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Delegations will find attached document COM(2016) 379 final.

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism

Introduction

The recent terrorist attacks in Europe once again underlined the urgent need to tackle the radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. The majority of the terrorist suspects implicated in those attacks were European citizens, born and raised in Member States, who were radicalised and turned against their fellow citizens to commit atrocities. The prevention of radicalisation is a key part of the fight against terrorism, as was highlighted in the European Agenda on Security[1].

The design and implementation of measures countering radicalisation takes place mainly on the ground, at local but also regional or national level, and falls primarily within the competence of the Member States. Local actors are usually best placed to prevent and detect radicalisation both in the short-term and the long-term. At the same time, the EU has a supporting role to play not least because the similar nature of the challenges faced by Member States, and the scale and interconnected nature of the problem, which mean that cooperation, networking, funding and exchange of good practices at Union level also have a role to play.

The EU has been supporting Member States' work in this area for over a decade. In 2005[2], the EU counter-terrorism strategy identified prevention as one of the four pillars of its actions. The Commission adopted a specific Communication in 2014[3] identifying priorities for further actions. The European Agenda on Security of April 2015 put the prevention of violent radicalisation in a broader policy context. Following the 12 February 2015[4] European Council's call and those of the European Parliament[5], the Foreign Affairs Council of 9 February 2015[6] and the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 20 November 2015[7] and 24 March 2016[8], the Commission proposed further concrete actions in its 20 April 2016 Communication[9] to further support the effectiveness of Member States' national policies to tackle radicalisation through: improved EU coordination structures, use of EU wide networks,

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[1] The European Agenda on Security, COM (2015) 185 of 28 April 2015.

[2] The EU Counter Terrorism Strategy of 30 November 2005,
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204.

[3] Commission Communication on Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response, COM (2013) 941 final of 15 January 2014.

[4] Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government Brussels, 12 February 2015 - Statement by the members of the European Council, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/02/150212-european-council-statement-fight-against-terrorism/.

[5] European Parliament resolution of 25 November 2015 on the prevention of radicalisation and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organisations (2015/2063(INI)),
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-551.967+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN; see also the European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2016 on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2016-0005+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN.

[6] Council conclusions on counter-terrorism of 9 February 2015, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/02/150209-council-conclusions-counter-terrorism/.

[7] Conclusions of the Council of the EU and of the Member States meeting within the Council on Counter-Terrorism of 20 November 2015, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/20-jha-conclusions-counter-terrorism/.

[8] Joint statement of EU Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs and representatives of EU institutions on the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/24-statement-on-terrorist-attacks-in-brussels-on-22-march/.

[9] Delivering on the European Agenda on Security to fight against terrorism and pave the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union, COM (2016) 230 final.

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better deployment of funds and European scale projects. This latest Communication also complements the United Nations Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism presented in January 2016[10].

Violent radicalisation is not a new phenomenon; however, its most recent manifestations, its scale, as well as the use of new communication tools present new challenges that call for an approach addressing both the immediate security implications of radicalisation as well as the root causes, bringing together all relevant actors across society

This Communication addresses the EU's contribution to support Member States in preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism in the form of terrorism. This multifaceted and complex challenge can only be met through a combination of actions across several policy areas and bringing together competent authorities, and societal and community actors at all levels – local, regional, national and European. This Communication focuses on how work at EU level can support Member States in meeting this challenge in seven specific areas: (i) supporting research, evidence building, monitoring and networking; (ii) countering terrorist propaganda and hate speech online; (iii) addressing radicalisation in prisons; (iv) promoting inclusive education and EU common values; (v) promoting an inclusive, open and resilient society and reaching out to young people; (vi) the security dimension of addressing radicalisation and; (vii) the international dimension.

1. Violent radicalisation, a complex phenomenon that calls for an in-depth knowledge and a multi-faceted response

- *An increasingly complex and evolving phenomenon*

The EU has long been confronted with different kinds of terrorism, notably based on extreme political ideologies. These remain a serious concern across the EU, and there are signs that they may increasingly lead to violent extremism in the form of terrorism. However, the drivers of the recent terrorist acts in Europe are different from, and more complex than, previous radicalisation phenomena. Radicalisation today has different root causes, operates on the basis of different recruitment and communication techniques, and is marked by globalised and moving targets inside and outside Europe. It grows in various urban and peri-urban contexts and is fuelled and inspired by violence-inciting ideologies that target new audiences such as women and very young people from different social backgrounds. Moreover, violent radicalisation is a complex matter, that depends on an intricate web of push and pull factors. It is not caused by a single "trigger" and does not have a single cause or an inevitable path, but is usually the result of a combination of different factors

