A EUROPE
THAT PROTECTS:

# PREVENTING RADICALISATION

EU MAYORS' CONFERENCE:
''BUILDING URBAN DEFENCES
AGAINST TERRORISM''

8 MARCH

Radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism is a complex and rapidly-evolving phenomenon. The majority of terrorist suspects involved in recent attacks in Europe were born and raised in EU Member States, but were radicalised and turned against their fellow citizens.

Preventing radicalisation is at the heart of the EU response to terrorism. It requires long-term, sustainable efforts involving all relevant actors, different policy areas and actions at local, national, EU and global level. Over the past two years, the Commission has driven action to counter radicalisation, both online and offline.

## STEPPING UP THE FIGHT AGAINST RADICALISATION OFFLINE

### Improving coordination at EU level : High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation

The Commission set up a High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation in 2017, bringing together experts from Member States, EU institutions and agencies. Its task is to advise the Commission on how to strengthen the EU policy response, increase the capacity, impact and visibility of EU policy in this area and enhance cooperation at all levels – local, national and European.

17 January 2018 – **Recommendation** calling on Member States to take steps to boost critical thinking, media literacy, and shared values.
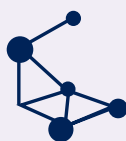
April 2018 – conference to discuss how to respond to the challenges regarding the return to the EU and the **Western Balkans** of children of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF).

### Supporting front-line responders: Radicalisation Awareness Network

In 2011 the Commission established the **Radicalisation Awareness Network** (RAN), bringing together frontline and grassroots practitioners, who have the trust and relationship within local communities and who are often best placed to identify early warning signs of radicalisation. The network provides a platform to exchange expertise and experiences, identify best practices and issue recommendations to policymakers – it is a **strong ally** in the quest to prevent and counter radicalisation in all its forms.

In 2015, the Commission set up the **RAN Centre of Excellence** to help manage the work of the RAN, and to provide support to the Commission and Member States by acting as an information hub and by disseminating expertise.

The RAN connects over **4,600 front-line practitioners** from all over Europe and has peer reviewed over **160 practices** on the ground.

The Commission has allocated **€25 million** over **4 years** to support the work of the RAN Centre of Excellence.

## Cooperation with industry: The EU Internet Forum

The EU Internet Forum was launched by the Commission in 2015 to stop the misuse of the internet by international terrorist groups. The Forum provides a framework for efficient and voluntary cooperation with the internet industry to curb terrorist online content.

The Forum brings together governments, EU Agencies, academics, and internet platforms. The Forum aims to reduce accessibility to terrorist content online and empower civil society to spread alternative narratives online.

### ▸ Reducing accessibility to terrorist content online

Building on the ongoing work within the EU Internet Forum, on 1 March 2018 the Commission recommended a set of urgent **operational measures** that online platforms and Member States should take, including **swift detection and removal** of terrorist content online, and increased cooperation with law enforcement authorities. Most harmful in the first hours of its appearance online, such content should be removed **within one** hour from its referral by online platforms.

Based at Europol, the **EU Internet Referral Unit (IRU)** works to anticipate and pre-empt terrorist abuse of online platforms. The Unit identifies and flags terrorist content to the hosting companies, and provides operational support and analysis to EU Member States. The database of known terrorist content (the so-called **Database of Hashes**), was launched in 2017 in the context of the EU Internet Forum. It prevents content which has been removed from one site from being published on another site.

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| The Internet Referral Unit has made over **40,000 content** referrals to **80 platforms** in more than **10 languages.** | The **Database of Hashes** contains well over 50,000 hashes of known terrorist videos and images, while **automatic detection tools** on some platforms remove 83% to 98% of identified terrorist content. |

The Commission has also proposed **legislation on combatting terrorism** – criminalising any incitement, promotion or glorification of terrorism online. This legislation has been adopted and will be in place in all Member States by September 2018.

### ▸ Spreading alternative narratives: Civil Society Empowerment Programme

The Commission supports civil society partners in delivering effective counter-narratives online. Under the **Civil Society Empowerment Programme**, €6 million has been made available to support campaigns providing alternative narratives to terrorist propaganda and promoting fundamental rights and values.

In 2017, The EU Civil Society Empowerment Programme has trained more than **250 civil society organisations** across Europe.

## REINFORCING EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: ERASMUS+ AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Schools, teachers and youth workers play a crucial role in strengthening vulnerable young people's resilience, and preventing them from feeling marginalised and turning away from society towards radicalisation. They are also key in promoting common democratic values, enhancing critical thinking and media literacy and helping to handle controversial issues in open, inclusive and safe environments.

Erasmus+ funds projects on social inclusion through education, training, youth and sport. These projects disseminate, replicate and upscale good practices at grass-roots level as well as facilitate direct contacts between young people at risk of marginalisation and positive role models in schools, sport clubs and prisons.
In January 2018, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on ''promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching'' aiming at ensuring that young people understand the importance of and adhere to common values, as well as at strengthening social cohesion and contributing to fighting the rise of extremism, populism, xenophobia, and the spreading of fake news.

The European Social Fund also supports national schemes and small local projects to foster the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups. The Fund is expected to reach 2.5 million disadvantaged people.

In 2017, an Erasmus+ call allowed to select **24 projects** in education, training and youth with a total budget of **€10 million.**

Under the European Social Fund **€25.6 billion** is available for social inclusion. **€8 billion** will be devoted to education and addressing early school leaving.