

# Tackling radicalisation through education and youth action



“We need to ensure that we stop people, especially young people, from developing violent and extremist attitudes in the first place. This means promoting freedom, democracy, human dignity and respect. And it means reaching out to all young people, enabling them to find jobs and their place in society.”

Tibor Navracscics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

**R**ecent terrorist attacks in Europe underline the importance of working towards more cohesive societies. This means ensuring that young people irrespective of their socio-economic, religious or ethnic background are included in social and civic life. Education and youth action have a key role to play in promoting shared EU values and fostering a culture of dialogue, mutual understanding and social cohesion.

## What are the EU and Member States doing to tackle violent radicalisation?

On 17 March 2015, the European Commission and the EU Ministers for Education adopted the so-called Paris Declaration. They committed to strengthening their actions to promote social inclusion and ensure that children and young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competences and enhance their critical thinking, particularly when using the internet or social media. This has been followed up both at EU and national levels.

On 14 June 2016, the Commission set out a number of initiatives to support Member States in their efforts across several policy areas, from promoting inclusive education and common values, to tackling extremist propaganda online and radicalisation in prisons.



## The EU is creating...

- **A network of role models** including artists, sportspersons or entrepreneurs who may have been at the margins of society but managed to build a life for themselves. These role models will visit schools, youth initiatives, sports clubs and prisons to share their experiences with young Europeans.
- **Erasmus+ virtual exchanges** to reach up to 200,000 young people in the EU, the Middle East and Africa for structured online discussions by 2019. These exchanges – run by trained moderators – will increase cross-cultural awareness, understanding and cooperation, as well as other competences such as language skills.
- **A toolkit to support youth workers and organisations** with practical guidance, methods and case studies to train youth workers and youth organisations working with young people at risk of marginalisation.
- **A new European-wide online platform for schools** as part of the [www.schooleducationgateway.eu](http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu) to enhance collaborative approaches in schools, improve attendance, reduce drop-out rates and find ways to encourage the involvement of parents in schools.

## EU Member States' measures to tackle radicalisation

Most Member States have taken concrete actions to implement the objectives of the Paris Declaration, with the greatest focus placed on enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences.

### France and Bulgaria, two concrete examples



In France, the action plan '*Great mobilisation of schools for the values of the Republic*' was adopted in early 2015. It tries to foster a culture of citizenship, addresses socio-economic inequalities and promotes social diversity. The main measures include the creation of a pool of citizens to support schools and educational institutions and the

introduction of a special training programme to help teachers discuss citizenship-related questions, including secularism.

Moreover, primary and secondary schools have introduced a syllabus for moral and civic education, while some schools offer courses on 'citizenship education' or critical thinking.



In Bulgaria, the '*Strategy for the educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities 2015-2020*' promotes equal opportunities and equal access to quality education for students from marginalised communities and young people with learning difficulties. The strategy also aims to increase tolerance and non-discrimination in pre-primary schools as well as the development of a cultural identity.

## ERASMUS+ PROJECTS

Since its launch thirty years ago, the Erasmus programme has enabled almost five million people to study, volunteer or train abroad. In 2016, approximately €200 million were allocated to Erasmus+ projects implementing the objectives of the Paris Declaration.

### Radicalisation Prevention in Prisons

This project was launched in December 2015 with an EU grant of € 330,526. It trains prison officers, psychologists and social workers to enable them to identify and help prevent radicalisation.

The project is implemented in five countries (Portugal, Norway, Turkey, Belgium and Romania) and will include 160 training sessions by August 2018.

It will create a radicalisation screening tool to help staff recognise signs of radicalisation at an early stage, a training course for all staff on how to detect and appropriately work with potential vulnerable individuals at risk of radicalisation as well as an e-learning training course.



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### European Learning Environment Formats for Citizenship and Democracy

This project seeks to prevent violent and political radicalisation by promoting participatory learning approaches, intercultural understanding and active citizenship in and outside schools. Launched in December 2016 with an EU grant of € 348,013, three different learning formats will be implemented in Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Poland and Spain:

1. 'Street Education' reaches out to young people from disadvantaged areas and backgrounds to invite them into a political dialogue.
2. In 'Democracy Coaches', student teachers and pupils work together to develop a module for participatory learning approaches that can be integrated into teacher training and school curricula.
3. Innovative, experimental and multi-media supported learning activities, which will be organised for young people.