The drivers conducive to radicalisation may include a strong sense of personal or cultural alienation, perceived injustice or humiliation reinforced by social marginalisation, xenophobia and discrimination, limited education or employment possibilities, criminality, political factors as well as an ideological and religious dimension, unstructured family ties, personal trauma and other psychological problems. These factors can be exploited by recruiters who prey on vulnerabilities and grievances through manipulation or be reinforced on the contrary, by self-isolation. Social media provide connectivity, virtual participation and an echo-

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[10] https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/plan-action-prevent-violent-extremism.

chamber for like-minded extremist views. Moreover, practitioners and academics have noted that the process of radicalisation can in certain circumstances take place in increasingly short time frames. Some 4000 EU nationals are estimated to have joined terrorist organisations in countries of conflict such as Syria and Iraq.

Recent terrorist attacks have put Islamist extremism in the spotlight. Ideological and religious factors are one of many possible drivers of radicalisation. Recruiters and extremist preachers have become adept at exploiting grievances abusing religious narratives and symbols providing justifications for acts of violence. At the same time, religion can play a vital role in preventing or countering radicalisation: it binds communities, strengthens the sense of belonging and guides people in a positive direction.

- *Supporting research, evidence building, monitoring and networks*

EU research has provided useful comparative results on radicalisation and de-radicalisation processes among young people and on the evolving and complex social context of religions, multiculturalism and political extremism in many Member States. It has produced and should continue to produce concrete tools and policy analysis directly usable by Member States' security practitioners and policy-makers. The most recent terrorist attacks perpetrated in Europe, however, show new trends in the process of radicalisation which need to be further investigated.

Several projects on radicalisation were launched under the Seventh Framework Programme for European Research and Technological Development (FP7)[11]. These projects targeted a better understanding of the drivers underlying radicalisation, as well as methodologies to assess the effectiveness of measures addressing them.

In order to further bridge the gap between academia and security practitioners in this field, the Commission has included research topics on radicalisation and inclusion in 2016 under the Horizon 2020 programme[12]. There is also important research on religious diversity in Europe[13]. The fresh evidence generated by these projects will strengthen the capacity of Member States to fine-tune existing policy approaches and develop new policies and practices.

Further research priorities include: systematizing the available knowledge and expertise to support strategic decision-making; enhancing interdisciplinary fieldwork on terrorists' recruiting grounds, socialisation and techniques; using big data in order to analyse the information related to the communication practices of violent radicalisation; improving existing links between academia including non-EU researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders; and research and education on languages, cultures, religions and ideologies.

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[11] FP7 security projects: www.safire-project.eu; www.impacteurope.eu; www.fp7-prime.eu/project; http://voxpol.eu/. FP7 social science and humanities projects: "Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe-Innovative approaches to Law and Policy"; "Finding a place for Islam in Europe"; "Combating inequalities through innovative social practices of, and for, young people in cities across Europe".

[12] EUR 8.5 million call on developing a comprehensive approach to violent radicalisation in the EU from early understanding to improving protection and EUR 5 million call on contemporary radicalisation trends and their implications for Europe.

[13] EUR 2.5 million call on religious diversity in Europe – past, present and future.

Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence

The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Centre of Excellence is the European hub and platform to exchange experiences, pool knowledge, identify best practices and develop new initiatives in tackling radicalisation. It engages, different actors (including psychologists, educators, social workers, community leaders and NGOs together with police, prison and probation officers as well as representatives from different ministries and administrations) in all relevant areas ranging from enhancing resilience against extremist propaganda on the internet, radicalisation in prison as well as in the educational environment with a particular focus on youth. The RAN is conceived as a network of networks and cooperation between other relevant networks and the RAN Centre of Excellence helps pooling relevant expertise and mutually reinforcing initiatives in different policy areas. The Commission has foreseen up to EUR 25 million over a period of four years to the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence to provide specific support to stakeholders in the Member States in designing comprehensive prevent strategies, setting up multi agency frameworks and networks and implementing concrete projects. Finally, the RAN Centre of Excellence is mapping latest research findings which are directly relevant for the concrete work of practitioners and authorities within the different RAN working groups.

