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## #11 Highlights

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'Internationalisation and multiculturalism in Maltese education and society'  
Symposium

New practical tools and guides

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## ARMOUR - A radical model of resilience for young minds



Newsletter #11  
Sept - Oct 2020

Learn more about the project, its design and structure, the partners involved and the most recent news at [www.armourproject.eu](http://www.armourproject.eu)!





## ARMOUR updates

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As part of its activities, the ARMOUR project delivered an overview of the programmes aiming to reduce or prevent radicalisation among young people in seven European countries: Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Malta, The Netherlands, Romania, and Spain.

In a brief outline of literature on radicalisation it becomes clear that although it is a contested concept, many researchers and policymakers see it as a process with a mixture of causal factors on different levels.

Possible influential factors range from individual characteristics to personal experiences and group dynamics to (geo) political developments, reflecting micro, meso and macro level factors.

The programmes listed by the ARMOUR team are sorted along these levels by looking at their focus. All selected programmes want to lessen radicalisation among youths. However, some programmes are working with the individual youths themselves, while others are aiming to have an impact by targeting either the direct environment or the indirect environment of the potentially radicalising young people. The division is not absolute, since many programmes focus on actors on multiple levels, but it offers a distinction that might be useful when choosing an intervention.

The first cluster is formed by programmes in which youths are the participants. These mainly aim to boost resilience against radicalisation by enhancing group inclusion, social skills, and school performance.

The second cluster refers to programmes that try to change the direct environment of youths by offering training to parents and first-line practitioners like teachers, youth workers, prison and police officers, imams, psychologists, etc. The ARMOUR project belongs to this group. These programmes aim to improve awareness and knowledge and offer parents and practitioners tools to deal with causal factors in their interactions with children.

The third group covers programmes aimed at policy and law makers to make them understand how policies and broader state response can be inclusive and more effective.

After offering a few samples of practices from each group of programmes, some conclusions on the successful elements of previously executed programmes are listed and can be used as guidelines when shaping new interventions. The report can be found in our [Deliverables Section](#) (Work Package 4 'Integrating best practices and training').

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ARMOUR explores opportunities to finalize the implementation of the Experimental Labs, and translations and special online versions of the Labs' materials are envisaged.

The ARMOUR Team also continued their work under [Work Package 4 'Integrating best practices and training'](#) and [Work Package 5 'Evaluation, testing and validation of design'](#) to ensure timely implementation of the project as best as possible.



## New practical tools and guides for you (1)

ARMOUR continues building a repository of guidelines, tools, articles, etc. developed by third parties and identified by the ARMOUR Consortium as best practices in the social polarization field for first line practitioners working with children and youth. Some new entries are shown below!

The logo for "First Line Practitioners" is enclosed in a purple rectangular border. It features the text "FIRST LINE" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, followed by three blue chevron symbols pointing to the right, and the word "PRACTITIONERS" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font below it.

### FIRST LINE >>> PRACTITIONERS

Given the increase of violent extremism across Europe, training first-line professionals, and generally including civil society, has been considered crucial to early detection, prevention, and counter the phenomenon. At national level, the available CVE training material varies extremely from a country to another, not only in terms of content offered, typology (online or offline) and providers, but also for quality (i.e., evaluation, trainers' professionalism, valuable sources used, etc.) and quantity (i.e., variety of training material or number of trainings' providers).

At European level, the situation is slightly different. Several European and international entities developed their own training and programmes on prevention of radicalisation, that might be used and adapted by national institutions. Also, EU-funded projects facilitate training materials through manuals or by creating online platforms able to collect useful information on the trainings, teaching materials and to evaluate results.

The First Line Practitioners Platform presented an [overview of the different initiative and specific findings and tendencies on national/EU level](#).

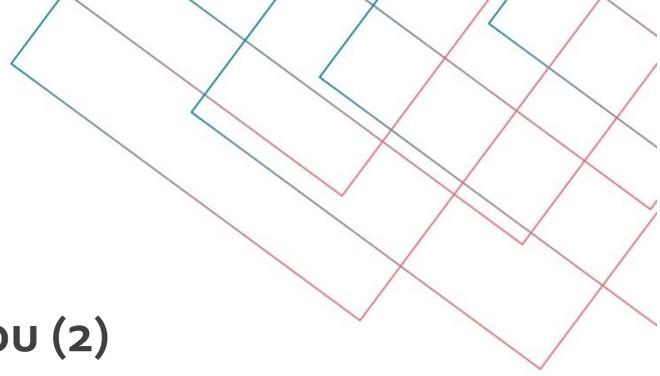
The EU-funded project MINDb4ACT has ended, leaving behind some valuable resources for first-line practitioners. [Some of them](#) were presented over the summer.

