TRIVALENT

TERRORISM PREVENTION VIA RADICALISATION COUNTER-NARRATIVE

Trivalent Summary Report

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Terrorism pReventIon Via rAdicaLisation countEr-NarraTive

PROJECT RATIONALE

On the assumption that to successfully contrast violent extremism it is needed a more balanced response, combining repressive with preventive measures, TRIVALENT project aims to a better understanding of root causes of the phenomenon of violent radicalisation in Europe, through a multidisciplinary analysis leading to a comprehensive approach, based on a firm commitment to respecting fundamental rights, promoting integration, cultural dialogue and fighting discrimination, in order to develop appropriate countermeasures, ranging from early detection methodologies to techniques of counter-narrative, involving LEAs together with academics, experts and civil society actors at local, national and European level, in collaboration also with communities of reference.

PROJECT CONSORTIUM

The TRIVALENT consortium reflects such an attitude by combining it with a balanced team of experts in several different aspects related to the project topic, such as:

- Radicalisation processes and violent groups;

- Radical narratives and counter-narratives;

- Policies to tackle radicalisation;

- Semantic analysis of online content;

- Development of IT tools;

- Skills and competences for LEAs.

The TRIVALENT consortium encompasses:

- **6 University Centres/Departments**: 5 from 4 EU countries (1 from Belgium, 2 from Italy, 1 from Spain, 1 from UK,) and 1 from non EU country (Israel);

- **11 LEAs**: 10 from 6 EU countries (1 from Belgium, 3 from Italy, 1 from Latvia, 3 from Poland, 1 from Portugal, 1 from Spain) and 1 from EU candidate country (Albania);

- **4 technical partners with a multidisciplinary expertise**: 4 from 3 EU countries (1 from France, 2 from Italy, 1 from Spain).

OBJECTIVES

The manifold and complementary objectives of TRIVALENT are:

1. To develop on the basis of a theoretical multidisciplinary study complex multidimensional models for better understanding the root-causes and related specific characteristics of violent radicalisation, defining different categories of radicalised individuals as well as providing a set of early detection indicators;

2. Within such theoretical framework, to critically assess strengths and weaknesses of different types of policies (e.g. preventive vs. legal and administrative measures) for countering radicalisation by testing them in the context of national and local experiences through a comparative analysis, with emphasis on best practices, aiming at the definition of a set of policy recommendations (guidelines) targeting different types of radicalised individuals;

3. To work out instruments for the analysis of specific online contents and communication codes used in particular by extremist groups, with an aim to contribute to the creation of media communication strategies directed to spread, both online and offline, an alternative narrative and counter-narrative;

4. To study and contribute to improved information exchange and more effective means of cooperation, coordination and communication between LEAs, local authorities/ communities and civil society actors, with an aim to promote and facilitate common efforts on prevention/protection against either radicalization symptoms and the exclusion of individuals or already marginalized groups, by promoting practices of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;

5. To study and contribute to elaborate suitable means and countermeasures to prevent youth radicalisation in the families and at schools, as well as to develop measures to contrast the spreading of extremism among those detained or otherwise deprived of personal freedom;

6. To strengthen and update existing methodologies and to improve competencies, skills and characteristics of the various types of practitioners involved in preventing, detecting or countering violent extremism, through training courses, with a special focus on recognising and interpreting early radicalization signs;

7. To validate with LEAs partners, other practitioners and civil society actors, including communities of references, the results achieved by the research/study activities focused on new approaches to anti- radicalisation, and to disseminate them in the various institutional and social contexts.

All the above envisaged objectives are in line with the main project purpose to tie up prevention and protection together in a comprehensive strategic approach to countering violent radicalisation with a view to join efforts between scholarly teams, LEAs partners, experts, civil society actors, and representatives of the interested communities, in order either to improve professional skills and to raise up a greater awareness and sense of participation on the side of all the quarters involved.

