# European Union's Articulation of Radicalisation:

## Deconstructing the Discursive Formulation of Radicalism through Counter Measures

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

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# Preface

This paper, written by Dr. Ayşe Tecmen, discusses the emergence of radicalisation and its prevention as a key pillar the EU's counter-terrorism strategy. Tracing the changes in the methods of cooperation and the proliferation of prevention strategies, it provides a review of the changes in the radicalisation discourse. In doing so, it analyses the key documents produced by the EU using a discourse-historical analysis focusing on the interplay between discourse and social, and cultural developments. This also illustrates that the EU's radicalisation prevention and counter-terrorism strategies are mainly reactions to the internal and external dynamics that influence the political and public debates.

This paper concludes that the EU maintains that escalation of radicalisation to terrorism is still a main premise within this discourse. While strategies since the mid-2010s have become oriented towards identifying the "root causes" thereby partly addressing the individual socio-economic and psychological factors that provoke radicalisation, there is still an overemphasis on Salafi Islam as opposed to right-wing radicalisation.

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# European Union's Articulation of Radicalisation: Deconstructing the Discursive Formulation of Radicalism through Counter Measures

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## Introduction

Prevention of radicalisation has been one of the main pillars of the EU's counter-terrorism policy for decades (Anderson et al., 1995; Hebenton and Thomas, 1995; Nilsson, 2004). In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and the proliferation of terrorist attacks and terrorist organisations across the globe, the EU has established various programs to define and address radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.[1]

This paper aims to provide a detailed account of the ways in which the term "radicalisation" has been defined by the EU institutions since the 1970s. There are various media that the EU uses to articulate its definition of radicalisation. These sources, which will be scrutinized in this paper, ranging from official documents such as Directives and Strategies to websites established within the EU Institutional server, as well as networks and forums. The paper will delineate the a) the relations between radical/radicalisation, extremism, and terrorist/terrorism; b) the competences among the EU and member states, which influence the allocation of regulatory responsibilities; c) the identification of groups vulnerable to radicalism and radicalisation including the youth; and d) the networks and programmes established by the EU.

In doing so, this paper provides a discourse analysis of the data collected from the abovementioned sources. Discourse analysis, as a qualitative method aims to deconstruct discourses and discursive practices by investigating articulations, subject positions and interpellations. Through these apparatuses, discourses fix the meanings of signs and establish a structured totality that excludes other possible meanings of objects and the relations between them (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 26-27). Thus, discourses need constancy to be reproduced. Discourse then constitutes social reality, which is relatively stable and unambiguous (ibid. 2002: 33).

This paper employs explicitly a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method (Wodak, 2010, 2011, 2013) focusing on the interplay between discourse and social, and cultural developments. Discursive practices, therefore, contribute to the construction of social and cultural domains which also include social identities and relations. While there are various strands of CDA, the "discourse-historical" approach (DHA) (Wodak, 1999) provides a systematic way of studying discourses through the refined linguistic and argumentative tools, mainly through its emphasis on identity construction (Aydın-Duzgit, 2014). DHA also

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minimizes the risk of being overly subjective by incorporating different data, methods, theories, and background information (Wodak, 2011: 65). While DHA has an emphasis on the historical dimension of discourses, it is also concerned with:

> discourse and discrimination (e.g., racism, ethnicism, nationalism, xenophobia, islamophobia, sexism); language barriers in various social institutions (such as hospitals, courtrooms, authorities, academic language, media); discourse and politics/policy/polity (e.g., politics of the past/political commemoration, nation-building, European Union, migration, asylum, multilingualism, language policy, populism); discourse and identity (e.g., national and supranational/European identity, linguistic identity); discourse and history (e.g., National Socialism, fascism, commemoration, history of discourse studies); discourse in the media (both classical print media and new social media); organisational communication (e.g., in institutions of the European Union); and discourse and ecology (climate change) (Reisigl, 2017: 48).

Over the years, DHA approach has also been utilised to study the European Union and the European polity. For instance, DHA has been employed to scrutinize the construction of European identities (Krzyzanowski and Oberhuber, 2007; Krzyzanowski, 2010; Krzyzanowski and Wodak: 2010); to debate the European Constitution (Oberhauer et al. 2005); and to analyse the discursive construction of European identities in speeches of German, British and French speeches of politicians (Wodak and Weiss 2005).

These applications of DHA to studying the EU has also shown the importance of intertextual and the interdiscursive relationships between texts, speeches and discourses. Intertextuality refers to "the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth" (Fairclough, 1992: 84). In other words, it means that texts are interlinked, in the past and in the present, through explicit reference to a topic or a main actor, through references to the same event; by allusions or evocations; or by the transfer of arguments from one text to another (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90). According to Fairclough (1992: 104), there is manifest intertextuality in which a text contains other texts explicitly incorporated by means such as quotation marks, and constitutive intertextuality (or interdiscursivity), in which texts that can be composed of diverse elements such as discourse types, and style.

Exploring the intertextual relationship between the texts produced by the EU, mainly by the European Commission, this paper utilizes DHA to deconstruct the articulation of radicalisation since the 1970s. The EU's conception of radicalisation can best be understood as a process of political socialisation towards extremism which is accompanied by process of conflict escalation in terms of increased use of illegal methods of political action. Significantly, the EU's counter-radicalisation measures are centred around preventing recruitment and mobilisation rather than addressing the social, cultural, political and economic factors that make individuals susceptible to socialising into extremism. Starting with the TREVI group in the 1970s, the EU has focused on establishing pre-emptive measures to deter the escalation of radicalisation. As such, counter-radicalisation measures

do not necessarily identify the root causes of radicalisation but rather take on a reactionary and conservative approach by concentrating on preventing socialisation to violent extremism.

### 1. Definitions through Interactive Terminology for Europe

This section reviews the definitions of radicalisation, counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation, extremism, violent extremism, and terrorism provided on the Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE) website. IATE is the EU's terminology database used in the EU institutions and agencies since summer 2004 for the collection, dissemination and management of EU-specific terminology. Due to its attempts to (temporarily) fix the meanings of the terminology, IATE is an important starting point for deconstructing the EU's articulation of radicalisation.[2]

According to IATE, **radicalisation** is "process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."[3] The European Commission's official website provides a similar definition. As of April 2020, under the "Prevention of radicalisation" subheading of the European Commission's Directorate General of Migration and Home Affairs website, radicalisation is defined as follows:

> Radicalisation can be understood 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 within the meaning of the Directive [(EU) 2017/541] on combating terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose.[4] While radicalisation is not a new phenomenon, the trends, means and patterns of radicalisation evolved. Home-grown lone actors and (returning) foreign terrorist fighters raise security issues and specific challenges for prevent work, while the Internet and social media gave extremist and terrorist groups and their sympathisers new opportunities for mobilisation and communication.[5]

As will be illustrated in the next section, this definition has been a result of decades of programmes, strategies, and legal sources that the EU has published. Nonetheless, the explanation above is provided by the EU Commission's Home Affairs DG. As such, it reflects the common concerns regarding the socialisation of "radicals," which are assumed to be subjected to the radicalisation process, into terrorists via their possible use of violence. As

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[2] The IATE project was launched in 1999 to provide a web-based infrastructure for all EU terminology resources, enhancing the availability and standardization of the information. See https://iate.europa.eu/home

[3] Original reference used in the data based is: UK Department for Education. 'The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers', June 2015, footnote 4, page 4, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf

[4] Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32017L0541)

[5] See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/crisis-and-terrorism/radicalisation_en

will be discussed, this is a part of the securitisation of "radicalism," which is articulated in relation to ideology, violence, criminality, and extremism. In turn, the EU maintains that there is a process of escalation that progresses from radicalism to terrorism.

Due to the anticipation of escalation, EU institutions have also concentrated on the mechanisms, programmes and remedies to counter the processes of radicalization. **Counter-radicalisation,** takes on the form of complex programmes on the national and EU levels, which seek to "deter" escalation towards terrorism. The term is defined as "package of social, political, legal, educational and economic programmes designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalised) individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists".[6] These programmes target specific groups, mainly the youth and other individuals and groups who are considered vulnerable to radicalisation. In that sense, they illustrate who are perceived as potential "threats", the majority of the EU's counter-radicalisation efforts do not target any "communities" but instead operate within a smaller scale.

EU institutions have also used another term to combat the processes of radicalisation: de-radicalisation. **De-radicalisation** is articulated as the sought-out result of counter-radicalisation measures. It is defined as the "process of renouncing both violence and the ideology underlying it".[7] Due to its interdependence with the vague and securitized definition of radicalisation, this term is also articulated within the same discursive field.

The critical distinction between de-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation is that the latter is often used to refer to interventions aimed at reintegrating, or at least dissuading radicalized people from violence into society. Whereas de-radicalisation seeks to reverse the trend by helping combat extremist agendas and promoting the removal of individuals from militant organisations. To this effect, prevention is the objective of counter-radicalisation.[8] In other words, counter-radicalisation's focus on prevention also reaffirms the perception of radicalisation as an escalating process which can be reversed through intervention.

As noted above, extremism is also an essential element in the construction of counter-radicalisation measures due to the significance of violent extremism in radicalized individuals' socialization to terrorism. According to IATE, **extremism**, is defined as "holding of extreme political or religious views".[9] **Violent extremism,** on the other hand, is defined

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[6] See https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/3564449/en. Original reference used in the data based is: UN Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force, First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes, p. 5, https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=10129 [27.6.2016]

[7] See https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/3563586/en. Original reference used in the data based is: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response /* COM/2013/0941 final */ CELEX:52013DC0941/EN

[8] See https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/3564449/en.

[9] See https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/925940/en. Original reference used in the data based is: "Tackling extremism in the UK", HM Government. Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism. December

as "serious threats, harm, murder, mayhem, and damage to property which are motivated and justified by extremist beliefs".[10] The definition of extremism is reflective of the politicization of radicalism, which may be explained through the rising threat of both Islamist and right-wing terrorism.

Finally, EU institutions have also generated their own definition of terrorism. **Terrorism** is defined as the use or threat of action where:

> (a) the action involves serious violence against a person or serious damage to property, endangers a person's life other than that of the person committing the action, creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system;

> (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government…or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and

> (c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious…racial or ideological cause.[11]

As can be seen in this definition, terrorism is articulated as the probable end-stage of violent extremism, which seeks to threaten or intimidate either government, international governmental organisations, or the public in general. Importantly, this definition does not necessarily require "action" but rather incorporates intent, *vis-à-vis* the use of "threat", which also resembles the definition of violent extremism.

As will be delineated in this paper, the definitions provided by the IATE are the most recent articulations of the selected terms that are the elements of radicalisation discourse. However, since discourses are structured totalities, they are systems of meaning production that temporarily fix the meanings of social phenomena, in this case radicalisation. As will be discussed in this paper, in line with the premise of discourse-historical approach, in the recent decades these terms have been (re)constructed numerous times in various contexts.

