

Cooperation between civil society and state actors in the fight against extremism in Germany was the main topic of the study visit in which 15 representatives of the Macedonian institutions related to the National Committee for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Combating Terrorism (NKSNEBT) and civil society organizations participated. The three-day intensive program (March 15 – 17, 2023) allowed the participants to meet a large number of representatives of German institutions and civil society organizations, to hear their experiences and to discuss the setting of the system of resocialization, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from foreign battlefields, of members of extremist groups, as well as for programs for the prevention of violent extremism. According to the participants, the experiences from the study visit are a good basis and a challenge for application in the Macedonian context.



Sabine Eckhardt, Head of Department in the Office of the Federal Chancellor and Sheila Alabei from the Department of the Interior introduced the participants to the activities for the prevention of extremism and de-radicalization from the point of view of the Federal Chancellor. They emphasized that in Germany they insist on prevention at all levels. "We invest a lot in the Ministry of Family", said Eckhardt and added that around 200 million euros are allocated annually for projects for these purposes, which are implemented by civil society organizations. Considering the federal arrangement of the country, the two host-speakers emphasized that the establishment of coordination between the institutions and the current coherent policy required time. Work at the local level is key, and the federal government provides the framework within which it takes place. The participants were interested in the way of establishing the teams working in the field; a sequence of what process the people who are part of them go through; how is the cooperation with civil society organizations, etc.

Fabian Wickmann, case manager from the Exit Germany project, spoke more about the practical experiences of family counseling. "Until now we have worked with 900 people and had different cases. We worked intensively and for a long time with some of them. We mostly worked with men, although we also had cases with women and children. For everyone, the requirement was to join voluntarily," Wickman said. Both Exit Germany and the Violent Prevention Network cooperate with the institutions at all stages.



