

[www.armourproject.eu](http://www.armourproject.eu)

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

PRESS RELEASE

24.09.2019

# ARMOUR: Addressing societal polarization caused by the adoption and spread of extremist ideologies by creating an interdisciplinary education oriented model of learning

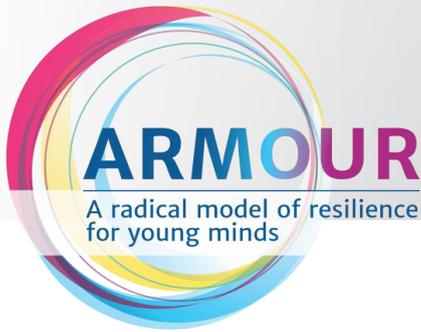
***The ISPF-project ARMOUR explores a new learning model to provide individuals in the community and practitioners the know-how, as well as a toolkit consisting of an experimental creative lab architecture in which to create, test, and promote psychological and community behavioural and communication strategies aimed at correcting reactions to perceived or real grievances and thus promote resilience to push and pull factors involved in advancing radicalization and violent extremism. For that purpose, a first round of interviews and focus groups has taken place with local stakeholders in Spain, Italy, Greece, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and Austria.***

ARMOUR Project, 24 September - During April-July 2019, the consortium of the ISPF-project ARMOUR (A radical model of resilience for young minds) has launched a series of interviews and focus groups in 7 countries (Spain, Italy, Greece, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and Austria).

During the interview phase the project partners intervened with over 70 teachers, researchers, social workers, health workers, law enforcement agents, mediators, consultants, jurists, home providers and subject matter experts, exploring three main topics: the protocols used to identify, communicate, intervene and/or mitigate extreme



This project was funded by the European Union's Internal Security Fund — Police under Grant Agreement No. 823683.



ideologies; the factors that lead to radicalization; and the measures and factors that should serve to build resilience.

The focus groups phase brought together over 60 representatives from practitioner organizations and law enforcement agencies debating over the existing tools, services, protocols, programs, strategies and policies and identify practitioner challenges, needs, required skills and recommendations to design effective prevention and intervention programs with minors and youth.

Both instruments confirmed the need to work not only at the individual level but also at the community level. In addition, some skills appeared as necessary and significant in the prevention of radicalization like the critical thinking capacity, the skills to get properly integrated into sound groups and dynamics, the capacity to solve daily problems, and several emotional skills. Thus, the model of intervention that ARMOUR designed is focused on strengthening critical thinking, individual and community empowerment, emotional resilience and community support. The project capitalizes upon the capacity of individuals, civil society and institution representatives to occupy public discourse and hence help containing extremist voices in the media space, no matter the narrative form they adopt, with the final objective of maintaining the social cohesion within the natural differences.

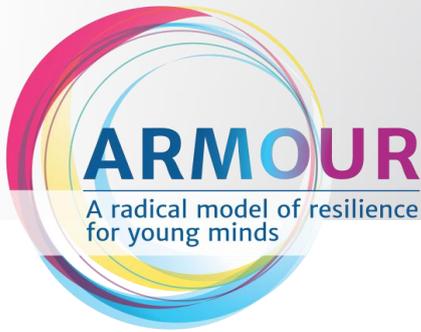
All findings can be found on the ARMOUR website at <https://armourproject.eu>.

The next step of the project is to create experimental labs, where special attention is placed on developing and testing individual capacity building and social skills of support, addressing

- social competence (responsiveness to other, conceptual and intellectual flexibility, caring for others, good communication skills, sense of humour);
- problem solving (ability to apply abstract thinking, ability to engage in reflective thought, critical reasoning skills, ability to develop alternative solutions in frustrating situations);
- emotional competence and autonomy building (positive sense of independence, emerging feelings of efficacy, high self-esteem, impulse control, planning and goal setting, belief in the future); and
- mediation and negotiation (group problem solving and consensus, base groups, stop and think before reacting to bullying).

The experimental labs are expected to engage over 125 professionals in 6 EU countries - Italy, Malta, Greece, Spain, Romania and the Netherlands, and are planned to start in the beginning of 2020.





*The ‘A radical model of resilience for young minds’ project – ARMOUR, aims to address societal polarization by providing an unique model for strengthening resilience of individuals, communities and vulnerable groups (such as children, youth, etc.) to polarisation, and promoting interaction and cooperation between different local actors from public sectors that specialise in working with vulnerable groups in preventing extremism. ARMOUR seeks cost-effectiveness and accessibility of its model by focusing not only on the nature of the model itself but also on how it is being implemented.*

*Behind the ARMOUR project (01/2019 – 12/2020) is a consortium made up of 9 entities from 8 different countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, and Spain.*

*This project was funded by the European Union’s Internal Security Fund — Police under Grant Agreement No. 823683.*

Contact:

Alexandra Tsvetkova, LIBRe Foundation	Javier Ruipérez, Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies
ARMOUR Dissemination Team	ARMOUR Project Coordinator
<a href="mailto:office@armourproject.eu">office@armourproject.eu</a>	<a href="mailto:proyectos2@fundeia.org">proyectos2@fundeia.org</a>
00359 885 038 35	0034 958 206 508
<a href="https://armourproject.eu">https://armourproject.eu</a>	<a href="https://armourproject.eu">https://armourproject.eu</a>

