

**Policies on Integration and Prevention of Radicalisation  
in the Netherlands**

*A progress report*

**The Minister of Immigration and Integration**

**July 2006**

# **Policies on Integration and Prevention of Radicalisation in the Netherlands: a progress report**

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A year ago, the ‘Memorandum on Society’s Resilience and Integration Policy’ (august 2005) was discussed by the Dutch Lower Chamber. The discussion focused on the complex character of the process of radicalisation for which there are no ready-made solutions, and which requires a long-term approach. As national and local authorities and their partners must find out in practice what works and what doesn’t, an experimental approach was opted for, in the form of a broad and varied range of relatively small-scale activities, adjusted as and where necessary. As requested by Parliament, the Minister for Integration and Immigration promised to present an interim progress report on the activities undertaken.

This report meets this wish. It is set up as follows. Following a brief summary of the objectives and an outline of the integration policy on the prevention of radicalisation, the report presents an overview of the activities carried out. Finally an overview is given of the results of these activities and how the programme is best continued in the light of recent developments.

## **Progress of the resilience and integration policy programme**

In order to detect and reverse processes of radicalisation at an early stage, administrators, professionals and civilians must view radicalisation as a joint problem that can be tackled only by combining forces. The cabinet contributes to the creation of a broad front against radicalisation at three levels (Memorandum Radicalism and Radicalisation, LC 2004-2005, 29754, no 26): enhancing the bonding between individuals and communities and society and the democratic constitutional state; the promotion of resilience; and – aimed specifically at radicals, the radicalisers and their supporters – the active response to, and thwarting of, radicalisation processes. The integration policy relates to the first two subjects. More in particular it relates to:

1. The general policy to promote shared citizenship, to reinforce social bonding and to prevent youngsters from dropping out and going down the wrong track. Please refer to the letter from the Minister of Justice, dated 24 January 2004, regarding the serious nuisance and crime in inner-city areas (caused by Moroccan adolescent boys) and the cabinet memorandum on dealing with the problems posed by the Moroccan youngsters.
2. Aspects of the integration policy, including initiatives in the field of integration and anti-discrimination. An example is the inclusion of questions on the Dutch social and political system in the integration examinations abroad. For an overview of the measures taken in the field of anti-discrimination, please refer to the letter of the Minister for Government Reform and Kingdom Relations and the Minister for Immigration and Integration (15-11-2005-283385 and the Proceedings 2004-2005, no 48 LC 3039-3123).
3. The specific programme by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Integration, in cooperation with social (self) organisations, to boost resilience against radicalisation amongst, for example, the Muslim community.

This progress report concerns the latter issue. The programme focuses on enforcing resilience against influences of radicalisation by:

- enhancing the *awareness* amongst youngsters in particular of the value of living in a Dutch democratic constitutional state. Providing an insight into the dangers of radicalisation trends and presenting possible alternatives.
- Enhancing the *bonding* of youngsters susceptible to radicalisation in Dutch society.

- Enhancing the *knowledge and expertise* of managers, professionals and key figures in the Muslim community to recognise manifestations of radicalisation at an early stage and to deal with these adequately.

The set-up and execution of this programme involved as many partners from the Government, local authorities, civil society and, of course, the minorities as possible. Important in this is that these partners are stimulated and supported in developing initiatives, while also promoting the alignment and cooperation between the various partners involved. In addition, there is a constant search for ways to promote the international exchange of contacts, knowledge and experience.

The Resilience and Integration Policy lists the projects to enhance the resilience against radicalisation as follows:

- Shared citizenship within a democratic constitutional order
- A local approach to enhance resilience and social bonding
- Manifestations of right-wing radicalism
- Involving youngsters and their parents
- Emancipation of women and girls
- Cooperation with the Muslim community
- Involvement of the native Dutch population

Below is a summary of the progress made in these fields. First attention is paid to the initiatives taken to expand the knowledge in this field.

### **Expanding the knowledge**

Knowledge is the beginning of all understanding. As said before, there is little empirical knowledge about the phenomenon of radicalisation in the Netherlands. In addition to the IMES report – which will be dealt with below - a number of other studies were carried out to broaden the knowledge in this field. The manual *Hedendaagse varianten in de islam* (Contemporary variations in Islam), due for publication, comprises authentic texts by religious and ideological speakers translated from Arabic to Dutch. The aim is to provide an insight into political Islam and other Islam trends. The manual will be used in information and training activities. Also worth mentioning is the special issue of the Eutopia magazine, which includes contributions taken from an international symposium *Muslim in Europe*, which FORUM organised at the end of last year in *de Balie*. The contributions concerned the functioning of Muslims in Europe's civil society. The special was distributed amongst students of various Islam studies in the Netherlands. Finally, FORUM developed a basic curriculum for an Islam and Modernity course in cooperation with the Society and Religion Expertise Centre (*Kenniscentrum Maatschappij en Religie*). The study delves into a number of themes focusing on Islam and the democratic constitutional state. It was offered to all Muslim organisations, who can use it as the basis for developing study activities for Imams, mosque administrators, and other Islamic management positions.

