



Bundesweites  
Netzwerk  
Extremismus-  
prävention und  
Deradikalisierung

**Austrian Action Plan for the  
Prevention and Countering of  
Violent Extremism and  
De-radicalisation**



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# Austrian Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation

Needs-based measures to prevent all forms of extremism at an early stage, including Islamist extremism, right-wing extremism as well as anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories as interdisciplinary issues with relevance to extremism

Note:

The present version of the National Action Plan (NAP) of the National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation (BNED) was completed at the end of 2021; however, it was not presented to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time. In view of the date of completion of the Action Plan, it was not possible to include the current geopolitical crises, in particular the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine and the Hamas' attack on Israel. From the outset, the committee responsible for the NAP saw it as a "living document" that serves as a basis for the work of the BNED. The methods and recommendations it contains are continuously being further developed, evaluated and adapted to current requirements.

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Directorate State Protection and Intelligence Service (DSN)  
Herrengasse 7, 1010 Vienna  
Telephone: +43 (0)1-531 26-0

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**Eine Initiative des österreichischen Bundesministeriums für Inneres**

Herrengasse 7, 1010 Wien / Praevention@dsn.gv.at / +43 (0)1-531 26-0

## // Preface

Extremism and terrorism in all their manifestations pose a constant threat to our liberal and open-minded society, constitutional state, as well as our Austrian values and world view. Maintaining public peace and order is the top priority of the security authorities.

In my function as the Federal Minister of the Interior, I therefore consider it as my duty to make a contribution to the increased cross-societal efforts against any form of extremism as it was written down in the government programme 2020–2024.

In 2017, the former Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism (BVT) founded the National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation (BNED), which was recognised by the Council of Ministers as a strategic committee for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation in 2020.

The present Austrian Action Plan for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation of the BNED marks a large step towards countering all forms of extremism at an early stage. Based on the Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation, the Austrian Action Plan for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation includes comprehensive and needs-based prevention and de-radicalisation measures for the first time. The strategic combination of measures and recommendations reflects the demands of experts all across Austria.

The BNED practises a cooperative approach to security, which represents one of the cornerstones for the strategic coordination of future prevention measures yet to be taken. Cooperation within society as a whole is an essential factor in meeting the challenges of the future. In the coming years, the national and interdisciplinary expansion of measures and recommendations will be implemented and coordinated by the BNED.

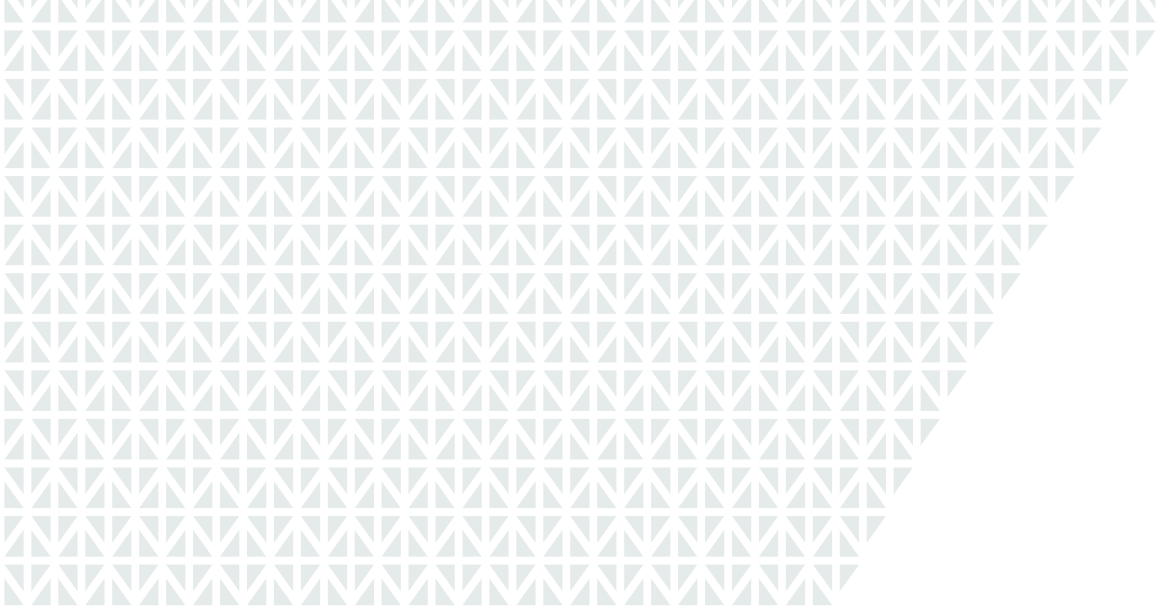


Mag. Gerhard Karner  
Federal Minister of the Interior  
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I would like to thank all contributors to the BNED and all experts from the academic and research community who significantly contributed to the Austrian Action Plan for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation. The efforts shown make me highly confident that the planning, realisation and evaluation of the measures in the context of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation in Austria are in competent and reliable hands.



**Mag. Gerhard Karner**  
Federal Minister of the Interior



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# // Development of the Austrian Action Plan

The rapid change occurring in all manifestations of extremism, which continuously adapt to socio-political, social, economic and technological developments, confront law enforcement agencies and civil society with increasingly complex challenges affecting society as a whole. It was in particular terrorist attacks and violent clashes in Europe that have emphasised the need to expand, consolidate and institutionalise the national prevention and de-radicalisation programmes that have already existed for years in order to take united action against violent extremism and terrorism.

In July 2017, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) founded the National Network for the Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation (BNED) in order to effectively prevent the increasing radicalisation and recruitment tendencies in Austria in the long term. Through strategic networking, in certain cases with the involvement of experts from the academic and research community, BNED members from ministries, the civil society, the federal provinces as well as the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns and the Austrian Association of Municipalities have been making a continued contribution to the implementation of comprehensive strategies and measures in the context of nationwide extremism prevention and de-radicalisation programmes ever since.

With its interdisciplinary expertise guaranteeing tailored and high quality guidance for policymakers and public agencies, the BNED has become established as Austria's central strategic committee. The decision of the Council of Ministers of 8 July 2020 legitimised the BNED as a non-partisan, objective and impartial committee.

Since then, the BNED has been an essential component of the Austrian security architecture and has been guided by the premise that extremism can only be tackled by society as a whole. The BNED is henceforth responsible for the comprehensive coordination of measures as well as strategic incentives concerning extre-



mism prevention and de-radicalisation with a focus on all manifestations of extremism. With the presentation to the Council of Ministers in December 2020, the BNED was expanded to become the coordination centre for all nationwide measures.

One of the first measures taken upon initiative of the BNED, which set trends and gave impetus, is the “The Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation”<sup>1</sup>, the joint development of which was started in the summer of 2017. This strategy is intended to meet society-wide requirements in a targeted manner by way of the BNED providing policy makers with recommendations for the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.

In the course of the Prevention Summit on 23 October 2018, the Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation was presented to a broad public. Based on the content of the strategy, which covers all essential areas of society, the BNED subsequently launched the compilation of the Austrian Action Plan on the topic of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.

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1 The Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation [https://dsn.gv.at/501/files/Praevention/767\\_Strategie\\_Extremismuspraevention\\_und\\_Deradikalisierung\\_publication\\_420x297mm\\_EN\\_WEB\\_20190115.pdf](https://dsn.gv.at/501/files/Praevention/767_Strategie_Extremismuspraevention_und_Deradikalisierung_publication_420x297mm_EN_WEB_20190115.pdf) (last updated: 14/07/2021)



## // The Austrian Action Plan as a comprehensive set of measures

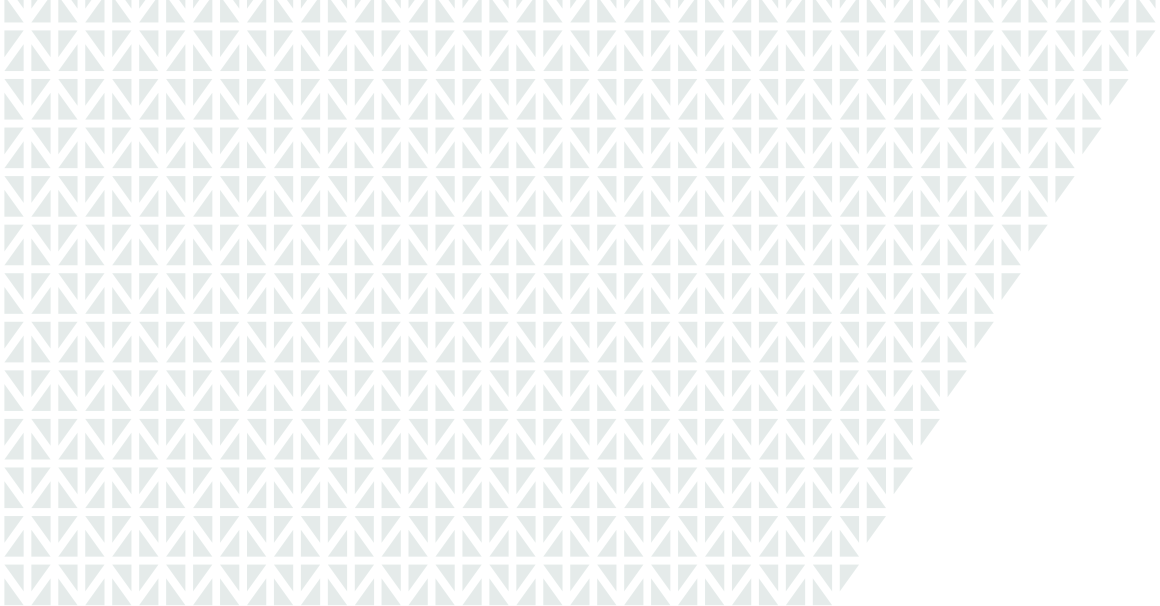
The primary objective of the Austrian Action Plan is to define comprehensive and needs-based measures in the area of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation in order to be able to react appropriately to future threat scenarios in the context of extremism and terrorism with preventive intervention possibilities for specific occasions. On the sound basis of the expertise and experience of multipliers, existing measures are to be combined, coordinated, expanded and supplemented by new measures.

The Austrian Action Plan comprises five essential categories. The categories “threat management/risk management”, “cooperation and coordination”, “resilience”, “education and training” and “knowledge and research” consist of subcategories, which include the measures in a systematic and thematic order. The categories are not ordered hierarchically and therefore, the order does not express significance or priority. They are to be understood as equal sets of measures, which are to be implemented simultaneously in order to realise a society-wide approach in their synergy. Their structural hierarchy is rather based on the current situation in terms of the security threat situation posed by extremism, and the adjacent subcategories follow a whole of society approach to problem solving.

Thus, the Austrian Action Plan serves as a trend-setting framework for the establishment of targeted measures in the context of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. Long-term professionalization and institutionalisation of the jointly developed approaches are directed at the protection of democracy and the constitution, which is considered a duty of society as a whole.

# // Principles of the Austrian Action Plan

1. The Austrian Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation combines nationwide measures in the context of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation and, based on the Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation, aims to provide an overview on the socio-political areas that require certain measures, in order to take action against all forms of extremism.
2. The Austrian Action Plan reflects the demands of BNED experts and external experts.
3. It includes measures that are already being implemented or whose implementation is planned as well as recommendations deemed suitable by the experts in terms of preventing all forms of extremism comprehensively. Therefore, the Action Plan comprises approaches, measures and recommendations in the context of general and specific prevention.
4. The BNED acts as the coordination centre for all nationwide measures in Austria aiming at the prevention of duplications and the use of synergies.
5. Extremist and terrorist manifestations and the challenges for society as a whole going hand in hand with it are subject to constant change. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that, especially in times of crisis, extremist ideologies are gaining popularity and that the underlying developments are often fast-paced. Therefore, the Austrian Action Plan does not claim to be exhaustive. Rather, it constitutes a *living document* that can be adapted and expanded if necessary.
6. The Austrian Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation aims to implement the respective measures in the next five years. However, the principle applies that the financing and implementation options of measures fall on the responsibility of the relevant experts who



submitted them. The implementation of measures mentioned in the Austrian Action Plan does not have an obligatory character and is not subject to sanctions, should a measure not be enforceable.

7. A working group was set up to evaluate the status of the implementation of the Austrian Action Plan. The members of the working group are experts contributing to the Action Plan.

# // Connection to the National Strategy Against Anti-Semitism

As part of the implementation of the government programme 2020-2024, the development of a comprehensive strategy for the prevention and countering of all forms of anti-Semitism was initiated. This strategy was produced under the leadership of the Austrian Federal Chancellery (BKA) and with the assistance of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the Federal Ministry of Justice (BMJ), the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (BMEIA), the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWF), the Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA) and the Federal Ministry of Defence (BMLV). In addition to the contributions from the federal ministries, the measures planned as part of this strategy are also built on the expertise of representatives of numerous non-governmental organisations and of civil society.

The Austrian Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation was mainly compiled by the BNED and focusses on all extremist manifestations. In this context, the National Strategy Against Anti-Semitism mentions the strengthened collaboration of the BNED with various specific actors and the compilation of an Austrian Action Plan for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation including concrete measures for the comprehensive prevention of extremism.



