This is the executive summary of Lorenzo Vidino and James Brandon's policy report published by the International Centre forthe Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence

Since the mid-2000s, several European countries have developed comprehensive counter-radicalization strategies seeking to de-radicalize or disengage committed militants and, with even greater intensity, prevent the radicalization of new ones. The report describes the genesis, main characteristics, aims, underlying philosophies, and challenges experienced by counterradicalization strategies in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, the four European countries with the most
extensive counter-radicalization initiatives. The report focuses exclusively on jihadist radicalization, although it should be noted that all these countries have at least some activities targeting other forms of extremism as well.

Each country's experience has been deeply shaped by political, cultural, and legal elements unique to that country. Moreover, the programs have been in place for just a few years, and it is therefore difficult to fully assess their impact. Nevertheless, the experience to date points to certain key characteristics and challenges common
to all European counter-radicalization programs.

All four countries have conducted both disengagement/ de-radicalization initiatives aimed at individual militants and preventive programs aimed at target groups or the population at large. With regard to the former, European countries have developed schemes that seek to identify individuals that have displayed clear signs of
radicalization but have not yet committed a crime. Authorities assess each case and craft targeted interventions aimed at swaying the individual away from militancy and back to a normal life. There are important national variations in these programs, ranging from which authorities administer them to what kind of intervention is set up,
but throughout Europe there is an understanding that these "soft" programs are a crucial component of a comprehensive counterterrorism policy.

Authorities have also invested significant resources in the development of initiatives that target at-risk segments of society (mostly Muslim youth), seeking to make them resilient to radical ideas. These initiatives vary significantly in characteristics and underlying philosophies, some focusing on the reinforcement of democratic values, others on moderate Islamic theology or individual selfempowerment. Often blurring the line between counter-radicalization and the promotion of social cohesion and integration, these sets of initiatives have been downsized in most countries due mostly to overall budget cuts, declining threat levels and the difficulty in demonstrating their effectiveness.

The report seeks to highlight challenges common to the four countries examined. From the onset, European authorities have struggled to identify the target of their actions. Most recently,

authorities throughout the continent seem to have shifted their focus from the broader phenomenon of extremism to the narrower subcategory of violent radicalization. This is not to say that authorities do not see a relation between non-violent forms of extremism and violent radicalization, or that they do not wish to tackle the non-security-related challenges posed by extremism, but the lack of clear empirics on the radicalization process combined with budgetary constraints are leading authorities to increasingly concentrate on the more narrowly defined phenomenon of violent radicalization. Authorities are also increasingly isolating their efforts to counter violent radicalization from initiatives aimed at integration and social cohesion, as the relationship between the two is considered unclear.

Authorities have also struggled to establish clear metrics to assess the effectiveness of their programs. While methods of verifying the success of de-radicalization and disengagement measures are relatively easier to find, general preventive measures are extremely difficult to empirically assess.

Another challenge common to most European countries is their choice of partners, as authorities have frequently struggled to find cooperative, legitimate and reliable partners within local Muslim communities. Of particular interest are potential counter radicalization partnerships with non-violent Islamists. While patterns vary significantly from country to country, there seems to be a consensus that such forces are necessary interlocutors but not yet partners, other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

Although circumstances and views still somewhat vary from country to country, the report highlights how authorities in the four European countries analyzed are converging on a variety of issues. From the importance of good training to the need for clearly defined goals, from increased focus on empirical effectiveness assessments to a growing role for targeted interventions, it is possible to observe some common trends across the continent. Based on extensive fieldwork and access to relevant experts, officials and community members, this report aims to condense the experiences of these countries, to outline key challenges and areas of convergence, while at the same time being a useful primer for policymakers throughout the West.