



# Erasmus+ Project

Prevention of violent Radicalisation and  
Of Violent Actions in intergroup relations



## GUIDELINES WP5 A5.1

Concerning the  
Prevention of violent  
Radicalisation and  
Of Violent Actions in  
intergroup relations



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**WP5 A5.1**  
**GUIDELINES**  
**Concerning the Prevention of violent Radicalisation and**  
**Of Violent Actions in intergroup relations**

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# EUROPEAN GUIDELINES

## 1. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

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A more systematic, complex and broader perspective of youth violent radicalisation should be taken into account to avoid mechanistic or simplifying readings. Therefore, it is essential to understand what means to be adolescents (and what they feel), bearing in mind the psychosocial features of the adolescence. In other words, the analysis of violent radicalisation processes should include not only individual dimensions but also the structural elements of political, economic and social nature, including the gender perspective.

There is no evidence of one universal violent radicalisation process. It is shaped by the interactions between local context and individuals. At the same time, the sole de-radicalisation and exit strategies – especially with a securitarian approach – are not a preventive strategy. The prevention is a long-term strategy based on an educational approach, social inclusion and resources development.

It is necessary to enhance empowering intervention by increasing competences, capabilities critical analysis of professionals and minors/young adults and their families to face social exclusion and to promote positive relationships.

Prevention of youth violent radicalisation should promote the implementation of:

- the **multi-level interventions**, considering the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of societies;
- the **multi-dimension analysis**, taking into account cultural, social, economic, and political issues;
- the **multi-component approach**, exploring cognitive, emotional, behavioural, relationship factors.

## 2. TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

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**2.1.** The initiatives of training programmes for professionals should promote **interchange** spaces to value their experiences and knowledge with the aim to contextualise, problematize, and improve their practices. Training programmes should increase knowledge about the different cultures, religions and vulnerabilities of youth and promote skills among professionals to address youth anger and negative emotions.

Training for professionals allows getting to know each other, consolidating an elevated sense of professional identity, and improving the ability to support education, competences, and development of social identity of youth by focusing on their psychosocial features and socio-economic constraints.

**2.2.** Social, educational and justice institutions and NGOs should implement a **multi-agency approach** to prevent youth violent radicalisation. It means to share ideas, information and experiences, to increase teamwork and cooperative decision-making, and to coordinate interventions based on good practices. This collaborative effort can be achieved through shared training and methods among different services to foster social inclusion and understand signals of the violent radicalisation process.

## 3. INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES IN WORKSHOPS WITH MINORS AND YOUNG ADULTS UNDER CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

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**3.1.** **Juvenile prisons** have to become a real space for socialisation and future social integration. Their **standards have to be guaranteed in Europe**, as regard accommodation and housing condition, work, educational activities, and as regards involved professionals (prison officers, social workers, psychologists, educators). Also, spiritual well-being is an important aspect that has to be carefully taken into account.

Preventive and educational work has to be founded on temporary stability, avoiding short-term projects, in order to promote socialisation, mutual respect, cognitive and emotional skills and to maintain links with informal networks of minors, if present (families, relatives, and friends).

**3.2.** **Innovative and participatory methods** appear essential in the implementation of workshops addressed to juvenile target, in particular as **narrative practices**, **life storytelling** tools and **theatrical methods** (which also let dissemination and communication of the experiences within the broader community through public performances).

The **Space manipulation**, too, is an innovative way to generate interest and satisfaction, and to reduce conflicts, reaching positive relationships. This activity can increase participants' awareness, social competences and sense of belonging in a shared environment. Consequently, educational, relational and vocational skills are promoted.

**3.3. Active involvement of university students**, male and female, in peer-to-peer activities with minors and young adults under criminal proceedings, appears to be crucial to develop attitudes and behaviours towards social inclusion.

Participation of university students in workshops with minors under criminal proceedings is an important strategy in developing specific skills for the prevention of violent radicalisation and conflicts. As a result, the perceptions change and the direct interactions could open a space where new aspects of both minors/young adults' and students' identity can rise.

Participatory workshops with minors/young adults and students appear extremely useful in countering violent intergroup relations and in promoting civic engagement and mutuality, through **intercultural/interfaith dialogue**.

#### **4. URBAN SPACE AS A REFLECTION OF THE SOCIETY**

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Social exclusion is connected with spatial exclusion, which may be explored at different levels.

##### **4.1. MACRO LEVEL (general principles)**

**Urban spaces need to become spaces for prevention and inclusion.** The promotion of inclusion – where differences work together in a common project of cohabitation – positively impacts urban life. Municipal Authorities should take the appropriate urban policies and plan effective local actions against socio-cultural discrimination, exclusion and spatial confinement of social groups.