## 1. Threat management/risk management

International and national connections, increased technological and economic dependencies as well as other contextual factors have led modern democratic societies to become sensitive to global security risks. In Europe, violent extremism and terrorism pose an increased risk with regard to security policy. Due to the permanent change of extremist and terrorist manifestations and potentials of mobilisation, Austria is increasingly confronted with multi-dimensional and complex threats. For this reason, the nationwide expansion and flexible adaptability of the threat and risk management – and thus the Austrian security architecture – are imperative for preventive and occasional intervention.

Extremism prevention provides comprehensive and needs-oriented security measures to prevent a shift towards extremist, anti-democratic and anti-integration mindsets, pejorative ideologies as well as group-specific misanthropy. Furthermore, it intends to identify and proactively counteract the implied risk possibly emanating from individuals who have already become radicalised. As a consequence of such an individual and dynamic process of radicalisation, extremist ideas become consolidated in thinking and behaviour. In certain cases, this might not only lead to the endorsement of violence as a legitimate means to reach one's objectives but also to the active use of violence. A challenge of this magnitude requires society-wide cooperation and the pooling of competences across individual fields of action. It is based on reversing the process of radicalisation i.e. the de-radicalisation in terms of an exit from extremist ideologies and environments, which is to be enforced and promoted. Needs-oriented case work not only allows for a step-by-step rehabilitation of radicalised individuals and their reintegration into society by highlighting alternative forms of life while at the same time considering their needs and resources, but also minimises the potential threat they pose to themselves or others. An increasing number of targeted support services in the context of extremism prevention for especially vulnerable groups of people as well as risk evaluation tools and approaches of de-radicalisation in the Europe-wide infrastructure have been developed, tested, evaluated and optimised in recent years.

However, strategies for the effective prevention of radicalisation and recruitment tendencies alongside diverse extremist factions must continuously be adapted to current threat scenarios, which continuously evolve with regard to the developmental dynamics and new forms of violent extremism and terrorism. Single

perpetrators or relevant groups can commit terrorist attacks at any place or time. Even with a functional and sustainable threat management in place, it is hardly possible to calculate the repercussions and it becomes more difficult to guarantee comprehensive internal security.

The threat emanating from these phenomena and their countless manifestations, which have reached global character due to modern technological innovations, calls for a whole of society approach. By developing, implementing and pooling effective measures at the provincial, federal or communal level the ever-present threat can be reduced, in order to protect the Austrian population. The best way to stabilise and preserve the liberal-democratic social order is to implement the organisational, strategic and operative expansion of measures, efficient quality assurance, as well as a threat and risk management involving all those with a vested interest, which ranges from the prevention, early detection and evaluation of threats to the appropriate reaction to them through optimal risk and crisis communication and concerns all actors. This includes additional investment in cross-system and interdisciplinary development of case management and risk assessment for the purpose of analysing, classifying and defining new threats in order to protect the population. Moreover, strategies and tools for danger aversion are to be critically reviewed with regard to their effectiveness and quality, and adaptable and effective development concepts as well as intervention and de-escalation measures are to be developed at all levels. In institutions that tend to be frequented by individuals with extremist attitudes and possible threat potential, post-prison support is to be enforced in order to allow the affected individuals to renounce these attitudes while at the same time adapting democratic values and reintegrating into society. However, the main focus in threat management is on the prevention of potential threats and escalations of any kind, which is to be implemented through diverse counselling services in the field of extremism prevention and complemented by phenomenon-specific aspects such as violence prevention. Setting measures focussing on society as a whole in the context of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention can guarantee both the standardisation and professionalization of an effective threat and risk management in the fields of extremism and terrorism and comprehensive and efficient safety precautions in Austria in the long term.

Preventive sets of measures have thus been identified for the category “threat management/risk management” for the purpose of expanding the security infrastructure at the state and societal level and ensuring the associated overall sense of security among the population.



## **1.1 Exit and de-radicalisation programme**

Due to the Europe-wide threat emanating from radicalisation and recruitment along the lines of political, religious or ideological extremism, the Federal Ministry of the Interior is increasingly faced with new challenges concerning the protection of internal security in Austria. Especially in times of crisis such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, extremist ideologies of any kind are gaining popularity and pose a challenge for our democratic social order. More than ever before, exit programmes aligned with the demands arising from current developments are needed in order to counter all manifestations of violent extremism in the best possible way. Meeting the need for individual counselling and support services requires cooperation between law enforcement and civil society. The legal basis for this has already been created in the context of case conferences for the purpose of exchanging information on individuals intending to leave their respective extremist environments.

Therefore, the continuation and further development of professional and interdisciplinary exit and de-radicalisation programmes concerning all forms of extremism for individuals intending to leave their respective extremist environments is to be continuously promoted and advanced.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Exit and De-radicalisation Programme	<p>The Austrian Exit and De-radicalisation Programme aims to coordinate exit and de-radicalisation initiatives concerning all forms of extremism for individuals intending to leave their respective extremist environments. Holding case conferences with the authorities and institutions required in individual cases under the direction of the law enforcement agency is a targeted measure for interconnected problem solving in connection with high-risk cases and should be accelerated within the meaning of the law. They serve as a basis for the Austrian Exit and De-radicalisation Programme. Exit and distancing strategies can be seen as further essential aspects relevant in particular while and after serving a sentence.</p>
Exit and distancing strategies while and after serving a sentence	<p>The establishment and development of comprehensive and flexible support services and points of contact as well as distancing strategies for primarily affected individuals from all known extremist environments who are either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• convicted or imprisoned,</li> <li>• released from prison unconditionally or conditionally,</li> <li>• or who intend to distance themselves from these environments,</li> </ul> <p>are essential criteria in this context.</p> <p>These aim to deconstruct the existing ideologies and negative stereotypes of the enemy adhered to by the affected individuals, find out the reasons why the extremist environment had been attractive to an individual, recognise the associated needs of the individuals, advance resocialisation through targeted assistance and create a positive outlook on life. As experience has shown, it is productive to give exit programmes over to an independent and officially recognised entity that is ministry-funded and reviewed. During the prison sentence in particular, the continuous supervision of radical/extremist individuals is critical for a successful exit from the relevant extremist environment. The key aspects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-violence training</li> <li>• Preparation for the release from prison</li> <li>• Psychosocial counselling and support</li> <li>• Political and/or religious deconstruction programmes</li> <li>• Offers to gain qualification and professional capabilities for the (re-)entry to working life</li> <li>• Reflection of the social environment</li> <li>• Preparatory measures for securing one's livelihood</li> </ul>

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Support of networking structures in the context of exit programmes	In the context of imprisonment and law enforcement agencies, multi-professional networking with relevant actors is an essential aspect of exit and distancing programmes. This includes all entities, institutions and individuals that are involved in exit programmes.
Development of methods for exit programmes at the European level	The methodology is to be based on the ISF project “EXIT Europe” for the improvement of exit programmes in Europe. Among other things, a training manual for professionals working in the context of exit programmes was compiled. It can be adapted in a proactive and effective way depending on local contexts and thus also applied at the local level in the cooperating countries.
Intervention measures for returnees	It is planned to establish an entity for the coordination of intervention programmes for returnees, which is entrusted with the coordination of problem and risk analysis and risk management as well as the complementary intervention planning and supervision. Cooperation with care facilities and the referral to support programmes as well as legal and psychosocial counselling for returnees and their relatives is considered productive and can be initiated via case conferences.
Early detection of potential criminal incidents	Initiation of appropriate measures, depending on the occasion, upon perception of potential threats by authorities or other relevant facilities; communication of information to the competent entities or in the context of the BNED.

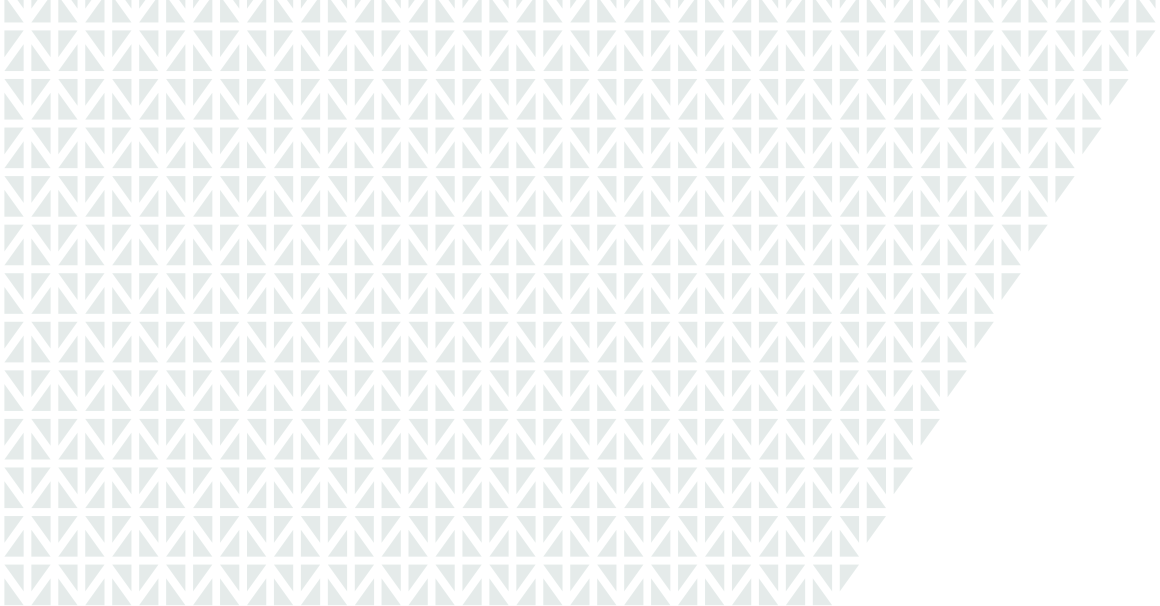
## 1.2 Further development and evaluation of the risk management

Risk evaluation tools giving direction for the adequate assessment of threats are considered a central element for the derivation of measures for threat investigation and threat aversion. The constant further development and professionalization of risk management in the context of both judicial and law enforcement agencies are prerequisites for successful preventive measures. This includes the training of experts working in this field as well as fundamental scientific research determining security-related measures in order to counteract radicalisation and recruitment tendencies – in part consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its instrumentalisation, which has lead and still leads to an increased polarisation of society.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Evaluation and further development of risk management	The use of risk evaluation tools becomes increasingly relevant in order to professionalise the work of law enforcement agencies in the area of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. In this context, the internal coordination within a given authority with regard to the risk evaluation tools is to be improved and the respective case-relevant risk analyses are to be compared. The designated evaluation tools are equally targeted at all judicial staff as well as social workers working this field.
Guideline for the creation of an obligatory sentence plan	For individuals who are detained pursuant to §§ 278b of the Austrian Penal Code (StGB), the compilation of a sentence plan shall be compulsory right from the beginning of the pre-trial custody. In 2017, a multi-professional team evaluated a variety of different mechanisms supporting the professional development of tailor-made support plans.
Baseline survey to determine psychosocial patterns in the detection of radicalisation and extremism as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic	Increased radicalisation and recruitment tendencies in mainstream society are a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to set targeted measures in the field of radicalisation prevention, thereby making an essential contribution to Austria's security policy, robust baseline research into push and pull factors, which can promote and trigger radicalisation processes, is needed. Likewise, the determination of psychosocial patterns and the identification of radicalisation or extremism is productive for the deduction of further measures in the context of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.
Implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Package	On the basis of the 2021 Anti-Terrorism Package, which provides for a massive expansion in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation programmes, concrete measures are to be implemented into the Austrian security architecture.

### 1.3 Transition management and post-prison support

Efficient transition management is necessary in order to guarantee a smooth transition from imprisonment to freedom and plays a decisive role in avoiding criminal acts in the context of prison furlough or after imprisonment and is to be considered for the successful reintegration of offenders into society. The close cooperation and networking structures between the penal system and the law enforcement agencies and civil society institutions in the field of transition management and post-prison support of former inmates are to be strengthened and intensified sustainably.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Transition management and post-prison support	In the course of the release from custody, there is already close contact with the relevant associations and organisations. Especially with regard to resocialisation, it is important that inmates are prepared for their release together with their social environment. “Social network conferences” have proven to be an ideal resocialisation tool for inmates who were imprisoned for suspicion of membership or support of a terrorist association.
Definition of cooperation and transition management in the penal system	Definition of standards for the cooperation in the penal system with regard to the supervision process and the early involvement of external organisations with relevant expertise.