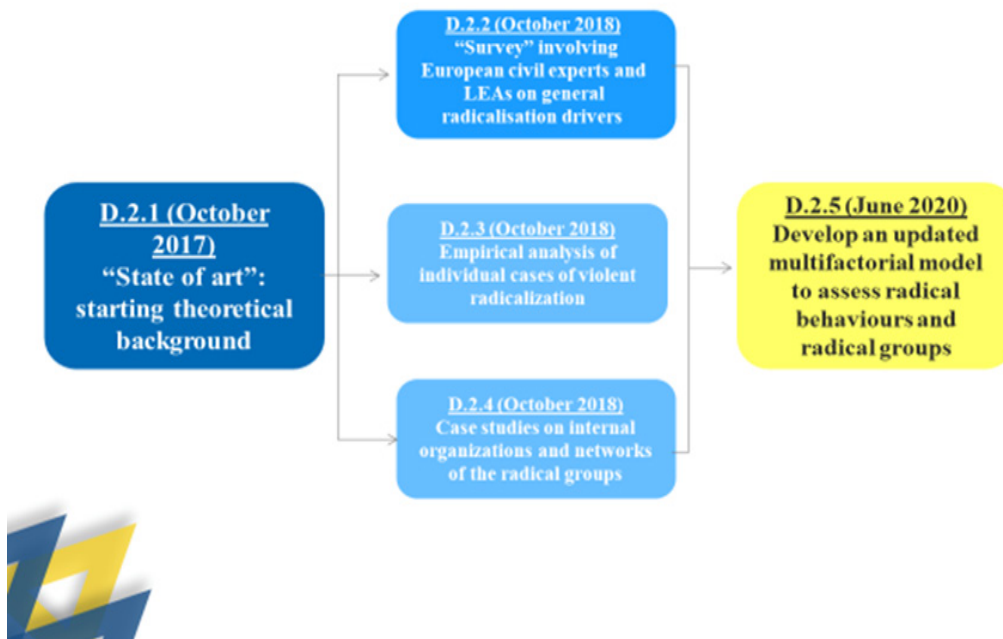# WORK PACKAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE DRIVERS OF RADICALISATION

Objectives:

The aim of WP2 – "Understanding the drivers of radicalisation" – is to provide an updated understanding of the factors constituting violent radicalisation processes in Europe. In order to achieve this final objective, the work done in the first four tasks have identified root-causes and specific characteristics of radicalisation leading to acts of violence with a particular focus on young people and gender-related aspects. The main output of WP2 – starting from the findings of the previous tasks – was the development of a multi-dimensional complex model that provided a series of indicators for early detection of the phenomenon of radicalisation, thus paving the way to its application within the context of future prevention/protection measures.

Methodology:

The first step was the review of the existing scientific literature on radicalisation. Once the theoretical background has been built, a survey with LEAs partners (by a two-step Delphi survey) and EU Experts (by qualitative interviews) was conducted. The results of this survey were enriched by the Open Source Information and the Osint method (Open Source Intelligence) applied to individual cases of violent radicalisation and by a review of the existing literature concerning different types of violent

extremist organisations and networks (jihadist arena, left-wing arena and right-wing arena).

WP2: working plan

D.2.1 (October 2017)
"State of art": starting theoretical background

D.2.2 (October 2018)
"Survey" involving European civil experts and LEAs on general radicalisation drivers

D.2.3 (October 2018)
Empirical analysis of individual cases of violent radicalization

D.2.4 (October 2018)
Case studies on internal organizations and networks of the radical groups

D.2.5 (June 2020)
Develop an updated multifactorial model to assess radical behaviours and radical groups

Main results:

The analysis developed through the four tasks of WP2 put in light, first of all, that the concept of radicalization should be referred to as "violent radicalization" to avoid misunderstandings and that it indicates a process of socialization and acculturation that leads to the acceptance and legittimation of violence as a social and political practice. Moreover, the vulnerability model is prevalent to identify people potentially at risk of violent radicalization and vulnerability arises as a cross between personal factors (age, psychological, ethnic origin, socio-economic status), macro-social processes (poverty, marginality, unemployment, national geo-political and political situation) and micro-social (relationship, marriage difficulties, behavior of the peer group). Finally, in the path of violent radicalization are decisive: the action of cultural factors (as ideologies or imaginaries), the role of Internet, the geo-political factors.

ANALYSIS OF RADICAL NARRATIVES ON-LINE AND OFF-LINE

Objectives:

The key objective of WP3 is the study of radical narratives online and offline. The semantic analysis of radical materials, both in social media as well as in news and magazines, is essential to identify narratives aimed at radicalizing individuals. By studying these narratives, as well as the different radicalisation and recruitment grooming communication strategies that emerge in social media, this WP has been able to develop automatic mechanisms for identifying radical content and accounts as well as mechanisms to alert LEAs.

