Prevention of group hatred and right-wing extremism in Germany and Central and Eastern European – experiences, lessons learnt and ways forward from the European Fair Skills, Fair*in and CEE Prevent Net projects

Für die Schriftenreihe "Annual International Forum" des Deutschen Präventionstages

Harald Weilnböck and Oliver Kossack (Cultures Interactive e.V.)

Table of Contents

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

1 Introduction: current challenges for the prevention of intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism in (Central and Eastern) Europe

CI's field work in preventing violent extremism in Germany and Europe suggested that intolerance, group hatred, hate speech and, ultimately, violent extremism have become more visible and urgent issues in European societies in the recent decade. Scientific research has widely reconfirmed these field observations, particularly with regard to a "radicalisation of the mainstream", not least in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (see Minkenberg 2017; see also Zick et al. 2011; Melzer/Serafin 2014; Kreko et al. 2015, Minkenberg/Kossack 2015, Pytlas 2015).

A recent report on the "Capabilities of the Visegrád Group in Preventing Extremism" by the Budapest Centre for Mass Atrocities Prevention (2017) specifies that there is an "increase in levels of intolerance across the continent", with "anti-Roma sentiments, xenophobia, and increasing hate speech" being "the most pressing challenges" in this region (12). At the same time, the report finds that "multi-agency platforms for countering and preventing extremism" are still lacking in the CEE region, esp. within education and youth work (9-10). This development is all the more alarming since young people in CEE show even higher support for sentiments of group hatred than their parents' generation (see Bertelsmann Stiftung 2017: 5ff.) – which is not the case in Western Europe and poses a severe long-term risk for CEE societies and European values. Most strikingly, Marian Kotleba's extreme right party was the most popular choice among first-time voters in Slovakia national elections in 2016 (23%).

(Rural) Eastern Germany – CI's focus of activity since 2003 – shows similarities, with the rates of anti-migrant xenophobia and right-wing extremist group hatred doubling those of the West, so that in recent parliamentary elections the radical right-wing anti-EU and anti-human rights party AfD came in second after the conservative CDU in Eastern Germany, in Saxony even first (!) – still building in part on the momentum of the xenophobic PEGIDA "movement" ('Patriots of Europe Against the Islamisation of the Occident'). Not surprisingly, the NSU neo-Nazi terror death squad, murdering ten perceived "foreigners" between 2000 and 2006, had also emerged in Eastern Germany in the late 1990s (preceding the Hungarian Death Squad from 2009).

Moreover, intolerance, hate speech, group hatred and right-wing extremism are not restricted by national borders but operate transnationally. Extreme right groups communicate intensely through European networks and visit each other for congresses, demonstrations, rallies and cultural events. For instance, the racist framing of the incidents on the 2015 new year's eve in Cologne applied by the AfD and extreme right groups in Germany was readily taken over by political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Slovakia's then-prime minister Robert Fico. Also the internet and online hate speech is not restricted by any national borders. Therefore, CI's work has always been driven by the insight that prevention work should not stop at national borders, but make use of sharing experiences, ideas and good practices among practitioners from different countries – and build networks to offer mutual support across Europe.

Given the fact that CI has mostly focused on preventing group hatred and right-wing extremism

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

in the eastern parts of Germany and helped to generate good practices in prevent work with a focus on youth work, education and community-embedded inter-agency approaches, it seemed logical to us to focus mostly on the Central and Eastern European countries in our international cooperation, since these countries share some historical and contemporary patterns with Eastern Germany regarding intolerance and group hatred in society - and right-wing extremist groups are by far the most active and dangerous actors of violent extremism. The latter fact can hardly be overestimated – as current EU discourses and partly also activities have come to apply a rather lopsided Islamism rhetoric which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

It has been for these reasons that Cultures Interactive began devising concepts and procedures for working specifically in CEE countries and creating bottom-up networks with NGO partners in this EU region. In this respect CI conducted its first CEE project 'European Fair Skills' (EFS, 2015-17) with partners in HU, SK, and CZ and engaged in a partnership with the "European Network of Non-Violence and Dialogue" (ENND) initiated by Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (PDCS; see www.ennd.eu).

Building on the experience and insight from these projects, this article shall present the most important insights from these projects and discuss challenges, lessons learned and ways forward for cross-border networks and projects to prevent intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism – with a particular focus on Central and Eastern Europe.

