



# EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation

# EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. WHAT ACTIVITIES DOES THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB ON PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION OFFER?</b>	<b>3</b>
Thematic panels	3
Project-Based Collaborations (PBCs)	3
Ad hoc workshops and events	4
Study visits	4
Tailor-made support services	4
Training programmes	4
Mentoring programme and mutual job shadowing	5
Research	5
Foresight scenarios	5
Expert database	5
Main actors and partners of the EU Knowledge Hub	6
<b>2. THE EU POLICY FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. THE THREAT LANDSCAPE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVE OF THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB ON PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5. GOVERNANCE OF THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB ON PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION</b>	<b>15</b>

# 1. WHAT ACTIVITIES DOES THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB ON PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION OFFER?

The EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation provides various activities, including events, workshops, trainings, and study visits, all related to the prevention of radicalisation and strategic communications. The topics addressed in these activities are agreed upon with the Steering Board on Prevention of Radicalisation, a high-level group of Member State representatives. These activities are guided by a yearly work plan with input from Knowledge Hub stakeholders, including policy makers, practitioners, and researchers.

Additionally, tailored consulting on topics requested by Member States and priority third countries may be provided. Various training sessions, both short and long, are part of a dedicated annual training programme developed collaboratively by the Commission and Member States. The Knowledge Hub conducts in-depth studies to identify and fill gaps in existing research and knowledge within the EU. Furthermore, foresight scenarios will explore possible future developments in the field of radicalization. Below you will find an overview of the activities available through the EU Knowledge Hub.

## Thematic panels

Thematic panels will be the main platform for experts to network, discuss, and brainstorm, consolidating knowledge on preventing radicalisation within defined priority topics. These panels are aligned with the priorities set out in the Strategic Orientations, and their duration corresponds to the validity of these priorities. Leaders, co-leaders, and participants of the thematic panels will be selected from the expert database in accordance with guidelines prepared by the Commission. The composition of a thematic panel will remain unchanged throughout its entirety to facilitate in-depth discussions. Depending on the topics to be discussed or the need or specific expertise, researchers may also be invited to some of the meetings. The outcomes of the thematic panel's work are summarised in annual reports. The Network of Prevent Policy Makers or the Commission may invite the leaders of thematic panels to report on their work.



## Project-Based Collaborations (PBCs)

Launched in 2019, Project-Based Collaborations (PBC) have proven highly successful in gathering and consolidating knowledge among Member States' policy makers on prevention topics. Their objective is to gather insights from Member States, EU policy makers, and other stakeholders (such as practitioners, researchers, and representatives from third countries, or the private sector) on pre-defined priority topics aligned with the Strategic Orientations. PBCs are led by one or more Member States, potentially lasting up to two years, and their meetings are co-chaired by the leading Member State(s) and the Commission. The project outcomes are disseminated to all Member States.

## Policy and practice joint events

The policy-practice joint events provide a platform for policy makers and practitioners supported by researchers, to discuss policies and practices with their peers. Their main objective is to identify practices that support the implementation of selected policy approaches and to design a common approach, ensuring that practices align with the most effective prevention policies. The summaries of the outcomes of the policy-practice joint events are presented to the Network of Prevent Policy Makers.

## Ad hoc workshops and events

To tackle emerging challenges, the Knowledge Hub organises ad hoc meetings and events focusing on topics defined by the Commission in collaboration with Member States. These gatherings, ranging from workshops to conferences, cover subjects such as unforeseen geopolitical developments impacting radicalisation processes, discussions on Project-Based Collaborations' outcomes or foresight scenarios for future actions, potential topics for in-depth studies, and the results of new research.

## Study visits

Study visits aim to support Member States, priority third countries, and practitioners in implementing successful policies, practices, and tools in preventing radicalisation or addressing strategic communication challenges developed elsewhere. The topics and questions for the visits are cooperatively drafted in advance with the interested Member State(s). After the visit, a follow-up discussion with the host country and participants will assess the impact on implementing policies and practices in the participating Member States. A brief summary of the follow-up is shared with the Network of Prevent Policy Makers (NPPM) and the Commission.

## Tailor-made support services

Tailor-made support services are available upon request by a Member State, a priority third country<sup>1</sup>, or a group of up to three countries. These services address specific needs related to the prevention of radicalisation or strategic communications challenges. They may provide customised support on prevention strategies and policies or on specific issues related to radicalisation and extremism that require urgent attention.

