



INTERNAL SECURITY FUND



Funded by  
the European Union

## Summary study

Summary study of the project entitled  
"Prevention of Radicalization in the Prison-system"

Project id.:

BBA-5.1.6-16-2016-00001

Author:

Dr. Gábor Héra



**Budapest Centre**  
FOR MASS ATROCITIES PREVENTION

The views expressed in this publication solely reflect the standpoint of the authors, and do not purport to coincide with the position of the European Commission or that of Hungary's Ministry of the Interior. The views expressed in this publication shall not be considered as binding for either the European Commission or Hungary's Ministry of the Interior in any ways.

The preliminary study was commissioned by the Foundation for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.

Budapest, Hungary, 2018.

## Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. Findings of the focus group research .....	4
Groups and conflicts.....	4
Signs of spreading extremism .....	7
III. On the findings drawn from the trainings.....	10
Radicalization in the correctional facilities.....	10
On recognizing and managing radicalization – the risk factors.....	11
On recognizing and managing radicalization – the strengths .....	13
IV. Conclusions from the life story interviews.....	14
The roots and background of radicalization.....	14
Opposition to specific groups.....	17
The path to deradicalization.....	20
VI. Recommendations .....	22
References.....	25

## I. Introduction

The strengthening of radicalization and extremism is a new international trend. Its prevention, the development and harmonization of relevant capabilities is in the interest of international and national communities. The so called „vulnerable” groups of societies, in particular persons with criminal record and imprisoned persons are especially susceptible to radicalization and constitute a relatively easy target group from the perspective of recruitment by extrem organizations. The risks at this domain are pointed out by numerous guidelines, documents, communications and strategic plans prepared by the European Union and Council of Europe, in particular as follows:

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council

“The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: First steps towards a more secure Europe”,  
22 November, 2010

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

“Supporting the prevention of radicalization leading to violent extremism”, 14 June, 2016

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

“Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU Response” 14 January, 2014

- Regulation (EU) No 5013/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing as part of the Internal Security Fund, the Instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management and repealing Council Decision 2007/125/JHA

- Action Plan adopted by the Council of Europe on 19 May, 2015 "The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism"

-Guidelines adopted by the Council of Europe on 12 March, 2016 for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism

Based on the recommendations formulated in the above mentioned documents it could be stated that for preventing the negative processes it is indispensable:

- the recognition, continuous and professional monitoring and evaluation of risks,
- professional detention of threatened persons and promotion of rehabilitation and reintegration in the society of detained persons,
- elaboration and recommendation of options for the radicalized persons to exit the extreme movements.

Increase of radicalisation<sup>1</sup> and extremism poses a new security challenge in Hungary, too. The extent and nature of this challenge, however, differs significantly from that faced by countries in Western Europe. Accordingly, the challenge of capacity building in terms of professional training to enhance prevention in Hungary is distinct from Western Europe. In spite of the different nature of threats and the lower level of risk posed by extremism in Hungary compared with Western Europe, the focus on prevention and skill development which took place in the framework of the project, as described in the present report, remains indispensable and has extraordinary importance.

The initiative titled “*Prevention of Radicalisation in Prison*” focused on a yet relatively unknown field, i.e. on improving the preventive skills of the staff working in Hungarian penal institutions. Exploring challenges related to radicalisation and identifying needs and demands arising in prevention and treatment were among the aims of the project.

The project was implemented by the [Foundation for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities](#). Within the framework of the project that was supported by the European Union's Internal Security Fund, we firstly assessed the skills that could be observed regarding the detection, prevention, and treatment of radicalization among the professional staff in five penal institutions. In the second stage, we provided training

---

1

□ Hereinafter, we use the term „radicalisation” in a way that has been recommended by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). According to this definition, radicalisation is a „*process through which an individual comes to adopt extremist political, social, or religious ideas and aspirations which then serve to reject diversity, tolerance and freedom of choice and legitimize breaking the rule of law and using violence towards property and people*” RAN 2017, p. 4. The preliminary stages of the process might be vulnerability resulting in frustration, opposition towards external/social factors and polarisation.

customized to local needs for the sake of developing these skills further. In the third stage, we conducted interviews known as “life story interviews” among the convicts on the assumption that coming to know the personal life stories can pave the way to a better understanding of the reasons behind radicalization. At the end of each of the three sections, observations are presented in the form of analyses.

All in all, we not only aimed at collecting information about radicalisation and extremism by research activities. Additionally, efforts were taken to improve skills required to recognise and prevent radicalisation through training activities also supporting and accelerating the reaction of staff. This experimental training and collection of information is extremely significant not only for the existing staff with meaningful professional know-how and experiences but also in terms of the planned increase and training of personnel by thousands of staff in the Hungarian Prison Service.

The present summary study provides an overview of the entire project, summarizes its main results and formulates recommendations. The results have been presented in the international conference organized in Budapest, 26 June, 2018.

