knowledge around the topic.
- The theme became discussable when some families finally decided to talk openly about it. Media played a key role in this process by interviewing families and making documentaries.

# Help and support

- Police didn't know how to deal with someone who was willing to travel to conflict area.
- Even police was not familiar with the issue of radicalisation and didn't know how to handle it. It was a new phenomenon.
- In the beginning families had to protect themselves because they were being treated as suspects.
- The government was not helping families.
- Families were interrogated frequently, but were not provided with information however the *intelligence service* did have some useful information. They knew for example that the houses of children were used for recruitment (Experience family).
- The government invite families for conversations but their messages were not taken seriously.

# Recommendations

- That law enforcement agencies are quicker to take the concerns of families seriously.
- That family members are, where possible, made aware of concerns that law enforcement agencies have about their family members.
- To inform and to help the family understand what is going on concerning radicalisation and what and where the risks are for young vulnerable people
- That law enforcement agencies actively make contact with partner organisations abroad, especially in Turkey, so that communication and investigations can be coordinated.
- That communication with family members is honest, as open as possible, and carried out in a respectful and tactful way.
- That information is readily available to families who are concerned about the local and national resources which they could call upon for help and advice if needed.



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