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2013.https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263181/ETF_FINAL. pdf

[10] See https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/3540448/en. Original reference used in the data based is: Parent, Dr. R. B. And Ellis, J. O. "Right-Wing Extremism in Canada". Working Paper Series No. 14-03, May 2014. TSAS Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society. http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/cnmcs-plcng/cn31894-eng.pdf

[11] See https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/3583920/en. Original reference used in the data based is: Terrorism Act 2000, Section 1 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11

## 2. The evolution of the EU's conceptualisations of radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism

11 September 2001 marked the increase in research on terrorism, which has since been debated in relation to radicalisation. At the time, the Commission used "violent radicalisation" which has since been used intermittently. This can be explained by the lack of media framing, which has been influential in the articulation of radicalisation as a step towards terrorist activity in both political and public discourse.

> Research on what was termed by the European Commission "Violent Radicalisation" began, with few exceptions, only after the attacks in Madrid (11/3/2004) and London (7/7/2005). It was a largely political construct; there had been hardly any social science research driven by this particular concept before the early 21st century. The phenomenon of homegrown terrorism emerging from immigrant diaspora communities worried national and European policymakers (Schmid, 2016: 26).

Furthermore, in the early-2000s, the public discourse on terrorism has also been reframed under "radicalisation" by EU member states (Ragazzi, 2017: 164). An important implication of this framing is that radicalisation has since become an "internal" problem (whether internally or externally-funded and driven). This shift then meant a re-articulation of who radicalises and their motivations. In other words, while immigrant communities, and religious minorities, particularly those of Muslim-origin, have remained the suspect communities, radicalisation among nationalist groups and the far-right have also become visible. To that end, the Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA defined radicalisation as follows:

> Individuals or groups becoming intolerant with regard to basic democratic values like equality and diversity, as well as a rising propensity towards using means of force to reach political goals that negate and/or undermine democracy" (Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA cited in Schmid, 2016: 27).

This also introduced "democracy" as a reference point into the radicalisation discourse. In turn, over the years, radicalisation remained a process of extremisation against democratic values upheld by the EU. As we will discuss in the upcoming sections, the EU articulates radicalisation as a threat to the unity and the security of the Community, which also leads to EU-wide counter-radicalisation efforts with a holistic mindset.

### 2.1 *Terrorisme, Radicalisme, Extrémisme et Violence internationale* (TREVI)

*Terrorisme, Radicalisme, Extrémisme et Violence internationale*, also referred to as the TREVI group, was the first and perhaps the most essential step toward the European cooperation on identifying a common framework for radicalisation. As will be discussed in this section, the works of the TREVI group, namely the 'Palma Document' (1989); the 'Declaration of Trevi Group Ministers' (1989); the 'Programme of Action' (1990); and the

Coordinators report on the progress on the Palma Document (1992), have been very important in EU's articulation of radicalisation.

Based on the legal mechanisms identified in Articles 33, 87, 88 and 89 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), police cooperation among the Member States began in 1976 through the 'TREVI Group,' which was an intergovernmental network of representatives of justice and home affairs ministries.[12] It was later integrated into the so-called Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) pillar of the European Union (EU) upon the implementation of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 (Occhipinti, 2003: 31).

The origin of the name 'Trevi' is contested. It may have been a reference to the Trevi Fountain in Rome, in which the decision to establish the group was first taken, or a pun on the name of Mr. Fonteyn, who was the director-general in the Dutch justice ministry and an initiator of the group. TREVI has since been turned into an acronym for *'terrorisme, radicalisme, extremisme et violence internationale'* (Bunyan, 2016).

### 2.1.1.  The establishment of TREVI

The creation of TREVI was prompted by several terrorist acts, such as the massacre during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, and the inefficiencies of Interpol in combatting terrorism.[13] Against this backdrop, based on a proposal from Britain, in December 1975, the **European Council** decided in Rome, that 'Community Ministers for the Interior (or ministers with similar responsibilities) should meet to discuss matters coming within their competence, in particular with regard to law and order.' The TREVI Group's first meeting established as an informal body for intergovernmental cooperation in the field of law was held in Luxembourg in June 1976. Similar to the majority of the EU's security-related programmes, this was also a reactionary response to the rising security concerns. Importantly, in 1976 the European Community was much smaller than it is today. Besides, since the TREVI group preceded the Single European Act of 1986, internal frontiers were still present, which impacted cooperation in security-related issues.[14] Thus, the TREVI group existed outside the formal EC structure in which the EC Court, the Commission, and the Parliament did not have any role (Occhipinti, 2003: 31; Casale, 2008).[15]

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[12] "The European Council - Rome (1-2 DECEMBER 1975)". Documents in the dossier include: The European Council in Rome, European Community Members to Issue EC Citizens a "European Passport", Declaration of Rambouillet 17 November 1975. December 1975. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/1407/1/rome_dec_1975.pdf
[13] For a detailed review of the events, see https://www.britannica.com/event/Munich-Massacre
[14] The Single European Act (SEA, 1986) sought to revise the Treaties of Rome (1957) in order to add new momentum to European integration and to complete the internal market (an area with no internal borders and in which there is free movement of goods, persons, services and capital) by 1 January 1993. Among others, the SEA also has the mandate to conclude: a Treaty relating to common foreign and security policy.
[15] A lesser known voluntary intergovernmental cooperation before the TREVI group was the Club de Berne established in 1971. It was as an intelligence sharing forum between representatives from the EC and Switzerland. It focused on anti-terrorism (Bigo, 1996).

Five working groups were set up in 1976, which were: Working group 1 (Trevi 1) responsible for measures to combat terrorism; Working group 2 (Trevi 2) scientific and technical knowledge and police training; Working group 3 (Trevi 3) set up to deal with security procedures for civilian air travel; Working group 4 (Trevi 4) safety and security at nuclear installations and transport; and Working group 5 (Trevi 5) contingency measures to deal with emergencies (disasters, and fires) (Bunyan, 1993).

However, only Trevi 1 and Trevi 2 were active, and the other groups never met. The main conclusions of the Trevi 1 group highlighted that the relevant agencies would share their experiences of how they handled terrorist incidents as well as establishing strategies to handle incidents involving more than one member state. This also marked the discursive construction of terrorism as an EU-wide concern.

Over time, the TREVI Group was "formalised as part of the intergovernmental **Justice and Home Affairs** (JHA) '**pillar**' of EU activity introduced by the 1992 **Maastricht Treaty**. It was subsequently 'communautised' by the **Lisbon Treaty**, which entered into force in December 2009 (Teasdale, and Bainbridge, 2012). As will be discussed below, the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties have been fundamental in terms of the free movement of persons and its potential security-related consequences.

### 2.1.2. Outcomes of the TREVI group

Since its inception, the TREVI group has evolved into different processes leading to the production of various documents and programmes. Bunyan (2016) lists the four essential TREVI documents as the 'Palma Document' (Madrid, June 1989); the 'Declaration of TREVI Group Ministers' (Paris, 15 December 1989); the 'Programme of Action' (Dublin, June 1990); and the Coordinators report on the progress on the Palma Document (Edinburgh, December 1992).

The Palma Document (1989)[16] marked the formal association of immigrants and asylum seekers with security concerns *vis-a-vis* emphasis on external border protection. In turn, the Palma Document has since become a critical text in the association of migration with border security (Papademetriou, 1996; Van Munster, 2009; Boccardi, 2002; Brouwer 2008). 1989 was also crucial in terms of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and the reunification of Germany, which increased mobility between east and West Germany. In turn, this also brought migration and mobility to the EU agenda. 1989 marked an enormous demographic change caused by the dissolution of the Eastern Block. The period starting in 1989 signifies the beginning of a new historical epoch that ushered in the massive migration flows of ethnic Germans, ethnic Hungarians, ethnic Russians and Russian Jews from one place to another. The mobilization of millions of people has stimulated the nation-states to change their migration policies in a way that encouraged the arrival of immigrants from similar ethnic backgrounds. This period of demographic change in Western Europe went in tandem with the rise of discourses like the 'clash of civilizations', 'culture wars' and Islamophobia

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[16] Full text reproduced at: https://www.statewatch.org/semdoc/assets/files/keytexts/ktch1.pdf)

that presented societal heterogeneity in an unfavourable light. The intensification of Islamophobia made easier by al Qaeda type violence, and the radicalization of some segments of Muslim origin immigrant communities in several countries reinforced the societal unrest resulting from immigration. The result was the introduction of restrictive migration policies and increased territorial border security *vis-à-vis* the nationals of third countries who originated from outside the European continent (Kaya, 2012).

In particular, as the first significant document produced through the TREVI group's intergovernmental cooperation, the Palma Document marked the beginning of a transformation from *ad hoc* cooperation structures, to more permanent intergovernmental collaboration. The report highlighted the progressive development of policies designed to combat terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking, interlinking them with policing and immigration control. The repetitive and frequent reference to the series of interlinked threats (terrorism, crime, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration) and the perceived need for coordination and cooperation of policy responses, demonstrated the constitutive relationship between the articulation of security threats and the development of new security practices (Bevir, Daddow and Hall, 2013: 151).

The main decisions in the Palma Document included a common visa list for the Community, to be updated every six months; a common list of inadmissible persons; appropriate measures to deal with the 'asylum shopping' phenomenon; abbreviated procedures for 'manifestly unfounded' asylum claims; harmonised interpretation of international commitments; common measures for external border control; the establishment of a common information system; and combating illegal immigration and common expulsion policies (Boccardi, 2002 :32, Vink, 2001: 9).

Under this approach, the movement of asylum seekers and legal and illegal immigrants, and of terrorists and criminals, were conceptually blurred as negative consequences of the abolition of border. Cooperation in terms of asylum-seekers thus became an component of external border protection (Hurwitz and Hurwitz, 2009: 33). Overall, the Palma Document marked the beginning of security measures aimed at avoiding the potential adverse outcomes of the opening of the borders.

To clarify, this Document was produced after the Schengen Agreement of 1985 and the Single European Act (1986). The Schengen Agreement signed on June 14, 1985, is a treaty that led most of the European countries towards the abolishment of their national borders, to build a Europe without borders. In May 1999, "The Treaty of Amsterdam" incorporated the agreement into the legal framework of the European Union, as a part of the rules and regulations governing the EU's external borders. Furthermore, while the Single European Act (SEA) was mainly a step towards reconfiguring competences within the EU, it also emphasised the abolishment of internal frontiers such as customs posts. To that end, Article 13 of the SEA had foreseen that "The internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services, and capital is ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty". In turn, the late 1980s were also marked by rapid efforts to ensure integration among the Member States.