Methodology:

First, a comprehensive review of the literature around online radicalisation was conducted. We explored the different definitions of radicalisation and its association with terrorism. We then took a close look at the different radicalisation models that have emerged from psychology and social

sciences. These models aim to encapsulate the factors that drive people to get radicalised (e.g., failed integration, poverty, discrimination), their different roots (micro-level, or individual level, meso-level, or group/community level, and macro-level, or global level) and how the radicalisation process happens and evolves, i.e., what are its different stages. Parallel to the study of social science models we explored the different computational methods developed to automatically analyse, detect and predict online radicalisation.

Novel radicalisation detection methods were then developed by integrating the knowledge of both, social science and computer science models. These new methods can be applied to identify radical content as well as radical social media accounts. These automatic identification methods are powered by a semantic engine also developed in this WP. This engine provides linguistic services which support and enable complex analyses of texts.

In addition, we have also studied different types of grooming patterns that emerge from social media communications:

1. radicalisation influence patterns;

2. network influence patterns;

3. linguistic patterns.

Our investigation has allowed us to better understand how users are influenced during the radicalisation process, and how the same terminology (language) diverges when expressing radicalisation vs. when not.

To conclude, we have developed tools integrating and encapsulating all these components and we have assessed how the tools fit with existing policing practices.

Main Results:

The main results of this WP can be summarized as:

1. the creation of a semantic engine, which supports and enables complex analyses of texts, and that has been used for the automatic analysis of online and offline content.

2. The creation of automatic mechanisms, based on a combination of social science and computer science models, to detect radical content and users;

3. The analysis of radicalisation grooming patterns, including: radicalisation influence patterns, network influence patterns and linguistic patterns;

4. the development of 'alert' tools based on the previously conducted research and a comprehensive assessment of how these tools fit with existing policing practices.
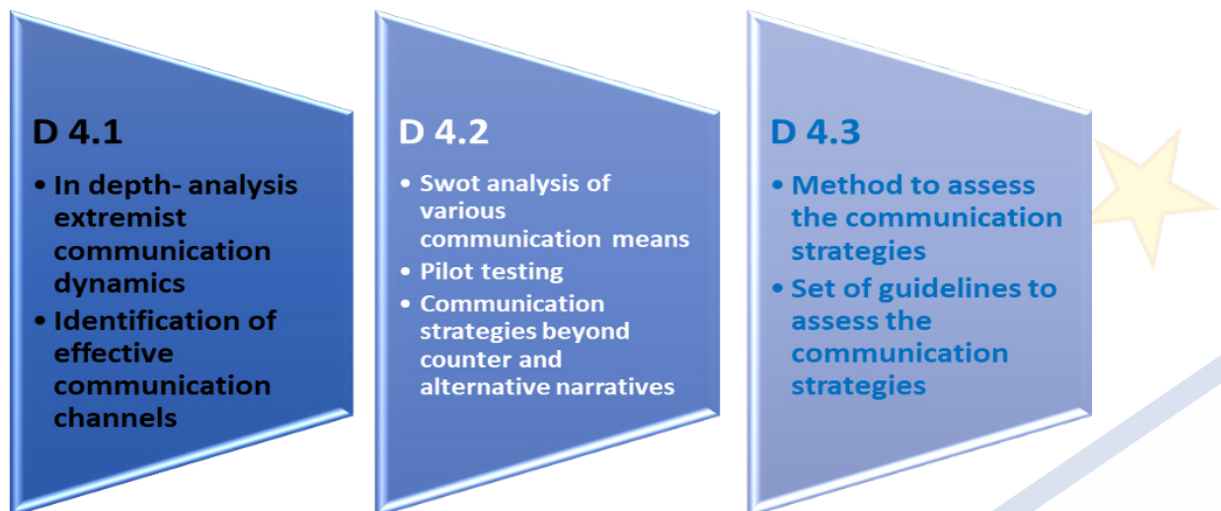
COUNTER-NARRATIVES AGAINST RADICALISATION

Objectives:

WP4 – "Counter-narratives against radicalisation" – consists of three Deliverables interconnected among them and developed as follow.

