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Subject: Instrument for compiling data and information on violent radicalisation processes

European Union Member States and institutions are invited and advised to make best use, as they see fit, of the data compilation instrument provided for them, by amending it and tailoring it to their specific requirements, should they see a need to do so, while taking advantage of the various features also making it very flexible and adaptable.

1. AIMS

This instrument¹ is being put forward as a basic means of compiling data and information, which it is believed may prove particularly useful at the information-gathering stage, in managing to:

- (1) facilitate, focus and improve data compilation, by increasing both the quantity and the quality of information obtained by other, non-specific means or instruments;

¹ Annexes I and II

- (2) facilitate and improve data integration and interpretation, by first organising and structuring information, thereby increasing potential for both tactical operational and strategic analysis of violent radicalisation processes;
- (3) facilitate and improve information sharing between agencies, institutions and Member States.

2. ADDRESSEES

The instrument is being provided for all Member States, if they wish, to make best use of as they see fit, by amending it and tailoring it to their specific requirements, should they see a need to do so. It is also being provided for European Union institutions and agencies to use, in the same way, if they consider that this might enhance both domestic and collective capabilities in better and more efficiently combating radicalisation and recruitment.

It is thought, too, that the instrument could be used to best advantage by police forces, security services and intelligence agencies and by institutions involved in combating radicalisation and recruitment and ultimately terrorism, which may have both direct or indirect access to a substantial flow of basic information (information-gathering capacity) and be able to build the resulting assessments into tactical operational and/or strategic decision-making.

3. NATURE AND USE OF THE INSTRUMENT

STRATEGIC OR TACTICAL OPERATIONAL APPROACH: The instrument is designed to be used in two ways, focusing on the issue of violent radicalisation (**ISSUE**) or focusing on the agents of it (**AGENTS**). The choice of what to focus the instrument on will automatically determine its approach and hence the decisions to be taken.

Focusing on agents, the instrument can be used to compile information on violent radicalisation of particular individuals or of a small group of people; data assessment will therefore automatically be built into tactical operational decision-making, with the measures and steps considered appropriate here being taken.

Focusing on the issue, on the other hand, the instrument will not compile information on specific agents, but rather on the sum total of all known violent radicalisation cases. Subsequent assessment, whether purely descriptive, explanatory or forward-looking, will thus have a bearing on strategic decision-making aimed at changing the course of events for the issue.

MULTIFACETED: Radicalisation processes are generally very specific, complex, multifaceted and hard to grasp; they may involve aspects such as personal, circumstantial, ideological, social and group-based, behavioural, psychological, technological and communication factors. In the light of that complexity, the instrument works along four different lines, bearing in mind that the distinction serves merely to help compile data and approach the issue, since the four aspects, as pointed out, form part of a single complex, evolving reality. The four lines along which the instrument works are as follows:

- A. **ideologies and radical messages supporting violent radicalisation:** this focuses on the ideological content to which individuals undergoing violent radicalisation are exposed;
- B. **violent radicalisation dissemination channels:** this focuses on the actual agents imparting and receiving ideological content and on the communication process involved;
- C. **factors affecting violent radicalisation:** this focuses on the setting and location in which radicalisation takes place;
- D. **impact and changes:** this describes the changes experienced by an individual after undergoing violent radicalisation.

SEMI-STRUCTURED: The instrument comprises 70 questions (Annex I), grouped along four lines (A, B, C and D), in turn broken down into 14 different factors, as shown in the table below¹:

A. Ideologies and radical messages supporting violent radicalisation	B. Violent radicalisation dissemination channels	C. Factors affecting violent radicalisation	D. Impact and changes
1. Description of ideology directly supporting violence (2)	5. Communication models used to disseminate radical messages (2)	8. Description of individual personal factors (12)	12. Description of cognitive impact and changes (6)
2. Agents adhering to that ideology and directly promoting violence and violent radicalisation (3)	6. Agents involved in the communication process (6)	9. Description of group, social and organisational factors (11)	13. Description of emotional or affective impact and changes (5)
3. Description of radical messages (4)	7. Other components of the communication process (2)	10. Description of macro-social factors (7)	14. Description of behavioural impact and changes (6)
4. Radical messages and other ideologies or movements (2)		11. Description of locations where violent radicalisation takes place (2)	

COMMON LANGUAGE AND INFORMATION SHARING: Use of a semi-structured common instrument by various individuals and/or institutions and/or Member States will facilitate and foster conceptual equivalence and a similar approach to violent radicalisation, thus no doubt bringing improved information sharing. If that move towards conceptual equivalence is to progress, the instrument needs to be discussed, amended, adjusted and accepted, but above all used by the various parties concerned. The instrument proposed is meant to be no more than a first stage in this process.