The objective, particularly for Member States, is to assist in implementing EU collaboration outcomes within the context of their unique conditions. Annually, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States and, where applicable, priority third countries, develops a list of topics for the yearly work programme. This tailor-made support is based on the needs expressed by Member States and is aligned with the Strategic Orientations.

## Training programmes

The Knowledge Hub enhances skills and competencies in preventing radicalisation and strategic communications through diverse training formats — offline, online, and hybrid — ranging from one-day sessions to longer programmes. Topics align with the Strategic Orientations, as outlined in the yearly training programme. Training promotes materials from the Knowledge Hub and EU-funded projects, including those under the Internal Security Fund and Horizon Europe. The Hub also provides training on evaluation, aimed at assessing the implementation of policies, projects, and interventions. Regional approaches may be applied, and collaborations with national P/CVE centres or other coordinating organisations in the field of radicalisation prevention may be explored.

<sup>1</sup> This service is not eligible for the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, or the United States of America

## Mentoring programme and mutual job shadowing

The Knowledge Hub provides a mentoring programme for young experts and offers mutual job shadowing for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers with extensive experience in the field of prevention of radicalisation.

## Research

The Knowledge Hub will develop relevant partnerships to provide data and analysis on radicalisation and extremism. **It will consolidate, create, disseminate, and promote knowledge, expertise, and good practices** to prevention stakeholders.

The Hub will conduct **medium-term in-depth studies to provide research-based knowledge** on topics relevant to the prevention of radicalisation and the implementation of EU priorities (Strategic Orientations).

The aim is to regularly deliver data, key findings, and above all, a truly European vision that will contribute to making it a major benchmark player in the field, supporting Member States in their efforts to prevent radicalisation.

To carry out its research tasks, the Knowledge Hub will rely on **two pools of experts**: the Knowledge Hub Research Committee and the European Research Community on Radicalisation.

The **Knowledge Hub Research Committee** will be made up of 15 internationally recognised researchers in the field of radicalisation. Their expertise will support the strengthened research pillar of the Knowledge Hub.

The **EU Research Community on Radicalisation (ERCOR)** intends to be the most comprehensive and inclusive database of researchers in the field of radicalisation. In close cooperation with Member States, ERCOR will be updated regularly.

## Foresight scenarios

The EU Knowledge Hub offers an overview of available foresight scenarios and conducts workshops to discuss their outcomes and potential impacts.

Upon request, the Knowledge Hub may provide specialised foresight scenarios for a Member State, a priority third country<sup>2</sup>, or a group of Member States or Member States and priority third countries from the same region on a specific topic using methods such as the Delphi method.

