

## 2.4 EDURAD MAPPING AND RESEARCH REPORT – Europe



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### EDURAD: Educational Responses to Extremism

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**Project Title:** EDURAD: Addressing Violent Radicalisation: A Multi-Actor Response through Education.

**Project Acronym:** EDURAD

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**Work Package 2**

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**Caveat:** The global impact of the COVID-19 crisis has led to an unforeseeable delay in Work Package 2 for two reasons: 1. Emergency contingency planning within home organisations; 2. Re-conceptualisation of research design due to impact of COVID on the wider educational sector and availability of stakeholders to participate in research in the scheduled timeline. No delay in final completion of the project is anticipated at present. In order to complete WP2 as planned, this has required an overlap with the schedule for WP3, however the action research principles underpinning the design of the project support this. These involve continual development and ongoing refinement of the work packages. WP2 is designed to support the research for the pedagogical modules of WP3. It will also contribute to WP4 as the focus groups with stakeholders will be developed to form the PVE-E hubs. Opportunities for learning, sharing, and reflection from the global experience of this pandemic will be developed through the focus groups. The project will also take address some of the implications of Covid-19 policy responses for democracy, education and prevention.

Given the extended timeline, preliminary work has begun on elements of WP3 in researching the modules.

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## European Report

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### Introduction

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The prevention of violent radicalisation, and by extension violent extremism, is primarily a responsibility of individual Member States as part of their counter-terrorism and national security strategies. As such, European Union (EU) initiatives in this area must fully respect the existing division of competences between Member States and the EU, particularly the provision in Article 4 (2) of the TFEU recognising that national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State. The EU has therefore sought to concentrate its efforts on areas where it believes it can provide added value, such as facilitating exchange of experiences and good practices, strengthening cooperation, and increasing joint capabilities. Given EDURAD's interest in Preventing (Violent) Extremism through Education (P(V)E-E) this paper provides a descriptive overview summary of EU initiatives in the prevention of extremism and radicalisation with the intent of introducing the main EU approaches in this area, alongside outlining those wider educational initiatives related to the prevention agenda which aim to support **democracy**, **societal cohesion**, and **integration**.

It distinguishes between those approaches that are **specific** to P/C(V)E and those that are **relevant** to P/C(V)E. This distinction enables different ways of understanding how P(V)E-E can be conceptualised and understood in educational settings. Elaboration of individual national approaches is provided in the national profiles. These reveal diverse ways of understanding, conceptualising and approaching P(V)E-E, in particular for countries with no national prevent policies, such as Ireland and Cyprus. Maintaining and valuing context-specificity and pluralism of both interpretation of P(V)E-E and enactment of diverse pedagogical approaches is central to the EDURAD project. This approach may also have implications for how EU policy frameworks should be developed in terms of taking into account the different contexts, histories and experiences of different European countries that shape how they address questions of prevention of (violent) extremism. The project will aim to provisionally conceptualise this approach in the theoretical framework as a starting point for thinking about educational responses to extremism and prevention.

### Definitions

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**Radicalisation** and **extremism** are both contested and often problematic terms. Radicalisation is defined by the European Commission (nd) as 'a phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence, including acts of terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose'. In a number of its policy documents, including its recent High Level Expert Group Report on Radicalisation (discussed below), the Commission appears to view radicalisation as a process that is logically prior to violent extremism and terrorism. A number of critiques have questioned this type of linear approach (see, for example, Christodoulou, and Szakács, 2018: 41; Horgan, 2005, 2008; Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010). However it is useful to reflect on how to develop awareness of both risk and protective factors, as we will outline below. It is also worth noting that in much of the work in this area, the Commission has sought to bring together the concepts of **Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)** and **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)** under the single banner of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) (see, for

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example, European Commission, 2017a; RAN, 2019; for a critique see: Christodoulou, and Szakács, 2018; Stephens et al., 2019; O'Donnell, 2020).