## II. Findings of the focus group research

We have previously described the methodological background of the first stage, grounded in focus groups discussions. We have also discussed the theoretical background of the research in detail, as well as the demands concerning the training to be organized in the second stage, our recommendations related to the training, as well as the lessons drawn from the roundtable discussion held on 27 November 2017. Consequently, we will in the following be primarily focusing on presenting the main findings of the focus group studies.

### Groups and conflicts

In the focus group discussions organized with the involvement of prison staff, we primarily asked questions concerning the groups formed in the penitentiary institutions as well as the conflicts generated between these groups. By this means, we wished to get an overarching picture of the first step of the process of polarization, group identities and the resulting negative behavior (Sherif 1998, RAN 2017, Tajfel 1998).

In the course of the discussions, members of staff first typically identified the groups of convicts formed as a result of the regulatory background and mode of operation of the institutions (e.g., men and women, inmates in different detention phases, people in preliminarily detention as well as those already serving time, et cetera). During further discussions, however, it came to light that the number of informal groups of convicts generated by "*the world of the penitentiary system*" is much larger while these groups are also much more diverse. Inter alia, we could mention the groups generated according to the place of origin (people from Borsod, Nógrád, Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg counties as well as from the capital), people at various levels of the prison hierarchy, those more or less prone to cooperate as well as those characterized with more or less demanding standards concerning their environment.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> These groups were enumerated in detail in the study summarizing the experience of focus groups.

In the course of presenting the groups, it is important to make reference to their dynamism and complexity. A given group could consist of several subgroups, while a given convict may belong to more than one group. Furthermore, there is room for permeability between groups. Crossing between groups could take place based on one's own decision (for example, upon giving up smoking). But it could be brought on by a change in one's life circumstances; for example, when an aging inmate slides down a rank in the prison hierarchy due to dwindling physical power.

The participants of the focus groups also defined where heated opposition is generated between the groups enumerated. The various types of opposition are displayed in the following table, classifying the conflict by themes and indicating the groups involved. The conflicts represented by rectangles involved convicts, while those represented by circles involved the staff as well.

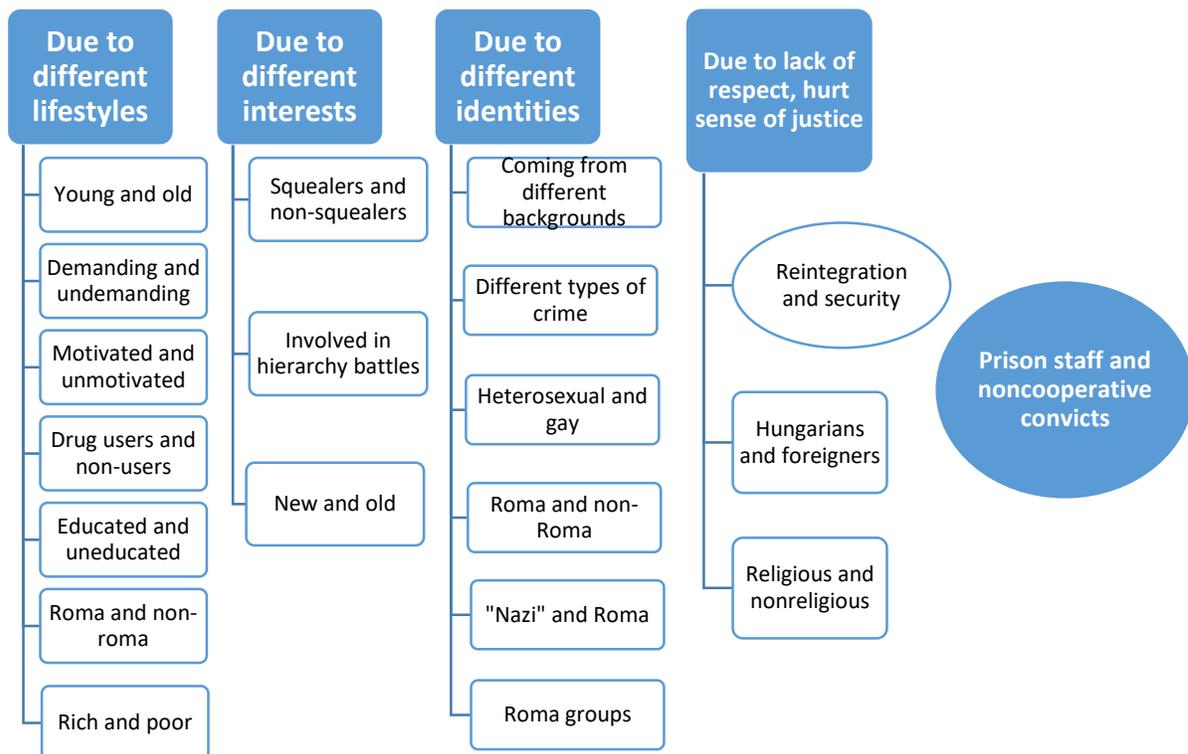


Table 1. Between-group conflicts

According to our partners in dialogue, conflicts can be traced back to the following factors:

