Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 20 April 2016
(OR. en)

7784/16

LIMITE

JEUN 27
EDUC 95
SPORT 12
CULT 25
EMPL 109
JAI 273

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	7373/16 JEUN 25 EDUC 84 SPORT 10 CULT 21 EMPL 104 JAI 237
Subject:	Draft conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the role of **[...] the** youth **sector** in an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to preventing and combating **[...]** radicalisation **leading to violent extremism** of young people

Delegations will find attached a set of draft Council conclusions on the above subject in preparation for the Youth Working Party meeting on 26 April 2016.

Draft

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the role of […] the youth sector in an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to preventing and combating radicalisation leading to violent extremism of young people

RECALLING:

1. The political background to this issue as set out in Annex to these conclusions.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

2. Young people, their skills, values and competencies represent a great potential for our societies. Constant changes and challenges make the sharing of democratic values, young people's social inclusion and active citizenship even more important.

3. The **recent** terrorist attacks in Belgium, France and Denmark, **and** similar atrocities in Europe in the past, **as well as the rise in incidents of hate-crime, destabilising propaganda and violent xenophobia in Europe, show an urgent need for** contributions from all sectors in society, including the youth sector, to **fight radicalisation**[1], maintain social stability and a positive and safe environment for growing up and living in families, communities[2] and the wider society in Europe.

4. While violent radicalisation needs to be confronted and tackled on a number of fronts, it is of crucial importance that the threat and dangers that it poses for young people are **[…] recognised**, prevented and **[…] acted upon** by early and effective intervention measures.

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1 **[…] Radicalisation is a complex matter that has not been defined uniformly. In EU context it is seen as a phenomenon of people embracing views which could lead to violent extremism and terrorism. Radicalisation refers to individuals or groups […] who purposely use violence or illegal violent actions out of ideological motives to reach their aims.**

2 Communities in this text are not referring to specific groups but to the social environment or neighbourhood.

5. The process of identity development towards violent **extremism can be** influenced by many factors such as a multi-problem family background, peers, internet and social media and the position of **groups of** young people in society often confronted with discrimination, humiliation, exclusion, injustice and **a lack of prospects**, leading to feelings of frustration.

6. Parents, **siblings, peers […]** and other 'educators'[3] are crucial in supporting a **positive** development of identity. **This can include intercultural awareness and respect for others, active participation in society, or even aspects of spirituality, religion or belief**, and **involves** strengthening the sense of belonging necessary to counterbalance the information and extremist ideas **[…]** young **people** may be exposed to.

7. Young people should be encouraged to engage in self-reflection, **develop empathy**, learn critical thinking, **[…]** how to live with challenges and uncertainties and **how to deal with situations and emotions that cause them discomfort**, thus becoming more resilient **[…],** and maintain constructive relations across social groups.

8. Young people must have awareness about democracy, equality, democratic principles, and respect for human dignity and human rights, as well as about media and information literacy. This contributes to an awareness of and knowledge about how information can be biased and exploited by violent extremist groups in order to spread propaganda.

9. Measures aiming at preventing radicalisation should not lead to the stigmatisation of, discrimination against or xenophobia towards certain groups of young people.

[3] Such as social workers, healthcare providers, volunteers, neighbours, sports coaches, religious and community leaders, community police officers

UNDERLINE THAT:

10. Youth work is a**n […]** accessible and outreaching service **and method** aiming for the positive **[…]** identity development of all young people, providing a non-formal **and informal** environment for the development of skills, **competencies,** talents **and open attitudes which also enables them to recognise and manage the risks they are likely to encounter, including radicalisation leading to violent extremism.**

11. Youth work uses a broad **and holistic** approach, involves young people actively and works together with **individuals and groups of** young people to find solutions to their questions and problems. **In this way youth work offers a safe environment to grow, build an identity, feel a sense of belonging to a community and be exposed to positive peer influences, and could prevent negative peer pressure leading to violent extremism.**

12. **[…]** The youth sector, in cooperation with **the education sector and** a range of other partners, can play **a crucial** role **in an integrated and cross-sectoral approach** in addressing radicalisation, in particular in its early stages, by supporting young people in their development and actions, promoting democratic principles, values and active citizenship **and targeting negative factors such as discrimination and a lack of prospects that influence young people's lives.**

STRESSING THAT:

13. The different elements involved, the complexity of the matter and its deep impact on society require **an integrated and cross-sectoral approach** at local, regional, national and European levels. **This approach involves** various **[…]** sectors and actors **including youth work, youth-led organisations and education in wider generic or universal prevention, as well as in prevention targeted at individuals and groups of young people at risk of radicalisation.**

14. In an integrated and cross-sectoral approach, **the** policies and activities of youth work **with a focus on a safe environment, and informal and non-formal learning as well as prevention, should be aligned on the policies and activities of other relevant sectors such as […]** early signalling, effective intervening and countering of **[…]** radicalisation**. […] In this way, a** coherent, structured, mutually informed and mutually supported approach to young people, peers, families and their communities can be achieved**.**

15. Such an approach should deploy different strategies depending on the level of radicalisation: from generic or universal prevention in early stages of radicalisation to a more targeted approach directed at specific groups or individuals when violent radicalisation actually occurs. **This complements the core role of youth work in helping young people to find their way in society and safeguarding young people from the dangers of violent extremism.**

ACCORDINGLY INVITE THE MEMBER STATES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

16. Work on an integrated and cross-sectoral approach at national, regional and local level in order to reach **all** young people who are at risk of violent radicalisation by:

    a) promoting effective and well-attuned cooperation between the youth **sector, the education sector and possibly** other sectors, and developing common tools, **measures and the exchange of good practices**[4] **to handle cases of radicalisation.**

    b) **exploring and** promoting the role youth work can play as a partner in coalitions **and networks** at the national, regional and local levels to form a strong support base for the development of young people, including their resilience and the strengthening of protective factors.

4 RAN good practices, Youth WIKI tool

17. **Recognise and s**trengthen **the** youth **sector** in:

a) its role in supporting young people to find their way **to adulthood and a place** in society and **creating a safe environment for young people to develop their** identity, taking into account, where **relevant**, the development of spiritual or cultural and religious identities**;**

b) **its role in promoting democratic values and active citizenship through the different forms of youth work practice, including intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in promoting respect for cultural diversity and to challenge ideologies and all forms of discrimination;**

c) its outreach towards **individuals and** groups of young people in danger of **further** radicalisation and exclusion from society, and in supporting and involving young people in peer-to-peer activities **[…];**

d) **[…]** reaching out to young people to undermine existing extremist ideologies and to counterbalance them with appealing **non-violent** alternatives **through the internet and social media**[5];

e) **promoting the education and training of youth workers and broadening their intercultural competences so that youth workers are able to deal with questions related to violent extremism and terrorism and are able to identify symbols and rhetoric that might be linked to violent extremism;**

f) supporting young people in **strengthening […]** media literacy and critical **thinking using a cross-sectoral approach by, for example, the youth work sector working together with schools, which can help to prevent** the recruitment of these young people for violent activities through peer **influence** and through social media **[…];**

g) its capacity to fulfil its role by improving up-to-date awareness, knowledge and tools, as well as good cooperation with relevant sectors and persons leading to a situation where violent radicalisation amongst young people is recognised, prevented and stopped at an early stage**.**

5 Examples are: No Hate Speech Campaign, Youth Information, and Eyca and Eryica

18. Implement innovative **and sustainable** measures and practices, **tailor-made for young people**, in local community action, democratic participation, intercultural learning and dialogue, active citizenship, **[…]** and in positive peer-to-peer education.

ACCORDINGLY INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE POWERS, TO:

19. Increase cooperation at European level in sharing knowledge and practice by working together in the EU context, including the Expert Group on Active Citizenship, Preventing Marginalisation and Violent Radicalisation, the Expert Group on Digitalisation, and the Radicalisation Awareness Network, and with relevant third countries a**nd the Council of Europe**[6] to exchange knowledge and best practice on preventing violent radicalisation, including the use of social media, counter-narratives[7] and digital youth work.

20. Develop **guidelines to set up coalitions or networks for an integrated and cross-sectoral approach, learning how to cooperate in an effective, well-attuned and cohesive way**, taking into account the diverse cultural context of the EU**. […]**

21. Foster the development of **a dialogue and** effective counter-narratives to support **parents, siblings, peers and others in regular contact with** young people who are at risk of violent radicalisation, **and the provision of information on existing support systems and counselling possibilities**.