"Declaration of Trevi Group Ministers" in December 1989 followed the approach instated in the "Palma Document," and it referred to the "new requirements" with the creation of a "European area without internal borders". [17] The Declaration reimbursed the Single European Act while refuting the assumption that this would disrupt the Community's ties with external countries. Significantly, the Document highlighted the development of organised crime, including terrorists and illegal immigrants as a common concern for all member states (Vink, 2001: 9). In this sense, this Declaration made a clear distinction between European citizens who needed extensive protection measures against the threatening "other", namely terrorists and illegal immigrants who threatened the freedoms embraced within the Community borders. This was an essential discursive shift that endorsed EU citizenship as a form of belonging centred on specific values and liberties. This has since been the foundation of the EU's identity narrative. As will be illustrated shortly, radicalisation has been rearticulated over the years to juxtapose this articulation.

Following the Palma Document and the Declaration in 1989, in 1990, the TREVI Group announced their Programme of Action (1990).[18] This Programme complemented the efforts introduced in the framework of the so-called Dublin Convention signed on 15 June 1990.[19] Significantly, this Dublin Convention is an instrument of international law and not of Community law (Vink, 2001: 11). The Programme of Action mainly focused on advancing communication systems to ensure information sharing among member states, particularly in dealing with organised crime. In doing so, it anticipated further police and security cooperation and aimed to establish a common framework for information sharing on criminals, terrorist, and asylum seekers.

Furthermore, at its meeting on 23 October 1992 the Coordinators' Group agreed that a report would be presented to the TREVI Ministers meeting on 1 December, suggesting a broad framework for 'the future organisation of European police cooperation' (Bunyan 1993: 7). This also marked the formal association of counter-radicalisation with EC-wide police cooperation.

In the early-1990s, Europe had witnessed the collapse of communism, which changed the relations between western, and central and eastern Europe. At the same time, in the Balkans, Yugoslavia was breaking apart, leading to civil wars and ethnic cleansing. This was combined with internal transformations within the EC, namely the completion of the Single Market in 1993, which also introduced the four freedoms of movement in terms of goods,

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[17] Full text reproduced at: https://statewatch.org/semdoc/assets/files/keytexts/ktch2.pdf)
[18] Full text available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20562/1990_june_-_dublin__eng_.pdf)
[19] The 1990 Dublin Convention, which entered into force on 1 September 1997, establishes a system determining the State responsible for examining the applications for asylum lodged in one of the Member States of the European Communities. The "Dublin system" is centred on the principle of authorisation, under which the State which has "authorised" the entry of an asylum seeker on the territory of the Member State is responsible for examining his or her application (Hurwitz, 1990). The Dublin Convention was replaced by Council Regulation No 343/2003 (Dublin II regulation) and its validity ended on 16 March 2003. The Dublin III entered into force in July 2013 and it contains procedures for the protection of asylum applicants. See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:180:0031:0059:EN:PDF

services, people and capital. Among these freedoms, the free movement of persons led to various measures on police cooperation.

Against this backdrop, the Treaty of Maastricht (1993) set out matters of common interest, which gave legitimate grounds for police cooperation (terrorism, drugs, and other forms of international crime). It also established the principle of creating a 'European police office' (Europol), which officially began its work on 1 July 1999. Furthermore, on 26 July 1995, the Europol Convention (Council of the European Union, 1995) was signed, and it was based on the enhanced powers granted by the Amsterdam Treaty signed on 2 October 1997. However, as noted above, police cooperation had already progressed before Europol with the creation of the Schengen Area in 1985. When the Amsterdam Treaty entered into force in 1999, the Schengen *acquis* - including its police cooperation aspects - was incorporated into EU law.

## 2.2. Legal Frameworks in EU Treaties

The rise of extremism, particularly the rise of religious and nationalist views, within Europe also proved that the social and political dynamics were changing. This meant that while externally driven or externally funded extremist and terrorist activities were an EU-wide issue, Member states' domestic affairs were also indicative of more localised radical activities. For instance, Basque nationalism was a problem circumscribed to the Spanish territory, and Islamic terrorism was mainly the deed of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), active only on French territory (Fijnaut, Wouters, and Naert 2004: 17, see also Wolff, 2009). In turn, member states had "unique" experiences with radicalisation and extremism, which were bound with the country-contexts.

TREVI group's work was fundamental in the articulation of radicalisation centred around the securitisation of the foreign "others" (i.e. non-Europeans) as a threat to the European way of life. However, the late-1990s and the 2000s have also been marked by internal developments in the EU's decision-making process and the policy-making structures. Most significantly, the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 has been crucial to identifying the EU's and member states' competences in matters relating to terrorism.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)[20] includes the legal framework for collective action to counter-terrorist activities. These Articles, as listed below, also legitimize collective action against such threats. For instance, Article 75 (ex-Article 60 TEC) reads:

> Where necessary to achieve the objectives set out in Article 67, as regards preventing and combating terrorism and related activities, the European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall define a framework for administrative measures with

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[20] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) [2016] OJ C202/1. The Lisbon Treaty, signed on 17 December 2007, was ratified by all EU countries and entered into force on 1 December 2009. It introduced changes to the existing treaties, and the EC Treaty became the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

regard to capital movements and payments, such as the freezing of funds, financial assets or economic gains belonging to, or owned or held by, natural or legal persons, groups or non-State entities.

The Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt measures to implement the framework referred to in the first paragraph.

The acts referred to in this Article shall include necessary provisions on legal safeguards.

In turn, prevention of radicalisation remains a competence of the member states due to the contextual differences, as well as the country-specific factor motivating and contributing to radicalisation. Terrorism, on the other hand, is a competence of the European Union. In this formulation, there are certain socio-economic factors, such as deprivation, contributing to radicalisation which can be remedied through national social, and economic policies which aims for de-radicalisation. In this sense, there is a logic behind radicalisation which operates within the boundaries of modernisation, which prioritises socioeconomic development in adopting democratic values. Terrorism, or a terrorist, on the other hand, is beyond the realm of socio-economic reasoning. As such, there is not a rationale in a terrorist's turn to violence (Taşpınar, 2009: 75-76). Thus, it is solely, a security threat, which cannot be resolved through national policies and frameworks. In other words, the main difference is that while radicalisation is perceived to be reversible through eliminating socio-economic contributors, terrorism is ideologically-driven. Therefore, terrorist attacks are committed against the European way of life, which also accounts for the definition of terrorism along the lines of Islamist jihadism.

Furthermore, the EU's efforts to combat terrorism fall under police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters and Article 83 of the Treaty refers specifically to terrorism. Article 83 (ex Article 31 TEU) paragraph 1 reads:

1. The European Parliament and the Council may, by means of directives adopted in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, establish minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the areas of particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimension resulting from the nature or impact of such offences or from a special need to combat them on a common basis.

These areas of crime are the following: terrorism, trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of women and children, illicit drug trafficking, illicit arms trafficking, money laundering, corruption, counterfeiting of means of payment, computer crime and organised crime.

On the basis of developments in crime, the Council may adopt a decision identifying other areas of crime that meet the criteria specified in this paragraph. It shall act unanimously after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament.

To ensure and legitimise collective action, Article 222 of the TFEU provides for a solidarity clause. This allows for joint effort on the part of EU countries when any one of them is the object of a terrorist attack. In doing so, paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 222 read as follows:

1.  The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. The Union shall mobilise all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the Member States, to:

    (a) prevent the terrorist threat in the territory of the Member States; protect democratic institutions and the civilian population from any terrorist attack;

    assist a Member State in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a terrorist attack;

    (b) assist a Member State in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

2.  Should a Member State be the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster, the other Member States shall assist it at the request of its political authorities. To that end, the Member States shall coordinate between themselves in the Council.[21]

Overall, while the programmes and strategies of the EU have been very adamant about establishing certain links between radicalisation and terrorism, the primary sources of European law are exclusively focused on terrorism and EU-wide cooperation in cases of terrorist attacks. Nonetheless, this is not necessary solely about the division of competences among the EU and the member states but also about the values and norms that are the foundation of European integration. Notably, as stated in Article 222, the protection of democratic institutions are also a significant part of the legal framework. As will be discussed in the upcoming sections, this emphasis on democracy and solidarity in defiance of criminal activity is not novel. This juxtaposition is one of the critical elements that formulate the oppositional relationship between terrorism and the European way of life, which in turn establishes the "non-European other" as a potential security threat.

## 3. EU Programmes and Strategies

Drawing on the legal frameworks established through the Treaties, EU institutions have actively tried to address radicalisation as well as terrorism. As noted above, based on the distribution of competences, the European Commission created various programmes and

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[21] See Mutual defence clause, European Parliament.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses_/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses_en.pdf

strategies to counter-terrorism within the borders of the EU. The primary documents that will be analysed in this section are the EU Counter-terrorism Strategy of 2005 and its revised version in 2014, the Stockholm Programme of 2009 and European Agenda on Security of 2015 complemented by the Internal Security Strategy in 2015. These are the primary documents which have shaped the EU's approach to radicalisation *vis-à-vis* their conception of terrorism. This section will also analyse the Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation, leading to violent extremism of 2016, and Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism. Last but not least, this section will also provide insight into the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R) established in 2017 and the EU Cooperation Mechanism. In doing so, we will start with an analysis of the documents developing the general frameworks articulating radicalisation, extremism and terrorism through countermeasures, followed by secondary sources of European law which also shape the member states' policies. The overview of the HLCEG-R and the Cooperation Mechanism will then provide insight into how the EU implements the measures as mentioned above.

## 3.1.   The EU Counter-terrorism Strategy of 2005 and the 2014 revision

As shown above, the EU's definition of radicalisation is interlinked with its conception of terrorism. While the prevention of radicalisation is primarily a responsibility of Member States,[22] the EU Counter-terrorism Strategy,  adopted by the European Council in 2005 recognised that the EU could provide an added value by facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices, strengthen cooperation and increase joint capabilities.[23] In order to do so, the EU Commission deploys the following policy instruments to support member states' counter-radicalisation measures: countering terrorist propaganda, and illegal hate speech online, addressing radicalisation in prisons, promoting inclusive society, education and EU common values, boosting research, evidence building, monitoring, and networks, strengthening international cooperation, enhancing the rights of and support to victims of terrorism and remembrance.[24]

Since the EU is an entity built on interdependence that interconnects the internal and external security aspects, the EU has therefore established a holistic anti-terrorism approach through the EU Counter-terrorism Strategy of 2005, which was revised in 2014 in the light of changing trends in domestic and international terrorism.[25]

Most of the Islamic terrorist activity was connected to Al-Qaeda in the early 2000s, and the attacks were mostly organized bombings. After 9/11, the deadliest attacks of that time were

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[22] The DG for Migration and Home Affairs compiled information on Member States' strategies to prevent and counter radicalisation leading to violent extremism or terrorism as well as counter terrorism strategies which have a section dedicated to prevention. The list based on publicly available data is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-and-member-states/repository_en
[23] Full text available at:
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204
[24] See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/crisis-and-terrorism/radicalisation_en
[25] Full text available at:
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/87257.pdf

the 2004 Madrid train bombings which killed 193 civilians and the 2005 London bombings, which killed 52 people. In the early-2010s, particularly after 2014, Islamic terrorist activity in Europe increased. There was also a change in the nature of the terrorist attacks, which shifted from those aiming for mass casualties through bombings to more individualised form of attacks using weapons such as guns and knives as well as vehicles.

