



POLICY BRIEF

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THE PREVENTION OF JUVENILE RADICALISATION: PROMOTING THE USE OF ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION THROUGH JUDICIAL TRAINING

This policy brief is one of the final results of the two-year project 'PRALT - The prevention of juvenile radicalisation: Promoting the use of alternatives to detention through judicial training', led by the International Juvenile Justice Observatory and co-funded by the Justice Programme of the European Union.

This document was created for use amongst researchers, scholars and professionals of the justice sector working for, or along with, minors and young adults in conflict with the law. It presents the most important conclusions of the project, as well as the recommendations that arise from these which will serve as support in decision-making within the framework of the prevention of juvenile radicalisation. Its main objective is to serve as a basis for discussion, debate and reflection among the EU member states, to inspire their future policies and practices related to the fight against radicalisation and violent extremism.



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It is part of the European Project 'PRALT - The prevention of juvenile radicalisation: Promoting the use of alternatives to detention through judicial training'.
The content is solely the responsibility of the authors, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



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 **Fundación
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INTRODUCTION

Within the past two decades, radicalisation and violent extremism, have become a priority issue in Europe. Terrorist attacks on European soil in recent years have placed the issue at the forefront of citizens' concerns.

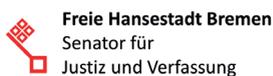
As highlighted in the European Agenda on security of 2016, preventing and countering radicalisation has to be a priority. Although the phenomenon of radicalisation is not new, it is an ever-changing process that requires professionals with updated knowledge on the topic.

In fact, the Directive (EU) 2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings, highlights in article 20 the relevance of training for professionals dealing with children in conflict with the law. Article 20 states that:

“Without prejudice to judicial independence and differences in the organization of the judiciary across the Member States, and with due respect for the role of those responsible for the training of judges and prosecutors, Member States shall take the appropriate measures to ensure that judges and prosecutors who deal with criminal proceedings involving children have specific competence in that field, effective access to specific training, or both”.

Despite all the work done thus far in this area, very few professionals have substantive knowledge of the subject, especially in connection with the juvenile justice field, where, in quantitative terms, it remains a much less common phenomenon among young people when compared with other forms of juvenile crime.

Training justice professionals is, therefore, an essential step to being able to prevent and intervene effectively in cases of juvenile radicalisation and violent extremism.





The project 'PRALT - The prevention of juvenile radicalisation: Promoting the use of alternatives to detention through judicial training' addresses the issue of juvenile radicalisation, within and outside the prison system, through the sharing of knowledge and practices between judicial professionals and actors of several EU Member States (EUMS). It is based on the assumption that efforts to promote disengagement from violence and extremism will be more effective if they build on existing structures of crime prevention and rehabilitation.

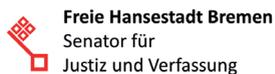
The main objectives of the PRALT project were:

- To train juvenile justice professionals such as judges, policy makers and legal practitioners.
- To exchange views on effective intervention management and sentencing practices regarding the prevention of juvenile radicalisation.
- To analyse current preventive practices regarding juvenile radicalisation in the European Union.

The project was conducted by different professionals and experts from the EU.

In order to collect the data, several methods have been used:

- Study visits were conducted in Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany in order to gather information on how preventive programmes were working in different countries.
- Professionals working in different preventative programmes worked together in order to collect information about the practices carried out.
- Documentary research.





CONCLUSIONS

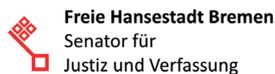
The following conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the situation of radicalisation among youngsters in Europe:

1. Children associated and affected by terrorist groups represent a global phenomenon in the European Union. Still, cases of minors suspected of or sentenced for crimes of terrorism or violent extremism are still much less frequent when compared to other types of crime.
2. Policies and legislation on violent extremism and terrorism are not specifically designed for young people. As a consequence, the rights of children affected by terrorism or counter-terrorism are largely overlooked.
3. The practices for the prevention of radicalisation that we found are mainly focused on adults.
4. The majority of the practices found in the European Union are currently in the first stages of implementation and therefore lack of analysis of their long-term efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations arise from the conclusions previously mentioned. They aim to address the lack of programmes and policies specifically designed for young people suspected of, or sentenced for crimes of terrorism or violent extremism, in Europe.

1. The best interest of the child should always prevail/be considered before taking any kind of response (having them participate in a preventative programme, handing down a sentence, intervening with family and friends).
2. National authorities must recognize their primary responsibility to protect all children and adolescents from all forms of violence.
3. Any form of child recruitment must be legally considered a violation of child rights, regardless of the nature of the entity perpetrating the violation.





4. Governments should allocate resources to the creation of preventative programmes and the improvement of professionals' training.
5. Professionals and stakeholders must receive proper training regarding the phenomenon of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, children's rights, preventative strategies and methods of intervention.
6. Programmes need to be created and/or adapted specifically for young people.
7. There must be preventative services available (at all levels). Preventative services should be an easily available option within juvenile justice, but also in schools and in the framework of the community. These services must guarantee safe and high quality preventative practices in the framework of national and international standards and guidelines.
8. The detention of juveniles should always be used as a measure of last resort, and the use and development of alternative measures should be encouraged.
9. Governments should encourage research/gather more scientific evidence regarding radicalisation and violent extremism.
10. Governments should ensure an appropriate legal framework through the introduction of legislation and specific policies for minors suspected or accused of crimes of terrorism or violent extremism.
11. Experts need to carry out an analysis of the legal actions affecting minors suspected or accused of crimes related to violent extremism, in order to gauge whether the actions taken and sentences handed down to these young people are proportionate.
12. The rehabilitation and reintegration of children and adolescents who have been associated with radical and terrorist groups must be of prime concern.
13. Professional networks need to be created, implemented and developed for the exchange of practices.