2 The EU's Islamism bias and its effects in CEE countries

Arguably the most eminent of the aforementioned challenges may be that Central and Eastern European countries and the European Union have not been understanding each other very well on a number of issues in recent years. One of these issues is so-called radicalisation and violent extremism. The EU's part in this misunderstanding about violent extremism certainly is that – in spite of some overarching policy papers – the EU's discourses have largely fallen prey to a current Islamism bias.[1] Thereby they are violating two ground rules of good practice in policy-making and political communication on preventing violent extremism and group hatred, which are: Do not focus on only one sort of violence, if avoidable! and: Try to avoid terms which implicate larger ethnic or religious groups, such as the terms Islamism, Salafism as they bear the potential to stigmatise these groups in their entirety rather than only few extremists who try to justify their actions with a certain interpretation of a religion. Instead, when policy-making concerns a broad and diverse region, such as the EU, try to use as much as possible general concepts as "violent extremism" or "religiously motivated violent extremism" that have a greater chance to meet the challenges across the whole region.

---

1   To illustrate this bias, the authors have conducted an improvised word count within the texts of the RAN News section during the year 2016, predominantly the "RAN Updates", containing the titles and short descriptions of the RAN events of that year (excluding the issue papers). They compared the numbers for two intuitively built semantic groups, the semantic group "Islamism"/ "foreign fighter"/ "jihad"/ "Syria"/ "Daesh" on the one hand, and the semantic group "right-wing extremism"/ "far-right"/ "neo-Nazi"/ "racism"/ "hate groups" on the other. Even with the relatively leveled RAN this count found 51 words in the semantic groups of "Islamism" and only 17 in the group "right-wing extremism".

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

These two ground rules notwithstanding, most policy-makers on national and EU level – even the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network which is a relatively advanced and practitioner-oriented network – by and large follow a rather lopsided Islamism awareness rhetoric. Such EU Islamism discourses currently tend to underestimate right-wing extremism and populism, neo-Nazism, white supremacists, racist militias, and similar sorts of hate groups and hate crimes, which would much deserve the epithet "home grown" while this term is generally used to refer to religiously based radicalisation of migration background persons born in western countries. Or else these forms of violent extremism tend to be subsumed and thus effectively obfuscated by a vague "polarisation" terminology that misses to acknowledge the underlying rightward shifts of the political spectrum in Europe (see e.g. Pytlas and Kossack 2015 for Central and Eastern Europe).

Union-wide the Islamism bias causes quite some "European added damage", in a manner of speaking. For the Central and Eastern European region this damage is even twofold. Not only does the one-sided extremism discourse not sufficiently support the prevention of right-wing extremism and similar sorts of violent anti-human-rights and anti-democratic movements. It even fuels them – especially after large numbers of refugees arrived in Europe. For, quite evidently, xenophobic, populist, anti-human-rights movements and parties in Central and Eastern European countries routinely abuse any such Islamism rhetoric in order to support their defamatory anti-refugee rhetoric and Islamophobia by equating refugees with violent extremists – thus also actively appealing to voters with xenophobic and right-wing extremist leanings and backing "home grown" right-wing violent extremism and populism.

This effect could be widely observed in speeches and statements of political leaders in CEE, but it also affected the work of prevention practitioners and other NGOs in the field more directly. For instance, a 2014 congress on the prevention of extremism in Prague which was hosted by the conservative-leaning foundation European Values Foundation focused solely on so-called Islamism. A London-based expert on the topic then proceeded to communicate to the Czech audience a strong sense of an imminent threat of radicalisation within the Czech Muslim community for which he cited no empirical evidence. For sure, this expert's views may seem quite understandable coming from a London perspective. But the location where he spoke was quite different. There are a few thousand citizens of Muslim faith in Czech Republic which seem well integrated in society. Hence, all intricacies an turns in the last hundred years of the history of interaction between Czech republic and the Muslim world taken aside, religious extremism using Islam can hardly be considered an acute problem in the country (Mares 2014: 207). At the same time, other attendants of the congress who courageously asked from the floor why there is no talk about foreign fighters from Ukraine and Russia who sometimes form right-wing militias in the country upon their return, did not receive much attention. There was no input planed on right-wing extremism in this event.

Another example comes from Slovakia – which has a similarly small Muslim population as the Czech Republic and which has also been a model country in the region for struggling with the challenge of building an exit program for people entangled in right-wing extremist organisations and movements since 2016. Around this time an expert from the same London organisation again issued a strong warning against the dangers of sudden Islamist radicalisation in local Muslim communities. In so doing, he emphasised the need to be particularly alert about any mosques since mosques would imply special risks of radicalisation. The fact that there is not a

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

single mosque in Slovakia just underlines how foreign and unbefitting this discourse is in CEE countries – and also how easily this discourse may be used for political and populist ends. These risks become all the more evident when considering that the reason for the absence of mosques in Slovakia most likely is the fact that Islam is not even an officially acknowledged religion and the Slovak laws on registering a new religious group seem to have gotten tougher recently (requiring at least 50.000 members while there is only around 5.000 Muslims living in Slovakia according to estimates and only 2000 according to the last Census from 2011).[2]