In addition to the changes in the "trends" for terrorist activities, proliferation of Internet users and social media platforms also changed the dynamics for extremist recruitment. As such, the 2014 revision of the Strategy aimed to update the existing strategy to consider these developments.

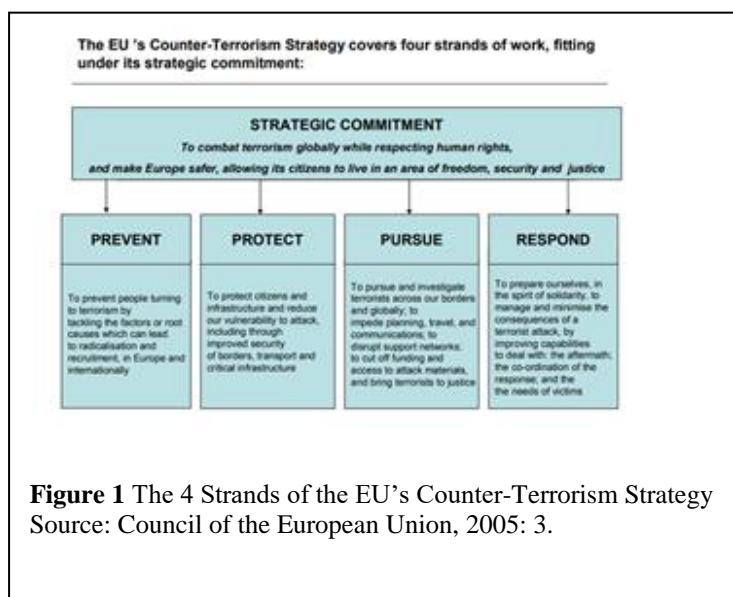### 3.1.1. Prevention, protection, pursuit and response

The EU's Counter-terrorism Strategy commits the Union to fight terrorism internationally while upholding human rights and making it possible for people to live within an environment of democracy, security, and justice.[26] It is built around four strands, which remain the pillars of the EU's counter-terrorism strategy (Figure 1):

- **Prevent** people from turning to terrorism and stop future generations of terrorists from emerging;
- **Protect** citizens and critical infrastructure by reducing vulnerabilities against attacks;
- **Pursue** and investigate terrorists, impede planning, travel and communications, cut off access to funding and materials and bring terrorists to justice; and
- **Respond** in a coordinated way by preparing for the management and minimisation of the consequences of a terrorist attack, improving capacities to deal with the aftermath and considering the needs of victims (Council of The European Union, 2005: 3).

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[26] As noted above, Article 83 TFEU gives the European Parliament and the Council the competence to adopt minimum rules concerning the definition of particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimension, of which terrorism is an example.

Furthermore, across these pillars, the strategy recognises the importance of cooperation with non-EU countries and international institutions.

Among these four pillars, "**Prevention**" is the primary strand that addresses radicalism and radical/radicalising individuals. Protection, pursuit and response, on the other hand, address place safeguards to maintain EU citizens' safety and wellbeing before and after possible terrorist attacks. Therefore, these pillars pertain to the stages before and after a terrorist act is committed.



**Figure 1** The 4 Strands of the EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy Source: Council of the European Union, 2005: 3.

The main focus of the EU is addressing the causes of radicalisation and terrorist recruitment. The prevention pillar seeks to fight against terrorist radicalisation and recruitment through the detection of terrorist strategies, propaganda, and instruments. The prevention pillar was further developed in 2014 in the Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism (Council of the European Union, 2014), which takes into account current trends, such as lone-actor terrorism, foreign fighters and social media propaganda, in combatting terrorism recruitment and radicalisation.[27]

> The main objective of the strategy should be to prevent people from becoming radicalised, being radicalised and being recruited to terrorism and to prevent a new generation of terrorists from emerging (Council of the European Union, 2014: 3).

As such, this Revised Strategy document acknowledges that radicalisation is an ongoing threat to EU security. Significantly, as will also be mentioned in the next section, "narratives" and "counter-narratives" have also been introduced as an essential part of the radicalisation discourse's counter-radicalisation element. In this sense, the Strategy states that:

> Some of the most effective counter-narrative work has also engaged with groups of victims of terrorism to create a genuinely powerful message. Many victims of terrorism have already engaged in prevention efforts through public outreach events; we must continue to support their efforts. As witnesses to the human consequences of terrorist attacks, victims and their families are best placed to "de-glamorise" and "de-legitimise" the terrorist narrative (Council of the European Union, 2014: 8).

[27] Full text available at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9956-2014-INIT/en/pdf

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The most important aspect of this statement is its emphasis on attempts to "de-glamorise" and "de-legitimise" the terrorist narrative. This also implies the perceived "heroic" and "glamorized" appeal of radicalisation and subsequent terrorist activity.

Furthermore, the 2014 Strategy is vital to the counter-terrorism debate in the EU as it identifies the relevant individuals who need to be trained to detect early signs of radicalisation by observing attitudes and behaviours. This approach also formulates radicalisation as a reversible phenomenon.

> A wide range of sectors can help to prevent people supporting terrorism or promoting an extremist ideology linked terrorism or becoming terrorists. Training of teachers, social and health care workers, religious leaders, community police officers, and prison and probation staff is a critical element of any successful programme to counter radicalisation. These practitioners or first line workers may be able to identify signs of radicalisation at an early stage, therefore they need to be aware of and understand signs of radicalisation to terrorism (Council of the European Union, 2014: 8).

While this has since been integrated into counter-terrorism measures, as noted in the Council's statement above, this measure still operates on the vague and undefined interlinks between signs of radicalisation and signs of terrorism. These linkages are further complicated by the pathologisation of radicalisation through "signs". However, an essential shortcoming in this conception of the term is that it does not provide a clear-cut understanding of these so-called "signs". As the psychology and sociology literature on radicalisation indicate, there are diverse motivations as well as various contexts in which radicalisation occurs; therefore, these signs are difficult to identify (Benevento, 2020).

Furthermore, the EU lists the ongoing work in this area as the Radicalisation Awareness Network and the follow up on the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation, which are discussed in the next section. In terms of countering radicalisation online, the EU Internet Forum and the Recommendation on tackling illegal content online with a specific focus on terrorist content are essential programmes.[28]

Following the prevention pillar, **protecting** citizens and infrastructure and reducing vulnerability to attacks is the second priority of the EU counter-terrorism strategy. This includes securing external borders, strengthening transport security, defending strategic priorities, and reducing critical infrastructure vulnerability (Council of the European Union, 2005: 3). Examples of ongoing research are the Action Plan on Public Spaces Security to increase support for EU countries' efforts to secure and mitigate the vulnerability of public spaces; and the so-called CBRN Action Plan to improve preparedness for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) health risks; the proposal for a regulation on the sale and use of explosives precursors.[29]

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[28] See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Al33275.
[29] See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Al33275.

The third pillar aims to **pursue** terrorists across borders while upholding human rights and international law. In order to do so, the EU's attention is on strengthening police and judicial cooperation and information exchange; depriving terrorists of funding and communication; and combating terrorist funding. An example of ongoing of the pursuit pillar is the 2016 Action Plan which aims to intensify the fight against terrorist financing.

Preparing, mitigating and reducing the effects of a terrorist attack; that is, the **response** is the EU's fourth counter-terrorism policy goal. This is achieved by developing resources to resolve the aftermath; organizing response; and needs of victims. Priorities in this area include designing EU crisis coordination arrangements; improving risk evaluation tools; exchanging best practices on assisting terrorist victims.

### 3.1.2. Engagement with international partners

The 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy also included cooperation with international partners, but these partnerships became more important in the 2014 revision. The European Council requested an effective counter-terrorism policy integrating internal and external aspects of security in June 2014. On 9 February 2015, following Charlie Hebdo's attacks, EU leaders stressed the need for EU cooperation with non-EU countries on security and counter-terrorism issues.

In its conclusions of 19 June 2017 on "EU International Action on Counter-Terrorism", the Council asserted the necessity for greater consistency between internal and external security activities and enhancing the role of JHA agencies (Justice and Home Affairs) in non-EU countries.[30] As such, the Council of the EU (2017: 2) notes that:

> The Council is appalled by the heinous terrorist attacks that have taken place all over the world, pays respect to the victims, and expresses its deepest condolences to the victims', families and friends. The Council also reaffirms that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Recent terrorist attacks within the EU and further afield remind us that countering terrorism and preventing radicalization remain priority challenges to the EU and its citizens. The combination of home-grown terrorists operating in networks; terrorists acting alone; foreign terrorist fighter returnees be they men, women or minors; attacks directed, encouraged or inspired by Da'esh and Al Qaeda; cyber related challenges; and the propagation of ideologies and beliefs that leads to radicalization and violent extremism, are parts of the evolving threat picture.

While acknowledging the diversity of terrorist acts, this statement directly refuted the rise of the public and political discourse which associated radicalism and terrorism exclusively with Islam and Muslim communities.

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[30] See https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23999/st10384en17-conclusions-on-eu-external-action-on-counter-terrorism.pdf

The EU cooperates with non-EU countries in terms counter-terrorism in various ways, which include high-level political dialogues; introducing co-operation provisions and agreements or relevant assistance; and capacity-building projects with strategic countries. The EU currently collaborates on counter-terrorism with countries in the Western Balkans, Africa (the Sahel, North Africa, the Horn of Africa), the Middle East, North America, and Asia.

The EU also cooperates with other international organisations (such as the UN and OSCE) and regional bodies to create international consensus and uphold international standards. Nonetheless, in addition to international collaboration and membership to international organisations the external dimension of EU's security policy has evolved since the 1990s. It gained momentum in the 2000s due to the proliferation of transnational threats as well as the expansion of the Union's external borders. The EU first attempted to impose its own model of internal security upon its neighbours, and currently it attempts to foster norms within the international community through its own ethical behaviour to address transnational security challenges (Rees, 2008:106). Therefore, over time the external dimension of the EU's security policy has become intertwined with its internal efforts.

## 3.2.    Stockholm Programme of 2009

Complementing the above measures, the 2009 Stockholm Plan of the European Council offers a framework for EU intervention on issues related to citizenship, justice, security, asylum, immigration, and visa policy between 2010 and 2014.[31] It called for a consistent policy response surpassing the areas of freedom, security and justice and including external relations, development cooperation, social affairs and employment, education and health, gender equality and non-discrimination.

