

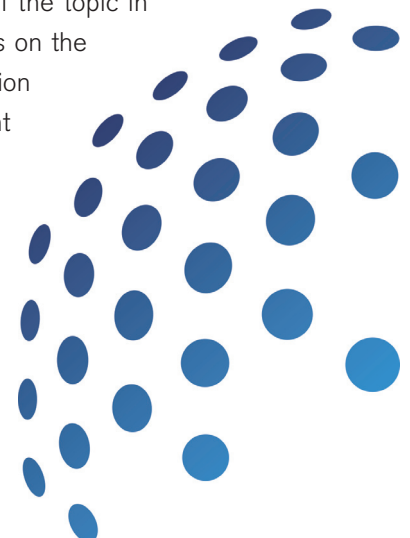
Cross-Regional Youth Forum on violent extremism. Youngsters as actors for prevention

Skopje, 13th and 14th December 2022

On 13-14 December 2022, CONNEKT is organising the Cross-Regional Youth Forum on violent extremism in Spokje, North Macedonia. Hosted by the Islamic Youth Forum (IYF), the gathering addresses the role of youth within the frame of violent extremism and through an innovative dynamic methodology engages youth in the creation of prevention measures. All the members of the Consortium will meet with 16 young people (two per country studied) so that the views of youth in the field of prevention are promoted.

During all phases of the research, CONNEKT situates youth as a relevant legitimate voice in understanding the phenomenon of violent extremism and constructing prevention strategies, rather than as passive subjects that can be potentially radicalised and as targets of prevention. The Cross-Regional Youth Forum seeks to bring together a diverse group of young people engaged in their communities to develop creative and innovative ideas and strategies for the prevention against violent extremism. Gender and nationality balance has been rigorously taken into account. The inclusion of youth views in the discussion of prevention measures, besides empowering young people, will contribute to the quality and appropriation of results. Moreover, the inclusion of youth views in the research will give more legitimacy to the results, and it will provide useful insights to inform the following phases of the research.

The first part of the Forum aims to provide a conceptual approach to radicalisation and violent extremism and to explore participants' own understanding of the topic in relation of their social contexts. Among others, the session will focus on the following questions: What does it mean to be "radical"? Does radicalisation always involve violence? Which are the factors leading to violent extremism? During the macro and meso-level analysis of the CONNEKT project, the research has identified several gaps in the way state and community actors perceive and address violent extremism and prevention. Hence, this exercise will allow to find out if the perception of young people participating in the forum fits with



the perception identified at the macro and meso level of analysis. The session developments will also lead participants to identify drivers of radicalisation and VE and to discuss the seven drivers identified by CONNEKT and the relevance of these drivers in the different countries under study. Taking advantage of the cross-regional approach of the Forum, that allows us to make regional inferences, one of the exercises of the first part of the Forum will be devoted to the relevance of contexts and the factors that can make some contexts more vulnerable than others, as well as the stakeholders involved in them. The diversity in terms of national backgrounds and regional specificities will be a challenge for the discussions undertaken but also represent richness in the amplitude of the ideas and the possibility to identify common trends and diverging paths.

After laying the basis for the discussion, the second part of the forum will focus on youngsters' understanding of prevention, encouraging them to reflect on potential ways to make their communities more resilient and supportive. In the first session, through hypothetical case studies, the participants will explore the aspects of community resilience that are important to young people in their environment, identifying institutions, actors, measures, that could be helpful in dealing with radicalisation and violent extremism. With a set of actors that should be involved in prevention measures identified, young participants will select and assume the role of one of these actors for the following exercise, that will be focused on brainstorming potential prevention interventions. Finally, the main observations emerged during these sessions will crystallize in the design of a pilot action plan or strategy for the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism, linking the drivers, contexts, prevention indicators, actors, and strategies. Based on the previous session, in which youngsters would have impersonated local actors, the focus will be on designing specific interventions, identifying the target of the interventions, risks, assumptions, etc. Therefore, the objectives of the Forum are twofold: on the one hand the pilot prevention interventions that will be designed cooperatively among the young participants and that could plant a seed of the future Prevention Toolkits; on the other, the final session will provide a platform for young participants to convey messages and to amplify their voices as actors of prevention.

* The working language of all forum's sessions will be English.



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THURSDAY 13th DECEMBER

PRESENTATION

9.00h - 9.15h

Welcome Words

Xhabir Emini, President, Islamic Youth Forum

Khalid Mouna, Université Moulay Ismail, Morocco

9.15h - 9.30h

Presentation, Objectives and Working Methodology

Lurdes Vidal, CONNEKT's Scientific Coordinator, European Institute of the Mediterranean

UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The first part of the Forum aims to provide a conceptual approach to radicalisation and violent extremism and to explore participants' own understanding of the topic in relation of their social contexts. Among others, the session will focus on the following questions: What does it mean to be "radical"? Does radicalisation always involve violence? Which are the factors leading to violent extremism? The session developments will allow participants to discuss the seven drivers identified by CONNEKT and the relevance of these drivers in the different countries under study.

9.30h - 10.30h

Let's touch ground: Concepts

The main objective of this session is to find out if the perception of young people participating in the forum fits with the perception identified at the macro-level of analysis (presence of securitization elements, identification with the "islam", etc).