1. **Differences in lifestyle.** There are regular conflicts between the younger generation who like to stay up late at night and inmates of a more advanced age, with a preference to going to sleep earlier. Furthermore, people with more stringent standards concerning the state of their personal environment and less demanding individuals sharing the same cell can also lead to conflict. According to the feedback received, motivation, financial status, drug use, and level of education can also be linked to lifestyle - and thus, in a related vein, to the conflicts generated. The opposition between Roma and non-Roma Hungarians was also interpreted by some as a lifestyle conflict. According to these participants, the fact of belonging to particular groups is not linked to one's ethnic origin; it can rather be described by a particular lifestyle.
2. **Conflicting interests.** These oppositions can be generated between squealers, i.e. informers and the convicts suffering the consequences of the squealers' activities. Here we can also refer to conflicts that are linked to the present hierarchy; that is when someone tries to conquer a more favorable position within the hierarchy for themselves. Similar reasons can be referred to concerning new arrivals to the correctional facility and long-time convicts.
3. **Differences of identities.** In this case, the mere fact of belonging to the other group emerges as the reason behind the conflict. Thus the opposition is generated or escalated by the mere fact that one of the parties involved originates from elsewhere, committed a particular crime, identifies as non-Roma or Roma (or the member of a specific Roma group), as belonging to the extreme right or as gay.
4. **Lack of respect or a frustrated sense of justice.** These oppositions are formed when someone feels that others are arbitrarily treated better. For example when the "migrants" (according to certain widely shared assumptions) enjoy better conditions in the detention centers for asylum seekers. Or the religious observant

(according to certain widely shared assumptions) enjoy special favors not available to others, resulting from particular conditions of their custody.

In Table 1, we presented this source of conflict as somewhat separate from the rest. By this means, we also tried to highlight the fact that in this case, it is not only the inmates, but the prison staff as well that is involved. We used a similar gesture of isolation to refer to

5. **The conflict between the prison staff and the non-cooperating convicts.** In this case, the isolation of the two groups is brought about by external factors: the regulatory background and the mode of functioning of the penitentiary system. It is nevertheless important to highlight the conflicts arising here as well due to the presence of and intensity of opposition.

### Signs of spreading extremism

We asked the participants of the four groups to identify the conflicts that have turned so sour already that 1) they raise the risk of escalation or 2) where the people involved can already observe the signs of rising extremism. The color red is used to highlight these conflicts in the table below.