Key actions:

✓ *RAN Centre of Excellence providing support to Member States in designing and implementing effective prevent work, providing guidelines and handbooks for establishing multi agency structures, creating a platform for exchange of experiences and practices and through further mapping of research on radicalisation.*

✓ *Establishment of a repository of prevent strategies at national, regional or local level, networks of practitioners and national/regional contact points in Member States.*

✓ *Mobilising research under Horizon 2020 on the complex root causes of violent radicalisation, in order to deliver concrete tools to allow better informed policy interventions.*

2. Countering terrorist propaganda and hate speech online: fighting threats, strengthening critical minds and encouraging civil society engagement.

Terrorists are increasingly abusing the internet for their purposes. Some terrorist groups now dedicate significant resources to producing large volumes of sophisticated terrorist material which includes threats, training manuals, practical advice on how to obtain and import weapons, on how to make bombs and how to select targets, plan and carry out attacks. They release videos of successful attacks, the torture and execution of victims, and disseminate messages supporting and further encouraging terrorist attacks and acts of violence through sophisticated encrypted channels. The internet provides radical recruiters more opportunities to interact with people who would not otherwise be reachable by conventional means. Online interactions with like-minded individuals can substitute for an individual's physical community and create an online social environment in which deviant behaviour and violence are acceptable. While such online material does not necessarily, on its own, radicalise

individuals, it appears to play a role in accelerating the radicalisation process. Interaction with others through internet channels fuels a sense of belonging and common cause.

Addressing the root-causes of extremism therefore requires action to tackle the surge of hate speech as well as the dissemination of extremist or terrorist material online. It also calls for measures to strengthen the individual's resilience against such propaganda.

- *Working with industry and civil society*

In December 2015, the EU established the EU Internet Forum bringing together industry, Member States, law enforcement and civil society partners to explore how to tackle the challenges of terrorist and extremist propaganda online through a reinforced voluntary cooperation, whilst safeguarding fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression.

Regarding terrorist content online, efforts are currently focusing on two areas: restricting accessibility to terrorist material on the one hand, and empowering civil society partners to counter the violent extremist propaganda with positive narratives on the other hand. The EU Internet Referral Unit at Europol plays a vital role in supporting the first objective. It helps identify terrorist content online, and refers the material to the company on whose site the material is hosted, where it is assessed to be in breach of the company's terms and conditions. It is ultimately the company's decision as to whether to remove the material. The RAN Centre of Excellence and its working group on 'Communication and Narratives' will continue to build on its experience in working with civil society partners on the second objective and offer insights into the development of alternative and counter-narratives[14].

The Commission, Europol, Member States, civil society and industry are working on a toolbox of targeted actions, to be launched in the coming months. This will include a Joint Referral Platform to be developed by the internet industry with the contribution of different stakeholders. The aim is to strengthen the referrals process and prevent removed material from being re-uploaded on to other platforms. Furthermore, an EU-wide Civil Society Empowerment Programme, to be coordinated by the RAN Centre of Excellence together with industry and civil society partners across Member States, will provide training, technical support and analyses of the effectiveness of counter narrative campaigns. In this respect, victims of terrorism but also religious leaders and communities are well-placed in providing alternative and counter messages. The implementation of the different initiatives under the EU Internet Forum will be supported by targeted research on terrorists' use of the internet.

Furthermore, the Commission together with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft established a code of conduct to combat the spread of illegal hate speech online in Europe[15]. In line with the Joint statement issued by the extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council of 24 March 2016, this will ensure that IT companies quickly and effectively review and, where necessary, remove hate speech which breaches national laws transposing EU law[16] and to make it easier for civil society and Member States' authorities to report illegal content. Further work will focus on how to promote transparency in the application of notice and take down procedures and encourage counter and alternative narratives.

On-going initiatives on hate speech, such as the "No Hate Speech Movement" campaign, supported by the Council of Europe, and further grass-root initiatives are crucial in promoting

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[14] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf.
[15] http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1937_en.htm.
[16] EU Framework Decision (2008/913/JHA) on combating racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

equality and preventing racism and radicalisation. The Commission will support civil society in monitoring and diminishing the attraction and impact of hate speech through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme[17].

The Commission will continue to finance the Strategic Communications Advisory Team/Strategic Communications Network. Expertise developed within the project is available to Member States, civil society as well as EU institutions in developing the appropriate policy framework, communication campaigns or individual initiatives. In addition to the creation of a network for sharing and exchanging best practice the projects provides practical support and counselling that can facilitate the development of effective counter narratives.