Deliverable D4.1 addressed the issue of the spread of extremist narratives not only with regard to jihadist organisations, but also to right-wing and left-wing extremist groups. More specifically, building on the specific categories of radicalised individuals identified under WP2, as well as on the pool of data provided by WP3, the report will provide an in-depth analysis on: contents and channels used by the above extremist groups to spread their narratives and reach their selected target audiences; the ways through which the above target audiences are addressed; the relation between the extremist narratives and the selected target audiences. In this respect, deliverable D4.1 also addressed the issue of the personalisation of extremist narratives in accordance to the target audiences to which they are tailored. Deliverable 4.2 addressed the identification of the most effective channels through which the narrative can be spread. Deliverable 4.3 addressed the need

to develop a method to assess the implementation of the previous comprehensive communication strategy. In order to achieve the aim, a preliminary consideration of the already existing methods was carried out as well as both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

D 4.1
- In depth- analysis extremist communication dynamics
- Identification of effective communication channels

D 4.2
- Swot analysis of various communication means
- Pilot testing
- Communication strategies beyond counter and alternative narratives

D 4.3
- Method to assess the communication strategies
- Set of guidelines to assess the communication strategies

Methodology:

The methodology is composed of a Swot analysis of various communication means based on the findings of the previous analysis in D4.1 and a pilot testing with students enrolled in the course of theories and techniques of mass communication, Catholic University, Milan to promote the result of a comprehensive communication strategy addressing the issues of extremism narratives, going beyond the dichotomy counter and alternative narratives.

Main results:

The outcomes of deliverable D4.1 paved the way for the identification of the most effective communication channels through which the counter-narrative can be spread across the target audiences identified in WP2. The results of such selection were presented in detail within a separate deliverable, D4.2, which therefore determine the communication effort devised by the consortium to address specific target audiences. The result is a set of guidelines for the assessment of the before identified comprehensive communication strategy.

NEW POLICIES AND TOOLS FOR TACKLING RADICALISATION

Objectives:

Accordingly, the objectives of WP5 were as follows:
- Assess strengths and weaknesses of a series of existing best practices from different EU and non-EU countries of counter-radicalization policies by conducting a thorough comparative analysis;

- Devise a set of integrated policy recommendations - addressing the whole process of countering radicalization, from prevention, investigation and prosecution to conviction, rehabilitation and reintegration;

- Investigate the factors underlying the existing cooperation gap amongst LEAs and civil society, the most evident barriers preventing communication and information sharing and instances of successful cooperation;

- Develop a new cooperation model and a roadmap for its implementation between LEAs and civil society;

- Design and develop an IT tool to improve communication between LEAs and CSAs in the context of counter-radicalization efforts.

Methodology:

Steps	Methodologies
T5.1 - Comparative analysis of existing counter-radicalization policies	Analysis of five case-studies (Italy, France, Spain, Belgium and the United Kingdom) through the review of: - Legal texts and scientific literature of policies implemented by EU institutions; - Radicalization trends in the EU; - Preventive and prosecution measures.
T5.2 - Development of policy recommendations	- State-of-the-art analysis of existing counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism policies; - Evaluation of existing counter-terrorism policies by leveraging third-party policy assessments and TRIVALENT's consortium's own analysis; - Development of recommendations for future policies addressing main existing gaps and loopholes in current policies; - Ethical and legal validation of the proposed policy recommendations through an assessment of their compliance with EU ethical and legal standards.
T5.3 - Analysis of the current relationship between LEAs and civil society	- End-user elicitation through a questionnaire directed to the EU LEAs within the TRIVALENT consortium; - Analysis of LEAs' answers to identify main examples of successful cooperation, less favorable instances and current cooperation initiatives with vulnerable communities (e.g. minority groups); - Analysis of best practices and case-studies within the literature.
T5.4 - New model of cooperation between LEAs and civil society	- Analysis of answers provided by 7 LEAs representing 6 European countries (Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal and Spain) within the TRIVALENT consortium; - Identification of successful models and major difficulties on communication between LEAs and civil society; - Analysis of best practices and case studies provided by OSINT.
T5.5 Development of a new IT communication tool	- Identification of the required features of the IT tool through the implementation of a third questionnaire on LEAs' needs, inputs on improving communication with civil society, communication channels utilized by CSAs to report potential radicalization cases; - Holding of workshops in Paris and Lisbon aimed at determining the scope, format and goals of this IT communication, as well as to test its validity.

Main results:

- D5.1 **outlined an overall convergence and standardisation amongst the national counter-radicalisation strategies** in the analysed EU Member States, as well as the **common need for structural reforms** in terms of increasing resources dedicated to law-enforcement training and improving information sharing between LEAs.

- D5.2 **set out policy recommendations** for every stage of countering violent radicalization with a special emphasis on preventive measures after the detection of policy gaps in countering extremism.

- D5.3 **proposed several mechanisms to reduce the cooperation gap** between LEAs and civil society within a counter-radicalization framework:
  » Development of new strategies of community-approach and improvement of those already in place;

  » Promotion of a system of involvement and participation of the public;

  » Assessment of the root causes of radicalization;

  » Selection of officers tasked with "community" duties on the basis of their social and communication skills, etc.