Gathering expertise is one step. Equally important is sharing this expertise with professionals at all central and local levels. In order to realise this, congresses, work conferences, expert meetings and master classes have been organised for local administrators, local civil servants and regional support position, professionals and key figures in the civil society.

### **Shared citizenship in a democratic legal order**

Shared citizenship is about being able and willing to participate in the equal rights and obligations civilians have in the Netherlands. It is about a way of dealing with each other that

fits within the frameworks of this democratic constitutional state. Key values on which this democratic constitutional state is based are: individual freedom, basic rights, including the equality of individuals and the importance of pluriformity. And it is about realising that we are all part of one society with a particular historical identity and shared future. Education plays a vital role in developing citizenship awareness and practising active citizenship. Early this year a bill was adopted by Parliament promoting obligatory active citizenship and social integration training. (8.3 WPO, 11.3 WEC and 17 WVO). The Education Inspectorate has been granted a supervisory role while a supervisory framework is being set up.

The programmes introduced by the Minister of Immigration and Integration comprise various projects aimed at promoting this awareness of shared citizenship amongst, particularly, Muslim youths.

#### *Series of debates*

Various organisations initiated series of debates involving youngsters – Muslim and non-Muslim – about the theme of radicalisation and the opportunities to respond (SMN, Cooperation Union of Moroccans Netherlands), Milli Görüs North Netherlands (*Milli Görüs Noord Nederland*, MG-NN), Refugee Organisations in the Netherlands (*Vluchtelingenorganisaties Nederland*, VON) and the Association of Imams (*Vereniging van Imams*, ViN). The series of debates on ‘religion and ideology’ was cancelled, as the project plan fell below the quality standards demanded.

A total of 20 meetings were held, each attracting 50 to 250, usually (relatively well-educated) (Muslim) youngsters from various ethnic backgrounds, men and women. The youngsters of the Refugee Organisations in the Netherlands are very active indeed. They organised a series of national and regional meetings, developed training material and built their own website. Based on their own experience or the experiences of their parents, they understand like no other the value of living a free life in a democratic country. The VON decided to distribute these experiences across a wide audience to benefit other groups, too.

Success factors (where organisations can learn from each other) included: enabling youngsters or student associations to organise meetings themselves (in itself an exercise in active citizenship!), securing concrete follow-ups (ideas competitions, contacts with local councils), involving people of native Dutch heritage by promoting contacts with local councils and native Dutch (youth) organisations from the start, involving general social institutions (police, schools, employers) and youngsters and allowing youngsters to develop concrete follow-up activities with them.

A selection from the solutions suggested: spreading knowledge about Islam, involving mosques and other institutions (school, work, sports), setting up networks, educational support, a more constructive role of the media, etc. These proposals confirm the direction of the policy.

Another issue concerns the question as to which lessons may be learnt (from each other). Points for attention included: involving youngsters of native Dutch heritage, securing a follow-up in the cooperation with local councils and social institutions and looking for forms to flesh out the themes and to extend them in order to reach other youngsters that are more difficult to reach (and their parents, if possible). These are the points that are to be the focus for the next eighteen months.

#### **Shared identity**

A good way to involve youngsters in the relationship between citizenship, freedom, equal rights and opportunities, and keeping them safe from discrimination, are the annual celebrations on 5 May. Ethnic minorities, particularly the youngsters amongst them, are not

really familiar with the traditions of 5 May. The ‘Celebrating 5 May – day of freedom’ project, originated by the *Breed Initiatief Maatschappelijke Binding* (Broad Initiative Social Cohesion), was implemented this spring. The project aims at enhancing involvement and informing civilians about the role of ethnic minorities during the Second World War. Youngsters of both foreign and Dutch heritage in Pre-vocational Secondary Education (VMBO) discussed the notion of freedom. This was recorded on DVD and distributed at VMBO schools across the country. Lessons were held on the theme of freedom while an activities ladder was published for 100 minority organisations. The project will be expanded next year in cooperation with municipalities and the 4/5 May Committee.

The importance of devoting attention to the identity development of Muslim youngsters in particular also appears from the IMES study *Strijders van eigen bodem* (Home-grown fighters). Radicalisation of Muslim youngsters is a relatively new phenomenon in the Netherlands, and little empirical expertise is available as yet. Following the motions of Azough c.s. (28006, n15), Parliament commissioned a scientific study into the position of Muslims in the Netherlands in general, (in response to which the Minister ordered the study *Muslim in the Netherlands*, published by DSCP in 2004) and into radicalisation of Muslims in particular. This resulted in the recently published *Strijders van eigen bodem: radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland* (2006) (the English translation - *Home-grown fighters: radical and democratic Muslims in the Netherland* will be available the beginning of 2007). In response to the WRR report ‘*Dynamiek in islamitisch activisme*’ (Dynamics in Islamic activism, 2006) the Cabinet will look into the IMES study in greater detail.