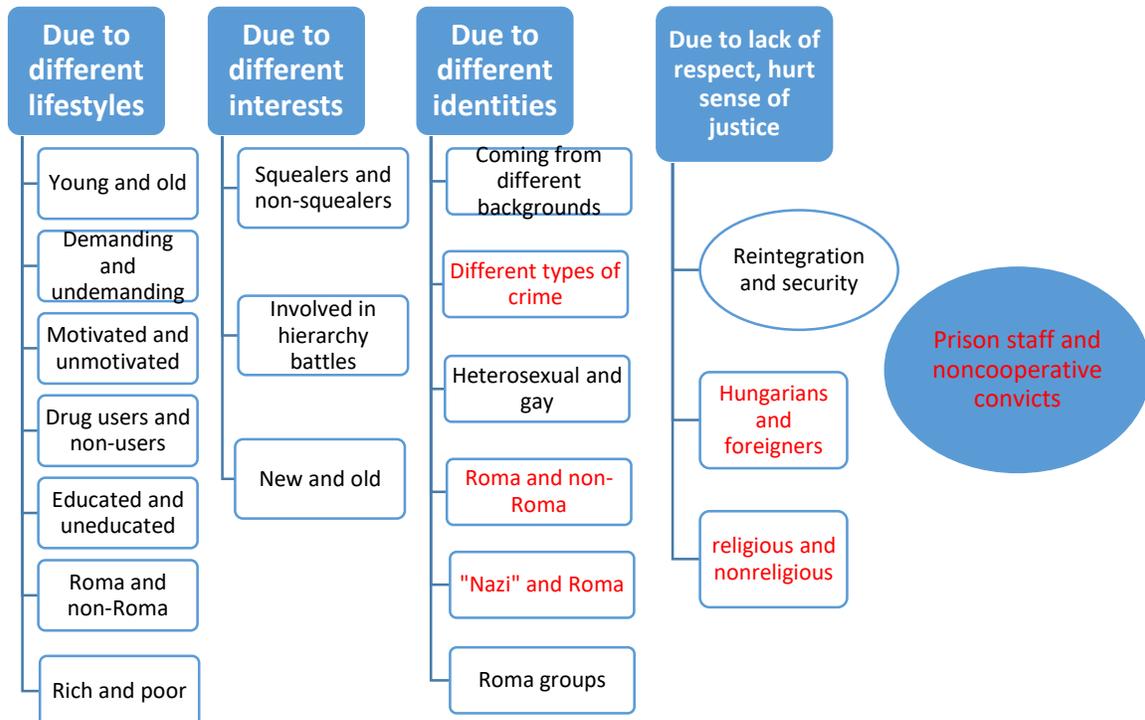


Table 2. Between-group conflicts gone sour

Our conversation partners gave a detailed description of the between-group conflicts highlighted above. In case of **conflicts linked to the type of crime**, conflicts are generated typically among the perpetrators of crimes of a sexual nature or and/or to the detriment of minors and those detained as a result of other kinds of crime.

The conflicts between **Roma and non-Roma** can appear as a result of the mere fact of belonging to the particular group – even though several people were of the opinion that it is more justified to consider this conflict formula as resulting from differences in lifestyle.

Conflicts between **“Nazis”** and the **Roma** also belong in the category of identity-conflicts. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that the staff of the prisons we visited only barely encountered convicts representing a clear-cut case of Nazi and/or extreme right ideology. Due to their limited number, these individuals did not have a significant impact on the working of the correctional facility or the order of detention. As reported earlier, conflicts between **Hungarians** and **foreigners** as well as those resulting from **religious differences** typically emerged as a result of a frustrated sense of justice.

Conflicts between **prison staff** and **non-cooperative prisoners** were considered in most places as being severe, having increased in recent times, and potentially carrying the risk of escalation. These conflicts are closely correlated with the rules of detention and the working conditions of the prison staff (a set of issues that we will be dealing with later on).

It should be underlined that the factors presented above do not exist in isolation from one another. Typically, it is rather the case that interacting with and amplifying each other, they reinforced previously existing identities and increased the chance of extremism as a consequence.

In summary, we can say that separation into groups and in certain cases, conflicts between these groups can be considered typical in the Hungarian correctional institutions. Sometimes the conflicts emerge as a result of the diverging identities of the people involved. In other cases, their occurrence and intensification have more to do with a hurt sense of justice, differences in lifestyle and the conditions of correctional facilities; that is to say, factors that the correctional facilities all have an influence upon (either in their own competence or in cooperation with the legislator).

### III. On the findings drawn from the trainings

We have previously discussed the objectives, the background, and the approach of the trainings implemented in the framework of the program and of the assessment of training participants, which was very positive. Thus, here we only present the opinions collected concerning the characteristics of radicalization, the chances of its recognition, prevention, and treatment.

#### Radicalization in the correctional facilities

According to the training participants, radicalization is not a widespread phenomenon or a widespread risk factor in Hungarian correctional facilities. According to opinions that can be described as typical, *“the extremists are limited in numbers, this phenomenon cannot be observed here”, “there are only a handful of cases in the correctional facilities, no specific groups are formed”, “even if there are identity-based conflicts, they are not serious”*. Some respondents thought that *“radicalization impacts only one or two individuals; it is starting to become a topic, but people have not yet joined in large numbers; it is not yet treated seriously. Those who nevertheless join these inmates are mentally unstable. The clever ones stay out of this.”*

Several respondents have however stressed that *“radical groups and radical individuals can be expected to enter the correction facilities sooner or later”*. In our assessment, the process of radicalization would in such a case be accelerated and strengthened by the between-group conflicts described in the previous section. For these reasons, it is important to identify the factors facilitating or hindering the recognition and treatment of radicalization. These factors shall be covered in the next section.

## On recognizing and managing radicalization – the risk factors

A number of factors might hinder the timely recognition of radicalization among convicts. These factors—commonly referred to as risk factors – shall be presented in the following:

1. In our assessment, the fact that prison staff is uninformed about radicalization can be considered a risk factor; however, the training provided to participants in the framework of the present program managed to rectify this problem.

2. In our assessment, a further risk factor is provided by the fact that the headcount of prison staff is low and they start working in the correctional institutions following a relatively brief period of training. Furthermore, due to the heavy work burden of more experienced colleagues, they can't expect to receive mentoring to a significant degree either. The chances that the signs of radicalization will be recognized in a timely manner and communicated to management is higher when there are more colleagues with a higher level of experience already working among the prison staff.

3. The heavy workload of prison staff and especially of those working in inmates' living quarters can also be considered a risk factor. When tired or exhausted, prison officers can pay less attention to the convicts, to the conflicts emerging among them and the process of polarization that might already have started to escalate.

The heavy workload will have consequences making the execution of work by the prison staff in an efficient manner more difficult and as a consequence, making the recognition of phenomena related to radicalization and polarization more difficult.