- D5.4 **developed a new model of cooperation between LEAs and civil society based on the following three main pillars**:
  1. Mutual trust: CSOs should connect with LEAs in joint efforts towards radicalisation prevention and LEAs should take into account civil society actors' existing differences, peculiarities and needs.

  2. Training and simulations: Enhancing both civil society actors' detection abilities and providing LEAs with specialised soft skills, as well as with technological, procedural and organisational capacities.

  3. New communication channel: Need to introduce new IT communication tools that are able to meet both CSAs and LEAs' needs.

- D5.5 **designed and developed a "chatbot"** which gives guides the users and provides them with the possibility to contact LEAs or relevant CSOs if suspicious of an individual undergoing a process of radicalization.

NEW POLICIES, TOOLS AND SKILLS FOR TACKLING RADICALISATION

Objectives

The aim of the **WP6** – "New skills for LEAs and practitioners in the field" – is to define a set of skills and competencies needed by LEAs and other practitioners in this field for more effectively countering the phenomenon of violent radicalisation. This objective has been achieved by:
- Identifying existing gaps within law-enforcement agencies and other relevant actors;

- Providing guidance on how to harvest and acquire the necessary abilities by developing a dedicated manual;

- Designing a training curriculum specifically aimed at helping LEA trainers to convey the identified set of competencies and skills.

Methodology:

In the first part of the work a gap analysis was carried out that highlighted the key competencies and skills whose scarcity prevents a more effective response to violent radicalisation.The methodological approach considered to conduct the analysis and to develop the manual is a mixed method approach. An in-depth systematization of the results emerging from the methodological actions were provided as a core and added value of this analysis.

Specifically, a **new soft skills approach** needed for Leas to tackle radicalisation, improving countering actions was developed under the umbrella of soft skills and the general framework of lifelong learning education.

Soft Skills are the new skills needed for Leas in countering radicalisation process. Their features are tailored according to three main dimensions: individual, organisational and cultural. At the same

time, these dimensions cross the different stages of counter radicalisation actions such as detection, prevention and countering.

Main results:

Gap analysis offers an overview of relevant competencies and skills for LEAs in order to better tackle radicalisation. The main assumption of this analysis is that the **implementation of a correct version of community policing**, combined with a serious effort in **restoring trust in LEAs**, will contribute significantly to the prevention of violent radicalisation, as well as other forms of criminality. This comprises a strategic partnership between police and the community and in order to be implemented, this needs to adapt if not overturn traditional policing attitudes, especially regarding the relationship with the community.

That new skills are needed, is confirmed in the following issues:

- **Occupational/professional culture** is a critical issue to take into account. If not, any attempt to invest in new policies are doomed to fail.

- **Initiatives at organisational as well as individual level** are needed in order to achieve the desired situation. The organisation has to be supportive towards initiatives in the communities. On the individual level, police officers have to be confident enough to share information and build trust with the communities they serve.

- **Knowledge of the social fabric** is also quintessential. Confidence comes with knowledge of the social fabric in which LEA personnel operate. What is not known, is feared.

- **Human rights** are the benchmark in any approach. Even though police organisations, as well as prison facilities, are executive organisations of political bodies, they must stay aligned with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the European Convention on Human Rights. Human rights are fundamental to democratic societies. Law enforcement agencies are no apparatus of political ideologies. Ethnic framing and cultivation of stereotyping need to be addressed within LEAs. This implies a huge challenge for police managers and senior servants in any governmental body.

- **Trust and sharing information among police services**: Police culture has also to do with trust among the services themselves. Collaboration and sharing information is a sensitive topic among LEAs. If we want communities to trust us, so that they will collaborate with us, we need at least have trust among ourselves. A legal framework and protocols on the European level could contribute to this ambition.

In the second part of the work a "Manual for improved counter-radicalisation efforts" has been developed aimed at the analysis of the needed new skills for Leas to tackle radicalisation. It is based on the results emerging from the **gap-analysis** and the findings concerning the new skills needed for Leas in the current threat scenario, especially referring to radicalisation processes, their features and the societal challenges they represent.

The Manual lies on **the main two pillars of the previous** analysis such as **community policing** and **multi-agency approach**. These drivers influence also the understanding of the needed new skills for LEAs.

At the end of the Manual, the main findings and results are organised as "Guidelines for the implementation of New Soft skills for LEAs" aimed at providing a useful insights on how to implement and consider soft skills for Leas in tackling radicalisation.