The study, carried out by the *Instituut voor Migratie en Ethnische Studies* of the University of Amsterdam (Institute for Migration and Ethnical Studies, IMES), focused on the question why a small part of these youngsters choose to go down the radical path, and not, like many other Muslim youngsters, voice their interests and frustrations through democratic channels. Instead of studying the scope of the phenomenon of radicalisation in the Netherlands, this qualitative study goes into the background factors and dynamics of political socialisation processes amongst Moroccan Muslim youngsters. As such, it aims to support national and local policy developments. In this progress report, too, the study is used to emphasise and substantiate aspects of the policy.

The study yielded interesting information. It shows that political orientations of Muslim youngsters are shaped by a combination of factors at the society, group and individual level. How this works exactly was fleshed out based on interviews with democratic and radical youngsters. Radicalisation feeds on the need to give meaning to life, the desire for social bonding and political justice. Youngsters who choose to go down the path of salafism or jihadism, are searching. They are searching for spiritual deepening and meaning, for emotional security and social recognition, or even revenge or justice. They find inspiration and security in the rules of Islam (as they interpret these), proud in the feeling that they belong to a select group with a justified goal and secure in the warmth of a group of kindred spirits in which they feel welcome.

While discrimination and exclusion play a role in this, they are not the predominant factor. After all, other youngsters who also suffer feelings of exclusion choose to solve these through democratic channels. Youngsters are more susceptible to radicalisation when they have little faith in political institutions and the democratic system and when they believe that politicians, authoritative figures and the media have a negative stance towards Islam.

Incidentally, the IMES study revealed another interesting aspect – it is exactly because Moroccan youngsters are so eager to take part in Dutch society, that they are all the more frustrated when they fail to belong. This is referred to as the *integration paradox*. Another

important finding is that the youngsters in the survey are well aware of the various options to shape their political commitment. They generally discuss this at length with others and make deliberate choices for certain democratic or radical paths they take. This suggests a certain degree of rationality, and therefore an option to influence the process, for example by offering arguments and alternatives.

The findings of the study support the cabinet policy of stimulating resilience, for example by fighting discrimination and enhancing the bonding between youngsters and society. With minority originations and key figures from the Muslim community and local councils, we will determine if the study provides a handle to refocus or adjust the projects in certain areas. Examples include increased attention for radicalisation through Internet support of a democratic vanguard, promotion of (political) participation and stimulation of a more pluralist offer of texts and examples about life as a Muslim in a Western democracy. These subjects are included in the projects described.

The differences between the values some of these youngsters grew up with and the values that apply in school and on the street create confusion and tension, more so than among other youngsters. Providing constructive alternatives, practicing critical self-reflection and sound coaching are important in channelling the search by youngsters. These elements form the basis for the 'Identity in the Picture' campaign by FORUM, which was started at the end of 2005. This campaign challenges youngsters of a variety of backgrounds to use modern technology to envision their identity in an imaginative manner and to start a dialogue with other youngsters. The aim is to promote the commitment of youngsters to the Dutch identity as well as foster mutual respect and understanding between youngsters.

The campaign is distributed through the magazine *Generation Now!* and a special website with assignments and prizes ([www.zelfbeelden.nl](http://www.zelfbeelden.nl)). Youngsters are also approached actively: until the summer holidays a 'road show' will be visiting schools and festivals, creating portraits of youngsters ([www.kiezenvoorjeleven.nl](http://www.kiezenvoorjeleven.nl)) while a creative educational programme has also been developed to start work with pupils in secondary education on themes of identity. In these activities use is made of a publication on identity which provides professionals with a tool to develop educational and other activities with youngsters (*Knowing me-knowing you*).

In addition to the activities set out above that stimulate youngsters' citizenship awareness and commitment directly, it is also important to support the resilience of the Muslim communities against influences of radicalisation. The Stichting Islam en Burgerschap (Islam and Citizenship, I&B) plays a key role in this. This organisation has been granted a subsidy by the Minister of Immigration and Integration at the request of Parliament. I&B aims to promote the level of awareness of various aspects of citizenship amongst Muslims and to promote the public debate between Muslims and non-Muslims on this subject. I&B also contributes to improving the cooperation between Muslim organisations, social, religious and ideological institutions and the government. Examples of activities currently being set up include: support for Islamic organisations to reinforce the integration of Muslims, the conference 'Muslims in the Netherlands', a topical overview of activities in the field of Islam (conferences, projects, studies etc), and the creation of a special chair in 'Islam and Citizenship' in cooperation with the Catholic Theological University in Utrecht (KTU).