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6 E.g. in the framework of the No Hate Speech Movement

7 **Counter-narratives are activities directly or indirectly challenging extremist narratives either through ideology, logic, fact or humour.**

22. **Where appropriate, d**evelop training and education modules for youth workers as a basis for educational materials to be used at national, regional and local levels in order to ensure that youth work acquires sufficient up-to-date knowledge, awareness, tools and skills concerning:

a. the phenomenon of all kinds of **[…]** radicalisation **leading to violent extremism,** an **understanding** of subcultures **and symbols** that can result **[…]** in **[…]** radicalisation **as well as** the specific methods of intervention to prevent this at an early stage;

b. trigger factors leading to violent radicalisation;

c. the digital world including the internet and social media **[…];**

d. countering extremist influences **on the internet and in social media by, for example, supporting positive identity development**;

e. supporting young people to develop critical **thinking and the skills to understand the different sources and agendas behind the information provided, including propaganda and hate speech**;

f. supporting peers to help young people to avoid violent radicalisation **by offering positive peer influences**;

g. working together in **cross-sectoral** partnerships**;**

h. supporting the development of young people's identity, intercultural competences and understanding of democratic values and active citizenship

23. Promote peer-to-peer seminars for youth workers, experts, policy makers and researchers, in order to enable the sharing of best practices and information on how best to approach the issue of radicalisation.

ACCORDINGLY INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

24. Ensure the optimal dissemination of the results of the Expert Group for Active Citizenship, Preventing Marginalisation and Violent Radicalisation, which will offer usable guidance for youth workers, social work organisations and professionals in an integrated cooperative context on how to reach out to and work with young people at risk of **[…]** radicalisation **leading to violent extremism**.

25. Promote, **initiate and support** further research on radicalisation and **inclusion** aimed at the **[…]** enhancement of knowledge of issues **such as** the scope, origins, protective factors, causes and cognitive as well as emotional dynamics of radicalisation, in order to enable Member States to develop evidence-based policies and practices.

26. Consider how existing EU programmes such as Erasmus+ **and the Europe for Citizens programme** could best be used to promote **the social inclusion of young people with diverse backgrounds, thus contributing** to the prevention of **[…]** radicalisation **[…]** and ensuring strengthened capacity in youth work, cooperation with education and other relevant sectors on this topic as well as the empowerment of the young people themselves.

In adopting these conclusions, the Council RECALLS in particular the following:

1. The European Council of 12 February 2015 at which Heads of State and Government called for a comprehensive approach, including initiatives regarding social integration, among others, which are of great importance to prevent violent radicalisation.

2. The Declaration adopted by EU education ministers at their informal gathering in Paris on 17 March 2015 in which **they provide** guidance **[…]** on how to cooperate at European level. The importance of efforts to prevent and tackle marginalisation, intolerance, racism and radicalisation and to promote citizenship of young people **[…] were highlighted**.

3. The Council conclusions on the Renewed Internal Security Strategy of 17 June 2015, which prioritise the specific issues of disengagement, rehabilitation and de/anti-radicalisation as a priority for action in the next years.

4. The current EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018 which focuses on increased social inclusion of ALL young people, taking into account the underlying European values, and the role of youth work both in the non-digital and the digital world.

5. The 2015 joint EU Youth Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field which underlined that young people should be able to grow up in inclusive and pluralist communities based on European democratic values. The joint EU Youth Report also illustrates the need to empower diverse young people even more, especially those at risk of exclusion.

6. Cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe within the Partnership Agreement.

In adopting these conclusions, the Council TAKES NOTE OF the following in particular:

7. The European Agenda on Security, dated 28 April 2015, in which the Commission considers participation of young people to be a key factor in preventing radicalisation by promoting European values and fostering social inclusion, also mentioning the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), an EU-wide umbrella which enables the exchange of experience and practices facilitating early detection of radicalisation and the design of preventive and disengagement strategies at local level.

8. The European Parliament Resolution of 25 November 2015 on the prevention of radicalisation and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organisations.

9. The Resolution 2250 (2015) adopted by the UN Security Council at its 7573rd meeting, on 9 December 2015 noting the important role youth can play further as positive role models in preventing and countering violent extremism

10. The Action Plan of the Committee of Ministers (Brussels, 19 May 2015), CM(2015)74 final, on The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism, and with the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.