Equating “countering” with “prevention” has led to some confusion and has arguably precluded the kind of reflection on approaches to prevention that might be better suited to the diverse range of educational contexts that we witness in Europe. As a consequence, one policy document suggests differentiating generic, targeted and indicative prevention (European Commission, 2017d). Whilst the universal or generic approach is the one broadly adopted by EDURAD, an approach that has been called CVE *relevant* rather than *specific* (Romaniuk, 2015), EDURAD will also be informed by the learning from targeted and indicative prevention that is closer to what is called *CVE specific*, in particular in respect of gaining insights into what is *important* to young people, how their experiences have shaped their life *trajectory*, including those who have become involved in violent extremism or other extremist movements, and the kinds of *pedagogical encounters* that have proven helpful to them. The pedagogical modules will be developed taking into account these insights.

The expert group of the European Commission (2017d: 12) describes ‘*Radicalisation* is the process of growing willingness to accept, pursue and support far-reaching changes in society, conflicting with the existing order’ and ‘*Extremism* refers to positions that are strongly directed against shared values and moral standards within a given society. The term “extremists” refers to people who strongly disrespect or even fight those values and standards (including the use of violence)’. These definitions raise important questions about how ‘the existing order’ is to be understood in Europe and what its relation to democracy is, in particular given risks of human rights abuses as raised in the *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (A/HRC/31/65)* because it may lead to governments qualifying even non-violent actions that are critical of them as “violent extremism”. The Special Rapporteur notes that ‘this is compounded by the resolution’s reference to ‘extremist ideologies or intolerance’ without any reference to violence and the use of the vague expression ‘supporters’ of violent extremists’ (2016, p. 12).

The OSCE (2019) offers an expansive definition that again draws together “preventing” and “countering” with its ‘whole of society’ definition of ‘preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalism that lead to terrorism’ (P/CVERLT). It underlines the risks associated with these terms and states that ‘the focus of P/CVERLT is on (1) preventing and countering processes of radicalisation that may lead to terrorism; (2) addressing and reducing grievances and structural social, economic, and political conditions that may be conducive to violent extremism; (3) assisting those already radicalised to terrorism to disengage and reintegrate into society; and (4) building community resilience to VERLT’ (2019: 25). It distinguishes this approach from that of counter-terrorism, and views P/CVERLT as complementary to counter-terrorism.

The following sections outline the European Union’s approach. As noted above, prevention, including in education, has tended to be situated within a broader counter-terrorist framework. However, the areas of CVE and PVE are relatively recent and there is now increasing sensitivity to the need to develop a nuanced approach that distinguishes between those strategies *specific* to PVE and CVE respectively and those that are *relevant* to PVE and CVE respectively, as well as to articulate what constitutes an educational response. This is a complex domain in terms of evaluation, so it is important to focus on positive factors that are generally understood to be protective factors. This will enable a

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better understanding of how these terms are understood in education and enacted through pedagogy.

It is outside the scope of this policy mapping document to offer a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the full range of initiatives in this field, or to map the extensive critical literature in respect of radicalisation, however, the definitions proposed of these terms will continue to be explored and examined through the project. The EDURAD project does not simply target specific ‘at risk’ groups, but aims to open up discussions of these questions with young people more broadly, in particular in its engagement with schools and other educational settings. It aims to continue to learn from the perspectives and experiences of young people when developing its educational approach and pedagogical modules in WP3 and WP4. It does so in order to open up a diversity of ways of understanding prevention of (violent) extremism through education that are sensitive to local contexts, and to articulate educational responses to extremism that retain commitment to pluralism, exchange, and context sensitivity, as well as the voices of children and young people.