From among these, we believe the following should be highlighted:

- a) Being overloaded may reinforce the conflicts between colleagues. Communication among prison staff may become more cumbersome. The weakening of solidarity makes it more difficult to handle the common problems based on trust and group

work providing professional background support for each other, which is of utmost importance in treating processes of radicalization.

- b) Being overloaded may decrease loyalty to the organization, which could lead to well-prepared colleagues leave in the profession, as well as to the reduction of the level of preparedness, skills, and the quality of the professional work executed.
- c) Health and mental health problems can become more frequent and more intensive which could in practice make it impossible to recognize and to monitor the process of radicalization. This could especially be problematic when the various methodologies of the treatment of stress are not known to the people involved.

4. Attitudes towards the convicts could also be considered as a further risk factor. In our experience, many among the training participants are especially accepting and supportive towards the convicts. At the same time, resentment and opposition towards them can also be described as typical, which makes the establishment of dialogue much more difficult, though it would be crucial from the point of view of preventing radicalization. We believe the negative attitudes can be traced back to several factors. From among these, we presently highlight only the following:

- a) a feeling of injustice experienced at the workplace. Based on the feedback, many among the staff feel that their income from honest work does not exceed the crime-related revenue accumulated by the inmates. The feeling of injustice may also develop because some people think that they are required to observe much more stringent standards and requirements than are enforced upon inmates.
- b) possibly existing prejudices.
- c) difficulties encountered in the course of work. According to several participants, work with the convicts is getting harder, primarily owing to the more unscrupulous and/or inmates with psychological problems. Detaining the latter safely (as well as their potential reintegration) requires more in terms of specialized knowledge and human resources. Some participants reported that as the regulations have

recently been made more stringent, decreasing custodial and supervisory decision-making autonomy have but increased previously existing tensions. The situation is only exacerbated by the fact that the applicable disciplinary actions have less and less deterring power.

We believe that the negative attitudes mentioned above can with the passage of time emerge in the form of even physical violence and could recur as additional risk factors in the relationship of prison staff and convicts, and thus in the prevention of conflict situations and their escalation. Furthermore, in the case of negative attitudes, there is a reduced chance that penitentiary officers will stand up against abuse and discrimination against convicts. Thus there is a greater chance that polarization and isolation will become stronger as a result of the print conflicts, and the process of radicalization will accelerate as an end result.

#### [On recognizing and managing radicalization – the strengths](#)

In spite of the risk factors identified above, the prison staff is typically characterized by trust and solidarity (being the preconditions of efficient prevention activities). The training participants repeatedly formulated messages of support and recognition to each other.

The demand for the execution of work up to professional standards can also be described as typical. It was the impression of trainers and the researcher that training participants carried out their work in a conscientious, humane manner and to the best of their knowledge. Furthermore, they are able to voice their dilemmas and to talk openly about the areas in need of improvement in a reflexive way, with openness and honesty towards their peers which is the most important preconditions for future professional development. Routine going back several years or decades enables members of staff to create prison life that is safe, free of conflict or incidents, and a set of rules also predictable for the convicts.

The strengths and difficulties observed in the context of recognizing and treating radicalization help us to formulate recommendations supporting the work of correctional facilities. These recommendations are collected at the end of the study, in the chapter entitled *Recommendations*.

## IV. Conclusions from the life story interviews

This study summarizing the life story interviews provides a detailed overview of the methodology utilized in the course of the research. Thus in this chapter, we only aspire to present the main lessons drawn.

### The roots and background of radicalization

In the life stories of the convicts, radicalization normally appeared as opposition, and occasionally, extreme form of opposition against the “system”, broadly construed (i.e. the school, the family, the law, a rule following life path), and in this context, against the institutions of the rule of law state (the administration of justice, the police) as well as against one's own microenvironment (family, school, neighbors, the people living in the neighborhood). A variety of factors played a role in shaping such an opposition. These factors are presented hereinafter – calling attention to the fact that these reasons and characteristics may not only act separately but can also lead to cumulative effects.

I. On the one hand, there are **emotional and family-related reasons** in the background of the formation of the opposition. An atmosphere characterized by (1) retribution, retaliation or neglect, (2), the lack of emotional ties and supportive bonding as well as (3) the sudden loss of the latter due to the family breaking apart could often be identified among the reasons. Childhood is often characterized by emotional and physical abuse, humiliation, and vulnerability. Exposure to aggressive, often alcoholic parents has also

been a frequently recurring theme, just like being exposed to other trauma-inducing factors.

In our experience, these interviewees with a history of no or insufficient secure family background or safe social ties often display a strong sense of justice. At the same time, they are often characterized by striving to implement radical retribution for injustices committed against their remaining close ones, and justify aggressive acts of such a nature by this motivational base.

