

## **The Radicalisation Awareness Network/ RAN – idea and reality**

A policy essay on interagency cooperation to prevent violent extremism and support resilient European societies

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When asked to write a “description and critical assessment of the RAN” for a major online Info-Service, Harald realized that all he could do is write an independent essay which conveys some of his and practitioner colleagues’ personal experiences and thoughts when assisting to build up the RAN – where he served as steering group member and working group chair from 2011-2015 and cooperated ever since.

The observations and issues range from the RAN as “the best thing of its sort” to the however misunderstood concept of a network of first-line practitioners, the RAN’s surprising lack of any evaluation on itself, the un-heard grievances of practitioners throughout, the RAN’s mechanism of simulating bottom-up while functioning strictly top-down and furthering “securitisation”, a “puppet-theatre” metaphor and the mechanism of “it-briefs-wellism” in program designing, the industrialisation of PVE and professional “NPO capitalists” in and beyond the RAN, some supposable cases of “EU added damage” through (i) the RAN’s ‘counter narrative’ strategies, (ii) its recruitment of young people, and (iii) its Islamism bias esp. in Eastern Europe; and a presumable coup d’état against the RAN by ministries of Member States in 2017 which may, however, be quite understandable (cf. the High-level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation/ HLCEG-R).

The essay finally underline the need to start afresh, restructure and build an ‘eye level’ interagency European framework of preventing phenomena which pose risks to democracy and human rights.