### Radicalisation Policy Framework 2005-2017

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As set out in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy (Council of the European Union, 2005) the prevention of radicalisation is a cornerstone of the EU's counter-terrorism effort. EU policies in this area have been strengthened in recent years as has been reflected in a number of policy and strategy documents, as well as in numerous EU initiatives and EU funding programmes. On 15 January 2014, the Commission adopted a Communication on *Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response* where it identified 10 areas where Member States and the EU could reinforce their actions to prevent radicalisation and recruitment, including the establishment of an EU Knowledge Hub (European Commission, 2014). In June 2014, the Council adopted a revised EU Strategy on preventing radicalisation and recruitment (Council of the European Union, 2014) and since then several Council Conclusions addressing different aspects of preventing radicalisation have called upon the Commission and Member States to adopt and implement numerous policy measures relevant to countering this process. In April 2015, the Commission adopted the *European Agenda on Security* emphasising again the particular importance of ‘prevent work’ as part of a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism and tackling the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism (European Commission, 2015). More recently, in a June 2016 Communication, the Commission specified in more detail how the EU supports Member States in a number of key areas making use of instruments and initiatives in different policy areas (European Commission, 2016).

Key policy initiatives in this area have included the establishment of a number of EU networks for cooperation and exchange between the different stakeholders involved in the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism. These include the [Radicalisation Awareness Network \(RAN\)](#), the Commission's main policy tool for countering radicalisation; the [EU Internet Forum](#) to address terrorist propaganda online; the network of national prevent policy makers; and the [European Strategic Communications Network \(ESCN\)](#). RAN in particular has been very active in the field of PVE-E through its explicit mandate to connect frontline practitioners (including teachers and youth workers) who are working in this field throughout Europe. The working group on education, initially called [RAN EDU](#), held its kick-off meeting in November 2015 in Prague with the aim of better equipping teachers and the school system so they can play a crucial role in preventing radicalisation. Since 2015, RAN EDU has

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been very active in supporting and promoting PVE-E following its *Manifesto for Education – Educators and Schools*, that was published after a large meeting with 90 educators in Manchester in 2015 (RAN, 2015). One recent example of work in this field is a 2018 paper *Transforming schools into labs for democracy: A companion to preventing violent radicalisation through education* (RAN, 2018a) which discusses ‘a need for a ‘whole of school’ approach to establishing certain conditions for students and teachers that would facilitate prevention work and activities’. Another is a recent *ex post* paper on education and violent extremism that has begun to gather evidence on ‘what works’ in these initiatives, with some directly targeted at P/CVE, while others are more indirect and focused on areas such as anti-racism, citizenship or value pluralism (RAN, 2019). The RAN Centre of Excellence (which supports and coordinates RAN) also produced two videos in 2018, one on conducting difficult conversations in the classroom (RAN, 2018b) and one on building resilience among young children (RAN, 2018c). RAN Y&E (Youth Work and Education) now brings together educators and youth workers, as it seeks to develop a concept of schools as labs for democracy, whilst learning from educators, in particular youth workers, what young people are experiencing and what they are struggling with.

These efforts at coordination have also been replicated at Member State level. Through its 2014 Communication on Radicalisation, the Commission has also encouraged the development of prevent strategies and networks at a national level allowing for the exchange of experiences and expertise among relevant stakeholders. These prevent strategies or prevention measures are collected in the repository of prevent strategies [here](#).

The Commission's stated main policy objective is to support stakeholders in Member States to effectively prevent and counter radicalisation in areas where it is viewed that the EU can bring added value. Thus, it has tended to focus on **enhanced exchanges** of practices and expertise, capacity building, and financially supporting initiatives and projects. The policy approach is grounded in the promotion of democratic values, a multi-sector/agency approach, the empowerment of civil society, and the involvement of local actors (European Commission, 2017b: 4). As can be seen, in addition to more targeted initiatives, the Commission has engaged adjacent fields in the areas of education, youth, social inclusion, integration etc. that can make a relevant contribution to tackling what are understood to be the root causes of radicalisation while strengthening resilience. This type of action has included, for example, the funding of non-formal educational projects under the EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018 and the development of a practical toolbox for youth workers providing guidance on how to encourage active citizenship and prevent marginalisation and radicalisation (Expert Group, 2017).