#### **1.4 Expanding counselling services for extremism prevention**

Points of contact and easily accessible counselling services for both individuals intending to distance themselves from an extremist ideology and their relatives are important measures for preventing seclusion and segregation tendencies and can make a significant contribution to extremism prevention. Affected individuals and their social environment as well as multipliers can benefit from these offers in terms of a joint prevention of extremism in all its forms. Comprehensive and needs-based counselling structures serve to consolidate social cohesion, teach social affiliation, conflict resolution skills and the ability to compromise, and build resilience to religious or political extremist ideologies. Therefore, the aim should be to systematically expand comprehensive counselling services and turn them into competent expert centres for extremism prevention.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Expansion of extremism prevention programmes outside the penal system	<p>Continuation, expansion and establishment of competence centres (i.e. Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW), Documentation Centre Political Islam, Extremism Information Centre) for the information, counselling and documentation of all extremist manifestations at the federal and regional level for primary, secondary and tertiary affected individuals. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance and support regarding the process of distancing from extremist ideologies or groups (see Exit and De-radicalisation Programme)</li> <li>• Counselling of the social environment of radicalised individuals</li> <li>• Counselling services for the development of awareness in the family environment of radical or extremist individuals</li> <li>• Establishment, maintenance and, where applicable, expansion of cooperation teams in the school sector</li> <li>• Specialist counselling for experts and multipliers</li> <li>• Counselling services for prevention, i.a.</li> </ul>
Extremism Information Centre	<p>Maintenance of the Extremism Information Centre and expansion of the centre's structures to the federal states in order to create country-wide access to its offers. The Extremism Information Centre has acted as the nationwide first point of contact since 2014. It offers counselling for relatives and multipliers, guidance on leaving extremist environments, workshops, training, as well as information and expertise.</p>
Expansion of extremism prevention programmes within the penal system	<p>Continuation and expansion of cooperation with qualified staff to improve supervision of imprisoned extremist individuals. On the one hand, the focus of the supervision lies on distancing from violent ideologies no matter if they are based on religious or political motives. Conversation formats developed especially for this purpose allow to target those inmates who are/were convinced of violent ideology based on religious or ideological motives or are/were ready to promote it. On the other hand, the development of resilience to extremist narratives is promoted in order to subsequently prevent susceptibility to political and religious extremism.</p>
Counselling and support for individuals affected by all kinds of extremist acts	<p>Legal and psychosocial counselling and support for victims of extremist acts.</p>

## 1.5 Violence prevention

In times of increasing violent conflicts and escalations of extremist nature, it is the shared responsibility of society to actively raise awareness for this issue among the general public and, due to possible interplay with individually distinct radicalisation patterns, to create synergies with the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. Needs-oriented violence prevention offers the necessary support to vulnerable individuals, increasingly counteracts the legitimisation and/or use of violence and ultimately decreases the threat potential.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Counselling services in the field of violence prevention	Counselling and support for individuals affected by violence. This includes, for example, family violence or sexual assault, as well as violence towards children and young people, women and men. In the sense of a comprehensive approach in the field of violence prevention, the establishment and expansion of networking and cooperation structures at the federal and provincial level is promoted.
Promotion of the Platform against Family Violence, awareness-raising measures and support programmes in the event of violence	The Platform against Family Violence serves as a tool for connecting support services in the form of a nationwide forum for the exchange of experiences and as a contribution to raising public awareness. There are 45 established organisations such as child protection centres, counselling centres for women, youth facilities, facilities for senior citizens and men's counselling centres that work in the field of violence prevention and intervention towards the following goals: Reducing violence, increasing the detection rate, inducing interventions efficiently, raising awareness.
Establishment of specialised centres for violence prevention in child and youth work	Organising workshops, lectures and expert conferences on different areas of violence prevention for all professionals working with children and young people as well as individuals in charge in the context of youth work, associations or authorities and volunteers.
Counselling and support of African women and girls – prevention and elimination of FGM ( <i>Female Genital Mutilation</i> ) in Austria in 2021	In addition to the main focus of prevention and elimination of FGM ( <i>Female Genital Mutilation</i> ), the psychosocial counselling covers the areas of successful and quick integration, work, education and training, violence prevention, prevention of other harmful traditions, prevention of human trafficking and trafficking in women, residency matters, and empowerment of women and girls. In addition to the main focus of prevention and elimination of FGM ( <i>Female Genital Mutilation</i> ), the psychosocial counselling covers the areas of successful and quick integration, work, education and training, violence prevention, prevention of other harmful traditions, prevention of human trafficking and trafficking in women, residency matters, and empowerment of women and girls. Extremism prevention and de-radicalisation are key components of counselling.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Workshops for school classes on extremism prevention, conflict resolution and non-violent interaction with each other	These workshops, which are individually tailored to the respective classroom situation, combine violence prevention and intervention with non-violent conflict resolution and the teaching of social competences. The different cultural backgrounds of the pupils are also considered and the topics of (cyber) bullying and violence as well as moral courage, respect and the role models of men and women are addressed.
Prevention of racism and violence in the field of sports	Racism, bullying and exclusion also pose serious problems in the field of sports. In the past, different kinds of extremists have occasionally used gyms and sports clubs to recruit people. Through exercise and cooperation with individual clubs, these prevention offers now aim to provide vulnerable young people with an alternative that meets pedagogical and ideological criteria. Some of the projects dealing with this issue are already being implemented.
Platform for Violence Prevention Upper Austria	Through the connected nature of the support organisations of this Upper Austrian platform – the police, the office of the Ombudsman for Children and Young People Upper Austria (KiJA OÖ), the school psychology/Upper Austria Board of Education, the Institute for the Prevention of Addiction and the Education Group – it uses synergies and offers tailored help both in individual cases and in the field of prevention. Aside from joint expert meetings, the additional value lies in regular information exchange and joint internal trainings of employees.
Trainings on the topic of violence prevention	Trainings on the topics of extremism and violence prevention for multipliers and employees working in the field of refugee aid in Vienna.



## 2. Cooperation and coordination

In the age of digitalisation, extremist and terrorist groups increasingly use virtual means for the dissemination of extremist propaganda and conspiracies, global networking and the recruitment of new members. These developments present the Austrian law enforcement agencies and civil society with a challenge of unprecedented scale affecting society as a whole. They substantiate the immediate necessity of a society-wide and interdisciplinary cooperation of multipliers from all relevant fields of action in order to counter radicalisation and recruitment tendencies in the public and digital space in the long term.

Comprehensive and interdisciplinary cooperation is seen as the driving force to raise extremism prevention and de-radicalisation to a professional level with regard to quality, effectiveness and sustainability on all levels. The needs-based prevention of radicalisation towards violent extremism can only be designed and guaranteed through cooperative prevention programmes. At the same time, the mutual pooling of competences prior to extremist or terrorist incidents renders the development and improvement of precautionary measures possible in order to induce even more specific responses in terms of social work or educational and/or state police intervention. Strengthening strategic and operative networking aims to cover all essential professions in this context thus meeting these demands according to the whole of society approach. In this regard, it is imperative to not only sustainably expand the nationwide networking but to also establish effective networking structures at the regional and district level in order to create and expand preventive and occasional ways of dealing with violent extremism and terrorism. This requires the systematic expansion of coordination mechanisms and needs-oriented capacities, the pooling of resources across fields of action and well-defined responsibilities in the areas of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.

On behalf of the Austrian population and their livelihood as well as democratic principles and the rule of law, cooperation must take place on the sound basis of an effective and functioning communication infrastructure. Long-term investment in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies and ministries at the national level is imperative in order to meet this expectation. Key departments are to be involved through efficient coordination structures. At the same time, the pooling of competences across borders as a consequence of international collaboration with relevant umbrella associations, support organisations and actors is essential for the prevention of extremist and terrorist threats and the development of preventive approaches.



With this in mind, extremism prevention and de-radicalisation can be understood as a common task from a long-term perspective. Governmental, practical and scientific findings and core competences are to be expanded, coordinated and pooled on a continuing basis. In this sense, aside from the implementation and optimisation of measures under the security policy framework, multipliers also take the profound function of an information carrier, which is to be fulfilled through targeted public relations and thus a professional information management. When it comes to fulfilling a task of this magnitude including society as a whole, it is necessary to create a multidimensional support system equally including all relevant actors and to proactively work towards the fulfilment of this task as one common unit. Through interdisciplinary and trend-setting networking, which is unique in Europe so far, an effective and sustainable contribution to the professionalization and standardisation of nationwide extremism prevention and de-radicalisation can be made.

Therefore, the category “cooperation and coordination” offers sets of measures that aim to consolidate and expand the interdisciplinary, multi-professional, institution- and system-wide cooperation at the provincial, federal and communal level as well as the international and EU level. By establishing and strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation, the local, regional and nationwide network management as well as the mobilisation and awareness-raising of partners at the state and civil society level, a key contribution towards the prevention of the society-wide challenge caused by radicalisation and extremism can be achieved.

## **2.1 Inter-ministerial and inter-institutional cooperation**

The professional, effective and sustainable coordination between the different authorities with regard to radicalisation and recruitment efforts and the development of nationwide prevention and de-radicalisation programmes inevitably requires inter-ministerial and inter-institutional cooperation. In order to deepen the cooperation, exchange meetings are to be established and supplemented by innovative approaches as well as needs-oriented and functional awareness raising events to react appropriately to challenges such as the dissemination of conspiracy theories or *hate speech*.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Expansion of the cooperation between security, social affairs and education	It is aimed to create regional and nationwide opportunities for cooperation within the framework of the BNED among administrative areas such as security, social affairs and education concerning radicalisation and recruiting activities, i.e. in project form.
Inter-ministerial exchange and cooperation meetings concerning extremism prevention and de-radicalisation	In order to deepen the cooperation between law enforcement, the penal system and all other relevant departments, exchange meetings within the framework of the BNED are to be promoted. This cooperation occasionally includes civil society organisations and can take place, for example, in the form of trainings.
Networking, collection and exchange of information concerning conspiracy theories	The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that conspiracy theories are becoming more established in society and cause various problems regarding society, health and social affairs. Occasionally, conspiracy theorists tend to radicalise and turn to extremism. Based on the results of the respective BNED working group (managed by the Federal Office of Sect Issues), further exchange between affected facilities and the development of information and prevention methods is being advanced.
National committee <i>No Hate Speech</i>	The national committee is the information and networking platform for all counselling and information facilities, federal ministries and institutions active in the field of <i>No Hate Speech</i> . This function is to be strengthened and expanded in the next years by realising, among other things, jointly supported activities such as information services and measures for the empowerment of young people against hate speech. This function is to be strengthened and expanded in the next years by realising, among other things, jointly supported activities such as information services and measures for the empowerment of young people against <i>hate speech</i> .

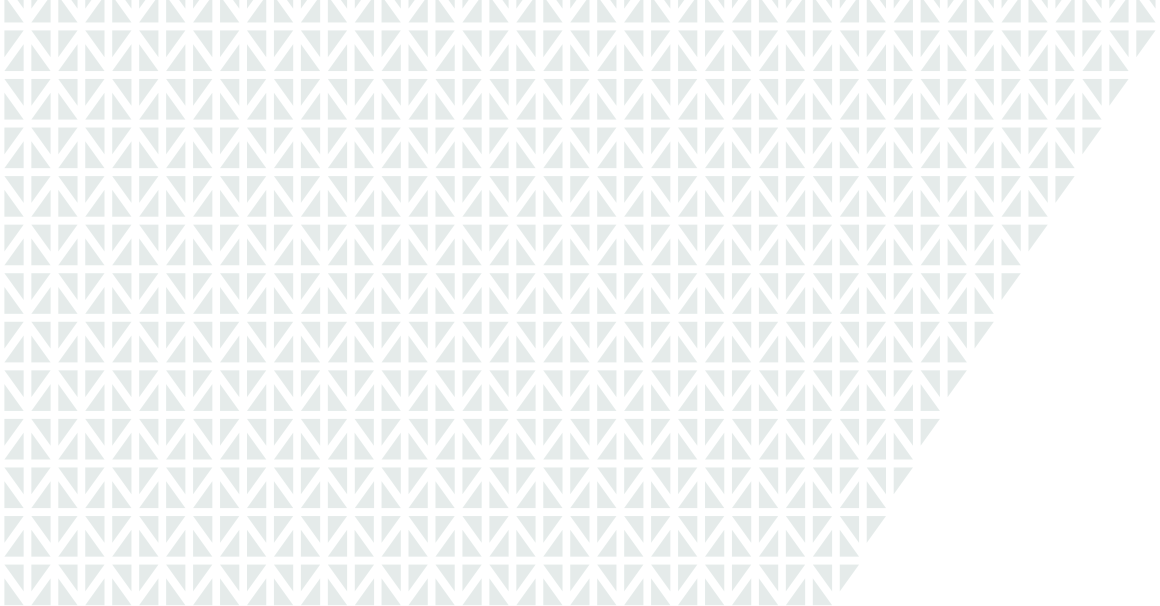
## 2.2 Strengthening the cooperation with and among law enforcement agencies

Due to the interplay of responsibilities, competences, duties and other relevant resources, cooperation across fields of action is also required in the field of competence of law enforcement agencies. In this sense, the law enforcement agencies' ability to cooperate is to be embedded at all levels, expanded and strengthened through comprehensive awareness raising measures in the context of prevention and de-radicalisation programmes and the teaching of values going hand in hand with it. This includes an even more targeted implementation of networking and cooperation mechanisms not only within law enforcement but, due to the entanglement of competences and responsibilities, also between law enforcement agencies and with population groups.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Promotion of awareness-raising measures and cooperation among law enforcement agencies	In order to improve the coordination and use of synergies as well as the cooperation among law enforcement agencies, targeted awareness-raising measures intend to promote the sensitization to the subject of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. A suitable mode of communication is to be developed.
Continuing the cooperation between prisons and the competent local law enforcement agencies	Cooperation between the competent local law enforcement agencies and the respective prison is to be continued and elaborated.
Recruitment of specialised staff in the field of justice	In the job advertisements and when selecting staff, there is a strong focus on language skills and awareness for religious and cultural differences in order to guarantee a diversity among prison staff as the origin and cultural backgrounds of inmates tend to become increasingly diverse.
Expanding and strengthening Austrian Police's Community Policing Programme "GEMEINSAM.SICHER" through national and law enforcement agency coordinated prevention activities	During the last years, the initiative "GEMEINSAM.SICHER" has proved to be an asset to networking in the context of prevention and should be maintained or expanded. Furthermore, cooperation between the police and the population (e.g. with young people) in the context of extremism prevention is to be improved and strengthened. This can be achieved through the development of relevant awareness-raising workshops as well as the establishment of teams with trained prevention officers.