## Expert database

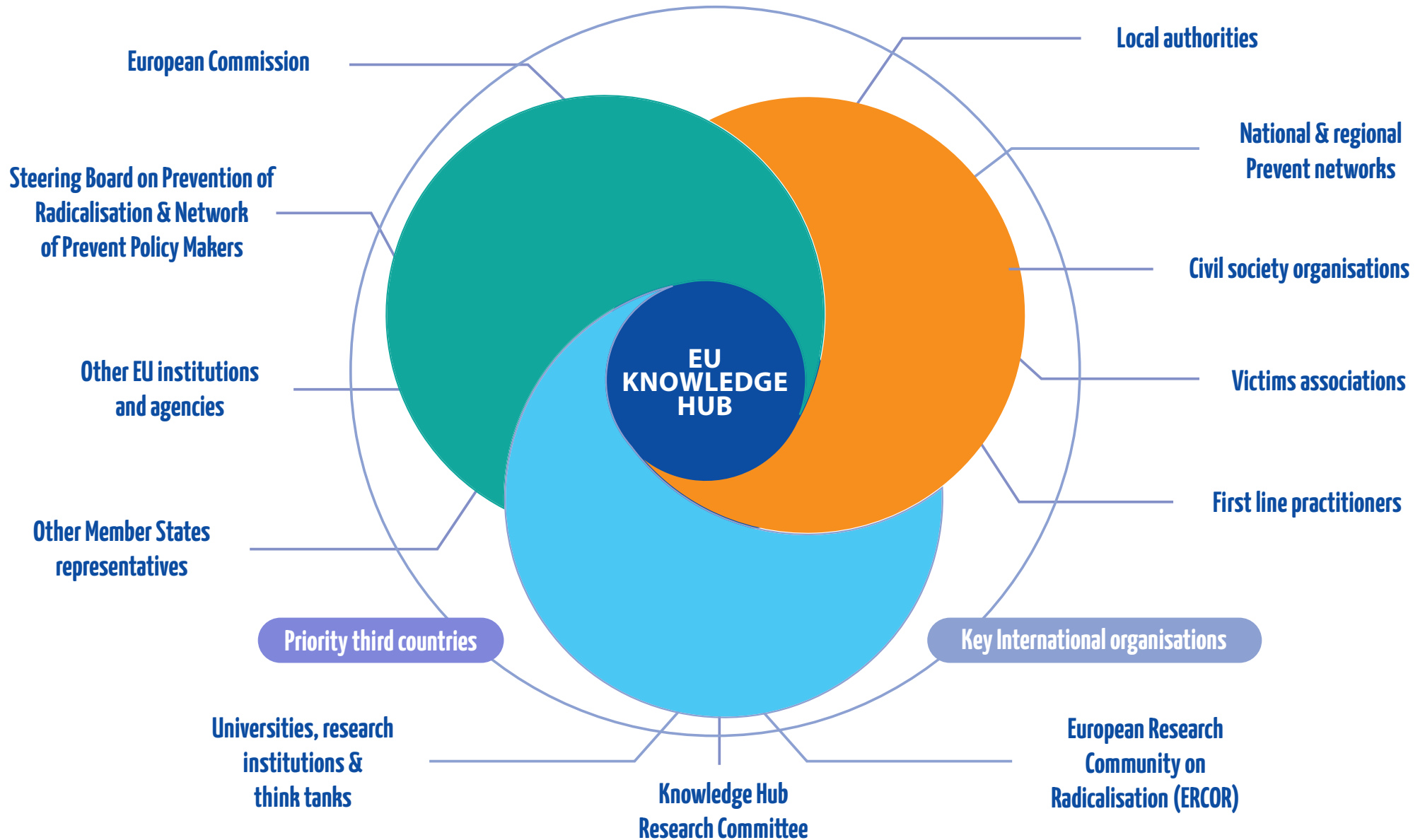
The Knowledge Hub will develop a new comprehensive expert database that will be open to practitioners and policy makers to register, while researchers will continue to be covered by ERCOR. Registering in this database will be crucial: practitioners and policy makers will only be able to participate in the activities of the Knowledge Hub if they are included in the expert database.

The expert database will serve multiple purposes: it will facilitate quick registration for Knowledge Hub activities, provide a better overview of the expertise of each participant, and enable the Commission to identify experts for events, consultancies, publications, trainings, etc. Members of the database will have the opportunity to modify or delete their profile at any time.

<sup>2</sup> This service is not eligible for the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, or the United States of America.

## Main actors and partners of the EU Knowledge Hub

\*\* This list of actors listed is non-exhaustive.



## 2. THE EU POLICY FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB

Radicalisation that leads to terrorism is a phased and complex process. In this process, an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses, or condones violence, including acts of terrorism, to achieve a specific political or ideological purpose.

Preventive work delves into the root causes of radicalisation, such as socio-psychological, political, or cultural factors. This might be related to personal grievances, emotions, as well as social factors such as marginalisation and discrimination, whether real or perceived. Additionally, political factors such as geopolitical developments, and ideological and religious factors might also be relevant.

Radicalisation has been a priority on the global security agenda for over 20 years. The threat of radicalisation might not only endanger the security of EU citizens but also erode EU shared values, undermine our democracies, and jeopardise social cohesion.

Preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism also have a global dimension. The external dimension involves promoting cooperation with priority third countries and regions outside of the EU. This responsibility ultimately lies with Member States, but common policies and coordination at EU level and collaboration between Member States are essential. Each Member State encounters a unique threat landscape shaped by its national and geographical context. However, there are many shared challenges too. Radicalisation does not respect borders. Member States experience many of the same extremist ideologies, movements, and other relevant concerns. All of this constitutes a common ground for cooperation.

Preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism also have a global dimension. The external dimension implies promoting cooperation with priority third countries and regions outside of the EU.