The position of the comprehensive assessment of EU security policies which reported in 2017 was that the EU added value of these initiatives, but it also identified room for improvement (European Commission, 2017c). The Report noted a stakeholder view that work within the EU framework needs to keep pace with new challenges and would require a comprehensive response combining an enhanced criminalisation framework with measures on prevention of radicalisation:

The various EU initiatives (such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network and initiatives under the EU Internet Forum) have laid a solid basis for more effective Prevent work and made valuable contributions to equipping the relevant stakeholders with the necessary skills to tackle radicalisation. At the same time, given the increased threat level and the scope and scale of radicalisation, the Assessment found that more could and must be done

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in terms of coordination, outreach and impact, building on the achievements so far (ibid: para 3.2)

Further related initiatives include the Council of Europe's 'No Hate Speech' campaign launched in 2013. Like the RAN, a range of approaches are presented, including the use of alternative and counter narratives.

### Radicalisation Policy Framework 2017-to date

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Further to this 2017 Report, the Commission established a [High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation](#) (HLCEG-R) to offer advice on how to further develop this strand of work at EU level. The final report, published in May 2018, encompasses recommendations for further action in priority areas as well as making recommendations on cooperation mechanisms (European Commission, 2018). Education is identified as one of the priority areas for action, with the Report identifying education 'as a cornerstone for effective prevention of radicalisation by strengthening resilience against radicalisation and recruitment' (ibid: 12). The Report is also clear on the crucial role played by educators and youth workers in 'fostering [social inclusion](#), promoting [common democratic values](#) and [managing controversial issues with open discussions in safe classrooms](#)' (ibid). Recommendations specific to the Commission in the Report include: improving access of first line responders to existing EU practices in the area of education; encouraging (with Member States) the use of existing platforms (such as eTwinning) to promote fundamental values, democracy and citizenship and to help develop critical thinking; and promoting (with Member States) initiatives in the cultural field to strengthen resilience against or help countering radicalisation. Recommendations of the HLCEG-R in relation to reform of the existing Prevent architecture have been adopted with the creation of an EU Cooperation Mechanism, including: a Steering Board, a network of national prevent policy makers, and a reinforced coordination and support structure in the Commission. As outlined in the HLCEG-R report this would ensure higher visibility for EU action in the prevention field as well as allowing for a more flexible, bottom-up approach.

### Relevant Educational Policies

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The following outlines important educational policy approaches relevant to this project. These engage with some of the key themes and concerns identified in policy work concerned with prevention of radicalisation and extremism, from an educational perspective.

The UNESCO (2016) *A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism* references both the position of the United Nations and UNESCO in viewing education as a vital tool to promote 'a culture of [peace](#), [tolerance](#), [intercultural](#) and [interreligious dialogue](#) that involve youth and [discourage](#) their participation in acts of [violence](#), [terrorism](#), [xenophobia](#), and all forms of [discrimination](#)' and, for UNESCO, this helps to prevent terrorism and violent extremism. Global Citizenship Education is the chosen model for this educational approach. It describes the key messages to deliver as '1. [Solidarity](#); 2. [Respect for Diversity](#); 3. [Human Rights](#); 4. [Learning to Live Together](#); 5. [Young people's Engagement](#). In their analysis of European policies, Weilnbida and Kossak (2020) argue that terms that focus on wider ethnic groups should be avoided as should a focus on one kind of violence. They claim that approaches in the RAN have an Islamism bias that does not pay sufficient attention to right-wing and far-right extremism, however arguably the remit of RAN's agenda was devised in order to be responsive to the political context and front-line practitioners. It has recently addressed the question

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of this wider spectrum of extremisms. *The Contribution of Youth Work to Preventing Marginalisation and Violent Radicalisation* (2017d) offers a framework for understanding youth motivation and engagement, and also supports for targeted educational interventions with hard to reach groups.

A further useful example for EDURAD from the global context is the MGIED/UNESCO document (2017) *Youth Waging Peace: Youth led guide on prevention of violent extremism through education* that makes a clear distinction between PVE and CVE. It states that CVE is a **targeted** and **responsive** activity aimed at de-radicalisation or counter-radicalisation and focuses on people involved in or at risk of being involved in violent extremism. This, they suggest, is rather like a **treatment** when one is **diagnosed** with an **illness**. Prevention is rather like **general advice** that one might obtain from a doctor to live a good and health life. It is concerned with **preventing** something from occurring and for this reason, it is **difficult to measure**.