Hence, the speakers and their expertise were quite inappropriate to the context of where they were invited to speak. Moreover, those who invited them are not unlikely to have been motivated by political strategies when issuing these particular invitations. However, not only events like these pick up on the EU discourses of Islamism and demonstrate its detrimental effects in Central and Eastern Europe. Even the European Commission's RAN network, albeit to a lesser extent, has sometimes become entangled in similar situations. In 2016 the RAN supported and engaged in a Hungarian radicalisation conference which was state-driven and conducted in a top-down manner through a quasi-governmental body, the Migration Research Institute (and the National University of Public Service). This Institute had recently been installed by the Századvég Foundation which – in the (remaining) critical press – was viewed as "Fidesz's favorite think-tank" (Novak 2015). Given this top-down and government-enmeshed procedure in a country like Hungary, it does not come as a surprise that the report about the event issued by the institute and giving much reference to RAN, used language that in some instances appeals more to the Hungarian government's populist anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rhetoric than to any genuine RAN prevent issue.[3] For, while the words RAN and radicalisation figured large in this text, one also repeatedly reads terms like "Muslim community", "Islam", "third countries", "inmates with foreign background in Hungarian prisons" whereas the words "group hatred", "hate crime", let alone "right-wing extremism" or "racisms" are not mentioned at all.[4]

It thus seems that the lopsided extremism discourse across the EU not only does not help to prevent right-wing extremism and similar sorts of "home grown" violent anti-human-rights movements and milieus; it partly even fuels right-wing extremism and populism in the CEE region, so that a term as "EU added damage" would seem quite in order to describe what has been happening here. This issue becomes even trickier when organisations, such as the EU's RAN get themselves entangled in the political pitfalls of a discourse which, however, it had helped to propagate itself. One measure against being involved in this detrimental dynamic seems to be the retransformation of the RAN into a more bottom-up, practitioner-focused network that does not require the involvement of governmental bodies and can thus act more

---

2   Information given in a personal conversation by Lukáš Zorád from PDCS, Bratislava. For further information on the political dimension see http://www.islamonline.sk/the-response/, where it is stated that Muslim persons are attacked, "robbed" and "strangled" at public transportation stations while the Prime Minister makes insulting statements about Muslims and Islam.

3   The report has been eliminated from the homepage recently (a copy of the text is with the authors).

4   Being RAN members who had helped to build the RAN since 2010 – and being active in Eastern Europe and Hungary at the time through the European Fair Skills project (EU/ ISF) and directly cooperating with regional practitioners – Cultures Interactive had voiced disagreement with these strategies internally in correspondences to RAN secretariat/ RadarGroup staff. For more context on this and on the RAN in general see Weilnböck 2018.

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

independently from party political agendas (cf. Weilnböck 2018).

This "EU added damage" caused in CEE by the Islamism bias in the EU's prevention discourses may become even more visible when looking at Bulgaria which is the only CEE country where some signs of Islamist radicalisation, especially its southern province of Pazardjik, can be found (Mancheva/Dzhekova 2017). Yet, it does not seem to be the Muslim population per se which is the prime target group of the local recruitment in Pazardjik. Rather, it is Roma living in the Roma quarter of the town which is subject to recruitment, irrespective of whether they are affiliated to Orthodox Christianity, Islam or Evangelical Protestantism.

Hence, religious radicalisation using Islam in this and similar communities is unlikely to work along the lines of ethnic or religious backgrounds as is generally assumed in predominant EU discourses, usually implicating the indigenous Muslim communities which in Bulgaria consist of ethnic Turks and Pomaks having lived in the country for many generations in relatively good rapport within their local contexts. Rather, it is Roma who have become and will be more vulnerable to so-called Islamism, while belonging to Orthodox Christian, Evangelical or Muslim communities.[5] Moreover, the reasons for Roma radicalisation is of little religious nature but mostly derives from the fact that they have been suffering discrimination and disenfranchisement by the mainstream population; and this discrimination, of course, increases when the country's unchecked right-wing populism and extremism rails against the Roma, while at same time using a prevent Islamism rhetoric – which, however, is also supported by the EU.

Here a vicious circle of "added damage" through the EU's Islamism bias becomes apparent. For, this Islamism bias, transferred into the CEE region, in the case of Bulgaria does not only distract from and indirectly bolster right-wing extremism and populism as is generally true in many CEE countries. In the case of Bulgaria it actually seems to also contribute to the creation of new forms of religious radicalisation using Islam by involuntarily and indirectly increasing the alienation of Roma population, parts of which may then become a new breading-ground for violent extremist recruiters.

---

5   Looking at the one and only key recruiter in Pazardjik and southern Bulgaria who has been documented thus far, reconfirms just how complex the issue or radicalisation truly is (Mancheva/Dzhekova 2017). For Ahmed Musa was born in the Roma quarter of Pazardjik as an Evangelical child, his mother coming from an Evangelical community and his father being Muslim. He then seems to have spent some years in Vienna in the 1990s where he converted to Islam and then also lived in Germany, Cologne, for 2-3 years 2001-2003 while he was probably traveling back and forth to his home community in Pazardjik during these years.

