



## STRASBOURG

### Factsheet Multi-Stakeholder-Collaboration Team Profile

#### Strasbourg risk landscape

While Strasbourg faces many of the same challenges as other large European cities, it also shares specific challenges with other border cities, such as Toulouse (which is situated near the Spanish border). One issue being right-wing extremists who come to Strasbourg from Germany to carry out activities in France thinking they will avoid being tracked by security services and taking advantage of the differences in law between France and Germany<sup>1</sup>. An increase in right-wing extremism is apparent.

Strasbourg has also been confronted for years now with political and religious extremism as well as far-left extremism, which from a pragmatic and objective point of view is less of a concern for the MSC as these groups are usually less violent. Finally, Strasbourg has seen a rise in recent years of more specific extremism such as anti-specist movements, identity groups, and regional identity groups.

#### The MSC's primary focus

For strategic reasons, Strasbourg has decided to work on all (violent) extremist phenomena, so as to avoid stigmatisation and thus risk being counterproductive.

#### Stakeholders currently involved and coordinating body

The city of Strasbourg itself has created a position of Coordinator for the Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism, which functions as the coordinating body of the MSC. Further stakeholders are the prosecutor's office and an association for victim support and access to law called Viaduc.

#### Further stakeholders to be involved

Strasbourg would like to mobilise further stakeholders with direct relations to citizens, mainly of two types: socio-cultural centres and the national education system. This extension of the network would concern primary prevention actions, mainly educational ones, and also actions that seek to strengthen social cohesion and thus shift the focus away from a securitised perspective.

#### Major contribution of the MSC to the prevention and countering of violent extremism?

Progress has been made in the city's northern district. Most recently, meetings have been organised with field partners to discuss a joint project co-designed with social centres for the autumn 2023 half-term break. Before that, we had meetings, some training sessions, but not any project as such. One of the characteristics of Strasbourg's strategy is that they have mobilised field workers in local networks linked to specific neighbourhoods in order to build neighbourhood-based networks to develop projects that respond to needs on the ground.

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1 For example, the Nazi salute is a criminal offence in Germany, whereas in France, it is not directly considered an offence, but only if it amounts to incitement to hatred or violence.

## How has participation in icommit impacted the MSC's work?

Most beneficial to Strasbourg was their work with the expert between the two sessions, and to share their progress with the experts and the participants. They had excellent discussions with the city of Liège and want to jointly implement a cross-border project to share good practices between France, Belgium, and eventually Germany.

The mentorship work was very beneficial for the team because it brought an external point of view and a new perspective on the work done in Strasbourg. The fact that they were questioned about their practices allowed for discussion of new proposals on how to implement a strategy, rather than on how to design it. Their mentor inquired about their expectations, actions and the desired results, what stakeholders they involve, etc. before suggesting several actions and encouraging them to work on the link between strategic and operational implementation.

## Future focus

The MSC is sometimes faced with a degree of institutional rigidity, for example in terms of data and information sharing. Knowing that they cannot work alone, the question of information sharing among the different institutions is crucial, acknowledging how complex the question is and that limitations will likely remain. It seems that other countries have better mechanisms in place to share information between public services. For example, in the United Kingdom, there is seemingly more sharing between local stakeholders and public services than in France.

## Piece of advice for other MSCs

Strasbourg highly recommends the Montreal-based Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence's Hexagon tool training (CPRLV). Having been invited in France to apply for the training back in 2018, the city has gone on to offer the same training programme which is designed to foster the sharing of culture and exchanges among stakeholders on the ground.

For a start, Strasbourg would recommend reading the relevant documentation and relying on expertise. But then, what will make the difference is to meet people that have experience in building up a multi-agency team and to compare experiences. Also, meeting with field workers and exchanging with them is key. Another thing that can be important is political backing. It is easier to implement MSC activities when you have political backing. Strasbourg has built their MSC strategy on what was already there and involved stakeholders who have been working in the field for a long time. They did not create anything new but improved and changed things. There is often no need to come up with a brilliant idea: when we want to build something, it probably has already been done somewhere else before. So, the essential recommendation would be to exchange good practices and find inspiration on what has been done elsewhere. Good and bad practices. We can learn a lot from the experience of others.

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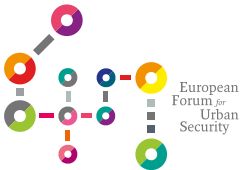
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