This Programme is also aligned with the 2005 Counter-terrorism Strategy, which also emphasises "early signs" of radicalisation as behavioural changes. In the Stockholm Programme (Council of the European Union, 2009: 51), the European Council calls upon:

> • Member States to develop prevention mechanisms, in particular to allow the early detection of signs of radicalisation or threats, including threats from violent, militant extremism;

> • the Commission, the Council and Member States to improve initiatives to counter radicalisation in all vulnerable populations on the basis of an evaluation of the effectiveness of national policies; Member States should identify best practices and specific operational tools to be shared with other Member States; new areas of work could include integration and the fight against discrimination;

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[31] Full text available at: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/the_stockholm_programme_-_an_open_and_secure_europe_en_1.pdf
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2010%3A115%3ATOC

• Member States, government institutions and the Commission, together with the civil society, to enhance their efforts and cooperate even more closely, especially at local level, in order to understand all the factors underlying the phenomenon and to promote strategies that encourage people to give up terrorism.[32]

In this sense, maintaining that the "prevention" pillar is the main priority for the EU, this Programme also defers some of the responsibility to member states. Significantly, "new areas of work could include integration and the fight against discrimination," also indicates the perception of radicalised/radicalising individuals as "non-integrated", thereby isolated, separated or marginalised persons. This is complemented by an implicit acknowledgement of "discrimination" as a factor in becoming radicalised.

As these points indicate, the Stockholm Programme is also essential in terms of identifying the different governmental, non-governmental, and supranational institutions as having to deploy various strategies to address the threat of radicalisation. Simultaneously, as will be discussed under the Radicalisation Awareness Network established in 2011, the strategies since 2005 also acknowledge the centrality of local administrations and first-line individuals, which indicates the growing awareness of the radicalisation as a local phenomenon.

### 3.3. European Agenda on Security of 2015[33]

In line with the criminalisation and securitisation of the radicalisation discourse, the EU moved towards a more substantive, explicitly security-based articulation of radicalisation. In the European Agenda on Security of 2015, the Commission set out its overall strategy stressing the holistic and multi-actor approach and further developed its approach in the 2014 Communication on Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response.[34] European Security Agenda's key objective is to identify and criminalise terrorist acts, to deter radicalisation, and dissemination of terrorist propaganda, and to eliminate the means, such as finance, firearms, explosives, to carry out terrorist attacks such as money, weapons, explosives.[35]

The European Security Agenda of 2015 lays out the criteria for EU action in responding to security threats as well as identifying the European Commission's key measures. The document defines the three targets for urgent intervention, including **terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime** (European Commission, 2015). These three priorities have a strong-cross border dimension, and according to the Agenda, national governments and EU

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[32] See Council conclusions on de-radicalisation and disengagement, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/129811.pdf
[33] Full text is available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52015DC0185
[34] Full text is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/basic-documents/docs/eu_agenda_on_security_en.pdf
[35] Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions, The European Agenda on Security, Strasbourg, 28.4.2015 COM(2015) 185 final, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/basic-documents/docs/eu_agenda_on_security_en.pdf

institutions are both accountable for Euroepan security in these areas. In terms of terrorism and radicalisation, the Agenda recommends a new European Counter-Terrorism Centre to be established within Europol, to combine expertise, tracing terrorist funding, and tackling the root causes of extremism. In regards to international organised crime, the Agenda notes that neighbouring countries will be taking active part in operational endeavours and that there will be more substantial efforts to combat crime financing, and fighting people-smuggling and human trafficking. In regards to the prevention of cybercrime, among others, the Agenda addresses online recruitment by extremist organisations as well as the restriction of terrorist propaganda.[36]

This Agenda also widened the understanding of counter-radicalisation measures by stating that the Internal Security Fund should be employed to develop "'exit strategies' for radicalised persons" based on the works of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (European Commission, 2015: 11). Furthermore, it stated that:

> Terrorism in Europe feeds on extremist ideologies. EU action against terrorism therefore needs to address the root causes of extremism through preventive measures. Throughout the EU, the link between radicalisation and extremist violence is becoming ever clearer. Extremist propaganda has been shown to lead foreign terrorist fighters from Europe to travel abroad to train, fight and commit atrocities in combat zones, and to threaten the internal security of the EU on their return (European Commission, 2015: 14).[37]

The European Agenda on Security of 2015 has been one of the key documents which addressed the "root causes of extremism". This was significant because it partially eradicated the misconception that extremism and terrorism were ideologically-driven without any rational root cause. This statement's reference to foreign fighters from Europe is also very important. This Agenda published in 2015, followed the UN meeting held at the level of Heads of State or Government on 24 September 2014, in which the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2178 to address the severe and rising threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters through aiming for the prevention of "radicalization to terrorism" (UN, 2014) as well as recruitment.[38]

This statement was aligned with the increases in foreign fighters and "home-grown" terrorists across the EU member states. Additionally, this Agenda deals with the stigmatisation of groups and communities. Despite the significance of acknowledging the potential effects of the securitising radicalisation, it also notes that that:

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[36] See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A230801_2
[37] Foreign terrorist fighters are defined as "individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict", https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/foreign-terrorist-fighters/
[38] See https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2178%20%282014%29

The EU response to extremism must not lead to the stigmatisation of any one group or community. It must draw on common European values of tolerance, diversity and mutual respect, and promote free and pluralist communities. The EU must cut the support base of terrorism with a strong and determined counter-narrative… Education, youth participation, interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue, as well as employment and social inclusion, have a key role to play in preventing radicalisation by promoting common European values, fostering social inclusion, enhancing mutual understanding and tolerance. Inclusive education can make a major contribution in tackling inequalities and preventing marginalization. Youth work, volunteering, sport and cultural activities are particularly effective in reaching out to young people. Against this background, the Commission will prioritise combating radicalisation, marginalisation of youth and promoting inclusion with a series of concrete actions under the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation on Education and Training ("ET 2020"), the European Youth Strategy, the EU Work Plan for Sport and the Culture Work Plan (European Commission, 2015: 15).

While the emphasis on "narratives" and "counter-narratives" can be found in several EU publications on radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, preventative social inclusion measures have become more prominent after 2015. Nonetheless, within this discursive construct, what comes to the foreground is the emphasis on the promotion of European values, which is considered a preventative measure. European values are articulated along with inclusion measures, which implies that radicalisation is a process exclusive to individuals who do not embrace these shared values. This is strengthened by the mention of culture and faith. However, this is not an explicit reference to those who are culturally and religiously different, namely minority communities. It is, in fact, an implicit reference to polarisation, which is considered along the lines of tolerance and multiculturalism.

The statement above discusses the growing emphasis on youth work and cultural activities, thereby indicating the vulnerability of the youth in terms of radicalisation and extremism. In doing so, it stresses the importance of RAN in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism. The Network, discussed below, facilitates the exchange of experiences and practices that promote the early detection of radicalisation, and the creation of strategies for prevention and disengagement at the local level (European Commission, 2015: 15).

## 3.4.    Internal Security Strategy in 2015

In addition to the European Security Agenda, the EU introduced a new Internal Security Strategy in 2015 to improve the EU's response to common threats such as terrorism (Council of the European Union, 2015).[39] The EU Internal Security Strategy for the 2015-2020 period is described in Council Conclusions of 16 June 2015 and is shared by EU institutions and Member States aimed at resolving the EU's security challenges and threats by 2020. The plan consists of several policy documents: Council Conclusions of 4-5

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[39] Full text is available at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9798-2015-INIT/en/pdf

December 2014, and Council Conclusions of 16 June 2015, based on the principles outlined in the Commission's "European Security Agenda".

The Internal Security Strategy's principles and priorities are aligned with the European Agenda on Security, namely confronting terrorism and preventing radicalisation, including online, disrupting organised crime, and fighting cybercrime. In the Internal Security Strategy, under the common threats, they constitute the main challenges for the internal security of the EU (Council of the European Union, 2015: 14); it is stated that:

> Crime takes advantage of the opportunities offered by a globalised society such as high-speed communications, high mobility and instant financial transactions. Likewise, there are phenomena which have a cross-border impact on security and safety within the EU. There are, therefore, a number of significant common threats which can be identified… Terrorism, in any form, has an absolute disregard for human life and democratic values. Its global reach, its devastating consequences, its ability to recruit through radicalisation and dissemination of propaganda over the Internet and the different means by which it is financed make terrorism a significant and ever-evolving threat to our security (Council of the European Union, 2015: 14).

In this view, radicalisation through online sources is seen as an outcome of globalisation's advancement of technology. In turn, radicalisation is articulated as a step towards terrorist activity, which is constructed as one of the downfalls of globalisation and European integration. In fact, evidence that shows globalisation increases the perception of affiliative, economic and existential threats among the youth. Individuals then turn to radicalism and extremism to compensate for their relative socio-economic and political deprivation as well as to remedy their existential concerns ( Adam-Troian, Tecmen and Kaya, 2019).

### 3.2.1   Internal Security Fund (ISF)

Moreover, the Internal Security Fund (ISF) was also set up for the period 2014-20, with a total of EUR 3.8 billion for the seven years. The Fund promotes the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy, law enforcement cooperation and the management of the Union's external borders. The ISF is composed of two instruments, namely the ISF Borders and Visa and ISF Police. The Funds' activities focus on achieving two specific objectives:

a) Fight against crime: combating cross-border, serious and organised crime including terrorism, and reinforcing coordination and cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other national authorities of EU States, including with EUROPOL and other relevant EU bodies, and with relevant non-EU and international organisations; and

b) Managing risk and crisis: enhancing the capacity of EU States and the Union for managing effectively security-related risk and crisis, and preparing for protecting

people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents.[40]

### 3.5. Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism of 2016[41]

Unlike the previously mentioned texts, the European Commission's "Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism" (2016) directly addresses radicalisation as the first stage in violent extremism and terrorism by stating that:

> The recent terrorist attacks in Europe once again underlined the urgent need to tackle the radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. The majority of the terrorist suspects implicated in those attacks were European citizens, born and raised in Member States, who were radicalised and turned against their fellow citizens to commit atrocities. The prevention of radicalisation is a key part of the fight against terrorism, as was highlighted in the European Agenda on Security (European Commission, 2016: 2).[42]

Nonetheless, its focus is shifted from terrorist attacks committed by non-EU nationals to those committed by EU citizens. Significantly, the Communication also refers to "violent radicalisation" (European Commission, 2016: 3) instead of "violent extremism" thereby reaffirming the contextual relations between radicalism and extremism. As noted earlier, this wording has been used by the EU intermittently to articulate a progression from radicalisation of opinions to radicalisation of behaviours manifesting through violence.

Unlike the other texts mentioned in this paper, this Communication is more advanced in its understanding of radicalisation as an evolving phenomenon which cannot be attributed to a single social class, gender or ideology. While stating that Islamist extremism has become a significant trope of extremism, the European Commission notes that:

> Some 4000 EU nationals are estimated to have joined terrorist organisations in countries of conflict such as Syria and Iraq putting Islamist extremism in the spotlight. Ideological and religious factors are one of many possible drivers of radicalisation. Recruiters and extremist preachers have become adept at exploiting grievances abusing religious narratives and symbols providing justifications for acts

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[40] See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/security-and-safeguarding-liberties/internal-security-fund-police_en

[41] Full text available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0379&from=EN

[42] "This Communication focuses on how work at EU level can support Member States in meeting this challenge in seven specific areas: (i) supporting research, evidence building, monitoring and networking; (ii) countering terrorist propaganda and hate speech online; (iii) addressing radicalisation in prisons; (iv) promoting inclusive education and EU common values; (v) promoting an inclusive, open and resilient society and reaching out to young people; (vi) the security dimension of addressing radicalisation and; (vii) the international dimension" (European Commission, 2016: 3).

of violence. At the same time, religion can play a vital role in preventing or countering radicalisation: it binds communities, strengthens the sense of belonging and guides people in a positive direction (European Commission, 2016: 3).