The EU Security Union Strategy<sup>3</sup> identified radicalisation as one of the main challenges in the EU's efforts to protect its citizens from terrorism and organised crime. It called for more coordinated actions to streamline EU policies, initiatives, and funds to tackle radicalisation by supporting the development of capabilities and skills, enhancing cooperation, strengthening the evidence base, and helping evaluate progress. This involves all relevant stakeholders, including first-line practitioners, policy makers, and academia.

The Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU<sup>4</sup> further highlighted the need to improve support to EU Member States on prevention of radicalisation by taking up a more coordinated action and a structured outreach.

The extremist landscape is changing constantly and the EU approach to the prevention of radicalisation needs to evolve and adapt to tackle the multifaceted and increasingly complex threat of violent extremism. The Counter-Terrorism Agenda identifies as one of its key actions in this field the setting up of an



<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission on the EU Security Union Strategy, COM(2020) 605 Final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TX/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0605>

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, COM(2020) 795 final. [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0795 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TX/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0795)

The extremist landscape is constantly changing, and the EU's approach to the prevention of radicalisation needs to evolve and adapt to tackle the multifaceted and increasingly complex threat of violent extremism.

The Counter-Terrorism Agenda identifies the setting up of an **EU Knowledge Hub on the prevention of radicalisation for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers**, as one of key actions in the field.

The European Commission has provided support to Member States in the prevention of radicalisation through the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), created in 2011. Initially, established as an EU-wide network connecting key first-line practitioners and field experts to exchange ideas and experiences and to identify good practices on how to best tackle all forms of radicalisation. In January 2021, the Commission added a second strand to the RAN (RAN Policy Support) to better support policy makers in the Member States and establish regular exchanges with the research community. The RAN has achieved its objectives by creating a robust network of cooperation for different stakeholder groups, allowing them to exchange ideas, expertise, and experience.

The next step in consolidating EU support to prevent radicalisation is the establishment of the EU Knowledge Hub, which will serve as the primary EU-level contact point for preventing radicalisation. The Hub will coordinate actions and implement relevant measures outlined in EU strategies. The priority in the forthcoming years will be the Hub's operationalisation and harnessing of its full potential to offer innovative forms of support to stakeholders.

The Knowledge Hub will become operational over the course of 2024. The Commission has earmarked EUR 60 million for its establishment and implementation for the period 2024-2028.



CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS:  
30 & 31 May 2024

**The attraction of conspiracy narratives and disinformation: a mental health perspective.**



Registration Deadline: 17 April



CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS:  
06-07 JUNE 2024

**Mainstreaming PVE in crime prevention?**



Applications Deadline: 30 April



CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS:  
28-29 MAY 2024

**Trust-building and the context of the P/CVE practitioner.**



8



11 March 2024

Ceremony:  
**20<sup>th</sup> European Remembrance Day for Victims/Survivors of Terrorism**





### 3. THE THREAT LANDSCAPE

In recent years, the threats posed by radicalisation have intensified and grown increasingly complex. The lines between different types of violent extremism are blurring, as are the boundaries between online and offline dimensions. Technologies are evolving rapidly, expanding the opportunities to promote violent ideologies across borders. Regardless of whether a Member State faces an imminent threat or is aiming to ensure its preparedness, it is essential to have relevant structures in place and further develop policies and practices to respond to these threats and prevent radicalisation. EU collaboration in this field, channelled through the EU Knowledge Hub, supports Member States and priority non-EU countries in addressing this challenge.

As various plots and terrorist attacks in recent years have demonstrated, both jihadism and right-wing extremism remain prominent threats in the EU, which need to be monitored and countered. At the same time, the threat from left-wing extremism has also been increasing in some Member States and must also be addressed. New forms of violent extremism should also be taken into consideration, such as violent anti-system/government extremism, which is not attributed to specific ideologies and can be linked to other issues such as the propagation of conspiracy narratives.

The threat posed by lone actors and small cells is prevalent in many Member States. It is anticipated that lone actors will persist as the primary perpetrators of terrorist attacks in the EU. Terrorist organisations may exploit the online environment and target vulnerable individuals to influence them to commit terrorist acts. Issues related to mental health are often linked to attacks committed by lone actors, which must be further explored.