- *Updating legislation*

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive[18] already requires Member States to ensure that audiovisual media services – such as TV broadcasts and video-on-demand services do not contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality. As hate speech on video-sharing platforms has increasingly given rise to concern, in its proposal to revise the Directive[19], the Commission aims to ensure that video-sharing platforms be required to take appropriate measures to protect citizens from incitement to violence or hatred. Such measures include for example reporting and flagging. The proposal foresees that the Codes of Conduct developed by the industry are submitted to the Commission, that the European Regulators' Group for Audiovisual Media Services may be asked give an opinion on these codes, and that national audiovisual-regulators are empowered to enforce them. Furthermore, the Commission will regularly assess the effectiveness of self-regulatory measures with a view to supporting them where needed, including by creating appropriate frameworks to provide legal certainty where necessary. The Commission will also broker a new Alliance to better protect children online[20], as part of its efforts to encourage industry to develop codes of conduct to support the implementation of the proposed update of the EU's audiovisual rules.

- *Supporting media literacy*

The Safer Internet Digital Service Infrastructure funded under the Connecting Europe facility allows national Safer Internet Centres to raise awareness among children, parents and teachers, of the risks children may encounter online and to empower them to deal with these risks. Some Safer Internet Centres have responded to the emerging issue of online radicalisation, which requires specific expertise to deal with it in an appropriate way. For example, the UK Safer Internet Centre has produced guidance on how to protect children from online extremism. In Austria, the Safer Internet Centre is working on a strategy to handle online radicalisation, collaborating with specialist organisations. And the Swedish Safer Internet Centre has developed educational material aimed at strengthening teenagers' abilities to see through propaganda.

Key actions:

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[17] Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme - Work Programme for 2016.
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/files/rec_awp_2016/rec_awp_2016_annex_en.pdf.
[18] Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services.
[19] Proposal for amending Directive 2010/13/EU on audiovisual media services SWD (2016) 168.
[20] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/commission-broker-new-alliance-better-protect-minors-online.

✓ *Under the EU Internet Forum: develop a Joint Referral Platform to improve the speed and effectiveness of the referrals process and set up a civil society empowerment programme to significantly ramp up the training and support for civil society partners in order to enhance the volume of effective positive alternative narratives delivered online.*

✓ *RAN Centre of Excellence to provide for a platform of exchange of experiences and best practices in enhancing media literacy and critical thinking on the internet, and to develop an EU-wide campaign with a view to strengthening resilience against radicalisation online to provide alternative narratives or alternative actions (Exit Hate campaign).*

✓ *Commission and relevant IT companies to monitor the public commitments in the code of conduct countering illegal hate speech online, including their impact. Improve transparency in the application of notice and take down procedures.*

3. Breaking the cycle: addressing radicalisation in prisons

The European Commission is already supporting Member States, whose competence it primarily is, in their efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation in prisons. In line with the 2015 Council Conclusions on the criminal justice response to radicalisation[21], Eurojust is monitoring the developments and trends with regard to the applicable legislative framework and relevant jurisprudence in the Member States on terrorism and violent radicalisation, including the use of alternatives to prosecution and detention to inform policy makers and inform the development of future initiatives. This is done, inter alia, through the Terrorism Conviction Monitor and through Eurojust tactical meetings on terrorism. Furthermore the Commission has provided EUR 8 million in 2015 and 2016 to implement the Council conclusions, providing funding for the development of rehabilitation and de-radicalisation programmes inside and outside prisons, risk assessment tools and training of professionals.

Moreover, the Commission is working with the European Confederation for Probation and the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services, both funded by operating grants under the Justice Programme, to involve them in specific training of prison and probation staff. The Commission is also working closely with the European Judicial Training Network and is currently funding a training programme on radicalisation for judges and prosecutors to provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with radicalised people, and make available risk assessment tools and methodologies for determining the level of threat posed by suspects of terrorist crimes. It is also important to facilitate the sharing of best practices amongst Member States in tackling radicalisation in prisons.