The European Commission, therefore, acknowledges the complex structures that lead to radicalisation by stating that:

> Radicalisation today has different root causes, operates on the basis of different recruitment and communication techniques, and is marked by globalised and moving targets inside and outside Europe. It grows in various urban and peri-urban contexts and is fuelled and inspired by violence-inciting ideologies that target new audiences such as women and very young people from different social backgrounds. Moreover, violent radicalisation is a complex matter, that depends on an intricate web of push and pull factors. It is not caused by a single "trigger" and does not have a single cause or an inevitable path but is usually the result of a combination of different factors.

> The drivers conducive to radicalisation may include a strong sense of personal or cultural alienation, perceived injustice or humiliation reinforced by social marginalisation, xenophobia and discrimination, limited education or employment possibilities, criminality, political factors as well as an ideological and religious dimension, unstructured family ties, personal trauma and other psychological problems. These factors can be exploited by recruiters who prey on vulnerabilities and grievances through manipulation or be reinforced on the contrary, by self-isolation. Social media provide connectivity, virtual participation and an echo-chamber for like-minded extremist views (European Commission, 2016: 3-4).

While discussing the importance of media literacy, and preventing radicalisation in prisons, this Communication provides an important shift in the definition of radicalisation by attributing the motivations for radicalisation to socio-cultural dynamics which counter the EU's narrative on European values such as equality, and non-discrimination.

Simultaneously, there are also "root causes" of radicalisation which the European Commission frequently attributes to the detrimental effects of globalisation. The references to alienation, injustice, humiliation among others are "personal" psychological and socio-cultural experiences which have been incorporated into the EU's radicalisation discourse in recent years. This also appears to be a result of the changing political dynamics shaped by polarisation among minority and majority communities has since been studies by various social sciences disciplines.

## 3.6. Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA[43]

The most recent definition of radicalisation is provided in Directive 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council dated 15 March 2017. According to this Directive, radicalisation is a phased or complex process in which an individual embraces a radical ideology of belief that accepts, uses, or condones violence. This articulation of radicalisation does not significantly depart from the implicitly and vaguely defined relations between radicalism and violence. However, in this Directive, the EU reemphasises violent ideologies rather than ideological violence. In this sense, the blame on the human agency is partially shifted towards the nature of certain ideologies.

To that end, while Article 31 of Directive (EU) 2017/541 reiterates that the counter-radicalisation strategies should "combine measures in the area of criminal justice with policies in the fields of education, social inclusion and integration, as well as the provision of effective de-radicalisation or disengagement, and exit or rehabilitation programmes, including in the prison and probation context", Articles 32 and 33 note that:

(32) Member States should pursue their efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation leading to terrorism by coordinating, by sharing information and experience on national prevention policies, and by implementing or, as the case may be, updating national prevention policies taking into account their own needs, objectives and capabilities building on their own experiences. The Commission should, where appropriate, provide support to national, regional and local authorities in developing prevention policies.

(33) Member States should, depending on the relevant needs and particular circumstances in each Member State, provide support to professionals, including civil society partners likely to come in contact with persons vulnerable to radicalisation. Such support measures may include, in particular, training and awareness-raising measures aimed at enabling them to identify and address signs of radicalisation. Such measures should, where appropriate, be taken in cooperation with private companies, relevant civil society organisations, local communities and other stakeholders.

These Articles are essential in terms of the identification of multiple layers to radicalisation, which was previously reduced to the local level while also identifying key stakeholders in the counter-radicalisation process. In this sense, Article 33 also states that the variety in Member States' circumstances can also require diverse and country-specific programmes to deal with radicalisation. While the different "needs and particular circumstances" are not defined in the Directive, it appears that these refer to different national social and cultural dynamics on equality, inclusion and integration.

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[43] Full text available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017L0541

### 3.7. High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R)

Due to the rise of extremist and terrorist activities within the EU and across the globe in July 2017 the Commission also set up a group of experts, named the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R) to build capacity for strengthening cooperation between stakeholders and Member States; to continue and develop the implementation of radicalisation prevention policies; to establish a mechanism for future organized cooperation in this area. As the name indicates, the HLCEG-R primarily addresses *radicalisation* rather than extremism or terrorism. In this sense, it specifically works on the radicalisation process, which varies across member states, rather than terrorism, which is established as an EU-wide security concern. As such, the HLCEG-R's responsibility is counter-radicalisation rather than counter-terrorism.

In 2018, the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation reviewed the existing EU programmes on counter-radicalisation and presented various recommendation by addressing the challenges in several areas, such as radicalisation in prisons, online propaganda and communication, ideology and polarisation, cooperation at the local level, education and social inclusion, and children returning from conflict zones or raised in a radicalised environment (European Commission, 2018). In doing so, this final report focused on issues such as member state cooperation while also identifying problematic areas.
This report acknowledged the "alarming speed and scale" of violent extremism and terrorism across the EU, and it reiterated the increase in the significance of EU-wide radicalisation:

> There is no official account of how many radicalised individuals are currently present in EU Member States and posing a potential security threat. Yet, various datasets collected at national level illustrate the magnitude of the problem: approximately 20.000 individuals have been reported in France; in the United Kingdom there are reportedly over 20.000 individuals having featured in previous security service inquiries; and the German security authorities have reported 11.000 Salafists, with a shift towards a more violence-prone and terrorist spectrum. Among those, a smaller fraction is considered as being particularly "dangerous" (European Commission, 2018: 3).

This also implies the extension of radicalisation as a member state's challenge to a threat shared by all member states. However, as seen in the statement above, the report also identified the growing number of already radicalised individuals. Among these statistics, the mention of Salafists in Germany is also notable. As will be discussed under the Radical Awareness Network's publications, this focus on Salafi Islam is not novel, nor is it exclusive to Germany.

### 3.8. EU Cooperation Mechanism

The HLCEG-R's final report (European Commission, 2018) also indicated that there was a greater need for cooperation at the EU level. As noted above, member states carry the primary responsibility for counter-radicalisation measures, but the EU supports the national

measures to prevent socialisation into terrorism. Thus, upon the HLCEG-R's recommendation, on 13 June 2018, the EU Cooperation Mechanism was established with the aim to strengthen existing networks, facilitate systematic exchanges between key stakeholders, to enhance EU level coordination of existing networks and initiatives and to establish a steering body ensuring that EU actions are aligned with Member States' priorities while offering the Member States the prospect of involvement in strategic decisions. (European Commission, 2018: 4).

As such, the Cooperation Mechanism's focus on radicalisation is a part of the EU's emphasis on advancing the cooperation among the Member States and the EU Commission. Although there are not any legally binding deferrals of competence to the EU, the composition of the Mechanism is also indicative of the fact that due to the EU-wide nature of radicalism and radicalisation, the Commission's involvement in radicalisation prevention strategies has been increasing.

4. The EU Networks: The EU Internet Forum, Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) and The European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN)

Based on the institutional structures and stakeholders, radicalisation and violent extremism "prevention" strategies are partially carried out through networks that aim to strengthen cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and practices between the different stakeholders. The EU Internet Forum and Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) are the leading networks established by the EU. The European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN) is another network which mainly focuses on the prevention of radicalisation online.

These networks are particularly important as they have been profoundly concerned with the radicalisation of refugees, asylum-seekers, as well as foreign fighters who have become very prominent in the media and the political arena.

While the Syrian civil war and its aftermath have been detrimental to European security, two main issues which have occupied the political and political discourse. To summarize, the Syrian civil war is an ongoing multi-sided civil war in Syria fought between the Syrian Arab Republic led by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, along with domestic and foreign allies, and several domestic and foreign forces opposing the al-Assad government. Due to the mass civilian casualties since 2011, the first consequence of the Syrian civil war has been the so-called "refugee crisis".[44] The EU has maintained that it is, in fact, attempting to end the conflict and enable the Syrian people to live in peace in Syria.[45] This crisis has led to various discussions on the vulnerability of asylum-seekers and refugees to become radicalised due to their socio-cultural dislocation and disconnection. As will be discussed in

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[44] European and non-European countries all had different experiences with refugees in terms of reception and integration. For a detailed overview, see Kaya and Nagel (2020).
[45] See EU strategy on Syria (April 2017) https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/04/03/fac-conclusions-syria/ and EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat (March 2015)https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14463-2014-INIT/en/pdf

the next section, Radicalisation Awareness Network has published various studies on the refugees' vulnerability and the significance of Salafi Islamist ideology leading to Islamisation of radicalisation. This emphasis on Islam in articulating who radicalises and why; scapegoating Muslims also applies to Muslim-origin migrants (Kaya, 2015; Kaya and Kayaoglu, 2017).

The second consequence of the Syrian civil war has been the foreign fighter phenomenon, which was also mentioned above.[46] Foreign fighters are individuals who join insurgencies abroad for ideological or religious motivations rather than financial reasons. It estimated that between 10 000 and 30 000 foreign fighters participated in armed conflicts in the Muslim world from 1980 to mid-2010 (European Parliament, 2015: 2). However, the rise of the 'Islamic State' (or Daesh or ISIL), which captured large parts of Iraqi and Syrian territory and announced the Caliphate's resettlement, has shown the rise of jihadist ideology and led to an increase in the foreign fighters originating from EU member states. In addition, "[t]ransnational recruits are responsible for higher levels of violence than are local insurgents, and insurgencies that manage to recruit foreign fighters are disproportionately successful as compared to other rebel groups" (Malet, 2010: 97).

> The majority of European foreign fighters leave to join jihadist groups, including the 'Islamic State' and Jabhat al-Nusra, whose ideology is hostile towards Western democracies. These individuals are perceived as a serious security threat to the EU Member States because they may have become further radicalised and acquired combat experience, and therefore be capable of carrying out deadly terrorist attacks once they return to Europe. These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that some jihadist groups have urged Muslims in the West to undertake such attacks (European Parliament, 2015: 2).