3 CI's field experience from the European Fair Skills project[6]

3.1 Transferring the Fair Skills approach to three Central and Eastern European countries – experiences and conclusions

In view of the situation in the CEE region which was somewhat similar to the situation in Eastern Germany after reunification when an endemic upsurge of right-wing extremism had emerged, CI had launched its first bottom-up, practitioner-lead project on the prevention of intolerance, group hatred and right-wing extremism in Central and Eastern European countries in 2015: the European Fair Skills project (EFS). In the EFS project, CI had set out to transfer the approaches it had acquired in prior years in Germany and, while doing so, came to realise and integrate the valuable local approaches which were already practiced in the countries without enjoying much recognition locally or (inter)nationally. These insights led to the idea of working towards a network for an exchange of experiences and good practices, a goal that was shared with PDCS' ENND project and is now pursued further in the CI-led CEE Prevent Net project (see below).

European Fair Skills was conducted from January 2015 to March 2017, in close cooperation with the partner NGO Ratolest in the Czech Republic, Kontiki Szakképző and Foresee Institute in Hungary, and REACH (Research an Education Institute and Centre for Community Organizing) in Slovakia and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Berlin.

Since August 2016, the EFS team of Cultures Interactive formed a partnership with the "European Network of Non-violence and Dialogue" (ENND), launched by PDCS Bratislava. Much in line of what the EFS methodology promotes, the ENND's major goal is to promote nonviolent approaches to current value conflicts and to stimulate the process of collecting and sharing of what diverse CSOs have learned about third-party interventions, process-based tools for public debate, and the prevention of conflict, polarisation and violence in 7 different countries: Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Germany.

The European Fair Skills methodology had been developed out of CI's national Fair Skills work in Eastern Germany between 2009-2011. The main objective of EFS was to empower and up-skill disadvantaged and vulnerable young people from different social groups by strengthening their resilience against intolerance, group hatred and right-wing extremism. To this end, the EFS approach combines (1) peer-learning workshops on youth-cultural activities (including street art, breakdance, skateboarding, DJ-ing, music production, YouTubing, inter alia) which appeal also to the more alienated and difficult to reach young people, (2) exercises of non-formal civic education, such as anti-bias training, mediation, team building, references to the civic and democratic origins of youth cultures and exercises in strengthening social and conflict transformation skills, and (3) psychologically based open-process self-awareness group work, providing the opportunity of more personal exchange in a safe space (narrative circles, We-Amongst-Ourselves-Group, see Weilnböck 2013, 2014) thus enhancing skills of narrative interaction and emotional intelligence.

---

6   This section is based on the conclusions from the European Fair Skills project (see Cultures Interactive 2017).

The EFS methodology was implemented through (1) Fair Skills Train-the-Trainer Workshops for educators, pedagogues and youth cultural actors to become (peer) facilitators of human rights-based youth culture workshops with young people, (2) Prevent Seminars (formerly called LocalDerad seminars) for local stakeholders in youth work, education, family welfare, youth law enforcement/ crime prevention, health services, etc. on how to effectively practice primary and secondary prevention of group hatred and right-wing extremism among young people, and (3) Regional Round Tables for a wider network of key stakeholders of local authorities, civil society, community representatives and local media who are relevant for the prevention of group-hatred and right-wing extremism.[7]

Key experiences and conclusions from European Fair Skills were collected both on a contextual and on a methodological level. The conclusions drawn from the project thus pertained both to the necessary context requirements in the community and national framework and to the methodology of how to practice effective prevent work with young people in a region which is characterised by relatively high degrees of various forms of group hatred and intolerance as well as right-wing extremism and populism.

Upon beginning work in the countries, the first and foremost field experience of CI and its partners was that there is, indeed, a great and increasing need in the areas of youth work and education for approaches which deal with issues of intolerance, group hatred and (right-wing) violent extremism more systematically and methodically in CEE countries. It was felt that systematic and practical prevent strategies on local level were truly necessary not only to safeguard the younger generations from the lure and recruitment of organisations or informal social milieus of intolerance, group hatred and right-wing extremism. We also found that many first-line practitioners in youth work and education in the region are acutely aware of the threat of intolerance and group hatred and would like to intervene – but don't know how to do so in a strategic and sustainable manner.

