

Summary of answers

EMN Ad-Hoc Query on detecting jihadists in the asylum procedure

Number of answers received until 9 August 2016: 18 (including the Netherlands)

Deadline for submission of answers: 15 July 2016

Dissemination: All answers, except for the ones from Czech Republic and Hungary, are for wider dissemination.

Background information

Since the influx of refugees to Europe, there have been numerous media reports referring to the risk of jihadists using the refugee flow to enter Europe. In its most recent annual risk analysis, Frontex stated that the attacks in Paris in November 2015 clearly demonstrated that irregular migratory flows could be used by terrorists to enter the EU, as two of the attackers had presented fraudulent Syrian passports to enter the EU through Greece.

Another risk that has been identified is the possibility of radicalization and recruitment for the jihad among asylum seekers in and around European reception centers. The German and Norwegian security services have recently confirmed reports of such incidents as published in the media. In the Netherlands, a man was recently convicted for recruitment activities in a reception facility.

Next to the above mentioned risks jihadists could also formally seek for asylum.

The Ministry of Security and Justice has instigated research on the question of how and to what extent relevant governmental institutions involved in the immigration process are equipped to identify 1) possible jihadists in the asylum process, and 2) recruitment activities in reception centers. The scope of this survey is to explore what policies exist in other European countries with respect to these issues. The questions below are aimed at gaining a general insight into policies and measures that have been reported to the public. They are not aimed at obtaining operational or confidential information, as your replies will be used for a public report aimed at informing Parliament and the wider public.

Question 1: Acknowledgement of risks

Have these abovementioned risks been acknowledged, considered or discussed in your country, for instance in parliament or in the context of risk assessments relating to asylum and terrorism or discussions around contra-terrorism measures, and if so, can you refer to public reports of these discussions or assessments?

The majority of countries that answered the ad hoc query have **acknowledged the risk** of jihadists using the refugee flow to enter Europe and the risk posed by recruitment activities in reception centres. The latter seems to be perceived as posing a lesser threat than the former. Only Portugal, Slovak Republic and Sweden mentioned that these risks had not (yet) been publically acknowledged by the government. In the United Kingdom the risks have been discussed internally within government authorities, without the results being published.

Several countries mentioned that the risks had been addressed in **government reports, discussed in parliament** or had been subject to **parliamentary inquiries**:

- In **Austria** the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism mentioned the possibility of jihadists entering Europe disguised as refugees in its annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution.¹ Targeted recruitment and radicalisation of asylum seekers by Islamists could however not be confirmed.
- In **Germany** parliamentary questions were asked about the possibility and concrete cases where jihadists used the influx of asylum seekers to enter Europe. In the answers² to the questions the German government stated that it had recently altered its policy. Since the Paris attacks in November 2015 the authorities assume that there is a significant risk that there are potential terrorists among the asylum seekers entering Germany. Previously, it was perceived as unlikely that terrorists would use this route, as other entry routes seemed more plausible. As of 25 April 2016, the German government has in 350 cases concrete indications that a person who has been registered as asylum seeker in Germany might be a (potential) terrorist. 132 of these cases have been closed because the suspicion could not be confirmed. 228 cases are being processed. In 38 cases investigation proceedings have been started.
- In **Belgium** several parliamentary questions have been asked on the issue, including on the radicalisation of refugees and the screening of asylum applicants for IS fighters.³

¹ http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMi_Verfassungsschutz/Verfassungsschutzbericht_2015.pdf, p. 52

² <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/083/1808382.pdf>

³ - 25/08/2015: Question about radicalized refugees

<http://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/showpage.cfm?section=qrva&language=nl&cfm=qrvaXml.cfm?legislat=54&dossierID=54-B045-885-0257-2014201504716.xml>)

- 15/10/2015: Question about the screening of asylum applicants for IS fighters

<http://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/showpage.cfm?section=qrva&language=nl&cfm=qrvaXml.cfm?legislat=54&dossierID=54-B052-866-0609-2015201605452.xml>)

- 01/12/2015: Question about the Task Force on radicalization in the field of asylum and migration

<http://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/showpage.cfm?section=qrva&language=nl&cfm=qrvaXml.cfm?legislat=54&dossierID=54-B057-885-0374-2015201606342.xml>

- 16/12/2016: Question about the presence of radicalized persons in asylum centers

<http://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/showpage.cfm?section=qrva&language=nl&cfm=qrvaXml.cfm?legislat=54&dossierID=54-B059-885-0389-2015201606638.xml>

Question 2: Identification of possible jihadists in asylum process

Have any measures been taken in order to create awareness and a reporting structure for the identification of possible jihadists in or around the asylum process, and if so, can you list these?