The RAN Centre of Excellence's activities will continue to cover radicalisation in prisons, most notably with its working group on prison and probation, allowing local practitioners to exchange best practices, issue recommendations, and develop or review guidelines and handbooks on implementing mechanisms and programmes to prevent and counter

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[21] Council Conclusions of 20 November 2015 on on enhancing the criminal justice response to radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/20-conclusions-radicalisation/.

radicalisation in prison and to promote rehabilitation and reintegration, including in particular guidance on developing multi-agency approaches as well as more specific intervention tools, such as risk assessments. First lessons learnt, recommendations and identification of challenges have been set out in the RAN issues paper "Dealing with radicalisation in a prison and probation context" covering aspects such as developing multi-agency cooperation, risk assessments, risk management including prison conditions and regime choices and reintegration programmes[22].

Key actions:

- ✓ *Using the RAN Centre of Excellence to exchange good practices and formulate policy recommendations on the prevention of radicalisation for first-line practitioners (including where appropriate judges and prosecutors), covering the prison and probation sector.*

- ✓ *Providing financial support to help Member States to develop risk assessment tools.*

- ✓ *Supporting the development of education and training programmes in prison (including vocational training) to enable detainees to ease their reintegration into society.*

- ✓ *Supporting the development of rehabilitation programmes for prisoners by Member States and the exchange of best practices and policies in the field of the execution of penal sanctions.*

- ✓ *Promoting the sharing of information at Eurojust by specialised prosecutors.*

4. Promoting inclusive education and EU common values

In the long run, high quality education from pre-school onwards remains the best safety net against social exclusion, which can be for some a factor in radicalisation. Yet, opportunities and outcomes are still determined by children's socio-economic backgrounds. 11.1% of young Europeans leave school early and will enter the labour market with a disadvantage that is very difficult to overcome later[23]. Tackling these issues while transmitting EU common values to young people and allowing them to make informed choices are therefore critical preventive measures.

On 17 March 2015, Education Ministers and the European Commission adopted the *Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education*[24], which defines common objectives for Member States and calls for EU-level supportive actions. On this basis, the Commission has already mobilised its policy and financial tools and will adopt further concrete steps to support Member States in their work.

- • *A strengthened framework for policy support and cooperation*

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[22] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-news/docs/ran_p_and_p_practitioners_working_paper_en.pdf.

[23] All figures in this chapter are extracted from the 2015 Education and Training Monitor.

[24] Paris Declaration, http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf.

While Member States are responsible for their own education and training systems, EU policy can support national action and help address common challenges, notably within the Education and Training 2020 cooperation framework[25]. The Commission will propose a draft Council Recommendation to promote effective policies and best practices, underpinned by funding opportunities, thus allowing for a more coordinated approach throughout the EU. This Recommendation will give concrete guidance to policy-makers, helping them to take the steps needed to achieve the national and local objectives of the Paris Declaration. Experience with frameworks such as the early school leaving framework[26] has shown that this approach yields rapid and effective results.

- *Making the most of EU funding*

Erasmus+ funds transnational cooperation projects and policy support[27]. In 2014 alone, it provided financing for over 1700 projects across the education, training, youth and sport sectors. As of 2016, priority is given to actions and projects that foster inclusion and promote fundamental values, echoing the objectives of the Paris Declaration. As a result, EUR 400 million is now available to develop new policies and projects supporting these priorities, and an additional EUR 13 million will be spent on helping to spread and scale up grassroots initiatives.

- *Supporting educators and educational institutions*

Schools have a key role in fostering inclusion and, as core parts of communities, work closely with parents and local associations. Regular contacts with representatives of civil society and role models can make a difference in motivating young people and preventing them from drifting to the margins of society. These kinds of networks already exist in some Member States[28], and should be scaled up at European level to reach a critical mass of young people. The Commission will therefore establish a network to enable local stakeholders to invite people from various backgrounds, such as entrepreneurs, artists, sportspersons, as well as formerly radicalised people when appropriate, to visit schools, youth initiatives, sport clubs and prisons to share their experiences.[29]

Teachers are particularly important. They are well placed to detect early signs of radicalisation in pupils and help address them. More generally, teachers should be equipped to address diversity in the classroom and pass on common values to pupils. Since teachers in many Member States are faced with similar challenges, peer learning and direct exchanges at EU level can help to identify best practices. The EU will continue supporting such exchanges through eTwinning, an internet platform connecting teachers and classrooms across Europe[30] and within the RAN working group on education. Finally, the Commission will work closely

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[25] Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf.

[26] Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving.

[27] At least 28% and 4.2% of the total budget respectively, i.e, EUR 14,7 billion for the 2014-2020 period.

[28] For example the the Réserve Citoyenne in France, http://www.lareservecitoyenne.fr/.

