



Conference on preventing and tackling violent extremism marks successful completion of IMPACT Europe project

Brussels, 1 June 2017 – The IMPACT Europe consortium held on 31 May in Brussels a public conference on preventing and tackling violent extremism, gathering together around 70 policy makers, practitioners, academics and other participants, who examined the current security context, addressed existing and emerging measures and approaches in dealing with violent radicalization, and underlined the role and contribution of proper and robust evaluation in establishing what works best.

The importance of evidence-based responses and integrated, proportional, multi-agency, and coordinated approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) was stressed numerous times in the course of the conference. Several speakers emphasized that P/CVE field can be informed and make use of lessons-learned in adjacent, more established fields, such as gang prevention and intervention, studies on hooliganism and football violence, cult exit strategies, community oriented programmes, restorative justice approach and others. The discussants further highlighted that P/CVE measures need to rely on and be incorporated in existing structures and systems for crime prevention. Frontline practitioners – teachers, police officers, social and youth workers, health professionals – need to know what they are looking for and communities need to be a part of the solution. The role and contribution of cities was also discussed. The conference concluded that good practices from the plethora of interventions can only be identified and established if we are able to evaluate which practices actually work.


This occasion also marked the completion of the IMPACT Europe project and the launch of the online evaluation toolkit that enables the evaluation of policies and interventions on P/CVE and helps professionals in the public and voluntary sectors to integrate the promising practice into the new programmes they are designing and implementing. The toolkit was developed and refined with stakeholders' and practitioners' input.

Alexandra Antoniadis, head of sector Prevention and radicalization at the European Commission, who opened the conference, stressed the timeliness of the IMPACT Europe project's outcomes. "EU has introduced a number of initiatives to counter violent radicalization and the IMPACT Europe toolkit has a potential of having a profound impact, assuring proper assessment of the actions' effectiveness," she said. Further speakers included Ana Gomes MEP, Geoffrey Van Orden MEP, Eva Joly MEP, experts and researchers, and frontline practitioners from Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, the UK, Canada and wider.

"There is always a desire to gain capacities to get information to assess the possible threats by radical or extremist behaviour. But if we do what we did, we will get what we got, and even more. This events shows and confirmed to me that we need to share information between partners and even communities. We will deal with the information available, but assess it together in a trusted integral community, so common worries will bring common care," said Theo Muskee from the Dutch National Police.

Prof. Hilary Pilkington from University of Manchester and coordinator of the Horizon2020-funded DARE project, added: "This conference was a stimulating and productive event, introducing people in the field to what is potentially very important toolkit in counter radicalization work".

Notes to the editor

Funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration, IMPACT Europe aims to promote understanding of what works best in countering different types of violent radicalisation. The online evaluation toolkit, helping stakeholders correctly evaluate their counter violent radicalization and extremism programmes and initiatives, is available at the IMPACT Europe website: <http://impacteurope.eu/toolkit> .

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