### 2.3 National Network for the Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation (BNED)

Since the decision of the Council of Ministers, the National Network for Extremism Prevention and De-radicalisation (BNED) has formed an essential part of the Austrian security architecture. It coordinates all national measures in the area of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. The constellation of the BNED is of unique character in the European prevention landscape due to the multi-professional combination of its members. As a central strategic committee with a focus on all manifestations of extremism, the BNED plays the role of an elementary early detection tool, which generates and pools knowledge and processes it in the form of products. The BNED is also intended as a high-quality advisory committee, which supports politics and policy makers, for instance through strategic recommendations and *policy papers*. The further development of the BNED is planned.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
National Network for the Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation (BNED)	Nationwide networks do not only promote cooperation between the individual levels but also between the federal provinces. Other existing and proven forms of exchange and cooperation are also to be used for extremism prevention. This is to take place in the form of increased nationwide and interdisciplinary expansion of cross-societal efforts in the context of prevention and de-radicalisation measures against any kind of extremism.
Information management	Publicity measures such as a BNED website are to be considered for strengthening the awareness of the public concerning the activities and output of the BNED.
Strengthening cooperation and dialogue in the context of anti-Semitism	Anti-Semitism can be seen as a cross-cutting issue for all forms of extremism. Therefore, with all forms of extremism, the focus of prevention should be on anti-Semitism. The aim is to create opportunities for cooperation with relevant entities (such as the Staff Office Austrian-Jewish Cultural Heritage at the Federal Chancellery) among civil society and authorities in order to identify society-wide measures for strengthening cooperation and dialogue with facilities against anti-Semitism.

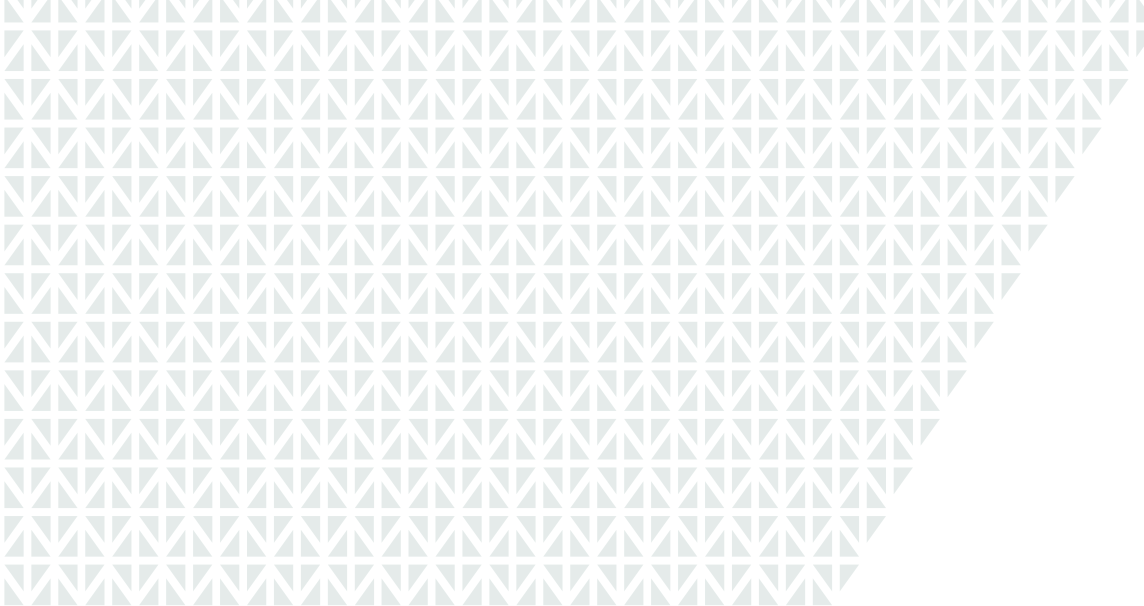
## 2.4 Social network conferences

It is of great value for the resocialisation of inmates who are/were imprisoned for suspicion of membership or support of a terrorist association to prepare them for their release together with their social environment (if any). Social network conferences aid inmates to activate individual resources for the time after imprisonment and thus increase the resilience against becoming radicalised again. De-radicalisation, resocialisation and reintegration into society also comprises the (re-)integration into a positive social environment and the provision of comprehensive support of the individual in order to disengage from contact persons from the extremist scene and minimise the possibility of relapse. The social network conferences have proven to be a suitable tool for this purpose and have been implemented throughout Austria on 1 November 2014. Therefore, the increased investment in and expansion of the social network conference system as well as additional networking structures are considered productive.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Implementation of social network conferences	In time before the release from prison, social network conferences are carried out in appropriate cases for the purpose of stabilisation and relapse prevention. Together with the individual affected, the coordinating body defines required prosocial individuals in order to create and positively reinforce a plan for the time after release from prison. In this way, the resources of the individual's private and social network are used in an optimal way.
Case-relevant networking	The expansion of the "case conference" system is intended. The aim is to create a networking structure according to international standards for all authorities that is obligatory in certain cases and comprises all relevant involved parties from the fields of security, social affairs and education. If possible, this should already start in the investigation phase and also be done in the case of a conditional sentence. The relevant lead organisation and a communication structure are to be defined.

## 2.5 European and international cooperation in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation

Beyond the national transfer of knowledge, it is important to also exchange information and experiences at the international level to prevent and counter radicalisation and violent extremism. Cooperation in the fields of PVE/CVE (*Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism*) at the European and international level are a key means to contain this cross-border and transnational phenomenon as effectively as possible through international exchange of experience and knowledge as well as the joint development of strategies and approaches. Setting and connecting phenomenon-specific focal points, target-oriented knowledge transfer, system-wide cooperation and monitoring of developments in society can contribute to the shared understanding of the nature and context of violent extremism and terrorism in order to ultimately consolidate international competences for its prevention.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Promoting European and international cooperation in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation	The active participation in European and international committees in order to advance a strategic orientation in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation at the European level is currently in the implementation phase. For example, this includes the active participation of Austria in the NPPM ( <i>Network of Prevent Policy Makers</i> ) or RAN ( <i>Radicalisation Awareness Network</i> ). The experiences gained in the course of international expert meetings are shared and jointly processed in order to optimise cooperation and exchange.

## 2.6 Local and regional networking structures

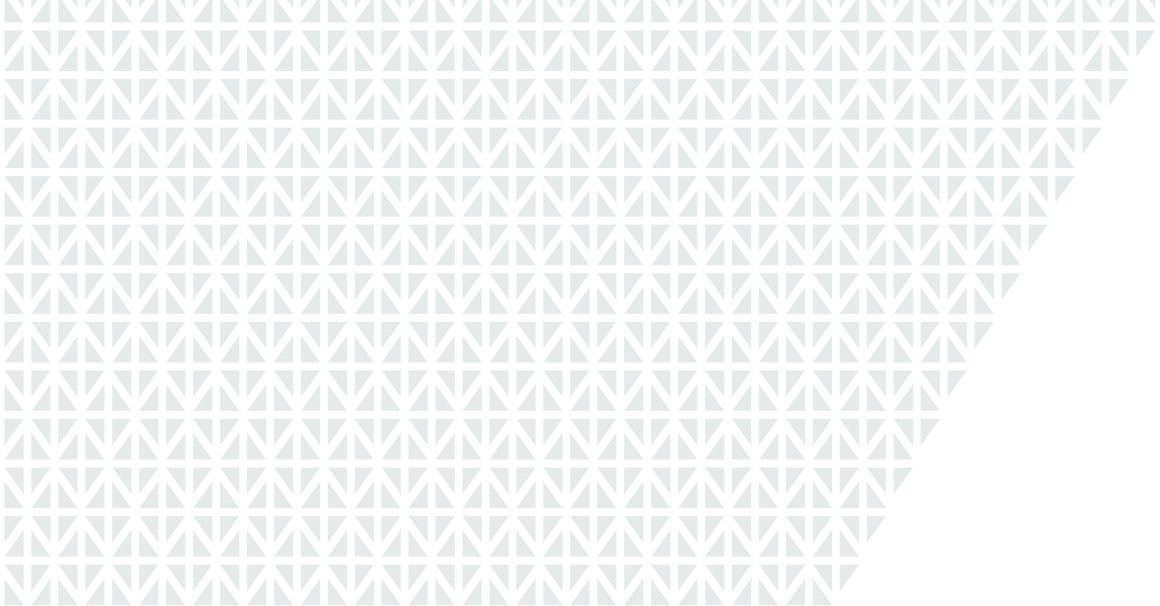
Institutionalised, interdisciplinary and society-wide cooperation is desired for the preventive and occasional intervention in the context of radicalisation and violent extremism by complementing nationwide networking through the establishment of local and regional networking structures. Only with systematic and active cooperation among all multipliers at the local and regional level can existing resources be pooled most effectively and the individual needs of individuals who are especially susceptible to radicalisation be covered in an even more targeted and comprehensive manner. Innovative approaches reach people both in cities and in rural areas and increase the probability of success in the context of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation considerably. The institutionalisation of networking structures at all levels enables the establishment of a multi-professional and multi-dimensional networking infrastructure for providing effective support in the context of nation-wide prevention and de-radicalisation programmes.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Establishing local networking structures for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation	These structures are not intended to be confined to the federal level but they are supposed to reach down to the provincial and communal level. This is the only way to implement an effective and well-organised mutual exchange, support in the realisation of measures and the joint development of projects in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. In detail, this can result in increased cross-societal efforts and structures for the regular exchange and cooperation. Based on the BNED, local and regional networking structures are to be established across Austria and the existing ones are to be continuously elaborated.
European and international cooperation in the field of political Islam	Networks and organisations in the field of political Islam are connected throughout Europe. For this reason, the exchange of experience and information is essential.

### 3. Resilience

Safeguarding the liberal rule of law and providing knowledge on democratic values are elementary components for the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. In times of globalisation and modernisation, teenagers and young adults in particular are increasingly exposed to insecurities and identity crises due to the overwhelming amount of offers and information amid complex social structures. There are no easy answers or sustainable solutions to socio-political, economic, social and psychological grievances, which can produce a feeling of helplessness, injustice, frustration or a lack of perspectives in many ways. Due to the fact that people feel excluded or disadvantaged by society, they become susceptible to extremist narratives, which come under the guise of solidarity provided by extremist groups who offer company and support. Therefore, it is imperative to increase the resilience in society to pejorative ideologies and extremism of any manifestation in the long term through target-group oriented and comprehensive awareness raising. The thorough resilience of the state and population to extremist ideas serves as a basis for peaceful coexistence. One of the fundamental goals of extremism prevention is to counter factors that facilitate radicalisation while at the same time promoting possible resilience factors with individual people and groups of people and thus the Austrian population itself.

Important resilience factors that deprive extremist narratives of their power and legitimacy can be built up through the targeted promotion of political education and media literacy. Effective awareness-raising in the democratic culture renders the early detection, evaluation and prevention of extremist, religious and/or political ideologies and conspiracy theories possible. Furthermore, a joint and fact-based awareness training processing the origin of contemporary societal developments is required. This aims to reduce general suspicions and stereotypes and achieve a positive impact on the social coexistence in the long term. In addition, due to the fact that our times are becoming ever more digital, social networks currently form the environment in which predominantly young generations spend their time, in order to experience different forms of communication, to get information or just to consume things. Therefore, strengthening both the in-person and digital youth work is vital for the promotion of media resilience to extremist propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Support services and initiatives for intercultural encounters create new possibilities for participation, integration as well as social recognition and responsibility. Comprehensive approaches like these can be adopted via central competence centres, consulting networks and the involvement of specialised fields of action. Inclusive and social measures are cornerstones for processes promoting integration and, in accordance with the requirements of integration,



facilitate peaceful coexistence through teaching democratic values, diversity, equality and self-determination. The manifold participative and needs-oriented approaches for the comprehensive increase of resilience, which is to be implemented strategically and pooled especially in the context of primary and secondary prevention, can serve as solid pillars for the effective, long-term and systemic prevention of extremism.

Therefore, the category “resilience” also encompasses sets of measures with the main goal of strengthening and expanding the resilience and the sensitivity of society and state comprehensively. As radicalisation processes are not linear, means and possibilities should thus be considered from a broad perspective in order to eradicate and deconstruct extremist narratives. In view of this, the measures focus on the promotion of democratic culture, the reduction of discrimination, on violence, equal opportunities, the containment of vulnerabilities, the strengthening of psychosocial resources, the promotion of intercultural dialogues, the consideration of key roles and the requirements of integrative youth work as well as the targeted expansion of media literacy.

### **3.1 Political education and culture of democracy**

The indicator for effective and successful prevention of extremism consists in countering factors that encourage radicalisation while increasing resilience factors inside the population at the same time. The targeted promotion of democratic thought and behaviour is considered a driving force in dealing with increasing radicalisation and extremism, which is why the teaching of political education and democratic culture is an effective means of equipping society with the necessary resilience to anti-democratic and extremist forces.