[29] This network, funded under Erasmus + will be launched as a pilot project with a focus on violent radicalisation in deprived areas in some Member States.

[30] Currently reaching 300,000 teachers and totalling 406 projects, eTwinning is the biggest teacher network in the world and already offers a wide array of courses in all fields of education, including on citizenship and intercultural dialogue.

with the Council of Europe and UNESCO to better implement existing tools designed to support teachers[31].

Students and staff of higher education institutions also play an important role. The Commission encourages higher education institutions to engage with local communities and to recognise students' efforts to do so, for instance by granting students credits for volunteering or other learning modules.

Key actions:

✓ *Proposing a Council Recommendation to enhance social inclusion and promote Europe's fundamental values through education and non-formal learning.*

✓ *Making available through Erasmus+ more than EUR 400 million in 2016 to transnational partnerships to develop innovative policy approaches and practices at grass-root level, prioritising social inclusion, the promotion of common values and intercultural understanding. Erasmus+ will scale up actions developed at grass-root level with a dedicated envelope of EUR 13 million in 2016.*

✓ *Establishing a network to facilitate direct contacts with positive role models in schools, youth, sport clubs and prisons.*

✓ *Promoting the award of student credits for volunteering, and the development of curricula that combine academic content with civic engagement through Erasmus+.*

5. Promoting inclusive, open and resilient societies and reaching out to young people

The EU stands for societies in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women prevail[32]. Combatting social exclusion and discrimination, and promoting social justice and protection are objectives of the EU in their own right[33]. Such societies should prove to be more resilient to the threats of violent extremism.

Countering discrimination, including on the grounds of religion or belief, race or ethnic origin, tackling hatred and stigmatisation of communities, and combating hate crime and serious forms of hate speech are all key elements in this respect. Member States need to enforce EU legislation on combating racism and xenophobia and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and agreement is now needed on the Commission proposal to complete the anti-discrimination framework on the grounds of inter alia religion[34]. Intercultural and interfaith dialogue between communities is of particular importance. Community leaders and civil society need to be supported to foster exchanges and joint projects between different communities. The Commission has allocated EUR 4.5 million in 2016 to projects to create

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[31] The Competence Framework on Democratic Citizenship to be launched in April and the "Teaching controversial issues" programme as well as the UNESCO pedagogical guidance on Global Citizenship Education.

[32] Article 2 TEU.

[33] Article 3 TEU.

[34] Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, COM (2008) 426 final.

better understanding between communities, including religious communities, to prevent and combat racism and xenophobia through interreligious and intercultural activities.

EU social and employment policies seek to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive labour markets and societies. One of the best ways to tackle social exclusion is through employment. One of the challenges faced by the Member States is to reduce the numbers of youth not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs). The EU can help with the policy guidance delivered through instruments, such as the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative, the Recommendation on long term unemployed and the recently adopted Skills Agenda[35]. In addition, the Directive 2000/78 on equal treatment in employment and education[36] helps to fight discrimination, including through raising awareness about discrimination among stakeholders, civil society and social partners.

Moreover, the European Social Fund supports national schemes and small local projects. From 2014 to 2020, EUR 25.6 billion will go directly towards fostering the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, for instance through tailor-made training programmes and social support schemes. In addition, more than EUR 8 billion will be used to help schools address early school leaving and increase access to quality education for all, for instance through adapting school curricula, teacher education courses and individual support to disadvantaged learners. The European Social Fund is expected to reach 2.5 million disadvantaged people, including 1.3 million who are unemployed or inactive. In addition, the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) can fund innovative projects on the ground, fostering social inclusion.

Youth work powerfully reaches out to young people, especially the disadvantaged, and helps them become engaged citizens, avoiding marginalisation and vulnerability to extremist views. Engagement of youth workers is important as part of a broader collaboration with all relevant actors, including with educational institutions, community organisations, employers and those closest to young people: their families and friends. To support this, the Commission will develop a specific toolkit of best practices in close cooperation with the Member States for youth workers and educators. This will provide examples of how to help young people increase their democratic resilience, become media literate and think critically, on how to teach young people to resolve conflicts and respect the views of others and on how to spot and react to early signs of radicalisation. To bolster the impact of youth work on the ground, the Commission will also strengthen the European Voluntary Service by increasing its budget[37] and give priority to projects promoting fundamental values and reaching out to disadvantaged people and communities.