While the project aimed at transferring and adapting a particular example of good practice (from Eastern Germany to Central and Eastern European countries), the exchange with the local EFS partners and other CEE practitioners revealed that there are many organisations in the region that already employ some good practices and have their own indigenous 'tested approaches' of practicing prevent work. Hence, the observation was that the EFS approach was quite useful for the partner organisations in CEE, but they certainly do not depend on transfer of good practice from outside. However, these indigenous good practices are often not sufficiently known, recognised, and supported locally, nationally and across Europe, as there has not been sufficient political and administrative support; there is no practitioner or even inter-agency network dedicated to this issue, and activities of peer exchange, processing feedback, developing quality and eventually manualising the practices have been widely lacking (see also Budapest Centre 2017). Therefore, the project partners and other organisations departed from the initial idea of transfer and engaged more in a participatory and reciprocal approach on eye level in order to exchange good practices from the region (including Eastern Germany). Furthermore, quality criteria of good practices and the specific regional contexts were discussed so that perspectives for the improvement of the implementation environments could be developed.

---

7   For more information on methodology and activities see europeanfairskills.eu/activities.html.

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

3.2 Recommendations on the social and political context of good practice

a) Following a bottom-up logic

On the contextual and structural level one of the most important recommendations from the European Fair Skills project was that prevention strategies need to be devised in a bottom-up logic, i.e. follow strictly practitioner-based and community-embedded procedures while at the same time the usual logic of top-down PVE programs coming out of ministerial authorities or governmental agencies without any consultation with practitioners "on the ground" should be avoided by all means. The recommendation to follow a bottom-up logic was specifically made around the EFS Prevent Seminars which were designed to address various sorts of youth practitioners who work in different sectors of education, such as youth work, schools, youth law enforcement, family assistance, health services. Here, participants observed that it is most effective and advisable to form local inter-agency groups which work in a bottom-up manner and make sure that the ground practitioners' experiences and views are effectively harnessed and taken as guidelines of policy-making. For, these bottom-up local interagency groups will then be able to become a factor for building empowered communities which develop their own framework of cooperation in ways that are maximally practitioner-based while they also enjoy support and assistance from community administration and local government.

In view of supporting bottom-up local inter-agency groups and empowered communities, one key conclusion from EFS was: No matter how complex the overall structure of the EFS project activities were, in order to have sustainable societal impact on local level, it is recommendable to systematically engage in four different sorts of activities on four levels with four different, only partially overlapping participants groups. Hence, it was found to be worthwhile and necessary to organise and maintain these four levels of activities in parallel – i.e. organise (1) Local Prevent Seminars in order to spur a local interagency approach and the build-up of interagency groups, (2) Train-the-Trainer Seminars for youth workers to enable them to implement adapted variants of the Fair Skills approach and combine it with their own prevent practices, (3) the youth culture workshops themselves to build resilience among young people and get their feedback and cooperation on the approach, and (4) the Regional Roundtables with local/ national stakeholders to raise awareness about the challenges and approaches and to support the logic of bottom-up, self-directed, community immersed prevention work. This fourth level then expanded into (5) "governmental advocacy" activities in some project locations (cf. further beneath) which emerged as an extracurricular of activity to transfer the result of local bottom-up processes into regional and national policies – and will be more systematically pursued in the up-coming CEE Prevent Net project (cf. 4.1).

Especially the emerging fifth level of activity had made evident how important it is to actively pursue an inter-agency approach on many levels of a given local setting. Without such holistic multi-level approach it sustainable societal impact would be much harder to reach.

b) Finding a new language for the challenges around violent extremism in the political sphere

For successfully building such bottom-up local inter-agency groups and empowered

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

communities which are also capable of liaising with local policymakers and governments across a wide political spectrum, the need was felt to develop a suitable non-jargonised language and use non-polarising terminology around the issues of intolerance, group hatred, violent extremism and the prevention thereof. This language would thus steer free of any rhetoric and terms which are or may be viewed as being (party) political or reinforcing existing patterns of ideological polarisation. It would also aim at being more adequate to the CEE countries' specific challenges around this topic – and allow for reaching out to various different groups of people, regardless of their background, ideology, and party political affiliation. This outreach capacity was found to be of paramount importance because any local inter-agency prevention initiative should be prepared and equipped to talk to a maximally wide array of different stakeholders/ authorities from various sectors of the societal and political spectrum and find the appropriate terms and narratives for these conversations to work well on the communicational level.

Most likely, this new and more suitable language would often times forgo key terms and concepts of the prevention discourse, such as Islamism, right-wing extremism, terrorism, even violent extremism and similar terms. For, firstly, these terms always cause manifold sensitivities and stigmatisation and have been used and abused in many political and strategic ways in the past, especially in CEE countries (cf. the introduction here above), so that it has become increasingly difficult and misleading to use these terms in any local multi-agency settings on the ground. Secondly, in terms of rhetoric and communication it makes a big difference whether one calls for combatting, fighting, countering, tackling issues of extremism, radicalisation, racism – let alone so-called Islamism – or any other related isms, or whether one instead soberly speaks about safeguarding young people from social risks and personal challenges (i.e. of being recruited into hate groups, violence, organised crime and/ or else become affected by drug addiction, mental health issues and violent extremism).