As far as the promotion of democracy is concerned, political education is of particular importance in the school sector, where the foundation for democratic understanding is formed. The expansion of primary prevention of extremism and conspiracy tendencies at schools and education centres must be promoted while maintaining already functioning structures. In view of this, multifunctional competence and contact centres for raising needs-oriented awareness and promoting resilience in the context of democratic and interreligious open-mindedness are intended to promote an understanding of democracy and diversity, self-efficacy, participation and ultimately social coexistence.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Establishment of a competence centre for the promotion of political education and democratic culture	Pooling and expanding the existing expertise in the broader field of political education, democratic culture and extremism in one central competence, research, information and contact point for multipliers.
Official point of contact for questions concerning all recognised churches, religious and confessional communities, interreligious dialogue, the fundamental rights of freedom of belief and conscience, the relationship between state and religion, and the legal status of the church and religious communities	The Office of Religious Affairs (Kultusamt) plays an informative and advisory role when other ministries, provincial governments, courts, authorities and governmental offices come into contact with religious communities when implementing their regulations or when religious/ideological concerns of citizens are involved. These activities are of particular importance in the system of cooperation that prevails in Austria (e.g. compulsory religious education at state schools) between the state, churches and religious communities, which exists alongside all due organisational separation and fundamental neutrality of the state.
Establishment of an entity following the example of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education	Deals with all extremist and anti-democratic movements through research, scientific preparation, expert meetings and learning material for formal and non-formal education.
Framework “political education” of operators of private child and youth welfare services in Upper Austria	The majority of operators of private child and youth welfare services in Upper Austria have come together to form an umbrella organisation. In the course of a conscious process, they have developed a framework including the core values concerning the topic of “political education”. This is now being addressed with the involvement of children and young people on the basis of concrete questions in the living communities and other services. Core values: Developing opinion, participation skills, and social competences in children and young people in care, thereby guiding them towards self-determined political thinking. This also aims to prevent polarisations.



### 3.2 Promotion of media literacy

In times of modern technological innovations, digital media play an essential role in creating and maintaining radicalisation processes. Access to political, religious or other ideological world views is facilitated by the relative anonymity and global coverage of digital information and communication infrastructures. Group building processes in social networks and other online contexts result in the creation of communication rooms in which like-minded individuals are permanently exposed to extremist contents within a filter bubble, where they find recognition and companions, support each other in their attitudes and action tendencies and, in extreme cases, may jointly prepare criminal acts.

Individuals and groups of different extremist orientation increasingly use the limitless opportunities of the digital space to spread their emotionally charged contents that especially look attractive for young mind-sets, to reach young people and to recruit them as new members. At the same time, *fake news* and conspiracy theories increasingly find their way into *social media* channels and consequently create a climate of polarisation and, in the end, a breeding ground for radicalisation and extremism.

Thus, it is inevitable to stop these developments and to accelerate social efforts in the field of media education and media literacy not only within and outside the school environment, but also in the context of society as a whole. If children, young people and adults view the world with a distinct critical eye, if they form their own opinion and act as educated and responsible citizens on the internet and in social networks, extremist propaganda can be deprived of its credibility and power to become gradually reduced.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Promotion of media literacy, especially with regard to social media	Implementation of an expert forum to develop and regularly update programmes designed for the target group-specific expansion of media literacy of all population groups.
Expansion of online counselling and information services	By expanding online counselling and information services, the existing structures and infrastructures in the field of the prevention of radicalisation and extremism are to be expanded in terms of creating effective countermeasures at the federal and provincial level as well as at the multi-professional level. With regard to a responsible use of social media, it is intended to expand existing initiatives and workshops in the cyber area.
Web@ngels	The aim of the project of the association ZARA (Civil Courage and Anti-Racism Work) is the prevention of online hate speech and extremist tendencies. Via online platforms, volunteers called "Web@ngels" are supposed to get in touch with the originators of posts, who move along the line between freedom of expression and hatred. The idea is to involve the originators of the posts into a reflexive dialogue using information and counter speech strategies in order to change their online behaviour for the positive.

### 3.3 Expansion of youth work

In search of orientation, particularly young people seek for clear and easily comprehensible explanations and interpretations as to how they can see and interpret the world around them. This search is crucial in times of personal growth and identity formation. Questions for the meaning of life gain in importance in a world that seems to be confusing. For this reason, young people become susceptible to radical, ideological and extremist answers and approaches. Against this backdrop, it is considered a priority task of society to support young people in building up, securing and using their resources and skills and to promote their resilience to strain and setbacks. Youth work offers young people various opportunities of participation, self-efficacy and self-organisation, as well as of informal, non-formal and political education. Through youth work support services, young people learn to think critically and reflectively and to be respectful of themselves and others. In line with its approach and structures, youth work promotes personal growth, integration and democracy and, in doing so, it basically counteracts any form of radicalisation.

To this effect, qualitative and quality-assured child and youth work has to be expanded and strengthened in the long-term by creating nationwide infrastructures and the necessary framework conditions. Youth work services should be easily accessible for everyone in order to support young people in developing their self-determination, social and intercultural skills and to assist them in participating in and actively contributing to society.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Expansion of youth work	The Federal Youth Promotion Act (Bundesjugendförderungsgesetz) enables children's and youth organisations active across Austria to receive basic and project-based funding for their work which also contributes to the expansion of this field of action. Furthermore, the Austrian Federal Chancellery provides further tools to promote the quality and contents of child and youth work that are to be summarised and expanded within the framework of the Austrian Youth Strategy.
EU Youth Dialogue	The EU Youth Dialogue is a participative instrument within the EU Youth Strategy (also to be implemented into the Austrian Youth Strategy) that is intended to promote the dialogue between political representatives/administrative authorities and young people, from the EU to the local level. For this purpose, there is a National Working Group as well as a Coordination Centre within the National Youth Council in Austria. <a href="http://www.jugenddialog.at">www.jugenddialog.at</a> . (German).
Workshops on the prevention of right-wing extremism for young people as part of the services provided by the Federal Office for Social Affairs and Disability (SMS)	The promotion of social cohesion and societal participation as well as the promotion of democracy are more effective than taking aftercare measures after radical incidents. Young people lacking parental or other social support are often on their own, last but not least this holds true for the time during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a great risk to come under dubious influence via social media. In order to counteract this risk, the SMS offers projects with easily accessible services to young people with special needs and disabilities (in particular the project "AusbildungsFit"). The aim of this measure is to strengthen democratic consciousness and societal and social cohesion, to convey the sense of belonging to the society and to reinforce the resilience against extremist religious and/or political ideologies.
Competence Framework for child and youth work	The idea is to promote qualitative and quality-assured child and youth work and to consequently foster the competence of persons active in this field. The Competence Framework describes individual competences of persons active in child and youth work. Thus, it serves to improve the quality of basic and advanced youth work trainings and is the central "translation tool" for mapping qualifications to the Austrian National Qualification Framework (NQF) in the future.
AusBildung bis 18	The initiative "AusBildung bis 18" (Education until 18) is aimed at enabling all young people up to the age of 18 to complete an education going beyond compulsory education. Every year, about 80,000 young people take advantage of these counselling and qualification services provided by the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) and the Federal Office for Social Affairs and Disability (SMS). When it comes to introducing young people to the concept of education and integrating them in the labour market, it is crucial to strengthen their personal and social competences. Thus, intense personal supervision marks a significant contribution regarding an effective development of resistance against radical and extremist influences.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Promotion of the prevention of extremism by the Vienna Network for Democratic Culture and Prevention (WNED)	The growing number of radicalisation and extremist tendencies, an increasingly aggressive and internationally connected Jihadist Islamism as well as growing anti-Semitism and hostility towards Muslims and the West, were the main reasons for the creation of the <a href="#">“Vienna Network for Democratic Culture and Prevention (WNED)”</a> (German) in September 2014. To prevent extremism, the WNED focuses on strengthening democracy and human rights paying particular attention to children and young people. The WNED does not only supervise individual cases in the context of radicalisation and the prevention of extremism, but also develops measures for different professional and population groups. The scope of measures ranges from organising workshops and projects concerning participation and democratic culture to holding expert conferences. Furthermore, facilities for the protection of particularly vulnerable population groups were created. Another example is the implementation of the Children and Youth Strategy. It is a <a href="#">participation project involving more than 20,000 children and young people</a> .
Legal integration of Open Youth Work in Austria	Professional Open Child and Youth Work and the respective framework conditions to be fulfilled (e.g. quality criteria) are to be laid down in federal law – as is the case in the German SGB VIII (KJHG - Child and Youth Services Act) – as an integral part of the social infrastructure of cities and communities. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the application of the detailed implementing provisions is to remain at the provincial level.
Set of measures against forced and child marriage	Further measures against forced and child marriage are intended to assure that these phenomena neither occur in Austria nor are imported to this country. This includes measures such as to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18.
Promotion of projects / programmes for young people outside the school environment, Promotion of further education	Promotion of youth facilities and Open Youth Work in order to carry out primary preventive (social inclusion, identity, tolerance, etc.) and secondary preventive (risk groups, project work on specific topics, etc.) youth social work, promotion of specific advanced trainings, regional networking and cooperation.
Promotion of the democratic culture for young people in contexts outside the school environment	Imparting knowledge on democratic culture and the concept of democracy in formats tailored to the needs of this target group (actions, projects, workshops, etc.) in informal settings outside the school environment; imparting basic knowledge on critical thinking and the valuing of diversity.
Awareness-raising workshops for young people	Workshops are organised at youth work facilities to raise the awareness of pupils and young people regarding extremism, violence, coexistence, democratic culture, anti-Semitism, anti-racism and gender.

### 3.4 Online platform with services for the prevention of extremism

An online platform with comprehensive and target-group oriented services for the prevention of extremism is to be implemented in order to be able to systematically collect and pool the knowledge from across various fields of action as well as findings from research and practice regarding radicalisation, extremism, prevention or de-radicalisation and to make it available to the general public. The platform particularly aims at providing experts in this field a possibility to transfer knowledge and experiences on the one hand, while raising the public's awareness of radicalisation and violent extremism by providing interdisciplinary and multi-professional information, through campaigns and other innovative formats on the other.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Online platform with services for the prevention of extremism	Creation and spreading of counter-narratives and alternative narratives via an online platform

### 3.5 Integrative and social measures

Guaranteeing a sustainable system of economic and social security can significantly contribute to prevent and avoid all forms of extremism, isolation tendencies and radicalisation processes and to identify them at an early stage. In this context, core values, such as tolerance, democracy, freedom of expression, equality, freedom from violence, diversity, participation, gender equality and the rule of law, are the cornerstones of social coexistence in Austria. Knowing these values on the one hand, while, on the other hand, living according to these principles every day, promotes social cohesion. Thus, integration has to be seen as a process including society as a whole that requires the support and commitment of every single individual in order to be successful.

On the one hand, this includes projects promoting integration that strengthen intercultural dialogue and allow for participative cohesion in society. On the other hand, integration requirements have to be clearly communicated and transported through supportive measures in the sense of a common understanding of democratic values and human rights.

