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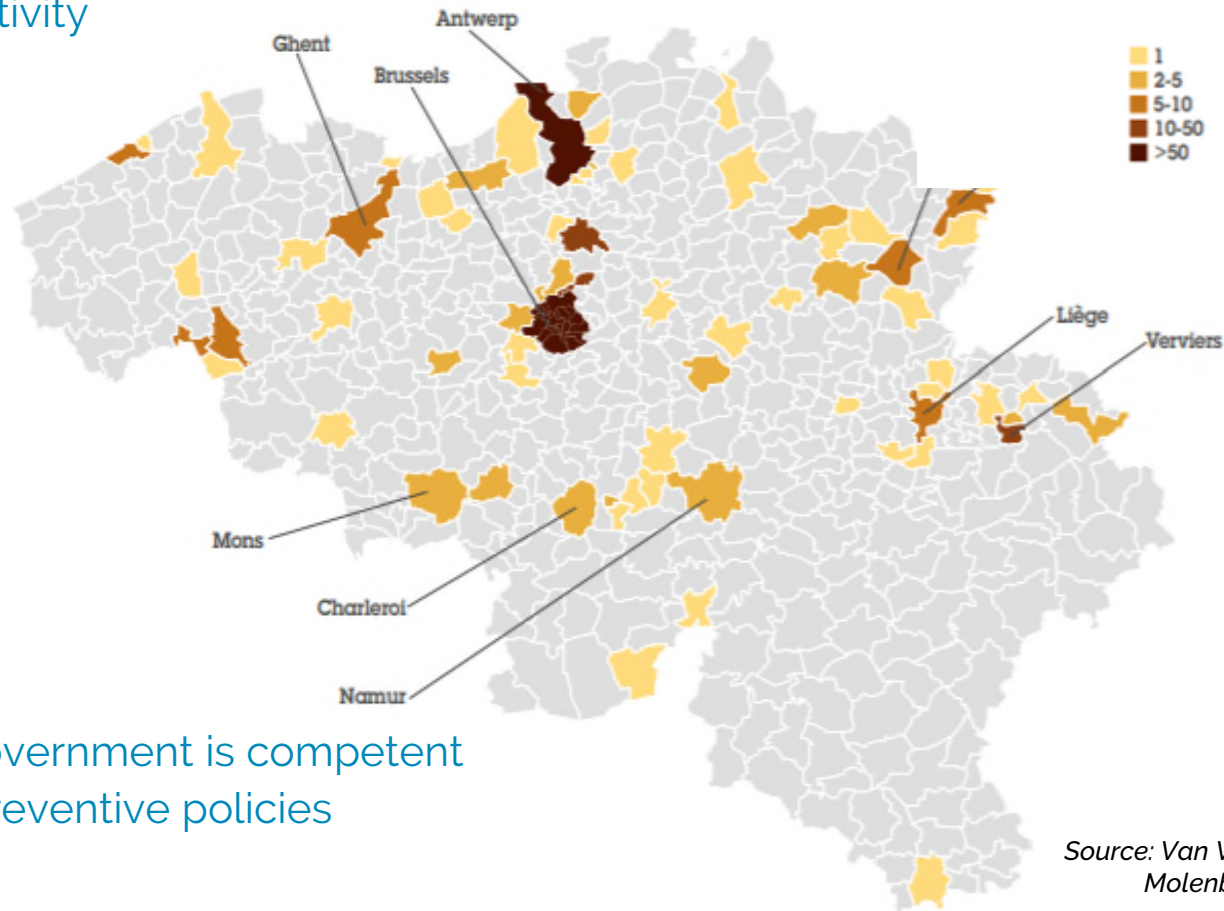


Lessons learned from the Flemish action plan for the prevention of violent radicalisation & polarisation

Flemish Peace Institute
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Flanders – a relevant case study for P/CVE policies

- ▶ A region confronted with radicalisation issues, the FTF phenomenon and terrorist activity



- ▶ Flemish government is competent for most preventive policies



Federal government is competent for repressive policies

The Flemish action plan for the prevention of violent radicalisation and polarisation

- ▶ Security context of 2015 created a sense of urgency
- ▶ First action plan was adopted in 2015, then updated in 2017 to respond to the evolving context
 - Broadened scope to include the phenomenon of polarisation
 - Double objective:

“With this action plan, the Flemish Government primarily wants to prevent people from radicalising, and to detect signs of violent radicalization as early as possible.”