It therefore was found more helpful to use wide concepts as prejudice, intolerance, group hatred, hate crime, or rather refer to positive concepts as supporting civil society and human rights and strengthening young people's social skills. In the same vein, the aforementioned risk factors – violence, organised crime, drug addiction, mental health issues – have been found to be closely connected with violent extremism in general, which is why it makes much sense to approach prevention in a more holistic manner and use a more universal langue and more ubiquitous terms. Overall, a straightforward terminology of safeguarding young people from becoming resentful and anti-social may be quite successful cross the board. After all, it is quite easily graspable for relatively varied groups of interlocutors that any sort of resentful and anti-social life style will end up limiting young people's personal development and skill building and endanger communities, which is of major concern for local authorities and politicians.

Hence, while it is important to use precise and clear terms wherever detail is required in actual prevent work or specific discourses, the EFS project has shown the need for a more sensitive and suitable language and commonly acceptable terms for prevention and youth welfare topics in its inter-agency activities, such as the EFS Roundtables that encompassed a greater variety of stakeholders from different professions and sectors of the political spectrum.

Such language became an absolute condition sine qua non when the EFS project intuitively began to develop targeted initiatives of "governmental advocacy" and strategic communication with middle-level political and administrative representatives. This strategic communication

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

may start in low-profile manners in many places, for instance in the wider contexts of the Round Tables, the Prevent Seminars or any local inter-agency groups which may have sprung from them. The endeavours of strategic communication usually begin by identifying and reaching out to local and national government or administration contact persons who have given signs of being promising interlocutors in that they seem interested and apt to understand well and contribute to local prevention challenges in a broad sense of the word.

These quasi-diplomatic communication and networking activities of informal "governmental advocacy" are highly recommendable for any prevent initiative, especially in countries or regions that experience widespread anti-European and anti-human rights populism. Since in these regions there usually is only little understanding of the logic of social prevention. Also, if successful, informal "governmental advocacy" is able to create conditions which allow the local actors to gain more recognition for and a better understanding of the necessity and methodology of their work and eventually receive the means for continuing it beyond the end of any project finances.

c) Using EU directives and instruments

Being able to refer to relevant activities, directives and instruments on Union level can substantially enhance "governmental advocacy" in local project work and bottom-up networking across Member States with comparable challenges. For instance, during EFS it was helpful to be aware of the EU Internal Security Fund and its "shared management" stipulation since 2014; since this stipulation puts EU Member States under the obligation to engage in the prevention of violent extremism nationally and collaborate with the EU commission on this. Provided that careful attention is given and mitigation strategies are put in place in case such EU obligations are circumvented or abused for political maneuvering (as was explicated above with regard to the Islamism bias and the resultant fuelling of anti-refugee sentiments in the name of EU PVE programs), the EU Internal Security Fund may be a helpful reference for bottom-up projects on the ground in CEE countries to support their strategic communication to local and national administrations.

Even more helpful may possibly become what is now discussed as a new form of „project-based collaboration" between "smaller groups of Member States" in the context of the recently inaugurated High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R). This Group is currently set to function as a new multi-lateral steering board above all relevant EU activities including the RAN, as is indicated in the Group's first report (European Commission 2018). For sure, this ministerial Expert Group's strict top-down logic – intending to build yet another policy-maker overhead on top even of the RAN which already was much less bottom-up than it claimed and should have been (see Weilnböck 2018) – raises many concerns about losing touch with the practitioner level and then possibly issuing policies which may be only little helpful on the ground. Yet, the Group's strategy does include the special promise of providing a new format of cross-border collaboration through working in smaller groups of Member States based on shared interest and joint solutions to common challenges.

Quite evidently, it would make much sense if such a smaller group of Member States would consist of CEE countries' representatives and focus on sharing a common interest in "safeguarding young people from social risks of being recruited into milieus of intolerance,

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

group hatred, violence, organised crime or become affected by drug addiction, mental health problems and violent extremism", as explicated above. Needless to point out, such CEE group of dedicated governmental representatives under the umbrella of the HLCEG-R could possibly be a quite significant support for what the EFS project pursued and the upcoming CEE Prevent Net project will continue to pursue as informal governmental advocacy in local settings, addressing options of "joint elaboration of solutions" for the challenges around intolerance, group hatred, violent extremism and related issues.

d) Overcoming the compartmentalisation of prevention programmes

Yet, what needs to be avoided when cooperating with EU directives and instruments is the compartmentalisation that characterises many prevention programmes on EU and national levels. Due to this widespread compartmentalisation, prevent projects and activities tend to focus either on religious extremism using Islam, or right-wing extremism, or polarisation, or on particular forms of group hatred and intolerance, such as homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Roma resentment etc. Particularly the programmes to prevent violent extremism have long been – and still are to quite some extent – narrow in scope. Consequently, prevention programs often overlook the fact that different forms of intolerance and group hatred resemble each other in their structure and usually come in combinations when encountered in the social field – which calls for an intersectional response.