An additional example of an educational policy approach committed to the promotion of democratic competences is embedded across both European and national policy initiatives, reflecting a multi-sector/agency approach, the **empowerment** of **civil society**, and the **involvement** of **local actors** (European Commission, 2017b: 4). The *Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations* report (DeSeCo, 2003) identified a conceptual framework for social and civic competencies and listed three broad overlapping categories deemed necessary for living within a well-functioning society: using tools interactively, interacting in heterogeneous groups, and acting autonomously. Each of the three categories contains a number of competences outlined below.

Key competencies for a successful life and well-functioning society	
Critical thinking: Holistic and integrated approach	<p><b>Acting Autonomously</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to defend and assert one’s rights, interests, responsibilities, limits and needs</li> <li>• ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects</li> <li>• ability to act within the big picture/the larger context</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Using tools interactively</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to use language, symbols, and text interactively</li> <li>• ability to use knowledge and information interactively</li> <li>• ability to use (new) technology interactively</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Functioning in socially heterogeneous groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to relate well to others</li> <li>• ability to cooperate</li> <li>• ability to manage and resolve conflict</li> </ul>

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Source: *Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations* (DeSeCo, 2003)

Subsequent European policy documents have further elaborated on these with varying descriptions of social and civic competencies for democratic cultures. *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: European Reference Framework* (EU, 2006); *Key Competences for a Changing World* (Council of Europe, 2010) and *Rethinking Education* (EU Commission 2012) and the Council of Europe's *Competences for Democratic Culture* (2016) are relevant here. In the main, these describe an individual as acting competently when he or she meets the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and interpersonal situations. Viewed through a policy lens, competences are generally categorised as values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

The *CRELL Research Network on Active Citizenship for Democracy* (2010: 126) describe these as follows:

**Knowledge:** human rights and responsibilities, political literacy, historical knowledge, current affairs, diversity, cultural heritage, legal matters and how to influence policy and society;

**Skills:** conflict resolution, intercultural competence, informed decision-making, creativity, ability to influence society and policy, research capability, advocacy, autonomy/agency, critical reflection, communication, debating skills, active listening, problem solving, coping with ambiguity, working with others, assessing risk;

**Attitudes:** political trust, political interest, political efficacy, autonomy and independence, resilience, cultural appreciation, respect for other cultures, openness to change/difference of opinion, responsibility and openness to involvement as active citizens, influencing society and policy;

**Values:** human rights, democracy, gender equality, sustainability, peace/non-violence, fairness and equity, valuing involvement as active citizens;

**Identity:** sense of personal identity, sense of community identity, sense of national identity, sense of global identity.

The focus here highlights the necessity of individuals' abilities to express, recognise and understand **alternative perspectives**; to engage **empathically** and **negotiate effectively** with others in and across diverse groupings; to **communicate critically** and **creatively** through a range of multimodal environments; to negotiate and communicate ideas and both seek and act on **feedback**; in addition to displaying **socio-political** knowledge and awareness. Being competent here is grounded in attitudes of **collaboration**, **solidarity**, **assertiveness** and **integrity**. For CIDREE (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe), core skills of **democratic competence** include the ability to **communicate constructively** in different environments, to show **tolerance**, express and understand different viewpoints, to negotiate with the ability to create **confidence**.

### Conclusion

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Since 2013, the prevention of (violent) extremism through education has been promoted and enacted by different international organisations such as the Council of Europe, European Commission, and UNESCO. The European Union is no exception in this regard and, as can be seen above, has outlined a framework for ‘prevent work’ that situates education as one of the core fields of intervention of such work. The RAN stands out as particularly significant in this regard, although as noted it has used the terms CVE and PVE interchangeably. It has also been criticised for failing to clearly identify what educational practices should be prioritised in this area (see further Christodoulou, and Szakács, 2018: 39), however its purpose is to bring together front-line practitioners in order to exchange knowledge and practice in a live context. The EDURAD project will seek to draw on learning from CVE in order to develop an approach to P(V)E-E that is **educationally specific**.

