

Youth Work Against Violent Radicalisation

Seminar / Conference

27 November - 1 December 2017 | Malta

Violent radicalisation among young people has become a growing issue of concern in Europe and its neighbouring regions.

Youth work has a very important role to play in the prevention of violent radicalisation, supporting and empowering young people to deal with challenges they face and strengthening their resilience. Youth work is particularly-as young people are susceptible to various influences during the critical stage of adolescence, and if they perceive themselves as susceptible to discrimination, social exclusion or marginalisation, they are more at risk.

Youth work can make an important difference to young people at this stage, by focusing on:

- **empowering youth** to have a greater degree of autonomy, self-determination and control over their lives in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible way
- **supporting youth** to deal with challenges they face
- **strengthening** young people's **resilience** to violent ideologies by helping them recognise the harm violence can cause to them and their communities

In this regard, youth workers may work on the development of young people's life skills, critical thinking, inter-cultural competences, active citizenship, promotion of diversity, and common values of freedom and tolerance through non-formal and informal learning. They may create safe spaces for discussions, approaching controversial topics, questions and opportunities for young people's engagement.

In order to examine how different actors have been dealing with potential violent radicalisation of young people, a consortium was created among SALTO EuroMed, SALTO EECA and SALTO SEE Resource Centers together with the National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth in Action of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom as well as the European Union and the Council of Europe Youth Partnership.

The **strategy for 2017** includes:

- a **mapping exercise** and research about "**concept of violent radicalisation**" that will showcase positive ways and initiatives in which violent radicalisation can be addressed and prevented through youth work, and an examination of how to

strengthen the role of different actors. The goal is to draw lessons, conclusions and recommendations regarding the needs and challenges of youth work at different levels, which will be compiled and published electronically after the end the conference.

For the purpose of this strategy, violent radicalisation includes different forms (urban violence, emergence of a violent sub-culture, right and left political extremist violence, nationalist violence, religiously motivated violence) and different manifestations (verbal violence, damage of public goods, violent rallies, physical aggression and homicide, organised crime, terrorist acts).

A full presentation of the strategy can be found on:

<https://www.salto-youth.net/about/regionalcooperation/current/ywagainstradicalisation/>

Video presentation: <https://vimeo.com/220431209>

The Conference will bring together participants from Programme Countries and from the four Neighbouring Regions of the European Union in order to reflect on interdependency and the need to analyse this topic from a wider perspective.

The conference will cover the following objectives

- 1) To explore the concept of youth radicalisation, its forms and manifestations, and how youth work can have a role in its prevention;
- 2) To increase participants' understanding regarding the role of youth work in preventing violent radicalisation and in supporting young people's resilience and empowerment;
- 3) To create a space for sharing inspiring practices among participants and for identifying adaptations of existing practices;
- 4) To strengthen the links of youth work to related fields and sectors where cooperation is useful in order to achieve more on the theme of violent radicalisation;
- 5) To explore support measures of Erasmus + Youth Chapter and other programmes for youth NGOs working on the theme of the conference.

Target group

- 1) Practitioners active in the field of prevention of violent radicalisation from:
 - NGOs working with the topic directly and working with the themes related
 - Youth leaders
 - Youth workers
 - Public authorities
 - Other sectors (schools, social work, community work etc.)

- 2) Researchers with relevant experience and expertise
- 3) Policy-makers with relevant experience and expertise

All participants should also:

- Have experience in the field, particularly in working with young people through a preventive approach
- Be motivated to develop their capacities further on preventing violent radicalisation
- Be able to work in English
- Be available for the whole duration of the event.