For instance, most persons with racist views also tend to express sexist, homo- and transphobic opinions, and are often also scornful and aggressive against persons with disabilities. Similarly, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism and other related forms of intolerance are usually central components of all sorts of violent extremism and populism. The recent arrival of large numbers of refugees in Europe has vividly illustrated this. The intensifying anti-Muslim racism against refugees has often used issues of sexuality and gender (e.g. refugees being portrayed as rapists), as is addressed in CI's current German model project "Fair*in – gender-reflective prevention of racism" (cf. 4.2). It thus seems advisable to address violent extremisms and its underlying components of intolerance together by way of a comprehensive approach – thus also engaging in prevention at an early stage, e.g. through youth work and education.

In this vein, compartmentalisation also often leads to a disconnect between primary and secondary prevention in terms of methods, personnel and skill base, which is unfortunate because these different levels of preventing intolerance/ group hatred and violent extremism could benefit greatly from mutual exchange. In this respect, CI has developed its current "DisTanZ" model project with high-risk young people in Eastern Germany since 2016, also extending activities towards tertiary prevention/ exit facilitation (see Cultures Interactive 2019) – as is also the case in the EXIT Europe project lead by CI staff and coordinated by the Austria Ministry of Interior.

e) Being aware of the needs of national infrastructure building

On the level of organisational development and national NGO politics it was a striking experience for the EFS team how much partner organisations in CEE countries were going through restructuring, organisational change and/or are under pressure for survival for political

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

reasons. The lack of structure and stability in the NGO area in CEE – and partly even in the usually more formalised area of social and youth work – hampered the implementation of EU project work in many ways. For instance, at the end of the project two of the three EFS partner organisations had effectively changed, after different sorts of organisational and political challenges – and two new, highly dedicated organisations had come into being or were identified by project partners.

However, on the (difficult) way to this most valuable outcome of local structure building, all sorts of unexpected obstacles and hindrances had come up: In one instance a highly engaged EFS coordination team lost support of its organisation due to leadership and political issues and then proceeded to found its own NGO in the course of the project. In another EFS country the whole NGO scene was suffering from increasing state oppression resulting in the closure of various NGO structures.

It therefore was concluded that working on prevention in CEE countries implies some additional attention for issues of organisational development as there are rather few NGOs around which are already experienced in issues of preventing group hatred and violent extremism and those that exist work under quite precarious conditions. All the stronger was the consensus that, in view of the these strains and hindrances, the prospect of having an inter-regional and international network of practitioners of preventing intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism across CEE countries, backed by the EU and other multilateral organisations, seemed to be most promising and helpful to the EFS partners – not only because it would enable professional exchange of knowledge and good practices but also because it would help to compensate for and avoid the sense of disheartenment and helplessness which unavoidably emerges in the current situation.

3.3 Recommendations on methodological requirements of good practice

The exchange among the EFS project practitioners on the methodological characteristics of how to successfully work with young people on the topic of intolerance, group hatred, extremism and populism came to conclusions that reconfirmed many of the principles formulated in the RAN Derad Declaration of Good Practice – having been worked out by first-line practitioners from across member states in the years 2011-15 (Weilnböck/Örell 2015).[8] However, the special context of CEE countries made the relevance of some of these principles even more poignant and graspable.

a) Work gratification – avoiding the argumentation and moral appeal traps

Particularly, there was a strong consensus among EFS partners on the urgent need to acquire and further train pedagogical methods which help to avoid the argumentation and moral appeal traps. As prevent practitioners usually hold political views that are rooted in human rights and democratic values they often have the impulse to confront the young people in argumentative and rational manners when they express populist or violent extremist views or group hatred. Hence, PVE practitioners or youth workers tend to start a discussion trying to convince the young people; or else they implore to their young people in a moralistic manner, appealing to

---

8   The draft declaration has been partly adapted into the RAN Exit ex-post paper on methodological requirements for exit interventions (Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016).

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

humanism, good manners, empathy and the like. However, these intuitive strategies of debating, reasoning, and moral appeal have regularly proven to be not very effective and even backfire, causing cynicism. Yet, intolerance, group hatred, violent extremism and populism are strongly driven by emotional issues going back to affects and impulses. Hence, prevention must attempt to address the emotional and affective layers of their young target group and their personality development as well.

In a way, the emphasis on the emotional level also holds true for the youth work practitioners themselves, albeit in a different way. For, as long as they are entrapped in the moralistic and argumentative patterns of pedagogical interaction and are thus hindered to build a more profound emotional rapport with the young people of concern, youth work practitioners are likely to endure a sense of failure, helplessness and frustration – putting themselves at risk of burn-out and fatalism (cf. further beneath with regard to psychological support). Hence, the conclusion in the EFS project was that there is a need to make sure that youth workers are equipped with methods which not only enhance emotional intelligence with the young people but also secure a more gratifying work experience and a sense of empowerment as an engaged but safely delineated youth professional.