The internet remains a key factor in all forms of radicalisation. In an ever-evolving digital landscape, the online dimension has become a key channel for dissemination of terrorist, violent extremist, and legally but harmful, so-called borderline content, leading to radicalisation. Readily available propaganda material, dissemination of footage from terrorist attacks, and instruction material found online serve as accelerators of radicalisation and sources of inspiration for real-world terrorist and violent attacks.

In addition, new technological developments, such as generative Artificial Intelligence, are exploited for terrorist purposes and lead to manipulation of the information sphere online, combining disinformation and terrorist content. With the Terrorist Content Online Regulation, the EU is addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online to prevent radicalisation and further attacks. Voluntary cooperation with platforms in the EU Internet Forum is key to respond to emerging and existing threats stemming from the digital environment.

The proliferation of disinformation and conspiracy narratives, both online and offline, increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of disinformation, combined with the spread of hatred and extremist speech, particularly related to geopolitical conflicts such as the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East, along with the recent sharp rise in both antisemitic and anti-Muslim sentiments in some Member States, poses substantial threats to security and social cohesion in the EU and escalates the terrorist threat. Disinformation



campaigns regarding laws and practices of public institutions could galvanise extremist actors and further raise the threat level.

Undesirable foreign influences, including the impact of political or conservative Islamist networks, seek to sow discord among the population with the aim of undermining our democratic societies, fundamental rights, and the rule of law.

The rising number of radicalised teenagers and minors is a growing concern. Some of these young people have been involved in plotting attacks in recent years, notably linked to online violent right-wing groups. At the same time, most fatal attacks from recent years are committed by older men<sup>5</sup>.

Radicalisation in prisons and the release of radicalised individuals are another security threat in some Member States. In the coming years, a growing number of convicted terrorists or prisoners sentenced for other offences who have been radicalised in prisons are expected to be released.

Foreign terrorist fighters and their family members returning from Syria and other countries outside Europe, including fighters returning from Ukraine and other conflict areas, are likely to pose a security threat to the EU in the future.

To prevent further violent radicalisation and curb the impact of existing tensions, the European Union is adhering to a research-based approach, with the activities of the Knowledge Hub grounded in a threat analysis<sup>6</sup>. This analysis serves to identify priorities and determine the focus of activities. The priorities are presented in a document referred to as the “Strategic Orientations”, endorsed every two years by the Steering Board on Radicalisation, a high-level group of Member State representatives.

<sup>5</sup> RTV Trend report 2023. Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe, 1990-2022, page 5.

<sup>6</sup> The threat analysis is based on the information provided by EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) provided by Europol and information provided by researchers and EU Member States.

## 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVE OF THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB ON PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION

The EU Knowledge Hub's work on preventing radicalisation is grounded in the respect for fundamental rights and EU values. All its activities are set out to align with European values and adhere to the principles of human and fundamental rights, as outlined in the EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The following principles guide the activities of the EU Knowledge Hub:

- 1 Whole-of-society-approach:** The Knowledge Hub supports EU Member States in implementing a whole-of-society approach to developing strategies and practices to prevent radicalisation and ensuring links between national strategies/approaches and local-level measures.
- 2 Holistic approach:** Coordination and cooperation across different sectors and professionals are making a relevant contribution to tackling the root causes of radicalisation while strengthening resilience, for example, by fostering social inclusion and preventing polarisation.
- 3 Multi-sectorial/multi-agency collaboration:** To prevent radicalisation, collaboration among relevant actors from different policy areas and professional backgrounds, including interventions at the local level involving all relevant stakeholders to design and deploy effective P/CVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism) approaches and practices.
- 4 Bottom-up approach:** Supporting local actors, including NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs), and developing the skills of first-line practitioners to prevent radicalisation and to tackle root causes of radicalisation at an early stage.
- 5 Empowerment of civil society organisations:** This is crucial as they play a significant role in various aspects of preventing and countering radicalisation, such as building resilience, engaging with young people, developing counter- and/or alternative narratives, and collaborating with institutions like prisons and schools.
- 6 Local dimension:** Measures at local level (e.g., municipality) within an EU Member State are necessary, and local actors need to be supported, while such measures should be coherent with and complementary to policies developed at the national level.
- 7 Regional approach on selected topics:** Geographically close EU Member States and/or priority third countries facing similar challenges in the prevention of radicalisation will be able to collaborate more closely.
- 8 The online dimension:** Acknowledging the rising significance of the online dimension in preventing radicalisation, considering its robust and continually expanding connections with offline prevention and countering violent radicalisation.
- 9 Enhancing collaboration and synergy benefits:** Steered by the Commission and the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism.
- 10 Use of strategic communications:** In today's landscape, strategic communications are indispensable in shaping an effective response to the current threats. More integrated and targeted communications responses are required in Member States to achieve relevant policy objectives. The Knowledge Hub will support Member States in developing these responses through numerous services, including meetings, trainings, research, and tailor-made supports.