Key actions:

✓ *Continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the anti-discrimination directive.*

✓ *Fostering social inclusion of disadvantaged groups through policy measures and the European Social Fund and Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.*

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[35] A New Skills Agenda for Europe: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (COM(2016) 381).

[36] Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

[37] The budget (EUR 65 million in 2016) is scheduled to increase by 15% annually between 2017 and 2020.

- ✓ *Enhancing support to youth workers and organisations, particularly by developing a toolkit.*
- ✓ *Strengthening the European Voluntary Service.*

6. The security dimension of addressing radicalisation

Preventing and countering radicalisation has a strong security dimension, as highlighted in the recent Communication "Delivering on the European Agenda on Security to fight against terrorism and pave the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union". Member States can take security measures to prevent young people from leaving to conflict zones to join terrorist groups. These include measures such as travel prohibitions, the criminalisation of traveling to a third country for terrorist purposes, but also measures through which families and friends can call upon the help of public authorities such as hotlines. Furthermore, extremist preachers and those disseminating terrorist propaganda or those recruiting vulnerable individuals may face criminal charges. Member States may issue travel bans to prevent extremist preachers from entering the EU, and may intervene against the dissemination of extremist messages through administrative measures. Such measures are the necessary complement to measures enhancing resilience against radicalisation.

Information sharing is key in this respect. The EU's border management, migration and security cooperation frameworks and information tools need to be joined up, strengthened and fully used[38] to effectively prevent EU citizens from travelling to conflict zones for terrorist purposes and detecting those that pose a risk upon their return. These and other frameworks and tools need to be used to exchange information of those suspected of radicalisation in order to facilitate the work of the relevant authorities across borders in taking the appropriate measures against persons representing a high security risk.

The Schengen Information System (SIS) is of particular importance in this regard. An alert in SIS can generate different actions depending on the assessment and intention of the Member State inserting it, *i.e.* a person can be arrested, placed under protection or subject of a discreet or specific check. SIS has also been useful to prevent terrorist travel and to trace the travel routes of persons suspected for terrorism. In the context of the foreign terrorist fighters, the Commission encouraged Member States to signal that the alert concerns a "terrorism related activity" without limiting it to foreign terrorist fighters or criminal activities as such. It can thus be used to include alerts on those suspected of being radicalised towards committing acts of terrorism.

Furthermore, Member States should step up their efforts to ensure that appropriate information is exchanged and shared with Europol. The recently created European Counter-terrorism Centre (ECTC) at Europol aims to become a central information hub in the fight against terrorism in the EU, including as regards radicalisation risks.

In addition, the Europol Information System (EIS) is positioned to serve as a central repository of law enforcement data, including the consolidated list of all known or suspected Foreign Terrorism Fighters. Member States still need to step up their efforts significantly to provide the necessary data on Foreign Terrorist Fighters to Europol.

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[38] See Commission Communication of 6 April on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security, COM (2016) 205.

Key actions:

✓ *The Commission will by end 2016, propose to revise the Schengen Information System to further improve its added value for law enforcement and counter-terrorism purposes.*

✓ *Member States should proactively exchange all relevant information with other Member States, and Europol where appropriate, on released convicts suspected of radicalisation or known radical individuals, in order to ensure close monitoring of those representing a high risk.*

7. The international dimension: addressing violent radicalisation beyond the EU's borders

Like EU Member States, third countries also face the challenges of responding to the security threat of radicalisation, address its root-causes and build resilient and cohesive societies. The EU actively works with the UN, the Council of Europe and OSCE in their efforts to counter violent extremism, for example through continued support through the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) initiatives[39].

EU action in the international arena follows two complementary approaches. First, when assisting third countries, the EU will support law enforcement and human rights compliant responses that aim to prevent radicalised individuals from committing terrorist acts. Secondly, and more importantly, the EU will step up engagement in preventive action, tackling the root causes of certain forms of radicalisation that can lead to violent extremism.

- *Strengthening partner countries' security capacities*

Where possible, EU support is framed within wider reforms aimed at strengthening security capacities in partner countries since organised crime, smuggling and illicit trafficking as well as weak border management have proven links with violent radicalisation. The EU and its Member States must be better equipped to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in third countries. To this end, the EU will further expand expertise and refine situation awareness in countries that present the highest risks. For example, in the Middle East and North Africa support will be provided to establish effective criminal justice systems to cooperate regionally and internationally in fighting radicalisation.