Particularly among young people and young adults, offers of interreligious dialogues which are thematically and methodically oriented towards their living environments can make a valuable contribution when it comes to opening up new approaches and perspectives to them and in expanding their skills to communicate and to resolve conflicts, especially with regard to (inter-)religious conflicts. Furthermore, primary preventive activities of cultural education offer great potential for critical reflection on human rights, democratic beliefs and social competences.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Values and orientation courses	Values and orientation courses have been defined in the Austrian Integration Act since June 2007. Teaching individuals entitled to asylum and people holding subsidiary protection status the values and rules of coexistence in Austria is the basis for successful integration and prevents segregation tendencies that can promote radicalisation. Here, it is crucial to familiarise in-migrants with the values and rules of the receiving country and to clearly communicate rights and obligations, from the very beginning. One module of the values and orientation courses organised by the ÖIF (Austrian Integration Fund) is dedicated to “anti-Semitism”. These courses and subsequently this module are mandatory for all individuals entitled to asylum and people holding subsidiary protection status. The aim is to make it obligatory for all refugees to be confronted with the issue of anti-Semitism.
Basic and advanced training courses regarding “gender-sensitive education”	Detail look into gender-sensitive education in the framework of teachers’ basic and advanced training as well as social and youth social work.
Counselling centres focussing on men’s counselling and violence prevention	Since the beginning of 2019, “Beratungsstelle Grundversorgung” (counselling centre for people receiving basic services) of Volkshilfe Vienna has also been offering counselling services focussing on men’s counselling and violence prevention. Apart from offering traditional services, such as language learning courses and advanced training courses, the overall aim of the counselling services is to identify the support needs of the individuals concerned on a case-by-case basis, to recognise and promote their resources and potentials, to develop integrative support measures contributing to a self-determined life together with the persons concerned, and to support the implementation of these measures.
Intercultural women’s meeting under bicultural supervision	Women’s meetings where girls and women are informed about various topics of living together in Upper Austria and where they can talk about it in an open atmosphere. In addition, there are creative activities which allow them to structure their day in a meaningful way.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Implementation of the concept of a gender-sensitive attitude in open child and youth work	Gender-conscious work means that all individuals working in the field of education, no matter in which function, have gender-specific expert knowledge and act as role models when interacting with children and young people.
House X	This emergency shelter is available to up to 15 girls and young women aged between 16 and 24 years coming from all over Austria who are threatened or affected by forced marriage and violence. Irrespective of their nationality, origin and residential status, girls and young women threatened or affected by forced marriage or intergenerational conflicts in the context of kinship-based gender violence are accompanied and supported holistically around the clock there. Depending on the individual situation of threat, they can stay there up to one year. The address of the temporary shelter is kept secret and is not disclosed to third individuals or institutions in order to protect the women.
Haus Josefstadt	The residential facility "Haus Josefstadt" providing shelter for 60 persons was opened in January 2019. On four floors, this shelter offers different types of housing for specific target groups, such as families, LGBTIQ+, elderly people, single parents with minor children and for refugees who have reached their full age in the meantime (formerly unaccompanied minors). The location is particularly suitable for individuals with physical impairments or persons who need permanent medical care, since it provides barrier-free access and is located close to several hospitals (University Hospital Vienna, St. Anna Children's Hospital).
Language courses and integration into the labour market	Learning a language can be an effective remedy to cross bridges and to overcome obstacles and isolation tendencies in order to establish a basis for societal participation and interaction. Particularly in the context of language learning, the expansion of state and institutionally supported services would have a positive impact on the maximisation of opportunities counteracting possible isolation tendencies that way. As far as the establishment of new framework conditions concerning the receipt of social benefits is concerned, it would be effective to create relevant offers.
Promotion of projects strengthening (intercultural) dialogue and providing for mutual exchange and participation (also by means of measures concerning language qualification)	Promoted dialogue projects (e.g. the "Likrat"-project of the Jewish Community Vienna (IKG)) are of vital importance, since they have the potential to counteract and actively reduce isolation tendencies. It is desirable to maintain federal and provincial subsidies in this context, in order to ensure that these projects are continued effectively at the operational and strategic level.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
DEMOCRATISATION IS DE-RADICALISATION	In the framework of the project of the association Asylum Coordination Austria (asylkoordination österreich) under the title of “participation is de-radicalisation”, Refugee Community Organisations throughout Austria are to be provided with knowledge and skills, in order to enable refugees to improve their participation in the Austrian society. In this way, it is intended to remove the basis for radicalisation and recruitment. Furthermore, the project focusses on connecting volunteer refugee workers and on providing access to information.
connecting people 2021	After completion of a training, interested volunteers have the possibility to be chosen as godparents for unaccompanied minors and young asylum seekers in the form of a sponsorship. The aim is that young people get the possibility to establish private contact (on a long-term basis) with individuals from Austria. The sponsorships are supervised in the form of individual interviews and exchange meetings with the entire training group.
Psychosocial point of contact LGBTIQ+	Point of contact of the association “RosaLila PantherInnen” in Styria, particularly for individuals from the LGBTIQ+ affected by discrimination and extremism seeking psychosocial support.
Strengthening personal responsibility and empowerment of LGBTIQ+ people	Comprehensive and holistic counselling and supervision of people having diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or sex variation, as well as their family and non-family environment. The aim is to strengthen the individuals’ personal responsibility and proactivity in order to achieve gender equality, to promote and strengthen a positive and self-confident self-image and to prevent extremism in their immediate environment.
Expansion of the focus courses “Police and Security” of the ÖIF for young people	Core courses on the topic of “Police and Security” organised by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) are to be further expanded in order to prevent isolation tendencies at an early stage. Specific courses give young people with migration background an understanding of the tasks and work of the police. In this way, awareness is to be raised and prejudices and resentments towards the police are to be eliminated.
Report on parallel societies	According to the government programme, an annual report on the emergence of parallel societies and segregation milieus in Austria is to be introduced. A monitoring through which developments of disintegration can be constantly observed and analysed, forms the basis for this report. The report serves as the basis for making decisions on further measures.

### 3.6 Psychosocial care

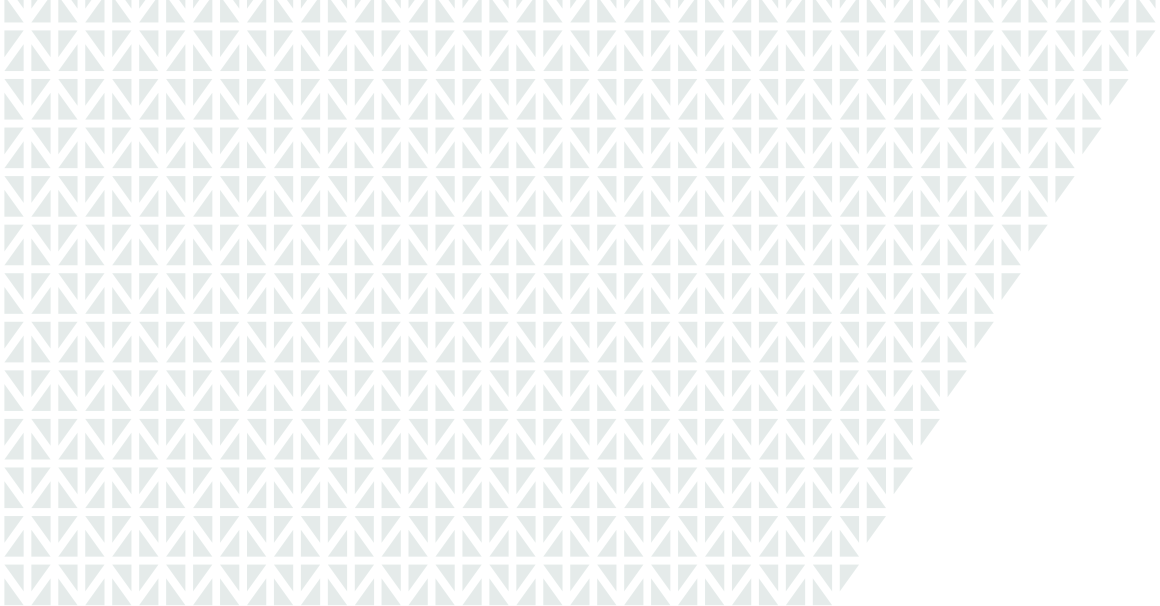
Psychosocial well-being is an essential factor for an individual's quality of life. Challenging conditions and experiences causing stress and traumatisation, or which cause people to deal with their own emotions and fears in a destructive way, may, under certain conditions, make these individuals vulnerable to problematic ideologies. In the long term, psychosocial health can only be guaranteed by promoting psychosocial well-being in all phases of life according to the individual's needs and by reducing psychosocial strain and stress situations, wherever possible.

Consequently, creating healthy living conditions and a public system of healthcare and psychosocial care equally accessible to everybody providing comprehensive psychosocial (i.e. psychological, psychotherapeutic and psychiatric) services, can help to strengthen personal resources and to reduce the vulnerability of individuals which might otherwise be misused by extremist groups. Psychosocial resilience as a protection against destructive influences.

In this context, particular attention has to be paid to children and young people who need special protection with regard to their psychosocial development. Thus, in order to provide psychosocial protection, sustainable (child and adolescent psychiatric) care is to be guaranteed.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Concept of a holistic solution for the organisation and financing of psychological and psychotherapeutic care	There have already been made some attempts to further develop healthcare benefits in the area of clinical-psychological diagnosis and psychotherapy on the national level. In the context of radical and extremist tendencies, psychological health and mental well-being are factors not be underestimated. The substantial, progressive and needs-oriented expansion of healthcare benefits until 2024 is laid down in the government programme for 2020-2024. Based on existing solutions and by taking into account best practice models, the concept of a holistic solution for the organisation and financing of psychological and psychotherapeutic care in Austria was developed together with all relevant actors. On the basis of this concept, a high-level workshop organised by the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection took place in September 2020, in which experts and individuals doing practical work participated. Efforts are currently made to further implement the concept.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Early identification of violence: Expansion of child and victim protection groups in hospitals	Hospitals are often the first point of contact for victims of violence. Thus, hospital staff also gets in touch with individuals who are directly or indirectly affected by radical or extremist violence. Consequently, healthcare personnel plays a crucial role in the early identification of all forms of violence. Pursuant to §8e of the Austrian Hospital and Sanatorium Act (KAKuG), child protection groups and victim protection groups are to be established in line with the purpose of the respective institution. Due to the fact that resources are limited, it is necessary to strengthen the health care personnel by making it visible, showing them recognition and making adequate resources regarding space and time available to them for child protection groups and victim protection groups and by initiating relevant interventions within the scope of their activities.
Creation of psychiatric outpatient departments for children and young people	Establishment of specific, multi-professional outpatient departments for children and young people at the interfaces of children and youth care, judiciary and probation assistance and educational institutions.
Creation of residential facilities	Residential facilities for male recipients of primary care who are suffering from psychiatric illnesses or have an increased need for care: 1) for single adult men 2) for male young people and young adults until the age of 21 years.
“RESET - psychotherapeutic interventions for the prevention of violence and extremism“	The Asylum Coordination Austria is coordinating a project for the prevention of subjective risk factors for violence and extremism through psychosocial services for refugees and people with a migration background provided by the project community NIPE plus (a network of organisations specialised in working with extremely traumatised individuals from various countries of origin).
Rendering shortage occupations in the field of psychosocial care attractive for children and young people	This measure was formulated in the federal target-based governance agreement (Zielsteuerungsvertrag) between the federal government, the federal provinces and social insurance entities. Childhood and adolescence psychiatry as well as social and developmental paediatrics were identified as priority areas. Two starting measures were defined from this set of measures: “Rendering attractive the field of developmental and social paediatrics” and “strengthening, making visible and expanding the networks of childhood and adolescent psychiatry according to the Austrian Structural Plan for Healthcare (ÖSG)”.
Easily accessible programmes of psychosocial care for children and young people in connection with the COVID-19 crisis (working title)	It is necessary to offer counselling and treatment for children and young people affected, in order to alleviate psychic consequences. The aim is to prevent chronic illnesses and long-term consequences. The respective services are intended to be easily accessible, not to require long waiting times, be specifically oriented towards the needs of the target group, and be of charge and available complementary to standard care.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Expansion of the project concept “Holistic solution for the organisation of psychological and psychotherapeutic care” for the target group of children and young people	Compared with adult care, psychosocial care for children and young people is more complex. This is due to the fact that not only service providers of the health and welfare system are involved in this case, but also those of children and youth care and the education system. It is the aim of this project to define, analogous to the model already existing for adults, ideal-typical access paths for children and young people to the psychosocial aid spectrum bearing in mind their respective realities of life. In close cooperation with the individuals concerned and the job groups involved in care measures, it is planned in a first step to list promoting and impeding factors to be encountered by children and young people when making use of psychosocial assistance services. Subsequently, it is planned to define the strengths and weaknesses of the existing access paths and to develop a model suitable for children and young people.

### 3.7 Measures against radicalisation in the area of sport

On the one hand, the area of sport serves as an arena for individuals to express pejorative ideologies (e.g. right-wing extremism in the fan cultures of certain team sports or Islamist extremism and right-wing extremism in martial arts). On the other hand, sport offers perfect conditions for counteracting radicalisation tendencies in vulnerable young people by offering them a club environment. By taking targeted measures in education and through campaigns with multipliers (e.g. coaches and sports officials), it is possible to enhance the systemic resilience of sports organisations to extremism. Thus, sports offer excellent conditions for extremism prevention.

When it comes to taking action against religious and political extremism, criminal law and repressive measures are not far-reaching enough. Therefore, as many areas of our society as possible should be involved in counteracting extremism in a proactive and preventive way. This requires not only good social, educational, health and labour market policies but also a good sports and club culture. Marginalised young people in particular get the recognition in sport that they do not find at school or at work. Sport is an area of society that is easily accessible for different social groups such as refugees, migrants and individuals living on the margins of society.

In order to provide a basis for the fight against extremism, radicalisation and violence, it is aimed to promote an inclusive, tolerant and open sports and club culture without racism, sexism, homophobia and discrimination.

Among other things, the idea is to take preventive measures in the context of sports clubs and their fans by organising positive campaigns using role models and identification figures. Furthermore, a point of contact is to be established for individuals involved in sports, which is to be supported by educational measures, public relations and specific campaigns.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Establishment of a point of contact against extremist tendencies in sport	A central point of contact for reporting extremist tendencies is to be set up. This point of contact aims to counsel sport organisations that actively seek support in connection with extremist incidents and to actively contact organisations if there are incidents that fall under their responsibility. It is to compile a survey on radicalisation in the field of sport. Moreover, this point of contact is to provide trainings for sport organisations.
Promotion of projects offering programmes for specific target groups	In the context of extremism prevention, programmes by clubs and organisations for concrete target groups such as refugees, socially marginalised individuals or migrants that aim to reach people who have difficulties getting into organised club sports by offering sports activities to them are to be promoted.
Promotion of sports associations taking measures against radicalisation in the field of sport	Homophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism and racism are still common among the fan cultures of some team sports. In order to counteract these tendencies, it is necessary to support concrete projects of sports associations and organisations in this field.