### **A local approach to stimulate resilience and social bonding**

The 'Memorandum on Society's Resilience and Integration Policy' talks about reinforcing resilience and how this should take place primarily at the local level. This local approach is fleshed out particularly by the Ministry of the Interior and the Minorities Integration Policy Coordination Department within the department of Justice in cooperation with the relevant

municipalities (refer to the 'Local and Judicial approach to radicalisation' memorandum). Below is a report on the activities unfolded in this area over the past year.

A lot of work has been carried out over the past twelve months, shaping the cooperation between the various departments of national and local authorities. Meetings were organised on possible connections between the various local approaches and on options for support by the national government. Front-line professionals were approached to discuss their role in preventing, signaling and combating radicalisation. The *Centrum voor Criminaliteitspreventie en Veiligheid* (Centre for Crime Prevention and Security, CCV) is supported by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to organise meetings and gather knowledge/best practices ([www.hetccv.nl](http://www.hetccv.nl)). In December 2005 a meeting was held with security and integration staff, where minority organisations and other partners in the resilience programme presented their projects. In January 2006 integration staff from some 30 municipalities gathered to discuss the possible role of the local integration policy in the prevention of radicalisation. On 29 June a meeting took place attended by IMES researchers to discuss their findings with local councils.

Partners in the resilience and integration policy programme are also unfolding activities at the local level. In June 2006 FORUM will be publishing *Local varieties in Islam policy* in which the developments at the local level are inventoried and recommendations are made with regard to the design of contacts between Muslim communities and local authorities. In the coming period, conferences will be held with local administrators and officials, together with members of Muslim executives and professionals working in social organisations. In addition, there is attention for expert promotion of specific target groups and institutions. In the past twelve months FORUM has organised expert meetings with scientists, policy makers of separate municipalities, police forces, professionals from education and welfare and employees of the judicial youth chain.

If local authorities and institutions have specific questions, they can address these to the FORUM *Service Centre Integration* established last year. It receives questions every week from the media, education, social workers, policy, municipalities, mosque organisations and others. Many of these can be answered by telephone, but sometimes local visits are in order to be able to give sound advice. For example, interventions were made in a number of religious organisations upon their request, to repair relationships with local governments. This working method is very labour-intensive and demands a special approach in which personal trust is a precondition for success. This component will definitively be continued next year.

The same applies to the *Security and Social Cohesion Networks* set up last year. In order to enhance contributions from communities of immigrant heritage to local social cohesion, a national network with local branches will be set up. These local networks comprise key figures from the communities that operate in cooperation with, but independently from, the local authorities or social institutions. It is their task to signal and discuss situations that threaten social cohesion (discrimination, exclusion, marginalisation and interethnic tensions). They can then put the issues to the community and/or the relevant institutions for discussion. The first year centred on intensive preparation and contacts with local councils and communities. Contacts were established in six municipalities with key figures, and relationships are being built with local councils. Over the next few months, coordinators and members will receive further training. A DVD was also produced and used in approaching new municipalities.

Finally, to support the local authority, a guideline of a local approach to radicalisation was drawn up. A conference for local councils was also organised about this guideline.

## **Phenomena of right-wing radicalism**

The 'Lonsdale youngsters' in the Netherlands (2005) report by the AIVD (the General Intelligence and Security Service) concludes that the 'gabber' culture poses no real right-wing extremist threat. Only a small hardcore within the gabber culture actually has right-wing extremist views and aims to provoke deliberately. This conclusion does not mean that the cabinet can sit back and do nothing. All too often over the past few years inter-ethnic tensions in villages across the country have flared up. Moreover, there are signs that an intolerant attitude towards minorities, and Muslims in particular, is still common amongst too many people in the Netherlands (also see the recent Racial Discrimination monitor).

For this purpose I teamed up with colleague members of the cabinet (Domestic Affairs and Youth) to organise a conference for municipalities that have had to deal with interethnic tensions and confrontations. The aim of the conference was promoting expertise, exchanging knowledge and experience and enhancing realisation of the interest of a local approach. Unfortunately, interest amongst municipalities in the conference was very disappointing, which raises the question which priority local governments assign these issues.

Other angles from which I choose to approach right-wing radicalism are the continued focus on creating bonds with society (broad initiative social cohesion, integration campaign) and the continued focus on the unacceptability of discrimination on whatever ground. Also, FORUM carried out an evaluation of the mosque fire in Helden on 13 November 2004. This report focuses not only on the operational approach of the fire, but also expressly looks at the social effects of the incident and the manner in which the council responded. The closing chapter of the publication 'Mosque fire in Helden: Evaluation of the approach and lessons for the future' contains tips and guidelines for other municipalities. Finally, I have set up four intervention teams. In addition to an 'Interethnic tensions' team there are teams that consult municipalities about subjects in the field of Security and Youth, Domestic Violence, and Institutional Accessibility. These teams are supported by FORUM.

I continue to stress that we strongly reject events like the ones in Venray and Uden. Fights and arson are symptoms of intolerance towards others for which there is no place in our democracy. They trigger a spiral of violence from action to reaction. Key words continue to be dialogue and mutual respect. Crucial in this, too, is commitment and cooperation by all parties – youth groups, parents, municipalities, youth work, education and police. Where necessary I will continue to support and stimulate this.