The EU is engaging with countries through counter terrorism and targeted and upgraded security dialogues leading to the creation of counterterrorism packages and roadmaps. The review of the European Neighbourhood Policy addresses several aspects related to tackling radicalisation, by giving priority to youth, education and socio-economic development. Tangible progress has been made so far with Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan. Further actions tackling violent extremism will be launched in order to implement the EU Regional Sahel Action Plan. A number of specific activities to counter radicalisation are taking place in Pakistan and South East Asia. Similar work is taking place in the Horn of Africa and EU support will be extended after the successful conclusion of various pilot projects in the region.

- *Supporting third countries in tackling the underlying factors of radicalisation*

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[39] Notably Hedayah and the Global Community Engagement Resilience Fund.

Preventing and countering violent extremism has become a key component of the EU's external counter-terrorism activities and has been mainstreamed into development policy bridging the gap between security and development. The EU funded package of "Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism" (STRIVE)[40] activities has been the precursor to the development of an increasing number of initiatives aimed at identifying drivers for youth extremism, empowering women, promoting community dialogue, strengthening local actors or improving the media and education capacities to counter radicalising ideologies.

Financial support to civil society will factor in the anti-radicalisation dimension, as specified in the 2015 review of the European Neighbourhood Policy[41]. The EU will further interact with civil society, practitioners and academia, including in partner countries, to deepen its understanding of the driving factors and identify effective responses. Where possible, the experience and expertise gained with the RAN will be mobilised outside the EU's borders, in priority third countries, especially in Turkey, the MENA region and the Western Balkans, provided certain requirements are fulfilled.

The EU is offering a more positive narrative through targeted communication to young audiences that may be more vulnerable to radicalisation. Among numerous ongoing activities, a Strategic Communication Task Force works with EU Delegations in Arab countries and with the Anti-ISIL Global Coalition to identify shared values and develop concrete actions. For example, the EU co-funds a project in Tunisia to increase financial inclusion among vulnerable communities through micro-credits. The Commission finances a project of EUR 3 million for Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon that helps build community resilience by working with the civil society and amplifying voices through strategic communications.

The EU will encourage direct contacts between people. It will extend further the eTwinning platform to selected countries of the European Neighbourhood, especially those facing problems related to violent radicalisation and where intercultural dialogue is most needed[42]. The Commission will also launch an Erasmus+ project to connect students and other young people from the EU and third countries. These moderated virtual exchanges will help young people develop mutual understanding and respect and also improve intercultural skills that employers are looking for.

Key actions:

✓ *Supporting international organisations in their work to counter violent extremism.*

✓ *Additional initiatives to focus EU's external financial instruments on the prevention of violent radicalisation.*

✓ *Continue support to the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) initiatives working on preventing and countering violent extremism.*

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[40] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/strive-development-strengthening-resilience-violence-and-extremism_en.

[41] The EU has provided substantial support to counter-terrorism measures by means of a variety of instruments, in particular under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and through wider development.

[42] The eTwinning network is already active in some third countries, notably in Tunisia, where nearly 300 teachers and 85 schools are currently registered on this online platform.

- ✓ *Extending further eTwinning Plus networks to selected countries of the EU's neighbourhood.*
- ✓ *Launching a feasibility project for Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges to promote online engagement of young people with the aim of reaching 200,000 young people by 2019.*

Conclusion

Violent radicalisation is an increasingly complex and evolving challenge that calls for new and wide-ranging responses, from immediate security concerns to addressing underlying factors. As indicated in the Commission Communication on delivering on the European Agenda on Security, *the absolute priority must be to prevent more people from being radicalised and ensure that those who already are enter de-radicalisation programmes and are prevented from spreading terrorist propaganda and hate speech*". Member States are in the front line, be it through its security and judiciary bodies, teachers, social workers and civil society. The EU can play a supportive role by mobilising its policies, its coordination capacity and its financial instruments, to assist national actions and provide real added value on the ground, within the limits of its competences.

This Communication sets out concrete actions to support Member States in introducing initiatives and policies that will help us prevent and tackle radicalisation and violent extremism within the EU and in third countries. The Commission encourages Member States to make use of the various support measures and cooperative tools at EU level to support their work. In the end, it is only in a joint effort by all stakeholders at national, EU and international level that the challenge of violent radicalisation can be effectively overcome.

The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to endorse this Communication, with a view to implementing the actions proposed, in close cooperation with all relevant actors.