

## EU prevention strategies

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# D4.4 Stakeholder dialogue on EU implementation of PVE strategies



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On 7 December 2020 from 13:30 to 15:00, CEPS hosted a public webinar under the title ‘Preventing violent extremism – Stakeholder dialogue on EU implementation of CT and PVE strategies’ in which 57 of the 100+ registered people participated.

The backdrop of the event was provided by a second wave of the COVID19 pandemic around Europe, three terrorist attacks that took place in France and Austria between mid-October and early November, the ensuing clampdown, as well legislative action in France and at the EU level. The overall message that emanated from the webinar was that in tackling root causes of violent extremism it is crucial to think about how the EU and its member states implement PVE strategies and how they cooperate with one other to prevent future mayhem. The discussion focussed on EU implementation, weaknesses and challenges of counter-terrorism (CT) and prevention of violent extremism (PVE) policies in relation to the Western Balkans and the MENA region in an effort to identify best practices and lessons learned in this field.

**Morten Bøås**, Principal Investigator of PREVEX and Research Professor at NUPI, welcomed the audience, set the scene and introduced the panelists. **Steven Blockmans**, WP4 leader (EU prevention strategies), **Diana Mishkova**, WP5 leader (Preventing violent extremism, the Balkans) and **Erik Skare**, WP7 (Preventing violent extremism, Middle East) presented the findings from the PREVEX research in their respective work packages. **Anna Reece**, Senior Counterterrorism Expert at the European Union External Action Service, and **Filip de Ceuninck**, Regional CT/ Security advisor at EEAS for the Western Balkans in Sarajevo, provided the perspective from the field. The ensuing debate was moderated by Morten Bøås.

**Blockmans** kicked off the presentations by reminding everyone that, overall, the PVE agenda is quite a recent phenomenon in most member states, which principally aims at preventing violent Islamist extremism through community engagement. The UK has been a pioneer in developing a ‘Prevent’ pillar as part of its 2003 counter-terrorism strategy and has since then actively contributed to the development of an EU-level PVE framework. This EU framework has in turn pushed other member states, like Ireland and Spain, to develop their own national PVE strategies in recent years. While Germany has also over the past decade made significant strides in preventing involvement in extremism and has brought its national practices to the EU level, France has generally favoured a more securitised than preventive approach. Blockmans then gave a sneak preview of the impending publication of the Commission’s CT and cyber security packages (9 December 2020), stepping up EU efforts to prevent radicalisation and better protect public spaces, primarily within the EU but with the inevitable foreign dimension giving the communicating vessels of internal and external security.

Turning to the Western Balkans (WB), **Mishkova** recalled the fact that the region currently channels the highest number of returnees to the EU. Looking at the PVE toolbox she commented on recent developments in the pre-accession sphere (notably the failure to open accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania) as weakening the pressure on governments to cooperate on other files, even if CT remains largely unaffected due to a shared interest in tackling the issue. She commended the EU’s ambition at expanding the RAN to include WB



practitioners but encouraged the EU institutions to focus more on returnees and radicalisation in jails. The EU's *avant garde* in this respect is embodied by Europol, a tool not at the disposal of some other key actors supporting CT/PVE in WB countries: the US, UNDP, British and German civil society organisations.

**Erik Share** criticised the EU's lack of a specific PVE framework for the Middle East. Partnerships with Lebanon and Jordan concerning PVE are defined as cordial by EU representatives, but less so with Egypt (Muslim brotherhood challenge, less Islamic State threat). He described the EU's role in the Middle East as one defined largely by local leaders; the partnership with Saudi Arabia being a case in point: a 'security first' approach confirms the shift of paradigm away from the EU as a normative power. By turning to securitisation, he predicted that the EU would end up alienating specific communities as well as end up stigmatising communities such as the Sunni in Iraq and Lebanon.

In her reaction, **Anna Reece** confirmed the need to strengthen CT in the WB countries. She emphasised that the EU does a lot other than 'strictly PVE' projects which is nevertheless of value added: e.g. by deploying experts, psychologists and teachers. She argued that the willingness of the local government to cooperate with the EU is great and now there needs to be a drive for implementation of PVE policies. There is an acute need in Bosnia-Herzegovina to deal with returnees since foreign fighters are being released. Similarly, a peculiar challenge is posed by the children born in Iraq and Syria since they arrive without a birth certificate. She pointed out that in the case of IS, women should be prosecuted too, while for de-radicalisation the EU's strategies and methods should be adapted. Despite there not being a CT advisor in Egypt (because the government is not willing), however, Egypt is involved with the EU in the global effort against terrorism.

**Filip de Ceuninck** stressed that in the implementation of its PVE policies, the EU works on all forms of extremism and radicalisation (e.g. political, Christian Orthodox), not just Islamic radicalism. He pointed to the unique regional framework resting on bilateral agreements with the WB countries, with strong commitments from both sides. Differently from 2012, when the EU dealt with returnees and radicalisation, reintegration and resocialization now have become the priorities. Prevention is key since no one knows how the WB countries might react to a major terrorist attack, which they fortunately have not experienced in recent years. On implementation, he stressed that monitoring and assessment of projects should be done, and that the EU put in place ISG in charge of mapping exercises and projects, to make visible who is doing what in CT and PVE and to ensure learning. The Covid19 pushed CT and PVE into the background but now they are back in the top priority list: WB countries are restarting to implement their strategies and their commitments with the EU. The socio-economic impact of the pandemic is extremely important because of the links between economic depression and radicalisation. Here, extra EU provision through economic support programmes could indirectly help in terms of prevention.