[White Book on CVEs](#) is a collection of policy reports dealing with preventing and countering violent extremism in Europe that aims to advise multi-layered stakeholders and reorientate existing approaches based on the best empirical evidence available.

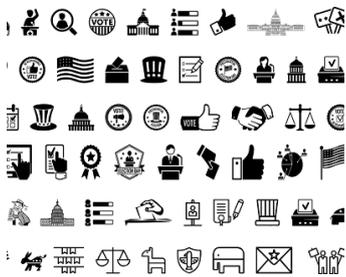
The [“Preventing violent extremism: Current trends and debates in Europe” Policy Report](#) compiles a series of policy recommendations to improve existing practices in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism.

[‘Preventing violent extremism: MINDb4ACT's insights and outcomes’](#) final project event, held 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, presented both tools. Recordings of the event are available





## New practical tools and guides for you (2)



A [workshop on indicators for good governance](#) and the potential and pitfalls of such tools and how they can be used by local or national authorities as well as researchers and NGOs, took place online on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. The event was jointly organized by three EU-funded projects – GREASE, BRaVE and BRIDGE, as they have produced different but complementary sets of indicators that can help authorities to monitor and assess how well different types of policies and practices are performing.

The RADPol2020 conference, titled “Radicalisation in Central and Eastern Europe – trends, challenges and opportunities to counteract”, was held in a series of online events on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, respectfully. The webinars were organized within a joint initiative of three European projects: CHAMPIONS, MINDb4ACT and BRaVE.



As a follow up, the conference team published [a collection of policy briefs](#), building on the discussions at the conference and bring together insights on: current trends on radicalisation in Central and Eastern Europe; context, challenges, latest research results and best practices on right-wing extremism; success stories and good practices on multi-agency approach and joint-action initiatives to tackling radicalisation and violent extremism; and the issue of gender beyond not religiously motivated extremism.

Violent right-wing extremists (VRWE) use the online space to spread their ideology and to reach vulnerable individuals to recruit online. It is important that practitioners become aware and understand the importance of online work in preventing and countering violent radicalism. Check out some good practices and successful approaches in a [recent article on delivering interventions online](#) on VOXPol.



Virtual reality is a widely engaging resource which has the potential to transform existing educational models and develop a new approach to engaging young people and building resilience against emerging and specific threats. A [recent article](#) by CENTRIC demonstrates how virtual reality can be used as a catalyst to diffuse the existing stigmas which underline the discussions of sensitive topics such as online safety, radicalisation, and extremism within the classroom.

Further information on tools, articles, and events can be found in [our website's News Section](#).





## ARMOUR at a Maltese Symposium on education and society



16-17 September 2020 brought us the [1st Annual Online Symposium, titled 'Internationalisation and multiculturalism in Maltese education and society'](#), and organized by the Institute for Education (IfE) of Malta. Dr. Aitana Radu and Ms. Giulia De Vita from the University of Malta – a partner in the ARMOUR project, addressed the audience with a presentation under the 'Effective international and multicultural practices in schools and society' conference theme.

Our colleagues presented the results of the ARMOUR initial research, including among the Maltese practitioners. They presented how these results affected our work towards the development of the ARMOUR Experimental Laboratories based on psycho-educational interventions. Each laboratory combines several exercises aimed at (a) teaching how to map problems, and (b) teaching various strategies on solving the problems.

An academic paper, titled 'Addressing Societal Polarisation in Maltese Schools through Experimental Laboratories', describes in detail the notions that serve as a basis for the presentation, providing highlights from the ARMOUR Project. It is part of the latest issue of the Malta Journal of Education (MJE).

**We continue our work to provide you with an innovative framework and tools for addressing societal polarization.**

**Are you interested in cooperating or taking part?**

**Do you want to know more about the project or any of our activities?**

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