As indicated in this statement, the number of European foreign fighters with a jihadist political agenda in the Syrian civil war has increased exponentially in recent years. It has become a significant concern for European policymakers. However, it is not necessarily the acts of foreign fighters abroad that concerns the EU, in fact, the EU focuses on the possibility that radicalised foreign fighters might return to European soil and become potential threats to their fellow citizens (Bakker, Paulussen, Entenmann, 2013).[47]

An important aspect of foreign fighters' recruitment and networking activities also take place over the internet (Klausen, 2015; Watts, 2008; Mendelsohn, 2011; Rudner, 2017). Nonetheless, the use of the internet for recruitment is not exclusive to foreign fighters. In fact, terrorist propaganda is wide-ranging over online mediums such as websites and most importantly, social media. A study by the Ines von Behr, Anaïs Reding, Charlie Edwards, and Luke Gribbon (2013) found that the internet creates more opportunities to become radicalised; it acts as an 'echo chamber': a place where individuals find their ideas

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[46] For further studies on foreign fighters, see Malet (2010, 2013); Mendelsohn (2011);

[47] For the "Timeline: foreign terrorist fighters and recent terrorist attacks in Europe" prepared by the Council of the European Union, see https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/fight-against-terrorism/foreign-fighters/history-foreign-fighters/

supported and echoed by other like-minded individuals; it accelerates the process of radicalisation, it allows radicalisation to occur without physical contact, and it increases opportunities for self-radicalisation. Furthermore, online radicalisation is not solely about recruitment. It also includes the dissemination of narratives and propaganda, information on how to radicalise individuals, prospect to join or associate with radical persons and communities (allowing for individually radicalised individuals to take collective action), searches on how to commit violence, as well as operational planning and fundraising.

## 4.1. Countering Online Radicalisation: EU Internet Referral Unit and The EU Internet Forum

Due to the proliferation of Information Technologies and online communications platforms, online radicalisation has become an essential element in the EU's security agenda. As such, various measures have been taken since the early-2010s, particularly after 2015, to address online radicalisation. For instance, in March 2015, Europol was ordered by the Council to create a dedicated unit to counter online terrorist propaganda. In July 2015, the EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) was established to identify online extremist terrorist and violet material and to advise member states on the subject, among others. Its primary responsibility is to identify and investigate malicious content on the internet and in social media. However, the official website of the EU IRU notes that:

> The work of the EU IRU, which is based at Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), not only produces strategic insights into jihadist terrorism, but also provides information for use in criminal investigations.

> Terrorists' use of the internet and social media has increased enormously over the course of recent years. Jihadist groups, in particular, have demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of how social networks operate and have launched well-organised, concerted social media campaigns to recruit followers and to promote or glorify acts of terrorism and violent extremism.[48]

In this sense, while the majority of the EU agencies or committees do not *explicitly* admit that they focus on jihadist terrorism and their networks, it is evident that EU IRU focuses on the pre-eminence of Islamist propaganda.

The EU Internet Forum was founded in December 2015 to tackle Internet misuse by terrorist organizations, including propaganda distribution and recruitment into extremist or terrorist groups. It brings together Ministers of Home Affairs, Internet industry, Europol and other stakeholders for cooperative collaboration to tackle this dynamic problem and protect EU citizens (European Commission, 2019). The Forum has two main objectives, namely to reduce terrorist content and to empower civil society to offer compelling alternative narratives online through the Civil Society Empowerment Programme, which supports civil society, and grassroots organisations.

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[48] See https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/eu-internet-referal-unit-eu-iru

Using the positive power and tremendous reach of the internet, it empowers these different groups to provide effective alternatives to the messages coming from violent extremists and terrorists, as well as ideas that counter extremist and terrorist propaganda.[49]

By way of the Civil Society Empowerment Programme, the EU is dedicated to building capacity, training, connecting civil society organisations with internet and social media firms, and promoting efforts to target vulnerable individuals and those at risk of extremist radicalisation and recruitment.

In 2017, a training programme was made available for civil society organisations in order to provide participants with the skills needed to design and implement an effective, convincing and credible online campaign, and to ensure it reaches the target audience.[50] As such, this Forum's main objective is to employ civil society as a network that is close to the individual level. Subsequently, the Forum's aim is to formulate narratives and campaigns to counter the narratives disseminated by online recruiters.

## 4.2.    Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

In 2011, The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) funded by the Internal Security Fund was established to link first-line practitioners, field experts, social workers, teachers, NGOs, civil society organisations, victims' groups, local authorities, law enforcement, academics and others. RAN's primary aim is to connect practitioners from all Member States to develop practices, and the expertise they need to tackle violent extremism. In doing so, RAN is the most extensive network of the EU in terms of counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation measures. As discussed below, it is mainly comprised of thematic working groups that focus on a variety of topics.

However, RAN also participates in the "EU Protects" campaign, which is a multi-layered programme built around the security of EU borders and EU citizens on various topics ranging from health to radicalisation. [51] According to the website of this campaign, radicalisation "can take many forms – religious, political and social – that provide inspiration for extremist groups and, potentially, violence." Aligned with this broad definition, the "EU Protects" campaign also employs individuals who have very different experiences of radicalisation. These individuals include those who have lost loved ones due to terrorist activity and those whose family members were affiliated with extremist ideology. In doing

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[49] See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/civil-society-empowerment-programme_en

[50] Training material on Creating online campaigns around counter and alternative narratives; Campaigns; Lessons learned; Target audience are available: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/civil-society-empowerment-programme/training_en

[51] Website of the "EU Protects" campaign on radicalisation is available at: https://europa.eu/euprotects/our-safety/awareness-prevention-how-eu-combating-radicalisation-across-europe_en

so, this campaign is more developed in its recognition of the various individuals/groups who have been impacted by radicalisation. Compared to other EU initiatives, the "EU protects" campaign focuses on the human element in the radicalisation discourse. As such, it focuses on the support networks in radicalisation "prevention" strategies.

Furthermore, RAN is built on the premise that identifying signs of radicalisation is difficult due to the variations in behaviour as well as the lack of consensus on the definition of radicalisation. In addressing these issues, RAN notes that:

> Throughout Europe, training courses have been put in place to raise awareness and understanding among first-liners with responsibility for individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, leading to violent extremism or terrorism. First-line workers who can make an important contribution include teachers, youth workers, community police officers, child protection workers and (mental) health care workers. In contrast to policy-makers, for example, first-line workers are able to – potentially – recognise and refer individuals who may be vulnerable or who are showing signs of actual radicalisation. However, they do not always have a sufficient understanding of processes of radicalisation, are not able to assess the warning signs, or do not know the best way to respond (RAN, 2019: 4).

As noted above, RAN is structured around thematic working groups, driven by a Steering Committee chaired by the Commission.

| Working group | Description |
|---|---|
| Communication and Narratives working group (RAN C&N) | Focuses on the delivery of both on- and offline communication that offers alternatives or that counters extremist propaganda and/or challenges extremist ideas. |
| Education working group (RAN EDU) | Bringing together first-line education practitioners throughout Europe to empower them to counter radicalisation. Schools have the objective to provide a safe and respectful environment for their students. It is part of their role to teach democratic and social values, and to help students form their identity. |
| EXIT working group (RAN EXIT) | Dealing with the process of moving from a radicalised and violent mindset and/or environment towards mainstream society. |
| Youth, Families and Communities working group (RAN YF&C) | Engaging with and empowering youth, communities and families to support the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. |
| Local authorities working group (RAN LOCAL) | Involves local authorities who are in charge of coordinating practitioners at their local level and organising their multi-agency work and structures. |
| Prison and Probation working group (RAN P&P) | Supports practitioners in the prison and probation sector who have a role in preventing radicalisation. |
| Police and law enforcement working group (RAN POL) | Supports police and other law enforcement officials who are responsible for community related police work. |
| Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism working group (RAN RVT) | Victims of terrorism (both targets of attacks and those who have lost a relative) are involuntary experts on the harm that violent extremism causes to humankind. Victims will be remembered and their voices broadcast to counter radicalisation. |
| Health and Social Care working group (RAN H&SC) | The key challenge for the health and social care sector is to interpret signs of radicalisation and help those individuals who might be at risk of being radicalised. |
| Steering Committees | The RAN Steering Committee is chaired by the European Commission and includes all working group leaders and the Centre of Excellence. The Steering Committee usually meets four times a year. |
| RAN YOUNG | Young people can provide a valuable contribution to the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism, and should be empowered to take an active role in doing so. |

Table 1: RAN thematic working groups[52]

These ten working groups illustrate the variety of themes that emerge within the EU's radicalisation discourse. Significantly, three of these working groups, namely Education

[52] Source https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran_en

working group (RAN EDU), Youth, Families and Communities working group (RAN YF&C) and RAN YOUNG emphasise the "youth" element of radicalisation while employing a multi-faceted approach. Within this structure, RAN Young is also important in the sense that it does not identify the youth as an age group that tends to radicalise but rather as a group that can pro-actively deter others from radicalising.[53]

While RAN operates with the EU's broader definition of radicalism which does not identify a specific religious or ideological group, in 2018, Radicalisation Awareness Network also published a report of Salafi Islamist Extremism titled "Radical Islamism: A Practical Guide", which provided an overview of the fundamental elements of violent Islamist extremism in order "to enable recognition of its symbols, vocabulary, recruitment tactics and narratives used in various settings, including online, in our schools, local communities, or prisons" (RAN, 2018: 4). While the report also noted that the manifestations of violent Islamist extremism at the local, national and EU levels are diverse, it focused specifically on Salafi-jihadism. In explaining its focus on Salafism, the report notes that this stems from the statistical data showing that terrorists and foreign fighters who "left" the EU subscribed to Salafi ideology.

> "Violent Islamist extremism" is an umbrella concept for different forms of violence promoting extremist groups within both Sunni and Shia Islam. There is great variation and manifestation across different EU states. Groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS adhere to the Salafi-jihadi school of ideological thought, which is part of the Sunni manifestation, while there are also violent Shia manifestations. Violent Islamist extremists are united in their rejection of democratic rule of law and the expression of individual human rights.

> This report focuses primarily on the Salafi-jihadi dimensions given that a majority of terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) who left for Iraq and Syria originate from this ideological strand. It is important to recognise that not all Salafists are jihadists. (RAN, 2018: 5).

An important part of this report is its focus on recruitment, which, as noted above, is one of the key areas under "prevention" strategies. Aligned with RAN's focus on the youth, this report also identifies youngsters as a vulnerable group which may be appealed by the jihadist ideological narrative. Significantly, this report departs from the majority of EU commissioned reports in its focus on individual factors such as alienation. This significant shift from community ideologies that condone or event promotes violence against the "other" to the individual discontents and deprivations also became prominent after the 2015 "refugee crisis" (Dimitriadi et.al. As such, it notes that:

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[53] Education working group (RAN EDU) is available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-edu), Youth, Families and Communities working group (RAN YF&C) is available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-yf-and-c) and RAN YOUNG is available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-young_en.

The Salafi-jihadi ideology and its interlocking narratives contribute to its popularity among youths. For some it provides a new identity for alienated individuals who discover (or rediscover) their religiosity, providing them with a sense of dignity and belonging. It is also attractive for many as the worldview of believers is binary and uncompromising, dividing everything into good and evil. For some it represents a protest ideology against the established order. For others, it provides a utopia and promise of heavenly rewards in the afterlife.