II. As a further factor, the role of the **same age peer group** should be specifically mentioned. The weakness or lack of emotional ties described above has reinforced the desire for belonging somewhere and cultivating attachments. This paved the way for a career in crime when the norms of the given group were based on opposition to the system. This is how the primarily minor conflicts became more and more serious – theft, breaking and entering, violent acts of crime and crimes against private property – while the perpetrators had to meet the demands of the **peer group** at any cost. These precedents helped some interviewees to better adapt to the rules of the prison society when they were given a significant prison sentence as a young adult, given that the rules of this society conform *“to the law of the street, the law of street urchins”*.

III. The fact that our interviewees were coming from multiply disadvantaged backgrounds often contributed to their attitude of fundamental opposition. Though these individuals are typically not radicals, they can be considered vulnerable to radicalization. The individuals in this group grew up in deep poverty, working families, or disadvantaged environments. They also have a history of coming into conflict with the system in the form of loitering, theft and, and getting into fights. While these behaviors are rejected by majority society, they are often endorsed, sometimes outright supported by the immediate family and the micro-community. This probably accounts for the fact that several of our interview subjects reported norm-breaking behavior of their own or by others nonchalantly, sometimes even with pride.

Violence and aggression are also in many cases part of the norm, or are regular features of life within the family and/or the small community. Initial acts of norm-breaking – even when they disapproved of it – were not, or not adequately, responded to by the parents, who came across in the narratives as being at a loss or helpless. Brawls, comparing one's strength with peers, and competition appeared at a young age; this was the way to earn the respect of the community.

Coping strategies that could provide protection against the criminal lifestyle are unknown or unavailable within these families. The disadvantaged situation of our interview subjects and their families prevented them from developing such strategies. The parents were unable to take care of their children's needs financially, sometimes even failing to provide them with appropriate housing. They were also unable to give adequate answers to potential childhood fears, frustration, angst and more severe psychological problems. In some of the more serious cases, the above-mentioned deficiencies explain how the children ended up with foster parents or in foster homes. In our understanding, it was often the lack of guidance and hope by (foster) parents led to aggressive behavior as detailed above, drug, alcohol and tobacco use starting at a very early age.

IV. Among the reasons behind the appearance and strengthening of radicalization, it is also possible to highlight typical **individual motivations** associated with being disadvantaged and vulnerable. For it is characteristic of both individuals coming from poor families living at the fringes of society, not infrequently being partial to criminal behavior, and those having grown up in emotionally dysfunctional middle-class families that the desire to acquire "power and resources" steer one in the direction of vulnerability to radicalization. It is these resources that can enable one to get out of the submissive position of the loser and free one from the sense of arbitrariness and the feeling of being exposed.

Its channels are typically provided by combat sports and money from criminal activities. In many cases, an obsessive collection of material goods also motivates crime. Combat sports and money not only give one a position of power but also protects the individual while compensating them for emotional attachments: money can be the source of ties and secure the proximity of people.

### Opposition to specific groups

Some individuals display animosity towards specific groups. In the system of values of this category of individuals we can find – to varying degrees – anti-Roma, homophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes, thinking in fixed categories of “us” versus “them”, sometimes coupled with radical statements concerning the despised collective. This chapter will present this group in detail.

In prison, it is most often in the context of forced cohabitation in a community that rancor is displayed against certain groups, the most frequently versus the Roma. The way the background of animosity is described and what it is attributed to varies. Some argue with reference to fears (*“Hungarians are disappearing, while the Roma keep multiplying”*). Others cite the criminal lifestyle presumed to be representative (*“In some of the living quarters, 90 out of 100 individuals are Roma.”*) (*“Individuals with Roma origins are overrepresented in the penitentiary system.”*) Still others allude to cultural differences (*“they had always been smelly, dirty, stupid. This is a tradition with them or I don't know what”*), (*“They're dull and ignorant of personal hygiene - something I just can't put up with”*.) Others complain of a perversion of social justice: (*“A Roma man or woman will make four kids, only to receive close to 200,000 HUF in family benefits plus free social housing. What do I get? Nothing! We are financing their livelihoods from our taxes. They contribute nothing. They won't work. This just ain't fair!”*)

Some form of a negative personal experience connected to life before incarceration, often linked to childhood years, is a common thread in the stories told by these interviewees, such a history of conflicts with a neighboring Roma family, or Roma youth picking fights during public events. Our interviewees often trace back the animosity toward the group to these experiences.

These previously formed feelings are exacerbated by the years spent in the forced community of the correctional facility - even though the reactions to these situations might be very much different.

Those displaying a strong sense of “us” versus “them” are frequently characterized by a heightened sense of national identity. These convicts often come from an environment that used to provide a relative degree of financial and emotional security, not infrequently proclaiming a Conservative-traditionalistic system of values. Several individuals referred to injustice the members of the family had to endure during the years of socialism. Others, even when they did not have their own experience from the period involved, could give a detailed account of the suffering of the parents and grandparents. The people responsible for these injustices were the soldiers of the Soviet Union and/or the secret police of socialist Hungary, along with the police, national bodies and the actors cooperating with them. Political attitudes are strongly influenced by these factors; the parties and initiatives proclaiming conservative values are more accepted and supported within the group involved, while those representing socialistic and liberal values are definitely not endorsed.