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### Context Specificity

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Areas of challenge (and opportunity) that became clear from the outset of the project were the different experiences, approaches, institutional structures, and histories in respect of P(V)E-E. The very different understandings of extremism and radicalisation held by participants in the fieldwork reinforces existing work in the field around the socially constructed nature of terrorism and terrorism knowledge which can also be applied to related phenomena such as extremism and racialisation (see, for example, Jackson et al, 2011; Martini et al, 2020). In some of the countries with histories of conflict, for example, the term ‘violent extremism’ was not applied to domestic extremist groups, demonstrating how networks and groupings which have been the main focus of international counterterrorism cooperation (eg Salafi-jihadist activities) can influence the connotations that the term carries in the public debate (Malkki and Sallaama, 2018). Such findings underscore the importance of maintaining a reflexivity around the term ‘violent extremism’, in both a national and international context, as well as a focus on extremism of method (ie the use of violence or the threat of violence) rather than the extremism of thought (Tsui, 2020, Lindahl, 2020).

Germany has a long history of engaging in political education and developing educational approaches to the question of extremism, and in this regard this issue has not been approached through a securitised lens but rather through the lens of democracy building. However, the federal structure of the German State has meant that no single national approach can be implemented and a consequence of this was that no sustainable pedagogical infrastructure had been developed in schools. Nonetheless, interestingly the key federal government departments involved in this work included the **Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)**, **The Federal Agency for Civic Education (BpB)**, and **The Federal Office for Migration and Flight-related Affairs**. Germany engages with a wide range of extremisms, though historically the emphasis was on far-right extremism, some more recent attention has been given to Islamist extremism.

A number of networks had been developed in this regard, in particular in engaging with youth involved in extremist movements with a holistic and relational focus. Indeed, the approach was framed as Preventing Extremism through Education rather than solely Preventing Violent Extremism through Education. Whilst Germany regards promotion of democratic values and democratic political culture as central to preventing extremism, this was framed as a whole society endeavour. This involves primary prevention, alongside secondary and tertiary prevention, and is connected to the lives of young people, creating the conditions for their participation through building trusting relationships and engaging with the complexity of causes and motivations, in the case of involvement in extremism. There are nonetheless issues in respect of intimidation of educators by students, and also the attitudes and prejudices of educators themselves. Overall in respect of young people, the focus is on a strengths based and capacity building approach, creating opportunities for real democratic participation and agency.

The case of Austria broadly mirrored that of both Germany and the Netherlands, with a proposed shift away from a securitised focus on Islamist extremism to a broader approach focusing on both prevention and deradicalisation. Particular attention is paid to the range of educational approaches that can support prevention efforts, as well as the opportunities to develop democratic skills and competences and to engage with the life situations of the young. It was however noted that more

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work needed to be done on the issue of right-wing extremism and schools needed to also address this issue. Situating these pedagogical efforts within the wider context of young people's lives and the opportunities afforded them to realise their hopes and dreams was seen as important, requiring greater attention to experiences such as a lack of security, acceptance or recognition. In this regard, a holistic vision of political education was seen to be helpful.

The two countries who have long experiences of conflict on the island did not, interestingly, have preventing (violent) extremism policies, let alone preventing (violent) extremism through education. Given their histories, extremism was understood differently in each case. In the case of Cyprus, radicalisation was framed in terms of occupation of the island, and in the case of Ireland, paramilitary organisations were not named either in policy or in the fieldwork as extremist. The focus in Cyprus was on engaging with difficult and controversial issues and building critical thinking skills. Extremism was not described in terms of ideology, movement or group, but rather in respect of behaviours, tendencies and mindset involving the *aggressive* rejection of alternative views, a *negativity* towards engaging in constructive dialogue, and a predisposition to support *hateful* speech or practice against other groups. This approach was shared in Ireland with a similar concern to engage with these issues on a relational and case by case basis. However, the Irish state has also been alert to the risks of stigmatising groups, in particular Muslims, and have explicitly adopted a multi-dimensional approach to engaging with questions relating to prevent (violent) extremism by centring on integration, equality, combating discrimination and building positive relationships with our minority communities. It is committed to an approach in its policies that is underpinned by principles of equality, countering discrimination and interculturalism.