RADICALISATION EPISODE: In view of the evolving, complex nature of violent radicalisation, there seems a need to facilitate assessment of the factors and variables involved, which makes establishing the order in which they emerge and develop crucial to a better understanding of the processes at work. Hence the need, after detecting a radicalisation process, to date all information concerning it.

¹ After each of the 14 factors, the number of questions dealing with it is given in brackets.

The violent radicalisation process can thus be seen as the sum total of all "episodes" experienced by an individual. The instrument is accompanied by a data compilation table (Annex II), in which to include information on each radicalisation episode.

VALIDITY: Initially, it is felt that the instrument should be used in compiling data on individuals involved in terrorist operations detected (closed cases), which would on the face of it show there to be a prior radicalisation process on which to focus. Having said that, the instrument has been devised for the specific purpose of obtaining information on the aspects thought most significant in radicalisation, so that each Member State or institution making use of it will have to consider its added value in organising and collating existing violent radicalisation data.

RELIABILITY: One of the instrument's features is its semi-structured data compilation approach, grouping questions around particular aspects of violent radicalisation. That feature, seen as a practical necessity in order to avoid overlooking information, build some flexibility into the tool and provide greater potential for future analytical exploitation, requires a breaking-in period for those teams who are to operate it, so as to familiarise themselves with it and work out how best to use it, since the tool's potential cannot be seen in isolation from the end user's observation and analysis skills.

INSTRUMENT

A. IDEOLOGIES AND MESSAGES SUPPORTING VIOLENT RADICALISATION (VR)**1. Description of ideology directly supporting violence:**

1. Spectrum in which the ideology is situated?¹
2. Most significant principles and objectives? How and why does the ideology support the use of violence?

2. Agents adhering to that ideology and directly promoting violence and violent radicalisation:

3. Organisations or terrorist groups that have adopted this ideology and the use of violence?
4. Organisations or groups that promote violent radicalisation?
5. Geographical area affected?

3. Description of radical messages (RM):

6. Literal description of the RM(s), main RM(s) or title/content of the work.
7. Main function(s) of the RM(s)?²
8. Features/aspects of the RM?³
9. How are the RMs adapted for different target audiences?⁴

4. RMs and other ideologies or movements:

10. Are any of these RMs also supported by other ideologies or movements that do not support violence?
11. Are there any other ideologies or movements that represent an alternative to, or compete with, the RMs and the ideology that supports them?

¹ Extreme right/left, Islamist, nationalist, anti-globalisation, etc.

² Legitimisation of violence; orientation of violence (aims, targets of violence, modus operandi); reinforcement of group identity; intimidation, etc.

³ Territorial, political, economic, social, historical, cultural, religious, ideological, ethnic, linguistic and social identity aspects, etc.

⁴ Selection of audiences, internal logic and reasoning used in RMs (deductive, inductive), emotional elements used in RMs, languages, etc.

B. VR DISSEMINATION CHANNELS

5. Communication models used to disseminate RMs

12. Most frequently used communication channels?
 - Model I (MI), based on the "content"¹
 - Model II (MII), based on the "effects"²
 - Model III (M III), based on the "process"³.
13. Are these models combined in the same agents? How?

6. Agents involved in the communication process

14. In relation to the M I-II-III communication models, who are the transmitters and recipients?⁴
15. Is there a prior relationship between the agents?⁵
16. In relation to the M I-II communication models, what is the basis for the hierarchy between transmitters and the recipients?⁶
17. In relation to the M III communication model, what is the basis for the equality between the agents?
18. In relation to the M II-III communication models, how do the agents contact each other? Who has the initiative?
19. How are the agents chosen?