## 4. Education and Training

Due to the fact that early childhood education already plays a decisive role with regard to future opportunities in life, it is necessary to increase investment in educational structures regardless of age, origin, sexual orientation and religious or ethnic affiliation. Radicalisation takes place in permanent processes of socialisation and reflection in the course of which an individual increasingly starts to identify with an extremist group and its ideology. Individuals may have already been influenced ideologically or confronted with attitudes hostile to democracy, integration and humanity within their families or peer groups.

Against this backdrop, it is considered a task of society as a whole to raise the awareness of all people living in Austria regarding these pejorative ideologies and extremist attitudes by making use of demand-oriented support services. In this way, it is intended to encourage people to reflect things, think critically, experience self-efficacy and ultimately develop their individual personalities. At the same time, active cooperation with the population opens up the opportunity to gradually reduce the polarisation of society, stereotypes, racism and prejudices, thereby also reducing hostility towards certain groups of individuals in the long run.

In practice, the responsibility for targeted awareness-raising falls to key individuals with a clear educational mission or to other fields of action relevant for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. In this light, it becomes clear that reference persons play a key role not only in the direct social environment, but also in the educational and care contexts of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. On the one hand, this means that holistic, awareness-raising measures aimed at preventing radicalisation processes in connection with violent extremism and terrorism in the best way possible have to be taken. On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that exiting an extremist scene or ideology is only possible if the individuals leaving the scene are gradually (re-)integrated into an alternative, positive social environment. Thus, effective support services at the federal, provincial and communal level are to be regarded as a fundamental criterion when it comes to enabling individuals to turn away from an extremist environment. By creating structural framework conditions and through efforts made by society as a whole, it is possible to establish tailor-made approaches for individuals willing to leave an extremist environment or people susceptible to radicalisation. The idea is to bring together a broad spectrum of relevant actors who meet individual needs – which had not or hardly been fulfilled in an individual's perception before and, thus, had been used by extremist groups – in the best way possible.

Especially in the educational context, teachers, whose competences are already very challenged, see themselves increasingly confronted with growing expectations, uncertainties and excessive demands. The aim is that specialised experts give guidance to teachers, raise their awareness and support them in the framework of evidence-based education and advanced training programmes by effectively linking and establishing the interfaces between formal and non-formal education in the long term. By including the educational sector and other relevant institutions, it is possible to provide individuals who primarily work in practice with effective tools and an orientation framework, enabling them to take innovative prevention measures and to identify presumable suspicions pointing to radicalisation at an early stage and to receive adequate support.

It is intended to standardise, professionalise and institutionalise holistic and target group oriented education and training programmes in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. Only if education and care opportunities are provided continuously and passed on to individuals who are regarded as particularly vulnerable, mechanisms raising awareness of extremist narratives and propaganda can take sustainable effect in the general population. The establishment and continuous maintenance of an individual's social support systems are efficient and future-oriented methods, when it comes to effectively countering extremist thought of any kind. System- and resource-oriented work in education and care on several levels will guarantee that prevention and de-radicalisation measures are continued in the long run and that the potential society-wide cooperation is fully exploited.

Thus, the category of "Education and Training" provides sets of measures primarily dealing with the possibilities the education sector can provide in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation. In the light of all this, they offer a broad spectrum of targeted educational services, pedagogical concepts and approaches to guarantee, in the best possible way, barrier-free access to education for all individuals living in Austria, including education and counselling in the school context and in open youth work, the promotion of dialogue, interaction, communication, diversity and inclusion, the motivation of people to critical thinking and active participation, the establishment of sustainable interfaces linking formal and non-formal education and the development of relevant teaching materials for extremism prevention and de-radicalisation.

## 4.1 Prevention Manual

The Prevention Manual can contribute to an improved prevention of extremism focussing on society-wide cooperation, pooling existing multi-professional knowledge to create a highly complex and politicised societal field of action. It is intended to reflect a common understanding of extremism prevention, always geared towards current findings from all relevant areas of fields of action and designed to include society as a whole. In this manual, experts from science, the civil society and the law enforcement authorities are encouraged to comment on the various facets of extremism and terrorism as a complex and challenging societal phenomenon and to describe different prevention approaches. In this way, this manual can serve as a useful tool providing orientation to those working in the field of extremism prevention in various areas and roles and according to different requirements.

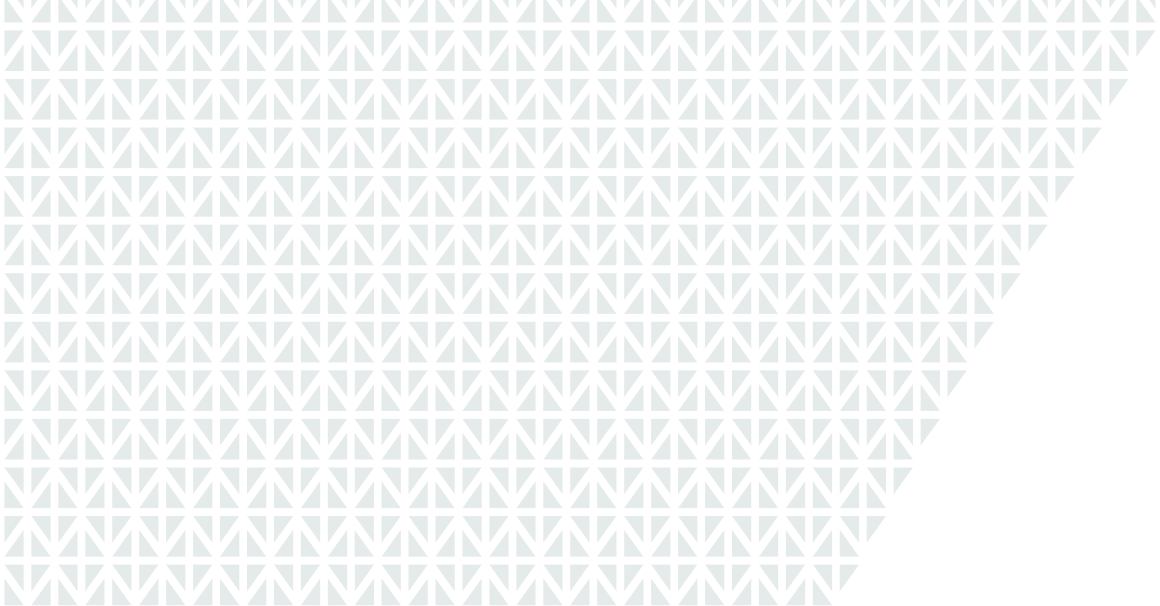
Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Prevention Manual	The idea is to create a needs-based manual, concentrating on concrete action practice, pooling the wide range of knowledge from extremism prevention, which shall offer a substantial orientation framework for various practical actors.

## 4.2 Education and training in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation

In order to create a common basis for education and training programmes in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation and to professionalise and institutionalise them, they are to be extended in terms of their field of action and according to consolidated quality criteria and current basic knowledge from research and practice. In this context, the innovative possibilities of specific education and training are to be adapted to the actual problems encountered in all forms of extremism, taking into account the practical conditions of the relevant institutions, in order to increase the competence of actors working in practice according to individual needs. To this end, certified courses and trainings adapted to the needs of individual professional groups regarding extremism and other phenomena can be set up, always taking into account the contextual factors of the respective field of action resulting in various approaches on how to deal with extremism – for example in schools or the penal system.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Establishment of a course or training in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation	Many actors are already active in the fields of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation or could potentially be confronted with these areas of action. In order to provide all people involved with the profound basic knowledge and training necessary, it appears to be appropriate to set up a common training course. In order to guarantee that a phenomenon of this dimension is understood as comprehensively as possible, it is important to jointly look at all relevant parts (e.g. migration, transcultural competences) and to apply the tools appropriate for the respective professional field (e.g. trauma pedagogy). It appears appropriate to include trainees from multiple disciplines, which would allow for the creation of networks among participants and, consequently, the use of synergies.
Education and training programmes for public agencies	Needs-oriented education and training programmes are to be developed via appropriate formats and according to the fields of action or institutions where individuals mainly get in touch with radicalised people or persons prone to radicalisation (e.g. penal system, labour market, social pedagogy, children and youth work). According to the possibilities of the respective institutions, these programmes, which focus on all well-known forms of extremism, are to be integrated into the already existing basic training of the staff, in order to further increase people's awareness and individual capacity to act.
Expansion of interdisciplinary awareness-raising and training measures	For the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation, it may prove successful to extend already initiated awareness-raising and training measures and supplement them by new ones. Multipliers and individuals who are interested in the matter can occasionally acquire basic knowledge on radicalisation and extremism, in order to be able to identify characteristic features and suspicious facts and to react to them appropriately, if required. This may be realised via innovative and practice-oriented settings, by supplying them with tools supporting them in their respective working and private environment or in the public and digital space. In this way, their way of acting and their self-confidence can be reinforced. In holistic and group-specific awareness-raising events, the focus is for example on various forms of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism and religious and ideological communities, in order to strengthen alternative perspectives on the societal environment. It is advisable to include experts who work as psychological or psychotherapeutic consultants and who have ideological and religious expert knowledge or experience into the respective awareness-raising courses, in order to increase quality and success of these programmes and to link the relevant competence centres and individual requesting bodies.



Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Provision of expert advice, education and training for multipliers	Easily accessible programmes fulfilling individual needs for social services, schools, labour-market institutions, institutions of adult education, counselling centres, e.g. concerning the field of extremism. The trainings are aimed at raising awareness by providing information, reflection and dialogue, promoting people's own ability to act in practice and making them familiar with practice-oriented possibilities of intervention. In this context, specific expert counselling and guidance and support of teams, as well as individual training offers and series of education programmes are provided.

### 4.3 Education and counselling in the school context

Education can possibly be regarded as one of the most efficient tools to prevent individuals from gradually turning to violent, extremist ideologies, organisations and movements, no matter whether these are Islamist, right-wing extremist or other extremist threats endangering our cohesive, integrative societies. For this reason, it is necessary to create or continue to develop framework conditions in the educational sector which enable children and young people to expand their ability to live according to the rules of democracy, their societal commitment and social participation, their creativity and self-esteem, enabling them to grow up into an independent and socially responsible human being. The early transmission of values aimed at supporting early childhood development and the promotion of critical and reflected thinking, media literacy and an understanding of democracy contribute to anchoring social cohesion in Austria and minimising tendencies of segregation. To that end, teachers are to be adequately prepared as regards initial education and in-service training, in order to be able to cope with a broad range of tasks, such as teaching controversial topics, religious and other aspects of diversity, human rights, valid regulations (laws) concerning counter terrorism and the development of protective measures at schools (building resilience). For schools, it is absolutely necessary to be able to assess the status quo regarding available and reliable pedagogical intervention, measures and material and to extend networking structures to local and regional democratic institutions, which can support them in times that are becoming more and more challenging due to radicalisation and extremism. Thus, it appears to be appropriate to continuously adapt educational programmes and formats to current societal needs and developments and to tailor them in a standardised format to individual target groups.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Educational programmes offered at schools and institutions of basic education	All children (irrespective of whether they belong to social groups with fewer educational opportunities or to groups valuing education, with or without a migrant background) are to be promoted from the very beginning in the best way possible and according to their individual needs, in order to provide them with equal participation opportunities. The aim is to communicate children's rights and the right to be protected from violence through plays, games and creative methods in a playful way. Further proposals are developed together with teachers, and on the occasion of parent-teacher conferences, information regarding children's rights, media literacy, diversity and conflict management is provided. It is necessary to take measures to support schools, which are aimed at increasingly establishing democratic principles in everyday school life, e.g. by expanding political education (competence model) and by the central provision of material. Amongst other things, the participation of external staff and active networking with local/regional democratic institutions, democracy workshops etc. are supposed to serve as methodical approaches in this context. The aim is to continuously anchor the respective measures in the educational system.
Teacher counselling	Expanding the promotion of participative school culture
Organisational development for inclusive and non-discriminatory learning and teaching spaces	It is planned to support processes to develop inclusive and non-discriminatory structures in school and educational organisations. Education formats are developed and offered, which – depending on the respective target group – convey facts and competences to act on the one hand, while they contribute to strengthen pupils, young people and apprentices in the fields of human rights and democracy education on the other.
Establishment of interfaces between formal and non-formal education	Cooperation between schools and individual families, as well as family counselling services and youth services, in order to establish concrete possibilities of support in the respective social environments. Both the school and parents are constant factors in young people's lives. By establishing a link between these institutions and the primary social instance, i.e. the family, early warnings can be caught and interpreted (information meetings, workshops, dialogue).
Database on extremism prevention programmes in the field of education	In the framework of the KIRAS Security Research project <a href="#">StratEX</a> (German), a comprehensive inventory of the extremism prevention programmes in the field of education existing all over Austria was made. The result is a list including more than 200 programmes, which were clustered according to their regions, their type of organisation, their offers, target groups and contents. In order to make this information accessible to a broader audience, a database is created at the moment, where you can find tailor-made regional offers regarding extremism prevention at schools.