Special emphasis will be put in political issues, mainly the socio-political participation among youth and activism, as the lack of socio-political mechanisms opportunities was identified at the meso level of analysis as a grievance that could lead to radicalisation.

The driver religion, identified as the main driver at the macro level, will also be discussed.

Facilitator

Corinne Torrekens, ULB

10.30h - 11.00h

Coffee break

11.00h - 12.00h

"Constellating" drivers

The objective of this session is to identify drivers of violent extremism, as well as the relations between drivers. The session is divided in two parts: a first part focused on brainstorming the possible drivers that could lead to violent extremism, and a second one where participants will elaborate a constellation of drivers.



Methodology: Division in groups. Each group will be given a white board/paper with post-its and they will brainstorm about the factors that they think can lead to VE. Each group will present the factors and discuss among each other (there is no need to reach an agreement, it is a discussion).

Facilitator
Lurdes Vidal, IEMed

12.00h - 13.00h **Does context matter?**

The objective of this session is to explore participants views on the contexts that they consider more problematic and the interaction between the factors and the contexts that make young people vulnerable to radicalisation and VE.

Some questions that will guide the discussion are the following: Are there specific contexts/communities making young people more vulnerable to radicalisation than others? How do drivers (factors) relate with contexts? Which are the contexts that are more likely to activate/deactivate the drivers of radicalisation and VE amongst youth?

Facilitator
Tasnim Chirchi, Director, Jasmine Foundation, Tunisia

13.00h - 14.00h **Lunch**

UNDERSTANDING PREVENTION

This session aims to delve into the difference between P/CVE and to identify preventive factors from the drivers. Also, it will encourage youngsters to identify preventive measures, strategies, and policies in their countries/territories.

14.00h - 16.00h **What was missing there?**

The objective of this session is to explore the aspects of community resilience that are important to young people in their environment. To do so, the participants will be invited to imagine communities in which they would feel safe and supported, which institutions' support would they need, what actors should be involved? In order to make the exercise more concrete, there will be hypothetical case studies shared with the young participants in order to help them in identifying the main actors and methods which they would find helpful in dealing with radical and violent actors/ideas/events.



The overall aim of this session is to encourage the young participants to reflect of the various ways in which their communities can become more resilient as well as supportive, and what would be the actors, institutions, or conditions which would enable such a change.

Facilitators

Florian Bieber / Lura Pollozhani, University of Graz, Austria

16.30h - 17.00h [Coffee break](#)

17.00h - 18.30h **From a local/community actor perspective**

Role-play simulation: Brainstorming of preventive actions

Based on the actors in the field of preventive identified in the previous activity, each group of young participants will assume the role of one of them (imams, school professors, correction officers, etc.) and will identify actions that could be implemented, as well as the resources needed to implement them.

Each group of young participants will be accompanied by one member of the Consortium.

Facilitator

Stefan Ralchev, Center for the Study of Democracy, Bulgaria



WEDNESDAY 14th DECEMBER

DESIGNING A PILOT ACTION PLAN

Objectives

To identify preventive strategies or programs in their social contexts and to discuss their limitations.

To design a pilot prevention plan or strategy for the prevention of radicalisation and VE based on the identified limits of the current preventive programs.

9.00h - 9.35h **Wrap-up and back on track**

Facilitator

Lidija Georgieva, Academy of Sciences and Arts of Macedonia, North Macedonia

9.30h - 12.00h **Design of pilot interventions – Action Plan on the role of young people**

After the identification of key stakeholders and actor mapping, young participants will progress towards the design of an action plan using 5WW1H model. The idea is to develop an action that links drivers, contexts, prevention indicators, actors, and strategies.

A gallery walk where all groups will be able to present their plan to other participants will be organised. Then, it will be followed by a group discussion to share and exchange ideas on the actions plans developed by the young participants.

Facilitator

Jadranka Stikovac Clark, Generations for Peace, Jordan

12.00h - 13.00h **Debriefing and key takeaways**

This final session will focus on the main takes of the seminar. What are young participants' priorities in prevention? What do the participants think we should keep in mind when dealing with prevention?

These inputs will be very valuable for the second phase of WP5.

Facilitator

Lurdes Vidal, IEMed, Spain

13.00h - 14.00h **Lunch**



15.00h - 18.00h **CONNEKT's Project Committee Meeting**
(Activity for consortium members, only)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Those participants who will not be attending onsite can use the following **Zoom links** to join the discussions (by invitation only):

Tuesday 13th December

Topic: CONNEKT'S CROSS-REGIONAL YOUTH FORUM Day 1

<https://iemed-org.zoom.us/j/88056866981?pwd=ZE54bWNJUkh3Ry9vNllyZmtzNkNiZz09>

ID: 880 5686 6981

Code: 805243

Wednesday 14th December

Topic: CONNEKT'S CROSS-REGIONAL YOUTH FORUM Day 2

<https://iemed-org.zoom.us/j/89957578567?pwd=TU54OW51QUd1NmRlR3lxSHZiakd2QT09>

ID: 899 5757 8567

Code: 199676

Project Committee Meeting, Wednesday 14th December

Topic: CONNEKT'S PROJECT COMMITTEE MEETING - SKOPJE

<https://iemed-org.zoom.us/j/81689301444?pwd=UXBtSEdKbUQxRHZxMmRxVUIzSEFBZz09>

ID: 816 8930 1444

Code: 148303

