The penal system in Hesse

Correctional facilities are a mirror of society. Of course problems relating to radical or extremist attitudes exist in the penal system too, but it must not be allowed to act as a breeding ground for radical ideology. Correctional facilities are therefore a particular focus in the fight against extremist radicalisation. The task and challenge facing the penal system with regard to extremist detainees is, on the one hand, to prevent inmates from radicalising themselves or others in the penal system or being radicalised and, on the other, to work towards the implementation of all possible measures for de-radicalisation to ensure effective protection of the general public after a possible release.

A particular risk of radicalisation in the penal system results from the fact that prisoners live together in difficult circumstances with, in some cases, problematic personality traits in a relatively confined space. By the same token, the circumstances prevailing in a correctional facility enable monitoring, control and influence through treatment, which is of course impossible in this form for a person living in freedom in the outside world.

To that end the penal system in Hesse has already made considerable efforts in recent years and developed an extensive package of measures. Since 1 April 2016 all these measures and programmes, as well as the individual cases of the extremist prisoners, have been supervised and controlled by the newly created administrative office NeDiS (NeDiC = Network for De-Radicalisation in Corrections).

Successful prevention and combatting of Islamist aspirations cannot be accomplished through uncoordinated action. To that end the penal system in Hesse has already made considerable efforts in recent years and developed an extensive package of measures. Since 1 April 2016 all these measures and programmes, as well as the individual cases of the extremist prisoners, have been supervised and controlled by the newly created administrative office NeDiS (NeDiC = Network for De-Radicalisation in Corrections).

Successful prevention and combatting of Islamist aspirations cannot be accomplished through uncoordinated action. With a view to achieving that goal an extensive concept was developed, which includes the following four key pillars:

- Identification
- Prevention
- De-radicalisation
- Coordination

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**IDENTIFICATION**

The identification of extremist prisoners is one of the fundamental pillars of the NeDiC concept. Identification is achieved through:

- Evaluation of information from the law enforcement documents and treatment examination
- Careful monitoring in the penal system
- Recording of tattoos
- Continual exchange of information with the police and domestic intelligence service
- Deployment of structural observers in the Hessian correctional facilities in which most of the prisoners with extremist tendencies are held
- Employee training courses for the recognition of radicalised prisoners
- Use of instruments for assessing violent tendencies and for making decisions on appropriate treatment measures (VERA-2R)
- Continual exchange of information with the police and other security and judicial authorities and the Hessian Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection; Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)
- within and between institutions
- with the security and judicial authorities and the Hessian Information and Competence Centre against Extremism (HKE)