- 11 Research:** Effective methods and approaches to prevent radicalisation are evidence-based and rely on research inputs.
- 12 Foresight future scenarios:** Foresight is the discipline of exploring, anticipating, and shaping the future to help building and use collective intelligence in a structured and systemic way to anticipate developments and trends in the field of extremism.
- 13 International cooperation:** Involves collaborating with and supporting priority third countries and regions in preventing radicalisation to enhance internal security within the EU and address the impact of geopolitical developments on radicalisation.

The objective of the Knowledge Hub is to strengthen the integrated, policy-driven approach to the prevention of radicalisation at the EU level and to support Member States and priority third countries in developing and implementing policies and strategies at national levels to prevent all forms of radicalisation according to a whole-of-society approach.

In 2022, the Commission conducted a series of workshops with Member States to actively involve them in the development of the Knowledge Hub. The aim was to gather Member States' ideas and to tackle outstanding issues, ensuring the inclusion of perspectives from all Member States. The outcomes of the workshops were gathered in a "Final Report on the creation of EU Knowledge Hub – workshops" in 2022, endorsed by the Steering Board on Radicalisation in December 2022.

The Knowledge Hub further develops the activities of the RAN, building on its achievements and considering lessons learned and experiences gathered. The Commission commissioned an external independent evaluation of the activities of the RAN to receive a comprehensive overview of the success stories and the areas that need improvement in the future. The evaluation covered the period 2015-2022 and had the objective of providing a comprehensive analysis of the RAN's activities and products, assessing how the needs of policy makers and practitioners in the Member States, and where relevant, in priority third countries, were addressed while identifying potential shortcomings. The Commission presented the final report "Targeted study on the assessment of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN Practitioners and Policy Support)" to the Network of Prevent Policy Makers (NPPM) in July 2023. The outcomes of the evaluation were taken into account in the preparations of EU Knowledge Hub.



## 5. GOVERNANCE OF THE EU KNOWLEDGE HUB ON PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION

The governance of the Knowledge Hub is based on three pillars: **the Commission, the Steering Board on Radicalisation, and the Network of Prevent Policy Makers.**

**The Commission** (Unit on Prevention of Radicalisation in DG HOME) coordinates and steers the activities of the Knowledge Hub. The Commission acts as the EU contact point in prevention of radicalisation at EU-level.

**The Steering Board on Radicalisation** – chaired by the Commission and composed of senior Member States' representatives – is the high-level steering body ensuring Member States involvement in setting out EU priorities on prevention of radicalisation. One of the main tasks of the Steering Board is to adopt Strategic Orientations – EU-level priorities for P/CVE, proposed by the Commission.

**The Network of Prevent Policy Makers (NPPM)**, consisting of experts from Member States, is a platform for policy makers from the Member States to exchange knowledge on specific challenges related to the prevention of radicalisation, including the involvement of researchers when necessary. The NPPM's task is to bring the viewpoints of the Member States into the preparation of decisions concerning the Strategic Orientations, Annual Work Plan, and Training Programme, before their final consideration by the Steering Board of Radicalisation.

To launch the **process of preparing the next set of Strategic Orientations**, the Commission consults all relevant stakeholders to share their expertise, with a focus on gathering the specific needs of the Member States. The Commission kicks off this process every two years by organising a **Town Hall meeting** that brings together relevant stakeholders, particularly policy makers from the Member States, practitioners, and researchers, facilitating their exchanges to define EU priorities for the next two years. The Town Hall meeting takes place in the year in which the new Strategic Orientations are due to be adopted.

**The Knowledge Hub Exchange Conference** aims to allow policy makers, researchers, and practitioners active in the field of prevention of radicalisation to meet every two years, alternating with the Town Hall meeting, to network and discuss the main trends and developments in the field of radicalisation, challenges ahead, and scope for further action or need for new approaches on prevention of radicalisation. This event also contributes to shape the work programme for the following year.