### **Involving youngsters and their parents.**

Radicalisation is a process that unfolds particularly amongst youngsters in the Netherlands. There are signs that point towards a continuous reduction of the age at which youngsters become susceptible: 12-year olds search extremist sites on the Internet and develop radically anti-Western ideas (AIVD annual report 2005).

The IMES report also refers to the relation between radicalisation and the (in itself normal) search for one's own identity in the 12-24 age group. Late adolescence in particular is referred to as a key period in the political socialisation of people (the impressionable years). The interviews with Moroccan youngsters reflect their struggle with their identity. In addition to the general issues youngsters in that age group are struggling with, these youngsters are faced with the question whether they are Dutch or Moroccan or perhaps Dutch Moroccan or Moroccan Dutch. Their religious identity, too, is a central issue for all Moroccans. Different from many other Dutch youngsters, they inherit an Islamic tradition that is experienced in an individual manner.

The report describes a number of processes that play a role in the development of the political and ethnic-religious identity amongst young Moroccans. This is about individualisation, the

development of a hybrid identity, experiencing a generation gap, lack of recognition, reinforcement of Muslim identity and the individual interpretation of Islam in the Dutch context. Youngsters are making more and more individual choices (about music, relationships between sexes or relationships with their parents), adapting these to their own hybrid identity (Muslim, Moroccan, Berber, Dutch). <sup>1</sup>These processes widen the gap between the modernising children and their traditional parents.

The gap is all the more painful as these youngsters focus more on integration in Dutch society – which is relatively often the case for Moroccan youngsters, more so than Turkish youngsters, for example (the interaction paradox). Youngsters adopt aspects of the dominant culture, while their parents may be reluctant and afraid that their children forget their Moroccan roots and Islam. Tensions will rise even more if the father's position in the family is difficult (unemployed, losing authority), which may inspire a more rigid and harsher upbringing. This is completed with another religious conflict that is the result of youngsters starting to distinguish between the traditional 'cultural' Islam of their parents and the 'true' or 'pure' Islam with which the second generation associates itself.

According to the researchers, the generation gap described above may impact negatively on the self-confidence of adolescents and their development of a strong personality. While parents and the environment may be willing, they do not understand what it means to have a hybrid identity. This leads to a lack of recognition. Wherever youngsters go – home, at school, in society in general – they continuously feel misunderstood. The social context of polarisation and exclusion makes switching between cultures and compromising even harder. Set in this context it is tempting to opt for associating oneself with others of the same age and in the same position. The youngsters experience a feeling of homecoming and recognition with their friends or in chatrooms on the Internet. This is where they can discuss their doubts and find support for the choices they need to make.

The large majority of youngsters opt for a pragmatic approach. Others need firmer answers. A strict interpretation of Islam can present an attractive alternative for them. The chaos and insecurity of the many choices in their lives are offset by forms of fundamentalism, with whose rules and rituals provide firm guidelines. Feelings of marginalizing are offset by pride and spiritual deepening, while loneliness and uprooting by a community spirit are met by a feeling of belonging. This interpretation of Islam can be a first step to the road of radicalisation.

Whether or not an individual is actually attracted by a more extremist, violent interpretation in the name of Islam depends on a number of factors. The susceptibility for radicalisation is enhanced when these youngsters:

- regard phenomena of disadvantage and discrimination as expressions of an inherently bad, discriminatory, anti-Islamic system
- believe that Muslims in the West are second-rate civilians and that the West threatens Islam;
- believe that it is difficult to reconcile the Islamic and European way of life and conclude that the Islamic identity must be developed separately from and as a counter to the European society, by going back to the rudiments of religion;
- have little faith in the democratic system; believe that politicians, people in authority and the media think negatively about Islam.

This analysis suggests that factors underlying radicalisation must be sought in the difficult identity development of young (Moroccan) Muslims, in the generation gap that arises, in the

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<sup>1</sup> Also refer to the study commissioned by FORUM, *Van Allah tot Prada* (from Allah to Prada, 2005): a topical trend survey into the identity development, lifestyle and religious life of young Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands.

lack of sound assistance from parents, school and other professionals in this awkward process, in the type of groups in which youngsters find inspiration and discuss their options and in the presence and attraction of alternative sources. Policy will need to focus on all of these points to increase the individual youngster's level of resilience against the influence of radicalisation trends.

In this context, a series of projects was carried out last year. I've already mentioned the FORUM campaign, *Identity in the Picture*, which challenges youngsters inside and outside of school to tackle identity issues. In March 2005, a large two-day youth conference was organised for migrant youngsters to talk with a wide range of officials, politicians and professionals (aldermen, members of the States General, politicians, education experts) on how they regard their place in Dutch society. One result is that youngsters aim to set up national networks of youth organisations to stay in touch.