### Questions by audience in webinar



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drmaj 03:18 PM

In terms of the typologies of Islamist groups present in Europe, have you concluded your analysis? And if so, is there a comprehensive list of the ramifications of these groups in Europe?

Anonymous Attendee 03:25 PM

Are there any projects or is there a strategy in place with regards to FTFs that left to Ukraine?

Evangelos Zarkadoulas 03:28 PM

As it is known, the perpetrator of the recent terrorist attack in Vienna was under deradicalisation program in Austria. How will we design such successful programs and which could be the contribution of the EU on that?

Laura Berlingozzi 03:28 PM

Question for Anna Reece: thanks for your intervention! you mentioned that a lot more needs to be done on gender, and I was wondering, first, what are the main gaps that need to be addressed? And how do you think that the EU gender mainstreaming approach in P/CVE can be better aligned with local level needs? Thanks

Scarpinato Medway Leah 03:30 PM

Thank you for your interesting presentations. I just wanted to ask Anna Reece what she thinks of the role of INTCEN in the EU CT strategy. Thank you !

Anonymous Attendee 03:35 PM

Does the EU differentiate between PVE and CVE too or does the EU see PVE and CVE at the one end of the spectrum and CT at the other?



## Annex 1: List of people signing up to the webinar

Anne Cecilie	Adserballe	Council of the European Union
Dragan	Alcinov	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Emma	Allen	Samuel Hall
Roberta	Aluffi	University of Torino
Njomza	Arifi	Group for Legal and Political Studies
Axelle	Basselet	British Council
Laura	Berlingozzi	Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies
Morten	Boas	NUPI - Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
Raphael	Bossong	German Institute for International and Security Affairs
Anne-Marie	Boudou	CEPS
Malika	Bouziane	GIZ
Andras	Braun	European Commission
Sebastian	Breuer	GIZ
Joris	Buyse	
Myriam	Buyse	European Commission
Letizia	Carnevali	GIZ GmbH
Katerina	Dalaverou	THUAS
Jules	De Neve	European Commission
Korneel	De Schamp	European Commission
David	Dessin	Flemish government
Ivano	di Carlo	EPC - European Policy Center
Liza	Dignac	Save Belgium
Stoyan	Doklev	Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria
Silvia	Donizetti	CEPS
Thomais	Douraki	
Henriette	Erstad	OSCE
Simeon	Evstatiev	Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Blera	Fazliu	Mission of the Republic of Macedonia to the EU
Astrid	Frey	Eduardo Frei Foundation
Lukas	Fulde	UNLOPS
Anne	Fumey	Civipol
Kurt	Gaissert	House of European History
Felipe	Gallegos	
Elvira	García	European Institute of the Mediterranean
Sarah	Gaudenzi	Tilburg University
Marton	Gellert	European Commission
Majid	Golpour	ULB - Université Libre de Bruxelles
Gabriel	Goucha	
Janine	Graf	GIZ
Viljar	Haavik	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
Barnea	Hassid	Mission of Israel to the EU
Stephan	Hensell	Hanse Office
Andreas	Heusner	GIZ
Lena	Hillmeier	UNLOPS
Jana	Hofmann	GIZ
Dana	Hruby	GIZ



Marija	Ignjatijevic	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
Shada	Islam	New Horizons Project
Susanne	Jacobi	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Ann-Kristin	Jonasson	University of Gothenburg
Allan	Jones	European Commission
Paul	Jordan	EIP
Konstantinos	Kechagias	Hellenic Police
Radek	Khol	EEAS
Bilge	Kırca	Economic Development Foundation
Dmitry	Kirizliev	Mission of Russia to the EU
Cornelia	Kliem	GIZ
Magdalena	König	University of Groningen
Joerg	Krempel	European External Action Service - EEAS
Anthony	Lamaudière	Squaris
Roland	Langthaler	VERBUND AG
Juliet	Lodge	Saher EU
Paula	Lopez Reig	European Commission
Ludmila	Malai	Intercultural Dialogue Platform
Angela	Marzorati	Equensworldline
Javier	Mojal	European Commission
Marja	Nesterova	National Pedagogical Dragomanov University
Caspar	Nijland	University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam
Dixie	O'Donnell	Google
Kari	Osland	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)
Kamaran	Palani	Middle East Research Institute
Himani	Pant	Vivekananda International Foundation
Enrico	Pelosato	Council of Europe
Deborah	Phares	USL-B
Chiara	Pierobon	Bielefeld University
Sonja	Prijic	
Monika	Pronczuk	New York Times
Anna	Reece	European External Action Service - EEAS
Sadaf	Richter	GIZ
Mariona	Rico	IEMed
Louis	Ridon	International Crisis Group
Pernille	Rieker	NUPI - Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
Axel	Rudi	University of Copenhagen
Eva	Saenz-Diez	UCL - Université Catholique de Louvain
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Leah	Scarpinato Medway	Permanent Representation of France to the EU
Sarah	Schnabel	European Economic and Social Committee - EESC
Henrik	Schuette	GIZ
Justine	Singer-Kaufold	CEPS
Erik	Skare	Sciences Po
Claire	Sovignet	CCI France
Onur	Sultan	Beyond the Horizon ISSG
Annamaria	Toth	European Forum Alpbach
Lev	Turner	Mission of the United States to the EU
Tzvetina	Tzvetkova	European Commission



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