Another frequent characteristic of this group is that authority, hierarchy, loyalty to values and order are highly regarded. According to their accounts, the regime change was an important step in Hungary's history from the point of view of ousting socialism. Nevertheless they still typically evaluate this historical change in a negative manner, as it replaced a period of relative order and predictability by unpredictability, as a result of

which the country has become such that *“no one knows where their place is any more”*. The perception that it resulted in heightened social injustice is another explanation frequently brought up for the bad reputation of the regime change.

As a final point, it should finally be mentioned that parallel to the hostility developing toward a specific group, a feeling of isolation and loneliness can be identified within the child peer group and in the microenvironment in general. It seems that for lonely, isolated youngsters, it is difficult to experience whom or where they belong to. On the other hand, with this shortage, their need to define themselves in an opposition to a specific group becomes even more pronounced.

## The path to deradicalization

Through our interviews, we were trying to find out which factors could protect one against radicalization, especially during the time spent in prison. At the same time, we also wished to identify the coping mechanisms that could pave the way towards deradicalization. These factors will be presented in the present chapter.

I. From among the factors that can guard against radicalization, **emotional support and the continuity of contact with friends and family outside** during a long prison sentence should be highlighted. As our interviewees also recognized, contact with the world outside provides one with goals, and goals might help keep one from falling apart. From this point of view, the importance of regular personal contact is clearly evident. For this reason, two factors already referred to have a significant impact: being isolated from one's visitors by a Plexiglas wall, as well as the convicts' difficulties in maintaining contact. From the point of view of communication, it is possible to identify two different narratives accompanied by different reactions given to the threat of radicalization:

**A)** one is a positive pattern, characteristic of well-to-do convicts with a reliable financial background, accompanied by **a)** strong and intensive communication, **b)** an outward-oriented perspective, **c)** building upon the remaining ties with the outside world. In our assessment, all these factors provide protection against radicalization.

**B)** the other pattern typically characterizes convicts coming from an environment of poverty or extreme poverty, sometimes being sentenced to extremely long periods. In their case, **a)** communication is weak, narrowing, sometimes disappearing, **b)** coupled with the elimination and weakening of family ties and other bonds with the external world, conditions that **c)** typically correlated with the fixation of radical views.

II. For many, it is a life event representing a juncture that sets them out on a path of deradicalization. Some link the appearance of an acute, chronic illness to the stress resulting from the criminal lifestyle, which they interpreted as "a sign" that "they need to

change the way they live”. Having suffered a four-month-long coma due to being shot when perpetrating a crime, one inmate had to learn to walk again and to construct their life anew from scratch. In the same incident, they lost their best friend, too (also shot). There are individuals who interpret the long prison sentence as a crossroads leading to change. Albeit the stories and the traumas are different, there is also the recurring theme for many for whom starting out towards change in the direction of deradicalization is linked to a specific life event.

III. Several individuals have declared that they arrived at transformation during the **long prison sentence**. Having confronted the system for a long time, they were forced to realize at a given point in time that it's impossible to complete a several decade-long prison sentence with an aggressive, confrontational attitude. For this reason, they started looking for new coping strategies. Part of it was that they accepted that in prison they have to coexist with groups – especially the Roma – towards whom they used to nurture hatred. The forced community also helped them to get closer to “the other”, and to understand their perspective, their reality.

## VI. Recommendations

Summarizing the findings of the project, we can say that radicalization is not a widespread phenomenon or risk factor in Hungarian correctional facilities. Based on the forecasts, however, members of staff can expect to encounter radical individuals/groups and the problems connected to radicalism. For this reason, and because of the between-group conflicts, it is of utmost importance to create working conditions that can facilitate the recognition, prevention, and treatment of radicalization, duly considering the risk factors as presented in our study as well. We hope that the following proposals can contribute to making the right steps in this direction.

Some of the recommendations were voiced by the training participants themselves, while the researchers and trainers chose to highlight some of the others. They primarily have to do with the working conditions, the conditions of detention, the professional expertise, and preparedness of staff for these are the factors that the international literature has shown to be necessary to take into consideration when we want to recognize, prevent and treat radicalization in detention facilities (see especially: IARS 2018, RAN 2017, RAN 2016, UNODC 2016).

In order to be able to retain the existing strengths, 1) it is imperative to increase the headcount of the staff directly dealing with the convicts in a way that maximally observes professional requirements; 2) the number of doctors and psychologists working in the correctional facilities should also be increased. In our assessment, 3) it is vital for new colleagues to be able to experience security and reliability in the workplace due to background support from more experienced colleagues.