¹ (M-I) Communication based on the "content" of the RMs: characterised by a strict hierarchy among participants (transmitter and recipient), there is no contact or feedback between participants and communication is aimed at a large anonymous audience. The content (ideological, religious, etc) disseminated is the main characteristic of this model of communication (e.g. communication from Osama Bin Laden setting out the objectives of, and reasons for, Al Qaeda's activity).

² (M-II) Communication based on the "effects" of the RMs: there is some degree of hierarchy among participants, mainly oral or written communication, with feedback between transmitter and recipient within a secure environment, aimed at a small and familiar audience. The effect which the transmitter seeks to have on the recipient is the most important characteristic of this model (e.g. the relationship between the recruiter and the person recruited – "vertical radicalisation").

³ (M-III) Communication based on the "process of exchange" of RMs: this is characterised by hierarchical equality among participants, who constantly interchange the roles of transmitter and recipient (emi-rec A y emi-rec B); there is feedback between participants within a secure environment, each participant being an active seeker of information. In general, the actors are "pre-prepared" (they have prior - albeit at times basic - knowledge of the nature and content of RMs and may have a radical background. The most important feature of this model of communication is the constant exchange of information (RMs) between participants (e.g. members of an internet discussion forum, which is used for exchanging files with radical content and openly expressing opinions on them – "horizontal radicalisation").

⁴ Personal particulars, if any, general characteristics, etc.

⁵ Schoolmates, neighbours, friends, relatives, shared time in prison, etc.

⁶ Leader of a terrorist group, member of a terrorist group, leader of a religious/ideological movement or organisation, ideological/religious authority, charismatic personality, activist with a violent past, etc.

7. Other components of the communication process

20. Depending on the communication model (M I-II-III), what is the CHANNEL used for communications?¹
 - How is the internet used?² What internet addresses are used?
21. Depending on the communication model (MI-II-III), what is the CODE used in communications?³

C. FACTORS AFFECTING VR⁴

8. Description of individual personal factors

22. Age, gender, place of birth and nationality of the agents?
23. Administrative situation?⁵
24. Economic situation?⁶
25. Relevant psychological traits?⁷
26. Possible underlying psychological motivation of the agents?⁸
27. Level/type of education?
28. Nature of work experience?
29. Nature and level of ideological knowledge and/or commitment?
30. Nature and level of religious knowledge and/or commitment?
31. Socio-economic level?
32. Criminal background?
33. Level of exposure to violence?

¹ Verbal, written, audio, images (TV channels, video), internet (several possible).

² Use of the internet to store and download RMs, use of the internet as a means of communication between transmitters and recipients, use of internet as a mechanism for communication between a group of equal persons (fora, chats, etc.).

³ Language, secret or encrypted codes, etc.

⁴ Factors that influence the individual(s) immersed in a process of radicalisation, focusing on the recipient of the radical message or the transmitter-recipient in the case of the M-III communication model.

⁵ Original nationality, acquired nationality, illegal resident, temporary residence, work permit, study permit, etc.

⁶ Unemployed, deterioration in economic position, loss of scholarship or financial assistance, etc.

⁷ Psychological disorders, charismatic personality, weak personality, etc.

⁸ Relative frustration and deprivation, hate-revenge, moral obligation, pro-social motivation, incentives and rewards, feelings of guilt, etc.

9. Description of group, social and organisational factors

34. Mainly socialised where?¹
35. Social dynamic?²
36. Level of integration in society? Reasons?
37. Level of direct personal support?³
38. Group dynamic observed?⁴
39. Basis for main social identity (membership group)?⁵
40. Reference for social identity (reference group)?
41. Relationship with the various institutions/government bodies at State level, regional level and local level?⁶
42. Relationship between the main social identity group (membership group) and institutions/government bodies at State level, regional level and local level? Level of representation of that social group in those bodies?
43. Orientation of terrorist groups or networks in the agent's geographical area?⁷
44. Orientation of the non-violent organisations or movements in the area in which the agent lives?⁸

10. Description of macro-social factors

45. Any relevant economic factor?
46. Any relevant social factor?
47. Any relevant cultural factor?
48. Any relevant technological factor?
49. Any relevant demographic factor?
50. Any relevant political factor?⁹
51. Any other general or global factor?