Most countries have measures in place to identify persons that could form a threat to national security, such as jihadists, during the asylum procedure. Several countries (e.g. Belgium, Finland, Luxembourg) report that they have recently introduced or expanded their procedures to detect potentially dangerous asylum seekers. Other countries (Portugal, Slovak Republic) stated that they have standard procedures in place that have existed for many years, but have not been altered recently. The measures countries have taken to detect possible jihadists broadly fall within the following categories: 1) using a screening process, 2) capacity building in the primary process of immigration services, 2) introducing specific reporting structures, and 3) improving information exchange between governmental authorities.

Several countries (e.g. Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovak Republic) stated in their answer that each applicant has to undergo a **security screening**. In some countries the security screening is carried out by the police or national security services. For example in Belgium the State Security Service screens all asylum seekers. In Luxembourg the check is carried out by the Judicial Police. However, in most countries (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Norway) the screening is carried out by the immigration offices themselves. As part of the screening the applicant's data is usually cross-checked with entries in specialised databases. For example in Belgium a check is performed based on a database with names of known foreign terrorist fighters. In the Netherlands, government authorities also make use publicly available information from social media (e.g. pictures) during the screening. If the screening yielded relevant results, the information is usually forwarded to the relevant security agencies.

A number of countries reported that they have taken **measures to enhance capacities in the primary process** of immigration services to identify potential terrorists. Such measures include awareness raising campaigns (United Kingdom, Belgium) and specialised trainings to identify potential threats (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Norway). For example in Finland each case worker dealing with exclusion clause cases has to participate in the EASO exclusion module training. Norway and Finland also reported that they have special procedures and guidelines for handling cases from applicants from certain regions (e.g. regions governed by the IS). In Belgium a working group on radicalism was recently (November 2015) created, which has (amongst others) the task to optimise the screening of asylum seekers and raise awareness for the threat of radical immigrants within the authorities responsible for asylum and security.

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Most countries mentioned that they have specific **reporting structures** to communicate information on potentially dangerous persons identified during the asylum procedure. Such information is generally forwarded to a number of security services on different levels, in Austria for example to the Provincial Agencies for the Protection of the Constitution and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism.

Several countries (e.g. Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium) mentioned the importance of effective **information exchange** between different government authorities. For example Belgium set up a dedicated working group which has the primary objective of strengthening the exchange of relevant information between the asylum and migration authorities and the security and intelligence services and to identify good functioning exchange channels.

Question 3: Identification of radicalization or recruitment in reception centers

Have any measures been taken in order to promote the identification of radicalization or recruitment for the jihad in reception centres, and if so, can you list these?

Several countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway) report to have taken measures to promote the identification of radicalization or recruitment activities in reception centers. The most common measures include:

- Training of personnel working in reception centers (Belgium, Finland)
- Specific reporting structures (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway)
- The provision of information material for personal working with asylum seekers (Finland, Germany)
- The introduction of a dedicated hotline (Germany)
- The registration of visitors (Estonia)

The **training of personnel at reception centers** usually focuses on recognizing signals of radicalization and recruitment activities and how to react adequately. In Belgium a dedicated training programme for the staff of reception centres regarding the phenomenon of radicalism was started in the beginning of 2016. The programme was initiated by the Federal Reception Agency for Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) and the State Security Service. The programme consists of an e-learning module and a face-to-face module with experts from the State Intelligence Service and experts on radicalism. Topics that are discussed are 1) the geo-political context of Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria and the influence on migration flows in Europe, 2) the role and functioning of State Intelligence Services and its collaboration with Fedasil; 3) islamic radicalization, and 4) recognizing and reporting signs of radicalism in reception centers (from radicalization to recruitment).

Most countries that recognize radicalization and recruitment activities in or around reception centers as a threat, have specific **reporting structures** in place to follow up on such activities. Mostly, reception centers are expected to report suspicious activities to the police or other security authorities. In March 2016 Belgium introduced a new reporting sheet on radicalism. If signals of radicalization are detected in a reception center, the reporting sheet (an excel document) has to be filled in and sent to the headquarters of the Federal Reception Agency for Asylum Seekers and to the contact point of the local police.