The excessive workload of staff could also be reduced by 4) *“individuals who are ill and should be treated in other institutions would not be put in prison”*. 5) At some of the sites, recommendations have been formulated with a view to facilitating the execution of professional work. In our assessment, a system should be established in order to collect, evaluate, and whenever justified, to implement these recommendations. Here it is

important to note that in the safe and supportive atmosphere created during the trainings, the participants shared valuable experience, practical knowledge, and recommendations with us. Collecting information in such a form has the potential not only to create this additional support for organizational development but can also provide participants with a feeling of recognition due to their proposals being duly weighed and considered.

We found that at least part of the members of correctional staff displayed frustration and stress due to being overloaded at the workplace. Participants highlighted the importance of the stress management programs already available today. Many employees consciously strive to find recreational opportunities (e.g., sport, family programs, venting about experiences). Nevertheless, still many others have no such skills or knowledge. It is especially the latter group that can be described as typically suffering from health problems induced by conditions at the workplace. Furthermore, 6) introducing measures designed to support recreational opportunities and to foster the resilience of the staff would also be important.

Over and beyond the above considerations, as indicated by the feedback from participants, 7) transforming and developing the carrier path model, and 8) a number of measures designed to make work in correctional facilities more attractive (e.g. higher wages, early retirement scheme, cafeteria, improving working conditions, organizing trainings etc.) would count as significant contributions. There were indications that these kinds of measures would be absolutely necessary to make sure that new colleagues join the ranks of correctional facilities staff who are both well prepared professionally and are psychologically fit for the job. The need for a significant increase in headcount by new colleagues meeting appropriate professional standards was raised during almost all the trainings as a priority task.

Resulting from introducing more stringent conditions in detention, and especially of the conditions of the convicts maintaining contact with the external world, tensions between staff and the convicts have clearly increased, and conflicts have deepened.

Internal conflict, as well as the dwindling or loss of external supportive relationships of the convicts, can contribute to strengthening polarization, and eventually, to accelerating the process of radicalization. Consequently, we propose to ensure that 9) convicts are given the opportunity to maintain contact with their immediate family. After an individual assessment of security risks, certain convicts should have opportunities to maintain physical contact with their next-of-kin.

Furthermore, retaining supporting relationships and the prevention of conflicts among convicts could also be fostered by making communication on the phone available for everyone in a fair manner. In our assessment, these changes play a key role in prevention, in developing immunity against radicalization, and in certain cases, in de-radicalization.

Last but not least, 10) we propose to hold informal further trainings for the management of correctional institutions, exploring the issue of radicalization. Such trainings could significantly foster the development of a shared language and methodology within the correctional facility, which would contribute to efficient cooperation among the management and staff, to developing a common stance against radicalization and polarization, facilitating their prevention.

## References

IARS – Youth Empowerment and Innovation Project (2018). *Youth Radicalization, Restorative Justice and the Good Lives Model: Comparative learnings from seven countries*. London: IARS. Available at: <http://www.oijj.org/en/docs/publications/youth-radicalization-restorative-justice-and-the-good-lives-model-comparative-lear>. Accessed on: 03/04/2018

GCTF – Global Counterterrorism Forum (2012). Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders. Roma: GCTF. Available at: <https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Rome-Memorandum-ENG.pdf>. Accessed: 03/04/2018

RAN – Radicalization Awareness Network (2017). EX ANTE PAPER. Discussing the draft 'Polarisation Management Manual'. Available at: [http://www.edu.fi/download/186224\\_polarisation\\_management\\_manual\\_amsterdam\\_6\\_july\\_2017.pdf](http://www.edu.fi/download/186224_polarisation_management_manual_amsterdam_6_july_2017.pdf). Accessed: 03/04/2018

RAN – Radicalization Awareness Network (2016). RAN P&P Practitioners' working paper. Approaches to violent extremist offenders and countering radicalization in prisons and probation. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalization\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_approaches\\_to\\_violent\\_extremist\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalization_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_approaches_to_violent_extremist_en.pdf). Accessed: 03/04/2018

Sherif, Muzafer (1998). A fölérendelt célok szerepe a csoportközi viszonyok enyhítésében. (Published originally as: Originally published as: Muzafer Sherif, "Superordinate goals in the reduction of intergroup conflict." *American Journal of Sociology*, 1958, 63, 349-356.) In: Erős Ferenc (ed.): *Megismerés, identitás, előítélet*. Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola. Budapest, pp. 123.

Tajfel, Henri (1998). Csoportközi viselkedés, társadalmi összehasonlítás, társadalmi változás. (Intergroup behavior, social comparison and social change.) In: Erős Ferenc (ed.):

*Megismerés, identitás, előítélet.* Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola. Budapest, pp. 140.

UNODC - UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (2016). Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. New York: United Nations. Available at: [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf). Accessed: 03/04/2018