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## P/CVE IN EUROPE: STILL DOMINATED BY THE STATE

**The P/CVE landscape in Europe may have diversified, but state actors retain dominance as practitioners, as new survey data suggests. Still, they exhibit similar diversity as observed internationally.**

Research on measures to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) increasingly highlights the development towards a whole-of-society approach. This refers to the increasing inclusion of a wide range of actors in the P/CVE landscape, particularly the growing involvement of non-state actors.

However, also actors that are more external entities to a country, such as the EU or UN, contribute to a diversity of P/CVE actors. But is such a whole-of-society approach already manifesting in Europe? To explore this question, interim survey data from 36 P/CVE experts across 19 European countries was analysed. For each country, different experts, including policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, were asked not only to identify but also to rank all relevant actors based on their involvement as P/CVE practitioners in their respective countries. Their responses suggest that state actors remain the predominant P/CVE practitioners in Europe.

For analytical purposes, different actors were categorised and analysed individually and grouped into three categories: state actors, non-state actors, and external actors. State actors included national, regional, and local governments as well as the police. Non-state actors comprised universities and research institutions, civil society organisations, and private or commercial entities. The external category included regional organisations, such as the EU, international organisations, such as the UN, and foreign governments. State actors were by far most frequently identified by the experts as the most important P/CVE practitioner in their country, namely by

78% of the 36 experts. Within this category, national governments were ranked highest, with 42% of the experts identifying them as the most relevant P/CVE practitioner in their European countries.

**“ Non-state actors were seen as less central to P/CVE efforts.**

The police were frequently selected as the second most important actor, chosen by 53% of respondents. Non-state actors were seen as less central to P/CVE efforts. Only 19% of experts identified them as the most important practitioners, while 33% saw them in third place. External actors appeared to have minimal influence as P/CVE practitioners. Only one Portuguese expert considered regional organisations like the EU to be the most important P/CVE practitioner in their country.

The relative frequencies of the actors selected, regardless of their weighting, can be compared with data from an international comparative study involving 14 countries and 37 participants, conducted previous to this year. In this study, which will be published shortly, another 24 experts from countries not included in the European study were surveyed, namely from Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Indonesia, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Singapore, Tunisia and the US.

All participants answered a multiple-choice question about which actors are involved in P/CVE activities in their country. The distribution of actors is largely similar between the two surveys. However, an interesting difference is that commercial organisations were more frequently identified as P/CVE actors in the European survey than in the international one.

Conversely, foreign governments, as well as regional and national governments, were named less frequently as relevant P/CVE practitioners by European experts. The reasons for these differences can only be speculated at present. However, the European sample may have included fewer countries that are dependent on foreign support for P/CVE, which may account for the lower frequency of foreign government involvement identified by European experts, for example.

Finally, comparative conclusions can also be drawn with regard to different countries. In France, Norway, Spain, Belgium and Denmark, there was relative consensus among the survey participants that state actors are the most important P/CVE practitioners. Here, various state actors were cited as the most important as well as the second and third most important.

State actors in Austria, the UK, Romania, Hungary, and the Netherlands, for example, are still very dominant as P/CVE practitioners, albeit slightly less so.

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The P/CVE landscape looks relatively balanced in Germany, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. Here, state actors are considered to play roughly the same role as non-state actors. The study on which this text is based is still ongoing. The present findings provide an initial insight, but this may change as more data becomes available.

To summarise, state actors still dominate the P/CVE landscape in the majority of all European countries surveyed. While the presence of many actors suggests a shift towards a whole-of-society approach, looking at their relative importance reveals that government actors remain particularly dominant. External actors play the least significant role, despite being sometimes present. These findings suggest the need to review whether the envisioned whole-of-society approaches are truly being realised, and whether there is potential to further diversify practices and enhance the role of non-state actors in P/CVE.

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