- ▶ Structured along five policy lines
- ▶ Operationalized in 62 actions and measures
- ▶ *“an integrated preventive approach in which each policy domain – within its competences - takes responsibility”*

Policy area Policy line	Global	Interior	Education	Social care, public health and family	Culture, youth, sport and media	Work
Coordination and cooperation	11	7	10	7	8	7
Local approach	17	8	6	6	2	2
Organisation of a person-oriented approach	5	2	3	5	3	3
Strengthening expertise and knowledge	16	6	14	6	4	5
Mobilising civil society	13	3	5	4	5	1
Total	62	26	38	28	22	18

An evaluation of the Flemish action plan for the prevention of violent radicalisation and polarisation

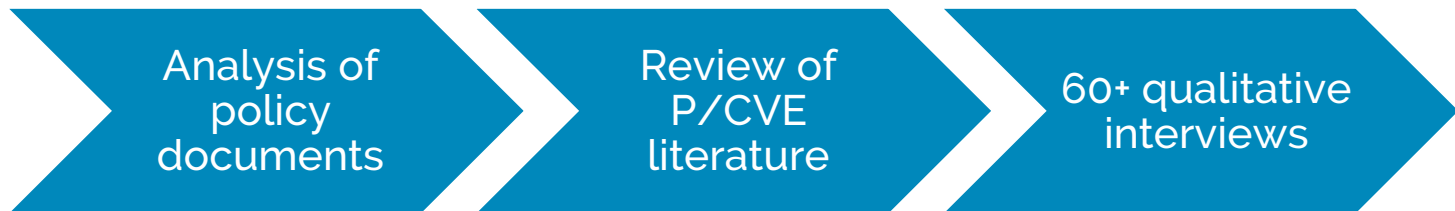
▶ Commissioned by the Flemish Agency for Home Affairs

▶ Three questions:

- ‘Does the action plan build on insights and recommendations from the literature?’
- ‘How was policy translated in practice? Do implementing partners think the objectives are being met?’
- ‘Is the action plan appropriate to deal with evolving needs and challenges in violent radicalisation?’

▶ ~~Impact assessment~~

▶ Methodology used:



Some research findings

1. An overarching vision and conceptual framework can increase effectiveness and better implementation



- Inspiring example is promotion of vision development within the education sector



- A vague vision of radicalisation created barriers to the implementation of the action plan in other policy domains (e.g., youth welfare sector)
 - > involving implementing partners in the development of P/CVE policies can contribute to a shared vision that respects the specificities of the engaged sectors

2. An adequate operationalization in five policy lines



- **Focus on strengthening cooperation and coordination**
 - > development of various cooperation platforms, both between and within policy domains
- **Emphasis on enhancing knowledge and expertise**
 - > strengthened knowledge base
 - > reduced reluctance and urge to act among front-line practitioners (?)



▶ Adequate financing is crucial

- Investments ≈ outcomes -> uneven financial support translated in different results

Policy area / Policy line	Agency for Home Affairs	Education	Welfare	Youth	Agency for integration	Media	Brussels	Total
Coordination and cooperation	216k	/	/	18k	/	/	/	234k
Local approach	16.094k	1.520k	1.384k	/	402k	/	/	19.400k
Organisation of a person-oriented approach	/	/	600k	/	/	/	/	600k
Strengthening expertise and knowledge	160k6	440k 4,5 FTE	975k	2k	50k	/	/	1.527k 4,5 FTE
Mobilising civil society	13523k	4,5 FTE	387k	312k	400k	45k	250k	1.917k 4,5 FTE
Total	16.893k	1.960k 9 FTE	3.346k	332k	852k	45k	250k	23.678k 9 FTE

Education sector

Youth sector



► Need for supralocal coordination

- **Overload in available knowledge and expertise.**
-> need to guarantee quality of knowledge and expertise, professionalise its dissemination, and identify further needs and requirements
- **Risk of losing knowledge and expertise that has been accumulated in projects.**
-> need to embed knowledge and results in a structural and systematic manner

“When grants are limited in time it often means that, afterwards, projects must be fully or partially phased out, because additional staff that was recruited cannot be retained - resulting in a loss of expertise – and valuable partnerships with external partners have to be discontinued.”

3. The need for a more structural evaluation reflex

- ▶ Evaluation was approached very differently by implementing partners of the action plan, for instance
 - **P/CVE projects adopted systematic evaluation – limited evaluation - no focus on evaluation**

- ▶ **Need to:**
 - > **Formulate clear and achievable objectives in concrete actions and projects**
 - > **Actively involve local actors in the development of a feasible and relevant evaluation framework**
 - > **Provide sufficient guidance for the evaluation of actions and measures**

4. New challenges in the prevention of radicalisation

▶ Violent extremism today - a more diffuse phenomenon

- Increasing threat stemming from lone actors
- Different forms of violent extremism
- Importance of the digital dimension

-> How to extend geographic reach of measures and actions?

-> How to reach out to different target groups?

-> How to translate P/CVE policies to the digital sphere?

Want to know more?



- ▶ Book “Violent radicalisation and polarisation”, available on our website (Dutch)
- ▶ Upcoming policy brief (English)

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