The Netherlands has a preventing violent extremism policy, but there is no specific role for education. However, like Germany, it has built expertise and capacity in this area, including networks of exchange between practitioners and has centred work in this area on youth work rather than in schools (though for different reasons). Educators are less likely to see preventing extremism as part of their role. Whilst initially the focus was on Islamist extremism in the Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2011-2015), the most recent policy focuses on all kinds of extremism. As noted, while the measures mirror the previous strategies – increasing resilience of vulnerable groups, early intervention, and counter-messaging – a notable difference is the lack of reference to any particular group or community targeted through these measures. PVE policies focus on resilience to radicalisation and early signalling, with the preventive role of education in supporting resilience framed in terms of radicalisation teaching critical thinking and media literacy, strengthening democratic awareness through citizenship education, providing resilience training, and drawing on role models as examples for students. It is noted that although there has been a rise in far-right extremism, the emphasis in such educational programmes has been on tackling jihadism. Nonetheless, the pedagogical examples aim to build resilience by looking at identity struggles and building resilience and are not framed as anti-radicalisation programmes. The role of education was understood in terms of socialising youth in democracy and the common themes were: 1. Promoting critical thinking and dialogue. 2. Focusing on understanding what is behind the behaviour and words rather than the words/actions themselves 3. Ensuring young people come into contact with difference.

### Ethical Review

Each country undertook ethical review appropriate to their own institution, context, and practice. The details of each are outlined in each of the country reports.

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### Research Design

From the early stages of the project, it was clear that each partner country had very different systems in place and significant differences in terms of professional expertise in the specific domains of extremism, radicalisation, violent extremism and violent radicalisation. Some participants had already been consulted for research in this area, whilst for others this was a relatively new topic of discussion. Moreover, the purpose of the research element of the project was to map the field, identify exemplars of good practice, locate opportunities for exchange, and whilst continuing to maintain the commitment to plurality outlined in Output 2.2, outline cross-cutting themes to support the development of the pedagogical modules for WP3 and the hubs or communities of practice of WP4. In this regard, the research does not claim to be comprehensive, but it offers a good indication of key concerns, clear gaps, and opportunities for pedagogical development and exchange. Rather than comparison, the research design aimed to develop understanding of the priorities, concepts and values guiding policy and practice in the different contexts.

For this reason, the questionnaires were approached differently in each partner country with, for example, Germany and Austria opting for shorter questionnaires, and Ireland opting for a longer questionnaire with a number of reflective questions. Similarly, the focus groups aimed to be representative of education broadly understood, including youth work, and partner countries approached these in a way that supported discussion of the themes most relevant to the partner's context. However, across all partner countries, there was a clear focus on “unpacking”, through a strengths-based lens, what an educational response to extremism would involve, distinguishing this from securitised approaches to youth education, and from wider discourses of de-radicalisation. There may also have been some translation differences in the framing of the question.

### Recruitment of Participants

The project originally aimed to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents and faith leaders, however the educational focus of the questionnaires meant that the approach needed to be more targeted. Partner countries focused on relevant stakeholders including policymakers, NGOs, teachers, and youth workers in order to ensure epistemic diversity. Again, each partner adopted an approach to recruitment appropriate to each context and these are outlined in the country reports.