A more personal approach is used in the *summer schools*, *Personal coaching for leadership* training sessions (FORUM) and *Management training for executive positions*. These routes are aimed at helping to create a socially committed vanguard of mostly higher educated youngsters. They aim to enhance leadership competencies, support entry to the labour market and the direct use as role model, debate chairman or member of the board of a social organisation. Two summer schools have been organised (one for a primary school and another for a group of students in higher vocational education). Some 75 youngsters took part in various subjects of these routes. Training programmes were developed and agreements were signed with CMBOs and ROCs for the use of role models as mentor or spokesman. The support to youngsters on their way to the labour market as referred to above is in line with Parliament's wish set out in the Motion Azough. In addition, and within the framework of the *Broad Initiative Social Cohesion*, a much wider project was established in the form of the cooperation between SZW and the Taskforce Juvenile Unemployment to find jobs for youngsters of immigrant heritage.

Another series of activities focuses on the relationship between youngsters and their parents and the role parents play in guiding youngsters. Social institutions (welfare, music schools, museums, etc) were approached to kick-start a *cultural exchange* with minority organisations between the generations and population groups. Some 250 parents and youngsters took part in the *Intergenerational discussion nights*, which FORUM organised in the South-Holland-South area. A film was shown, *Le grand voyage*, about the generation differences between a Moroccan father and his son living in the West. This was followed by a discussion. Interestingly, concurrent meetings were organised with Imams and mosque administrators, who have agreed to incorporate the themes in their sermons.

Support from parents in children's education – a crucial aspect in the preventative approach – also took shape this year. A broad range of minorities organisations (including the refugee organisations) brought parents and children together to learn about and experience Dutch norms and values through information, training and discussion. In cooperation with expertise centres and regional supports another 25 training sessions and meetings or so were held about stimulating the involvement of parents in their children's school lives, in line with the new *Platform Parents of foreign heritage and Education*, directed by FORUM.

Young Dutch Muslims are not alone in their search for their place in the modern, Western societies in which they live. Youngsters in and around Europe are struggling with similar issues. The attacks in London and arrests in Toronto made it clear that 'home-grown' radicalism is not unique to the Netherlands. It is interesting to exchange experiences and best practices at the international level. A start can also be made shaping an international 'democracy vanguard' – as the IMES report is called. At the EU level a EU strategy on the

approach to radicalisation and recruitment was adopted in December last year. It is now being implemented. Advances have been made in the field of the development of a communications strategy and in the field of Internet. Not all EU Member States, however, experience the problem in the same manner, however. This makes bilateral contacts essential as ways to learn from each other and to share experiences. One such result worth mentioning here was the cooperation between the British embassy in the Netherlands and the Ministry, organising a weekend for youngsters from the two countries. Twenty socially active young men and women (from Moroccan, Turkish, Iraqi, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds) spoke with selected speakers in a farm in the North of Holland about living life as a Muslim in western Europe. It proved a particularly informative and stimulating experience for all. A follow-up exchange is now being discussed with the Brits. Possible cooperation efforts with other countries are also being studied.

### **Emancipation of women and girls**

Muslim girls and women are confronted with conflicting expectations and ideal images about how to behave. On the one hand there are the ideals rooted in the traditional interpretation of the rules of Islam on how to live, on the other hand the norms and values of a largely secularised Western society. These create personal dilemmas. Women who make their way through this play an important role in shaping life as a Muslim in the Netherlands. The fact that women and girls play an active and often leading role in this, appears from the large numbers who attended the debates and took the role of organiser or discussion leader. On the other hand, the most recent AIVD annual report showed once again that young Muslim women, too, seem increasingly susceptible to radicalisation. Sufficient reason to devote special attention to this target group.

In December 2005 a two-day conference was organised for Muslim women. It followed an event earlier that year, with *de Balie* being transformed into a Mosque for women. Women were in charge and a female Imam gave a sermon. For other (more conservative) women this was one step too far. From them, FORUM organised *female salons* over the past year, allowing women to speak in a secure and informal environment with each other and with experts about specific themes that promote their emancipation in their own community and in Dutch society. In total some 200 women and girls (Moroccan, Dutch, Turkish, Pakistani and African) took part in these salons. More female salons will be held in coming years, all in close collaboration with municipalities, mosques, local media, social services and educational institutions. Finally, networks for women are being set up and expanded to bring the many active Muslims, women and girls and their organisations in contact with each other.

### **Cooperation with the Muslim communities**

It goes without saying that cooperation with the various sectors in the Muslim communities in the Netherlands is essential to reinforce the resilience and bonding of Muslim youngsters. Over the past few years an extraordinary development has taken place. Many from the Muslim communities are standing up to voice their concerns about the tense situation in our society—men and women, Moroccans, Turks and others, youth workers, local civil servants, members of self-organisations, student organisations, Imams, mosque councils, and professionals from the academic world, education, consultancy, politics and the legal sector. These people are looking for ways to contribute and are open for cooperation. To give an example: a course in social orientation for Koran teachers had allowed room for 25 attendants, but 70 signed up from all over the region. It would be nice if this type of news would also make it to the front pages!