The improvement of social cohesion may overcome insecurity and feelings of fear of citizens and also of marginalised populations, who often are seen as a threat. It is necessary to improve the integration process, avoiding the competition on human rights, by paying attention to the perceived worries of all the citizenship.

In the areas characterised by complex difficulties, Local Authorities, in synergy with local representatives, natural leaders, migrant associations, and NGOs, should foster citizens' participation in planning and implementing interventions to improve quality of life and urban cohabitation.

In particular **workshops with stakeholders** have to be promoted for engaging inhabitants in proposals for renovating urban spaces and **living lab** experiences for fostering participation and sense of community among citizens, especially young people and women. The role of women should be improved, favouring their empowerment and entrepreneurship in the community life.

A partnership between Public Authorities and NGOs (associations and voluntary organisations), emphasising their strengths and specificities, is essential to influence public policies. Stakeholders should be actively engaged in interventions for social inclusion and policy planning, addressed specifically to youth potentially exposed to violent radicalisation.

##### **4.2. MESO LEVEL (community level)**

In the local communities is necessary a **networking approach** among public bodies, NGO, religious groups, social movements, to transform space through participation.

**Institutions, including juvenile prisons, should "open the doors" to the community** for planning best policies. "Opening the doors" of institutions is essential in order to build social relations and to counteract "institutional isolation" and to avoid the stigmatisation of persons in prison or on probation and marginalised groups.

Educational, artistic, social and cultural activities promoted and carried out by the Third Sector – together with the whole citizenship – may contribute in building an inclusive society and creating bridges between the justice system and people.

**School** is a critical node of the network, in promoting awareness campaigns for the prevention of violence, conflicts and aggression, developing and implementing programmes and campaigns for the early identification of signs of violence among adolescents. Local networking with professionals in the

educational system is highly relevant and needed. The school site is the main place where it is possible to spread inclusive attitudes and behaviours, promoting a culture of “Otherness”.

#### **4.3. MICRO LEVEL (individual and interpersonal level)**

**Public spaces for socialisation need to be rediscovered and urban spaces, including total institutions, need to be renovated.** The rediscovery and reactivation of public urban spaces as relational spaces for meeting together are strongly recommended, involving in such projects – aimed at inclusion – political, religious and other social groups. It is important to emphasise the renovation of all the public spaces, including negative ones, such as prisons because unsuitable spaces are barriers to community development, shared values, and sense of community.

Civic engagement for promoting more friendly urban spaces, cooperating in imagining, designing, and improving individual, group, and community public spaces is widely necessary, involving in this experience also the justice system. This is a way to make the hidden voices audible: for instance those of minors and young adults in prison or under proceedings. Talking about space means to treat aspects related to power and the re-exercising of autonomy, responsibility, and freedom, in preparation to living in society, after prison or probation time.

### **5. NETWORK AND INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS**

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#### **5.1. Effective networks among European countries, local and national institutions, and stakeholders should be improved.**

It is crucial to improving European networks able to involve local and national institutions, and local and national stakeholders, in order to share best practices and experience-based methods and tools already applied to face violent radicalisation.

“Opening” the institutions of the justice system to the society is highly suggested as a first step to share a common perspective among all European countries since permeable institutions can promote an inclusive culture and communities empowerment.

Stable networks should aim to create a strong partnership with common actions in order to counteract the phenomenon of violent radicalisation, by constantly activating social actors as:

- Public authorities and institutions (at a national, regional and local level);
- Educational and universities institutions (high schools, universities and the whole educational system);
- NGOs (associations and cooperatives involved in inclusive actions);
- the whole Justice system (including ombudsmen for prisoner rights).

#### **5.2. Foster European Networks**

As the European Commission has already highlighted, it is strongly recommended to foster the respect of fundamental human rights and to focus more on the integration of marginalised groups. On the other hand, while these aims are pursued, it is important to consider the peculiarities of the Juvenile justice system in every country, and its specific difficulties that could contrast the reach of European aims.

To strengthen a European network aimed to prevent violent radicalization is recommended to share a model based on common principles (as Radicalisation Awareness Network already stated) fostering a path for supporting freedom and equality of people. This consists of creating a partnership among different stakeholders and local, national and European institutions.

### **6. PROMOTION OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

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#### **6.1. Communication is a crucial aspect, both inside the European network and towards the general public.**

It is necessary to improve effective actions, such as the **Platform for best practices** (developed in the Project PROVA, <https://prevention-of-violent-radicalisation-platform.eu/prova.html>), to maintain and develop communication among local, national and European stakeholders and public bodies.

The communication among nodes should be stable and steady, based on a multi-agency approach and not only aimed at short-term actions or in emergency situations.

**6.2.** It is also important to cooperate with *professionals of the media industry* to counteract the manipulation of information about violent radicalisation (as well as about many social problems related to marginalisation) and to create and spread *counter-narratives*, based on outcomes of the implemented interventions and best practices at European level.