Whatever the underlying reasons for joining Salafi-jihadi groups, recruitment remains essential. There are multiple arenas that the Salafi-jihadi ecosystem exploit in their recruitment efforts to the cause. It is often a combination of making initial contact through online activity that is continued offline through social events, religious meetings or demonstrations (RAN, 2018: 19).

This emphasis on youth also coincided with RAN's intense emphasis on Salafism and the refugee crisis, especially after 2015.

Furthermore, RAN (2020) has also published various reports and briefs on radicalisation among vulnerable groups such as the Brief on "Preventing the risk of radicalisation of asylum seekers and refugees, and far-right mobilisation against asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants". The brief noted that in 2016, a report by Eurocities, a network of local governments of major European cities, summarised the concerns in 28 European cities:

The refugee situation in many European cities raises two main concerns relating to anti-radicalisation: fear of radicalisation of asylum seekers who may be vulnerable to recruiters targeting refugee shelters, and concerns about rising violence of extreme right-wing groups towards asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants (Eurocities, 2016: 6 cited in RAN 2020).[54]

In this Brief, RAN experts identified four groups of people with a higher risk of vulnerability to violent extremism or radicalisation:

1) Refugees with mental health issues those suffering from mental health issues/illnesses and socio psychological problems;
2) Rejected asylum seekers those excluded from the asylum procedures and who remain in the country, for instance because they won't cooperate on their repatriation;
3) Unaccompanied minors; and
4) Unaccompanied minors turning 18+ (young adults) (RAN, 2020: 5).[55]

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[54] Eurocities. (2016). City responses on preventing radicalisation and violent extremism: Social inclusion as a tool? Brussels, Belgium: Eurocities. Retrieved from
http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Radicalisation%20report_Oct16_FINAL.pdf
[55] Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2020, 17/01/2020 POLICY BRIEF "Preventing the risk of radicalisation of asylum seekers and refugees, and far-right mobilisation against asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants"

Significantly, this Brief is also discussed the Prevention of far-right extremist mobilisation against asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants. In doing so, it summarizes the polarisation model developed by Bart Brandsma. According to Brandsma, there are three rules to polarization (cited in RAN, 2020: 13-14):

> 1. Polarisation is a thought construct, 'us-and-them' thinking, based on identities and groups. Polarisation is the spin, the story exploiting an incident or conflict;
> 2. Polarisation needs fuel; it thrives on talking about identities in combination with judgment. If there is no communication, no energy put into the polarisation, it will die out; and
> 3. Polarisation is about feelings and emotions. Facts and figures won't get the job done in managing polarisation.

The mention of "immigrants" as well as "polarisation" is an important shift in the articulation of radicalism and radicals. In the majority of the programmes and strategies, polarisation was an inferred issue; however, this Brief also acknowledges the two sides of the coin, namely the right-wing, nationalist radicalisation and radicalisation among asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants. In this sense, while the preceding texts have constructed the terrorist as the "other" of European citizens and a threat to the European values. This document, on the other hand, is more nuanced. As the RAN's operations are close to the local communities as well as the victims of radicalisation, it recognises the emotional and psychological aspect of the process.

## 5. European Parliament and definitions of radicalisation

Due to its role in the EU, the Commission has been the key institution in developing an understanding of radicalisation. However, the European Parliament has also been active in commissioning studies on radicalism and radicalisation. The Parliament has also established several committees and services which provide insight into the EU's definition. These include the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS). As will be shown in this section, in comparison to the Commission, the Parliament has a more critical approach to current approaches to radicalisation.

### 5.1. Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) was founded in 1992. It is a committee of the European Parliament that is responsible for protecting civil liberties and human rights, including those of minorities, as listed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Since its establishment, LIBE has

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/policy_brief_breaking_the_cycle_122019_en.pdf

been one of the key agencies in the European Parliament's understanding of radicalisation. To expand on the EU's focus on the youth as a vulnerable group, this section focuses on two studies that were commissioned by the Parliament.

In a briefing paper submitted to the European Parliament in January 2008 titled "Preventing Violent Radicalisation and Terrorist recruitment in the EU: the threat to Europe by Radical Islamic terrorist groups", Laurent Bonelli and Didier Bigo (2008) provided analysis and evaluation of the different strategies aiming to deal with radicalisation while assessing their effectiveness. Bonelli and Bigo (2008) deny the idea that the radicalisation process comes from a single group's actions, rather it emphasizes the relations between the different actors including vulnerable groups, public authorities and the media among others. As such, this study argues that radicalisation itself leads to counter-radicalisation measures within the EU institutions and member states, which may sometimes contribute to reinforcing initial radicalisation rather than eradicating initial radicalisation. In this sense, Bonelli and Bigo's study is very enlightening, especially considering that it was written in 2008 which was before the proliferation of attacks on European soil, as well as being before the foreign fighters phenomenon. Most significantly, this study was critical of the reports produced both by member states and the EU. The prevalent point criticism in this study was that these actors were also involved in "reciprocal engagement dynamics, leading to the spiral of radicalisation, counter-radicalisation, and new radicalisation (Bonelli and Bigo, 2008: 28). The authors also note that this entails a terminology of "escalation" which mainly stems from the fact that:

> the radicalisation terminology used in the reports on terrorism is nothing else but the same terminology that has been well-known by any expert on violence: the terminology of escalation (Bonelli and Bigo, 2008: 3).

Furthermore, Bigo et al.'s (2014) study titled "Preventing and countering youth radicalisation in the EU" focuses on how to prevent youth radicalisation in the EU. It evaluates counter-radicalisation policies, both in terms of their efficiency and their broader social and political impact. Building on a conception of radicalisation as a process of escalation, it highlights the need to take into account the relation between individuals, groups and state responses.

This study mainly argues that youth radicalisation should not be disconnected from its social and political context and must be investigated within the broader scope of sociology of conflict and violence studies. It also criticizes the conception of radicalisation as a form of pre-terrorism that could be disrupted before the shift to violence by intensive surveillance of a community. Bigo et al. therefore argues that radicalisation should not be analysed as a linear process but as a relational dynamic (Adam-Troian, Tecmen and Kaya, 2019; Kaya, 2020). Finally, the authors note that the dynamics of escalation or de-escalation should also be considered when analysing radicalisation. In doing so, they argue that:

> 'Radicalisation' appears to be an unhelpful concept to understand forms of political violence, and simplistic causal links have obscured the fact that radicalisation processes are complex and difficult to anticipate and predict (Bigo et al., 2014: 6).

This study has three main findings, which criticize the conception of radicalisation as a linear process which can be observed in different groups in similar manners. Bigo et al. first argue that there is no such thing as a single or even prevalent set of motivations, driving radicalisation at the individual level. Second, radicalisation should be viewed as a non-mechanical process. Third, an extremist discourse and/or an extremist environment do not necessarily produce violent individual trajectories (Bigo et al., 2014: 11).

## 5.2.    European Parliament Research Service (EPRS)[56]

The European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) provides Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work. Anita Orav's (2015) Briefing titled "Religious fundamentalism and radicalisation" submitted to the EPRS is also critical of the EU's conception of radicalisation. It focuses on a 2008 report by the Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation [57] suggests that radicalisation can be considered as socialization to extremism, which may lead to terrorism.

European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation's report "Radicalisation Processes Leading to Acts of Terrorism" (Reinares et al. 2008: 6, 7) starts off with the definition provided by the European Commission 'embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism' and makes some important distinctions as to whether it might necessarily include the use of violence or not and whether or not adherence to ideas needs to be accompanied by corresponding behaviour. Orav maintains that the current approach builds on socio-political contexts, and considers

> the interrelation of social structures and exposure to violence as factors contributing to the development of radical terrorists. Hence, radicalisation can be viewed as a phenomenon relying on a combination of global, sociological and political factors, and with ideological and psychological aspects (Orav 2015: 2).

In this sense, compared to the European Commission institutional approach which is almost exclusively focused on European security as well as counter-terrorism, the European Parliament's articulation of radicalisation and radical individuals is more complex. This complexity stems from the fact that the Parliament does not propose legislation or strategies, and it is not an administrative unit. The European Commission, on the other hand, is an executive body, which is also political due to its responsibility on protecting the EU external borders. Therefore, this institutional set-up also accounts for the Commission's

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[56] European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) The database of the EPRS is available at:
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/stay-informed/research-and-analysis
[57] European Commission Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, Radicalisation processes leading to acts of Terrorism, May 2008.

broader and more collective approach to understanding radicalisation in reference to the possible threat of escalation to terrorism.

## Conclusion

As a unique form of regional integration, the European Union's approach to radicalisation is complex and multi-layered. First and foremost, the division of competences which deems radicalisation a member state competence and terrorism an EU competence is the foundation of this complexity. This also means that the threat of "violence", whether actual or perceived, whether ideologically or socio-economically-driven, makes extremist actions a concern of the EU. The European Commission is the leading EU institution discursively constructing radicalisation through various apparatus including intertextuality. The Commission's work is also aligned with the widely used discourse on radicalisation as a process of escalation, which entails socialisation into extremism and terrorism. In this sense, while counter-radicalisation measures which are the responsibility of member states entail more localised strategies that consider the contexts in which individuals radicalise. Therefore, the Commission's counter-terrorism measures manage and respond to the potential and actual threats from radicalised individuals who have already escalated into violent behaviours.

Particularly after 2011, networks, such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network, on the other hand, operate on the assumption that EU member states can train first-line practitioners who can identify the "signs" of radicalisation. This pathologising term is often vaguely discussed in the EU documents, perhaps because signs can vary across age groups and genders as well as socio-economic contexts. Nonetheless, the repetitive use of the phrase "root causes" has become more recurrent since 2015. As opposed to "signs", "root causes" connotes a more generalised framework, and grounds the articulation of radicalisation as a social, economic and political phenomenon. The drivers of radicalisation of the European Commission have also diversified over the years to include personal or cultural isolation, perceived inequality, injustice or humiliation compounded by social marginalization, xenophobia and prejudice, restricted educational or employment opportunities, unstructured family relations, criminality, political factors as well as ideological and religious elements.

Furthermore, there is a clear and undeniable shift that Islamised radicalisation after the 2010s, coinciding with the rise of terrorist activities on European soil and across the globe as well as the Syrian civil war, which, after 2015, has led to the refugee crisis and the foreign fighters phenomenon. In this sense, since the TREVI group in the 1970s, European Communities, and later the EU has been reacting to the global and regional extremist trends through articulating their understanding of radicalisation and countermeasures in a reactive, and temporal manner. As a consequence, the EU does not have a pre-emptive strategy which provides a set definition for radicalisation or vulnerable groups/communities. Aligned with global trends, the European Commission also addresses Salafist jihadist ideology as the major radicalising force, rather than emphasising the propensity for radicalisation across the political spectrum. In this sense, the works

associated with the European Parliament are more inclusive of far-right radicalisation, but these works do not directly shape EU policies.

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