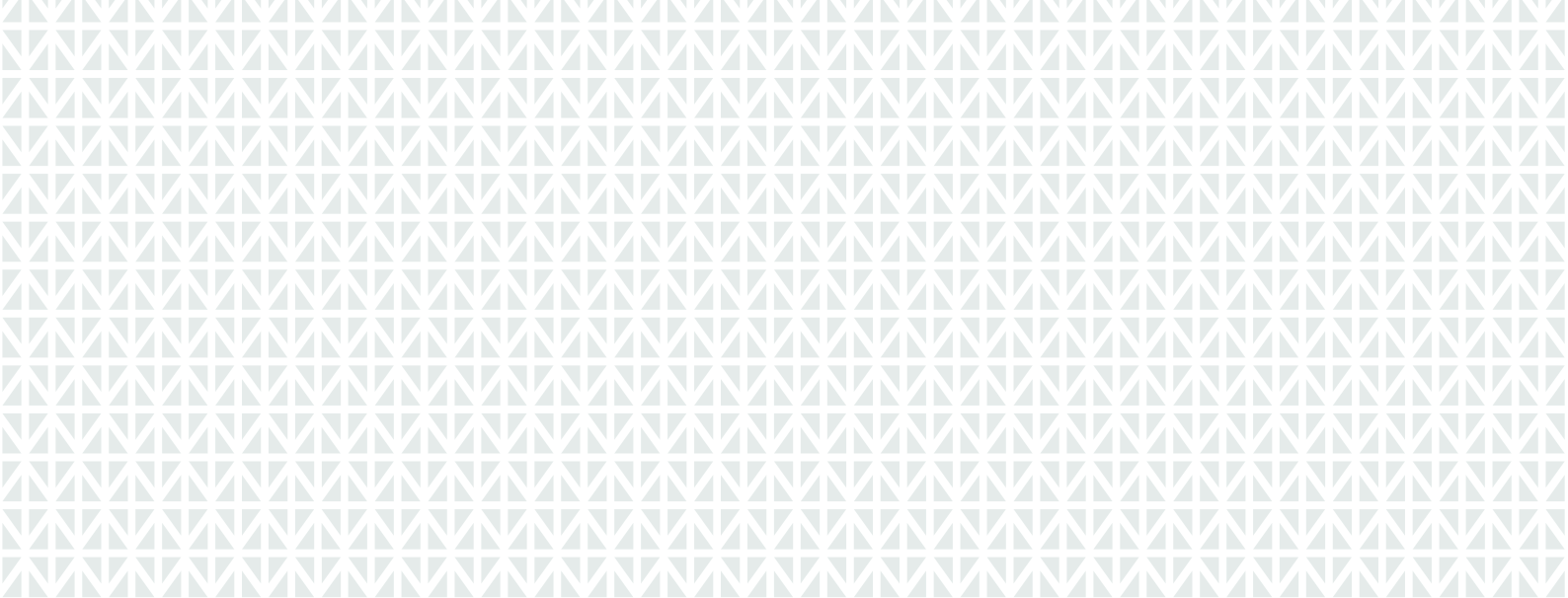
## 5. Knowledge and Research

In the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation, it is the fundamental responsibility of science and research to make a decisive contribution to establish a common understanding of extremist forms based on political and/or religious motives by generating, managing and transferring knowledge. Through systematic observation, information collection and analysis as well as the documentation by experts of research institutions and documentation centres focussing on violent extremism, scientific knowledge can find its way into nation-wide measures. Moreover, in all elementary areas of prevention, approaches can only be optimised by continuous evaluation on the basis of evidence-based quality criteria.

Comprehensive research and evaluation activities are regarded a continuous process that needs to go hand in hand with extremism prevention, since extremist and terrorist phenomena are subject to constant change. While familiar manifestations of extremism tend to adapt to current conditions and circumstances – particularly the global digital revolution of modern age – others break up, take on new characteristics, or come in completely new, partly non-institutionalised manifestations. Against this backdrop, new research gaps constantly arise regarding the conditions of origin, effects and correlations of radicalisation and violent extremism.

This transformation/change and its influence on public discourse and societal coexistence render evidence-based, interdisciplinary research work indispensable. It is necessary to make increased investments in research, not only because of the fact that extremist manifestations and their threat potential for internal security tend to become more and more manifold, but also since the locations where radicalisation and recruitment efforts take place are constantly changing. Research can provide the basis for a sustainable consensus by re-assessing the origin, aims and nature of extremist groups and the individual processes, motives and accompanying circumstances of (de-)radicalisation processes. At the same time, new research results can help design targeted intervention measures against extremist and terrorist phenomena in a more effective way and establish new ones, in order to arrive at an interaction of society as a whole.

By systematically taking together scientific findings and proven practices, new coordination structures will be established paving the way for a scientific *Centre of Excellence*. Particularly by expanding interdisciplinary project activities on the national and international level, it is intended to enlarge and professionalise the



research landscape. In this context, experience has shown that a whole of society approach is the right one, since it is only by way of a cooperation going beyond professions, areas of activity and national borders that extremism and terrorism research can take complete effect. One focus of interdisciplinary research shall be put on evaluation and impact research in this context. Continuous quality controls of progress and effects followed by an optimisation of performance will guarantee that the probability for prevention and de-radicalisation measures to succeed is considerably increased. Accordingly, accompanying evaluation processes will enable multipliers to check whether a successful implementation of prevention and de-radicalisation measures is possible under the existing practical conditions and how they could be improved in terms of effectiveness and sustainability. Due to the fact that extremism and terrorism are highly sensitive fields, it is of utmost importance that comprehensive research and evaluation are accompanied by professional quality management, in order to maintain internal security. Therefore, knowledge generation and transfer through evidence-based research are to be regarded as a means to be continuously elaborated, while at the same time being decisive and pioneering as regards effective prevention and de-radicalisation work.

In light of this, the category “knowledge and research” contains comprehensive sets of measures, allowing to analyse, contextualise and pass on the manifold experience values collected in extremism prevention and de-radicalisation on the basis of current research methods and practical approaches. In this way, it is intended to create and expand a broad spectrum of options for action. They range from independent research work with a focus on evaluation and impact research to the sustainable realisation of prevention and de-radicalisation measures, a substantial acquisition of knowledge and fundamental research, the transfer of scientific findings to practice, to the promotion of a holistic-interdisciplinary approach on the local, national and international level.

## **5.1 A Scientific Centre of Excellence**

In order to better understand and explain the motivations, manifestations and structures of radicalisation processes and extremist tendencies in their entire complexity and to take them as a basis for developing and realising effective and efficient prevention and de-radicalisation measures, it is necessary that scientific research adopts an interdisciplinary and holistic approach. Therefore, in order to establish a type of systematic and interdisciplinary extremism research concentrating on a comprehensive examination of the identified areas

and producing knowledge-based inputs for practical and political use, it is necessary to create a structural basis, which guarantees that research-related competences are pooled.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Establishment and funding of an interdisciplinary research cluster/ <i>Centre of Excellence</i>	In order to make independent and excellent research possible, it is necessary to create structures. Thus, it is recommended to establish an independent, scientific competence centre to improve the coordination of research activities and to create synergy effects, in order to put research on a broad empirical basis while at the same time considering interdisciplinary competences. Consequently, it is the aim to form cooperations with scientific institutions, in order to provide the relevant results to everybody.
Establishment of the research cluster “Counter-Terrorism, CVE and Intelligence” at the Danube University Krems (Donau-Universität Krems).	The research cluster will be funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the purpose and the aim being to sustainably establish, coordinate and realise needs-oriented research and education in the field of “state protection, counter terrorism and counter extremism” according to top-of-the-line international standards. The focus is on implementing an evidence-based research design in a core domain of internal security, which is structurally mapped in relevant research projects and in curricula. Apart from drafting comprehensive analyses of latest trends and sustainable systemic developments, it is the aim to formulate strategic derivations for the field of counter terrorism. For one thing, the outcome should be a systemic overview of the phenomenon of politically motivated violence and of anti-constitutional extremism, for another, relevant developments should be mapped according to substantiated sociological principles to serve as a basis for potential anticipatory measures to be taken by the competent security authorities.

**5.2 Expansion of interdisciplinary national and international project activity**

Prevention and de-radicalisation measures aimed at society as a whole can only be successful if background information on the phenomenon, such as its origin and contextual circumstances, are known and if these measures are continuously checked to verify that they are up to date via evidence-based criteria and expanded if needed. Therefore, it is the duty of empirical research to systematically analyse the information and to determine the path that lead to extremism as well as the possibilities for exiting the extremist environment while taking into account the role of the actors involved. By means of accompanying studies and relevant projects, extremism prevention and de-radicalisation programmes offered by civil society or institutions are to be examined in view of their structures and processes as well as both their conducive and, possibly, detrimental

conditions, and, in the sense of quality assurance, also their effectiveness. Substantiated research results and evaluative assessments contribute to planning extremism prevention and de-radicalisation programmes in a targeted manner and sustainably developing them.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Cooperation in the fields of science, academia and research	Professional support with academic papers, research and publications.
Research and evaluation	Accompanying research studies aim at analysing and systematically evaluating the effect of implemented measures on de-radicalisation.
Assessment of needs for de-radicalisation programmes in labour-market policy measures	The project " <a href="#">ResilienceWorks</a> " (German) aims at obtaining an in-depth problem assessment of the potential for radicalisation in selected measures of active labour-market policies while at the same time developing practise-relevant approaches to increase resilience of young people against radicalisation. The expected outcome of the project are evidence-based recommendations for the expansion of extremism prevention in labour-market policy measures in the scope of the Federal Ministry of Labour, which will be implemented accordingly.

### 5.3 Interdisciplinary research with a focus on evaluation and impact

Given the high sensitivity of precautionary measures for the effective prevention of extremist and terrorist threats, it is imperative to highlight the relevance of interdisciplinary research, in particular its focus on evaluation and impact research, which has been increasingly recognised in recent years. Accordingly, national and international research projects into evidence-based and interdisciplinary mechanisms for evaluating impact effects and probabilities of success are to be implemented in order to design long-term and impact-oriented prevention and de-radicalisation measures. Accompanying research activities, such as institution-specific or interdisciplinary studies, research reports and early warning systems, are not to be limited to extremist thought and the related practices but are to be expanded to all relevant phenomena which are to be taken into account due to their reciprocal influence.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Promoting research projects with the goal of establishing extremism prevention and de-radicalisation on a broad, interdisciplinary evidence base in the sense of high-quality evaluation and impact research	In order to get a better overview of research activities in the field of extremism prevention and de-radicalisation, the establishment of a research unit is considered productive. Effective prevention and de-radicalisation presupposes knowledge about the causes and the context of the respective phenomenon and requires the scientific evaluation of programmes and measures. Therefore, both fundamental scientific research and practise-oriented studies are to be promoted.
Promotion of interdisciplinary research projects	Promotion of research projects in the field of fundamental scientific research, the evaluation of projects and measures as well as practise-oriented studies, interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches and language skills for the analysis of primary literature.
Annual report on extremism to identify the impact of radicalisation processes	Current developments in Austria and in Europe make the systematic discussion of extremist phenomena indispensable. Information on all forms of extremist and anti-democratic activities makes it necessary to thoroughly process current developments for the entire population, especially in view of Austria's historical responsibility. The annual report on extremism makes a significant contribution in this context.
Research reports by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF)	With the research reports, the ÖIF, together with experts from the academic and research community, research institutes and state academic institutions, addresses the current developments and challenges in the field of integration, such as the emergence of parallel societies in Austria.
In-depth studies in the field of integration dealing with phenomena such as extremism or devaluating attitudes	The Austrian Federal Chancellery supports research projects that deal with phenomena of religious or political extremism in the field of integration and migration. This includes in particular studies that spotlight forms of anti-Semitism in the context of migration and integration. The aim is to gain sound scientific findings on the manifestations and backgrounds of these phenomena in different groups and generations of migrants. These findings form the basis for further preventive measures.

#### 5.4 Austrian Fund for the documentation of religiously motivated political extremism (Documentation Centre Political Islam)

The phenomenon of political Islam as well as its beliefs and characteristic features has been a source of controversy for years. Prior to the establishment of the Documentation Centre, Austria did not have a government organisation that documents the developments in the field of “political Islam” and provides information about it. The establishment of subject-specific documentation centres allows for a more targeted and evidence-based information gathering, analysis, documentation and knowledge transfer in the context of individual



extremist orientations such as “political Islam” with a more detailed consideration of its characteristic features. This facilitates the elaboration of the similarities, differences and connections between different extremist tendencies, raising awareness and making them available for public discourse.

Measure / Recommendation	Short description
Austrian Fund for the documentation of religiously motivated political extremism (Political Islam)	The Austrian Fund for the documentation of religiously motivated political extremism (Documentation Centre Political Islam) was established in July 2020. The Documentation Centre was founded on the proposal of BNED members and acts as an independent scientific research hub and competence centre. Its work essentially consists of knowledge generation, knowledge management and knowledge transfer. The Documentation Centre makes full use of all scientific means of research, analysis, documentation and archiving in the context of “political Islam”.
Elaboration of a working definition of “political Islam” in Austria	A scientific study was published which introduces the concepts of “political Islam”, but predominantly focusses on the variations and tendencies of “political Islam” in Austria. The working definition devised from it forms the basis for further preventive measures.
Annual report on the developments of political Islam in Austria	The annual report aims at illustrating the current structures and networks of political Islam and will be presented to the public.
Substitution of personal statute through “habitual residence” as a connecting factor	This is to avoid the application of legal systems that are incompatible with Austrian law and to strengthen the corresponding protection mechanisms in this context, and to change Austrian Private International Law Act (IPRG) in the area of personal law from the principle of nationality to the principle of habitual residence.

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