11. Description of locations where VR takes place

52. City/country in which VR episode/process occurs?
53. Social environment in which VR occurs?¹⁰

¹ Place/country of birth, place/country of residence.

² For example in Muslim communities: immigrant dynamic, second or third generation dynamic, convert background.

³ Family, civil status (single, married, widowed, divorced, separated), children, friends.

⁴ Strong group dynamic (basis for "group mentality"), weak group dynamic.

⁵ Nationality, country of origin, region, religious group, ethnic group, clan, social class, ideological vision, age group, etc.

⁶ Social services, educational establishments, security services (immigration, police, prisons, intelligence, etc.), other.

⁷ Terrorist attacks in the area in which the person lives, radicalisation and recruitment in that area sending human resources to other theatres, radicalisation and recruitment for terrorist logistical support in that area, other (several options possible).

⁸ Reaching a large number of people (expansive), transmission of socio-political ideas, transmission of religious values, penetration into society and its institutions, etc. (several options possible).

⁹ Wars, other conflicts, terrorist attacks, strong counter-terrorist activity, other.

¹⁰ Family home, friends, Internet, educational centre, religious or prayer centre, prison, workplace, leisure centre, etc.

D.-IMPACT AND CHANGES IN THE INDIVIDUAL¹

12. Description of cognitive impact and changes

54. How does the person consider or interpret his own relationship to the new collective identity² and its members?
55. How does the person consider or interpret the relationship between that collective identity and other agents, and the social, cultural, religious, political or economic situation?³
56. How does the person change his perception of the relationship between things and why they happen?
57. How does the person consider or interpret other collectives considered as "enemies"?
58. How does the person come to regard violence as the best way or the only way of acting against "enemies"?
59. How does the person consider, interpret or evaluate his participation in the activities of the new collective identity?

13. Description of emotional or affective impact and changes

60. Person's feelings about his own relationship to the new collective identity and its members?
61. Person's feelings about the relationship between that collective identity and other agents, and the social, cultural, religious, political or economic situation?
62. Person's feelings about other collectives considered as "enemies"?
63. Person's feelings about the use of violence?
64. Person's feelings about how and why he should take part in the activities of the new collective identity?

¹ Factors affecting the individual(s) immersed in a radicalisation process, focusing on the receiver of the radical message or the transmitter/receiver if communication model M-III.

² Terrorist organisations and groups usually set themselves up as defenders of a group or social identity which may be real or fictitious and is the focus of supposed affronts, persecutions, injustices, etc. That, in turn, enables them to identify other social or group identities, treating or defining them as "enemies". In this context, "new social identity" therefore means the identity as defined by the terrorist groups or the ideologies which sustain them.

³ Terrorist groups exaggerate situations of injustice, inequality, oppression, etc.

14. Description of behavioural impact and changes

65. Has the person made oral comments on:
- the collective identity promoting violence?
 - the collective or group considered as the "enemy"?
 - the use of violence?
 - any intention of taking part in violent action?
 - other issues, mainly of a political nature, using arguments based on RMs?
66. Has the person recently given up some routine behaviour¹? Possible reasons? Most likely cause? Any prior information suggesting radical influence?²
67. Has the person recently taken up some routine behaviour? Possible reasons? Most likely cause? Any prior information suggesting radical influence?
68. Has the person begun to actively seek out a radical point of reference?
69. Has the person recently taken up some relevant non-routine behaviour? Possible reasons? Most likely cause? Any prior information suggesting radical influence?
70. Has the person recently given up some relevant non-routine behaviour? Possible reasons? Most likely cause? Any prior information suggesting radical influence?

¹ Habits, dress code, hygiene, diet, prayer, means of communication, visits, contact with groups, etc. (several options possible)

² Ideology, religions, group, means of communication, web pages, prayer centres, etc. (several options possible)

DEFINING DEVELOPMENT OF VR						
Episode	Date/ time	Place/ country	Ideologies and RMs supporting VR	VR dissemination channels	Factors affecting VR	Impact and changes
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						