Of course, there's a lot still left to be done. And these active Muslims are the first to agree. In the Netherlands there are worries still – and not entirely unjustified – about a possible terrorist attack and concerns about the inward focus of many Muslim communities. This demands clear positions and statements from the 'democratic vanguard': against terrorism or violence in the

name of Islam, against curbing the rights of women and girls and people who think differently, against discrimination of Jews and homosexuals. This cultural transformation process presents a huge challenge and requires great courage. A study by IMES shows that democratically active Muslims often feel very isolated: people of Dutch heritage do not always accept them while they also drift too far from the home front. These men and women therefore deserve our full support.

Putting all Muslims in the same category, i.e. placing them outside society or excluding them out of fear and prejudice - in short, Islamophobia - is fatal in this. Discrimination seriously affects the key values of democracy and therefore undermines our shared constitutional state just as much as radicalisation does. If we want to create a society that is safe and that offers a place for all, regardless of religion or origin, we must respect each other as fully-fledged co-citizens and treat each other with decency.

The national government contributes by supporting projects set up by Muslim organisations and their confederations. In addition, active attention is paid to the looser, sometimes temporary networks of active youngsters and women who move outside organised structures. Where possible, attempts are made to bring these people into contact with similar organisations and networks and with social institutions.

Below is an overview of the activities carried out in *cooperation with the Muslim communities*. To start, the Minister spoke with the CMO and CGI several times about the theme of resilience and bonding. Attempts were made to draft thorough plans, but it proved difficult to get good projects off the ground with voluntary people at this umbrella level. Certain projects, such as taking out cooperation covenants and addressing negative stereotyping were therefore dropped. At the local level, these issues were dealt with, however. Eleven Turkish mosques in Rotterdam, for example, took out a contract in which they rejected radicalisation and announced a series of social-cultural activities to promote the integration of their congregation into local society. Activities to improve the mutual formation of the image of Muslims and non-Muslims are put in motion by the *Stichting Islam en Burgerschap* (Foundation for Islam and Citizenship), which is been granted professional support in its efforts.

This also explains the choice for working with separate federations, some of which are members of umbrella organisations. Milli Görüs North Netherlands, for example, organised a series of debates for youngsters in cooperation with municipalities and local institutions (policy, social work). Training sessions were also organised to teach Imams (with women and youngsters) more about the Dutch legal system. The UMMAO (Union of Moroccan Mosques in Amsterdam and Surrounding District) organised a conference on the role of mosques in Dutch society. The OSV (Umbrella Organisation for Shiites) set up the training session for Koran teachers referred to above in cooperation with the University of Leiden. The ViN (Union of Imams) organised a highly successful two-day conference on radicalisation, with host speakers and role-plays ('convince the radical'). The SMT and IOT also organised a study day for some 50 Turkish and Moroccan imams and mosque administrators.

The meetings reflect the will to enter the dialogue that should lead to a stronger basis of trust in society. There is increasing recognition for the need for structural contacts with the broader (local) community. The realisation grows that the Muslim communities and mosques cannot afford to ignore or condemn the specific youth culture in which their children move. Attention for pedagogic, social-cultural projects and more room for women and youngsters was discussed. These topics will be discussed in greater detail with the parties involved.

A theme that requires special attention is the Internet. It is commonly known that the radicalisation processes of youngsters take place predominantly through websites and

chatrooms on the Internet. Away from their parents or other authority figures, youngsters look for kindred spirits and answers to the many questions they have about life as a Muslim in the Netherlands. On the Internet they find a wealth of (strategically distributed) radical texts and examples, with only few counter arguments or authoritative alternatives. This needs to change. Last year, the partners of the LOM decided to team up with a number of websites frequently visited by youngsters to start an information project for the Internet. A special website is built with links to the popular sites while contact is sought with Imams to provide answers to frequently asked questions. Partnerships are also set up with publishers, the media etc. to shape the contents. For the sake of clarity: the social partners determine which messages are offered and how. There is no interference from the government, in line with the basic principle of separation of church and state. This is about promoting a pluralist offer based on the idea of reinforcing shared citizenship to create room for critical discussion. This project requires a substantial investment that is to be expanded over the next few years.

Also worth mentioning here is the biggest Ramadan festival which I, as Minister of Integration, helped to support. This was an initiative taken by a group of Muslims to enhance contacts between all groups in Dutch society and to realise better mutual understanding and acceptance. The festival gives Muslims the opportunity to present themselves to others, with the motto *Will you have dinner in my home?* More than 60 Muslim organisations and mosques from all parts of the country welcomed the idea to organise activities including lectures and debates. Neighbourhood fathers entered into debates with local politicians while youth organisations organised iftar meals for the residents of homes for the elderly. Many activities were set up with non-Muslim organisations. Muslims visited the home of Anne Frank and the Biblical Museum. Remarkable was the immense enthusiasm of the participants. This initiative is definitely worth repeating.