### Common Concerns and Shared Values

Despite the considerable differences between the partner countries, there was striking commonality of values and concerns. These included a strengths-based and holistic approach to working with young people, the importance of trusting relationships, the need for safe spaces to explore difficult topics and for young people to speak freely, the need to create opportunities for democratic participation and to exercise democratic competence. Relating to the question of democracy and plurality, participants across the different partner countries noted how extremist positions were unable to tolerate difference or showed hostility or hatred towards difference. A further topic that arose in different ways across contexts in respect of students was the importance of belonging, imagination, and purpose, the importance of engaging with emotions and affect, and the need to cultivate critical thinking. The need for educators to develop their own capacities for self-reflection and self-enquiry was seen as important, alongside developing relational skills and capacities in supporting open dialogue and questioning with young people. All participants across partner countries noted the importance of developing their own and their students' critical digital literacy skills, understood as also engaging with complex issues such as conspiracy theories. Finally, there was an appetite for

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continued exchange between a diverse range of practitioners, in particular teachers and youth workers, and learning from other partner contexts, as each partner's participants noted different needs for training and gaps in knowledge in their own context.

Six key themes arose:

1. Supporting critical thinking and critical dialogue, including conflict resolution and engaging in difficult conversations.
2. Exploring the affective lives of young people, including what belonging means and how it feels to belong or not belong with young people.
3. Engaging with difference, including complicating the stories of history and 'identitarian' narratives.
4. Cultivating democratic life and democratic culture, alongside a socio-ecological understanding of resilience and positive school climates with warm and loving relationships.
5. Developing youth work and educational approaches to critically and imaginatively engage with the digital world and online life.
6. Creating communities of practice and opportunities for self and co-enquiry, learning, and sharing for practitioners involved in education, in particular in engaging with issues relating to both extremism and violence.

There was also interest in further "unpacking" and exploring the question of extremism, with participants in both the Netherlands and Ireland noting their position that whilst education can be preventative, this is a (welcome) collateral benefit, and that education should not aim directly at prevention but rather at exploring and "unpacking" these complex questions with young people. Such an approach chimes with literature promoting critique and empowerment as a means of reducing vulnerability to extremist messaging, rather than the co-option of education in the service of government counter-terrorism objectives (Davies, 2009; O'Donnell, 2016). It also coheres with a growing body of scholarly work that seeks to decouple 'radical' ideas (deradicalisation) from 'radical' behaviour (disengagement), and thus implies a tolerance for radical ideology provided that it is not accompanied by violent actions (Horgan, 2009; Horgan and Braddock, 2010; Braddock, 2018).

Finally, a key theme that arose across all partner countries was the importance underlined by the practitioners and policymakers to have reflective spaces for dialogue, sharing, active listening, and exchange of both knowledge and pedagogical approaches. Indeed, the creation of such spaces can be understood as a pedagogical exercise supporting professional development. What was particularly valuable was talking to others from different professional backgrounds and experience, to learn how others approach shared questions and problems through their different lenses, and to reflect on how to develop relationships and dialogue both on and offline. The focus groups were seen as a valued and formative professional development space; one which a number of partner countries felt could also be enhanced by the voices of young people. There was little appetite for additional bespoke interventions and a mixed response to the need for resources. In some countries, like the Netherlands, there are plenty of resources available in the field and well-established networks, whilst in others like Ireland, participants felt there was a lack of resources and that they were not sure always where to seek knowledge. Nonetheless, a common theme was that all participants wanted to learn from one another in order to develop their pedagogical judgement and repertoire, and were keen to learn from international colleagues in a number of cases.

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Teachers in Ireland and the Netherlands noted that curricula are already overcrowded, and Germany also noted that educational curricula in schools are devolved to the regions, so what was required was not more content or discrete trainings, but rather development of, and confidence in, their own capacities to engage with these complex and sensitive questions. In this regard, creating opportunities for continued exchange was seen as a particularly valuable dimension of professional development. There are generally few opportunities for this kind of open reflection and exchange. It was particularly important for policymakers that they encountered the insights from practice as well as from one another. In this regard, alongside teachers, the other central voices in the fieldwork were those of policymakers, advocacy organisations and NGOs, youth workers, social workers, and educators involved in professional development. This vital learning from WP2 that should inform WP3 and WP4 is the importance of listening to the voices of the participants as we reflect on how best to construct the pedagogical approaches in ways that will be meaningful for them, that are sustainable, that they can integrate into their own practice, and that will continue to grow and deepen their relationships and conversations with one another.

### Next steps

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The themes outlined above will inform the development of WP3 and WP4.