VALIDATION AND TASTING OF THE TRIVALENT SOLUTION

Objectives:

The aim of WP7 – "Validation and testing of the TRIVALENT solutions" – is to test the solutions (IT tools) developed under previous WPs and validate them involving partners within the consortium and external end-users (practitioners in the field of counter-radicalisation). The testing phase is exclusively addressed to the analytics tools and IT carried out by WP3 and WP5: respectively, analytic tool for identification of radicalisation narratives on/offline and IT tool for early detection of radicalising and radicalised profiles on social media, and IT tool for enhancing and encouraging communication between LEAs and civil society.

Following the testing phase the tools will be validated with the other TRIVALENT solutions developed under WP5 and WP6: respectively, a new model of cooperation between LEAs and civil society, and a manual for LEAs with new skills and competencies required to improve the effectiveness in order tackle radicalisation.

WP7: working plan

D 7.1 (October 2019)
Testing of the identification and analytics tools

D 7.3 (April 2020)
Testing of the communication tool

D 7.2 (April 2020)
Validation of TRIVALENT solutions

Methodology:

Each of the items indicated have been trained and constantly monitored by active members of WP7. During the project members outside the LEA's have been involved, thus implementing and perfecting the IT tools and the training manuals with elements gained by on field experience.

All LEAs involved in the project were coordinated, including representatives from different departments, together with technological companies and the academic world. For each task workshops were set up, where participants had the possibility to test e refer on the products through targeted questionnaires.

Main results:

The role of WP7 is to make the consortium aware about the effectiveness of those solutions aimed mainly for LEAs, civil society and their interaction. This purpose has been facilitated from the active interaction among all WPs during the implementation of the singles task. The concrete results already achieved were originated especially from the continuous sharing of opinions amongst Trivalent partners, stakeholders and practitioners in the field. The described synergies allowed to gather positive feedbacks but also to implement the tools making changes if needed. That happened in particular for scientific products. The manual of new skills and the new model of cooperation between LEAs and civil society, could represent a clear example of how cooperation between researchers and practitioners could be incisive.

TRAINING, DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION

The full benefit of a large project like TRIVALENT is achieved when the project interacts with the outside world. Workshops are essential knowledge dissemination means. The partners are experienced in disseminating research results and a number of conferences and workshops have been identified for spreading the TRIVALENT results as well as soliciting needs from the stakeholders. The TRIVALENT consortium partners use workshops to discuss, present and deliberate project related matters and findings.

- The TRIVALENT project has officially started with a conference dedicated to "Europe and the challenges of radicalisation: what answers?", held at the Italian Chamber of Deputies on June 22th.

- The TRIVALENT kick-off meeting was held in Roma on June 23rd. It was followed by the first Executive Board meeting.

- On December 5, 2017, Trivalent project participate in Brussels to the European Commission's 9th Community of Users on Safe, Secure and Resilient Soceieties Workshop on Radicalisation.

- The Trivalent representatives participate at the meeting organized as final event of Saffron project and held in Brussels on January 24-25, 2018. The 2nd LEA workshop was held in Brussels, on September 24th 2018.

- "The Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation" Conference was held on 18th June 2019 in Central London. The event offered the latest practical insights to assess how all public sector institutions can deliver effective interventions which successfully prevent and challenge radicalisation and extremism.

- On April 11th 2019 at the mosque in Rome was held the Conference "Engaging with communities" organized within TRIVALENT project, coordinated by Confederazione Islamica Italiana.

- Trivalent project has been presented during the workshop with Law Enforcement Agencies in Tirana on training approaches to counter radicalization. (May 28-29 2019).

- The TRIVALENT General Assembly and the 4th LEAs workshop took place in Rome on 26-28 June 2019 at The Centre of excellence Altiero Spinelli (CeAS) Roma Tre University with the participation of TRIVALENT partners.

- The Trivalent representatives participated at the International Conference of the EENeT – European Expert Network on Terrorism, in Athens form 15th to 18th October 2019.

- In the framework of WP2, UniRoma3 and the Royal Military Accademy have organized the seminar: "Understanding radical behaviour in support of preventing and countering violent extremism" on the 5th November 2019 , that was held in Brussels, hosted by Royal Military Accademy

- The Conference "Preventing violent extremism and the role of civil society: present and future challenges" was held in Torino from 10th to 11th February 2020, hosted by Local Police of Torino.

A final conference where the main findings of the project will be presented is planned in March 2020.