Germany published a 35-page long **brochure** titled "How do I recognize extremists and intelligence activities: Guidance for persons working with asylum seekers".⁴ Moreover, Germany introduced a dedicated **telephone hotline** for signals of Islamic terrorism, where also signs of radicalization and recruitment activities (including at or around reception centers) can be reported.⁵ The Finnish authorities sent a **letter** to all reception centers with instructions on how to react in case of radicalization or recruitment activities. Latvia reported that **visitors to reception centers are registered and monitored** during their visit.

Question 4: Measures to increase awareness among employees of relevant governmental institutions

Have any measures been taken to increase awareness among employees of relevant governmental institutions involved in the asylum process or working within the reception centres with respect to the abovementioned risks, and if so, what measures?

The majority of the countries that answered the question reported that they have measures in place to increase awareness among employees of relevant governmental institutions (see table below). These measures mostly consist of trainings and the provision of information material (e.g. websites, brochures).

Country	Measures taken?	Examples of measures
Austria	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings and awareness-raising events for employees in the field of asylum (Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, First Reception Centers, etc.).
Belgium	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated training programme for the staff of the reception centres regarding the phenomenon of radicalism (see answers to question 3 above)
Croatia	No information available	
Cyprus	Classified	
Czech Republic	Not for wider dissemination	
Finland	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception centers have been trained concerning the extremism in the common training days and the police have offered special training for individual reception centers

⁴ <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/publikationen/allgemeine-publikationen/broschuere-2016-08-handreichung-fuer-fluechtlingshelfer>

⁵ <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/hinweistelefon>

Country	Measures taken?	Examples of measures
France	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific measures, but the French government set up an action plan against radicalization and terrorism which might lead to such measures in the future
Germany	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brochures providing information about jihadist salafist movements in Germany have been distributed among personnel working at reception centres and shelters Employees of the German immigration service that work closely with asylum seekers are trained and informed about indicators for security relevant constellations
Hungary	Not for wider dissemination	
Latvia	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminar-training for employees of the relevant institutions on security issues and conditions that could trigger investigation regarding potential security risks (jihadists among asylum seekers, radicalisation etc.)
Lithuania	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officials at reception centers have been informed on possible risk indications
Luxembourg	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees of the asylum unit, especially those who are in direct contact with the applicants (employees in charge of registration and interviews), have participated in a basic training by the Luxembourgish Intelligence Service
Netherlands	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness trainings and information messages Offering specific internal websites with information on national security Officials responsible for screening and officials specialized in fraud of the immigration office receive additional training on detecting signals that could be related to national security The National Training Institute for Countering Radicalization that offers specialized courses on the phenomenon of radicalization, jihadism and how to act upon signals of these phenomena, has developed a specific training for the organizations most directly involved in the immigration process
Portugal	No	
Slovak Republic	No	
Sweden	No	
United Kingdom	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All caseworkers have received counter terrorism training and guidance on the referral process
Norway	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees of reception centers are trained about when to notify the Norwegian immigration service or the police when they detect incidents that they interpret as being affiliated with national security risks or attempts at radicalization or any other behavior that would violate Norwegian law

Question 5: Increase in incidents since October 2014

Could you indicate whether reporting on the presence of possible jihadists or incidents of radicalization or recruitment for the jihad in or around the asylum process has increased since October 2014 and to what extent?

A number of countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway) reported an increase in the number of incidents relating to possible jihadists or the radicalization or recruitment for the jihad in or around the asylum process (see table below). For example in Norway, the Oslo Police District has reported 68 potential candidates (for further investigation) to the Norwegian

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Police Security Service since November 2014. In previous years the Oslo Police District reported around 2 to 4 cases on average per year.

Country	Increase of reported incidents
Austria	Yes
Belgium	Yes
Croatia	No information available
Cyprus	Classified
Czech Republic	Not for wider dissemination
Finland	Yes
France	No information available
Germany	Yes
Hungary	Not for wider dissemination
Latvia	No
Lithuania	No
Luxembourg	No
Netherlands	Yes
Portugal	No
Slovak Republic	No
Sweden	No information available
United Kingdom	No information available
Norway	Yes

However, the increase in the absolute number of reported incidents in some countries does not necessarily mean that also the relative number of incidents increased, as was emphasised by several countries. The percentage of incidents compared to the total number of applicants might well have remained the same. Moreover, the measures that countries have taken to enhance the awareness of and reporting on incidents might have contributed the fact that more cases are reported now than previously.

It can be noted that an increase of incidents has only been reported by countries that received a higher influx of asylum seekers during the last two years. Several Eastern European countries with low application rates reported that no increase had taken place (Latvia) or that no incidents have been registered at all (Lithuania, Slovak Republic).