### **Involving the community of native Dutch heritage**

In addition to reaching and supporting various minorities and Muslim organisations and networks, it is essential to involve the community of native Dutch heritage. Bonding requires commitment from both sides. Resilience against radicalisation is a factor in parts of the population of native Dutch heritage, too. In order to stimulate meetings and discussions between people from various backgrounds, FORUM devised the '*New Nation*' campaign. A VIP coach travelled all over the country to pay some 42 visits to pupils, imams, residents, and ministers to discuss the issues around Islam and modernity/integration.

All debates resounded with the big frustration concerning the *role of the media*. By presenting oversimplified and negative news and information they were said to push minorities, and Muslims in particular, in a corner, thereby increasing polarisation. This was countered with the notion that the situation is improving slowly but surely and that people must also look inside to why they are so eager to consume negative news. In order to kick-start the dialogue, a national debate was organised attended by journalists, operators and media consumers from foreign and Dutch heritage to talk about the news and the negative image of Dutch citizens of foreign heritage. They discussed subjects like an ombudsman function, about rules of thumb and about the inflow of journalists from a non-national background. Arrangements for a follow-up to this meeting are currently being made.

In addition to the projects carried out by established (minorities) organisations, it is also important to give *third parties a chance* to become active. It is initiatives from all sectors of society that provide a broad reach and that may inspire innovative and creative ideas. Moreover, as said before – becoming socially active presents the perfect practice in active citizenship for the parties involved. For this reason, FORUM created a fund for which applications can be submitted. Only part of the overwhelming number of applications could be awarded (20%). The applications concerned mostly plans for stimulating meetings between

different cultures and religions, in line with the motion submitted by Lambrechts c.s. to have youngsters formulate proposals that promote integration and prevent radicalisation.

The memorandum on resilience also talks about the set-up of an *Integration Board*. This fits the general policy to involve people from Dutch heritage more in the integration policy. The current dialogue structure focuses on the input from minority organisations in the cabinet's policy intentions. However, integration is a dual-sided process that requires an effort from both the minorities and society as a whole. This insight led to the idea of an Integration Board. A growth model was opted for whereby social organisations would be invited based on the theme to be discussed. The experience thus gained would then serve to shape the definitive Integration Board. Meanwhile, four Integration Boards were organised: one about the 5 May celebrations with the '4&5 May Committee' and the LOM cooperation units; the second about the linking of social networks with the LOM cooperation unions and Rotary, Lions, Probus and the Service Club Foundation in the Netherlands, the third about Sports and Integration with *Sportkoepels* and the fourth about policy on parents of foreign heritage (see the memorandum sent to Parliament on 30 March 2006).

## Conclusion

Like I said before, in setting up resilience and bonding programme an explicit choice was made for an experimental set-up, with a broad range of small-scale projects. What are the conclusions about the effects of the projects one year later?

First and foremost a steady flow of focussed scientific and practical knowledge about Islam and about processes of radicalisation was generated and distributed in a target-driven manner. Secondly, the many debates, meetings and campaigns brought about a lively discussion about the phenomenon of radicalisation and possible responses. This ties in with a positive note in the most recent AIVD annual report, that a critical internal discussion in Muslim circles is slowly evolving. This is a key development: these are the first signs of a change in the attitude on which the entire policy is focused. On the other hand it has become clear that young Muslims – even those active democratically – are greatly disappointed as they feel rejected by society as a whole and feel somehow made responsible for the crimes others commit in the name of their religion. The projects carried out have given youngsters the option to voice their disappointment and make a start with providing a constructive answer to this situation. Thirdly, a giant effort was made by many partners, social institutions and (minority and Muslim) organisations. Relationships were established, networks expanded, mutual trust enhanced. This is a form of social capital which will greatly benefit society. Finally, large parts of the Muslim population have managed to become visible as active citizens with a place in the social discussion forums and networks. They have shown that radicalisation is a concern for them too and that they are prepared to do all that is needed to pick up on manifestations in their own circle.

In addition to results, the projects have also yielded insight into which areas will be requiring extra attention in the near future. Examples include improving cooperation between organisations, involving local governments and social institutions – also to guarantee the embedment in the future, to flesh out themes and to find ways to involve youngsters that are more difficult to reach, to increase the insights that are available and examples of alternatives for radical ideas (also on the Internet). These and other themes were discussed by all partners in a broad evaluation meeting and will receive extra attention in the near future.

In conclusion, let us go back to the 'integration paradox'. It is youngsters who *want* to belong in society in particular who turn away disappointed if they feel that they are unable to find a place in society. It is up to all parties: politicians, managers, members of organisations and

individual citizens to translate this positive desire into options and responsibilities for active citizenship.