In this respect, the different approaches within the EFS project – e.g. their youth cultural and creative methods, combined with the narrative approach as well as with mediation and civic education exercises – were able to serve two purposes: For one, these methods provided new avenues for successfully engaging young people also on the emotional and affective level, thus eventually having a more profound effect on their thinking and behaviour – while avoiding the "argumentation and moral appeal trap"; and second, they allow for a more gratifying and empowering work experience with professionals both in education and youth work, thus strengthening the sustainability of their engagement. Specifically youth workers in open youth work settings welcomed the approach with a sense of relief and gratification.

The young people, too, intuitively opened up towards the key offer to react emotionally and speak their mind in safe spaces of narrative exchange – and be productive, self-expressive and creative and thus build an eye-level rapport with the educators and among themselves. Sometimes the young people showed quite existential personal reactions and effects of profound resilience building, as for instance one young attendant from Hungary did who in a letter expressed the feeling that the project "gave back his life to him".

b) Narrative approaches, personality development, gender issues – and refugees

Especially the focus on narrative methods for personal skill building in self-expression and dialogue was found to be a methodological element which some partners had in common and which was found to be most helpful not only for avoiding the argumentation and moral appeal trap. Spaces for narrative self-expression also proved effective in meeting the challenge of working on an inter-personal and dialogic level rather than on a rational one. Strictly speaking, narrative means to exchange first-hand personal experiences which have been individually lived through by participants themselves and are thus beyond debate. Telling and re-living these experiences – be it individually or in a moderated group process – helps to get to and reflect on the roots of personal opinions and attitudes. Thus, narrative methods can have impact where debates and arguments cannot.

Moreover, the narrative approach always also implies that the issues and topics of narration are

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

not pre-defined by any agenda setting or syllabus but are facilitated in an open-process manner so that topics of the exchange emerge and develop out of the actual group of participants. In fact, within the EFS project, focusing on narrative methods arguably was the most important eye-opener for quite a few practitioners on how to pursue good practice across different partners' approaches. It effectively elucidated the importance of narrative self-awareness processes on a personal level and paved the way for more complex interventions, such as CI's Narrative Groups at Schools (see chapter 4.2 below) or the We-Amongst-Ourselves-Group setting (cf. Weilnböck 2013, 2014).

Within the framework of narrative methods, EFS partners have largely reconfirmed one key observation which CI practice and research has been making over the last years – also in their pertinent EU project WomEx on "Women and Gender in Extremism and Prevention" (womex.org). While men are often strikingly visible in contexts of group hatred, extremism and violence, upon closer view it becomes more apparent that women also play a crucial role in milieus of intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism. Hence, both female and male youth workers in their very capacity as gendered persons – and most preferably in co-facilitating gender-mixed tandems – may powerfully contribute to prevention.

The second gender-related observation went decidedly beyond looking at the ratio of women and men. Personal issues of how young people define their gender identity, how they deal with existing stereotypes of 'real man' or 'true women' or 'normal families' and the like among themselves and in society have proven to be of crucial importance psychologically and practically in all dynamics of intolerance, group hatred, extremism and rejection of human rights. Practitioners in EFS activities in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia have observed within their actual youth work practice how much these gender issues are at the core of what they deal with when encountering intolerance and group hatred.

It thus was realised by EFS practitioners how easily it happens that the very basic issue of femininity and masculinity in each individual's life and in their social context is picked up on as a prime temptation to adopt thought patterns and behaviours of resentment, prejudice, discrimination, hatred and exclusion. Hence, an important common experience and general insight among EFS practitioners was that gender-based devaluation is one of the most prevalent patterns of aggrandising one's own and devaluing another group – and that there is hardly anyone in social milieus of group hatred, violent extremism or populism who does not also hold sexist, homophobe and/or transphobe attitudes to a certain degree.

Conversely, what was also concluded both in the WomEx and the EFS project, openly talking and working with young people on gender issues was found to be highly effective in view of their personal development and resilience building against group hatred, extremism and destructive life styles. In fact, working on issues of gender identity and gender roles on a more personal basis often seemed to be more effective than dealing with issues of ideology and/or religion in the strict sense – while gender issues also are, of course, of high ideological and religious importance. Hence, the conclusion was that those elements of the EFS approach which provide pedagogical impulses on gender identity themes had a profound impact on youth work practice in the local spheres and should therefore be further pursued and intensified.

The only form of intolerance and group hatred that has reached a similar importance as gender-based intolerance among young people during the existence of the EFS project from 2015 to

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

2017, was the enmity against refugees and Muslims, which was a rather new development in the CEE region where Roma used to be the main target of group hatred (and hatred against Roma continues to be a major issue across the region). EFS partners often recognised how virulent and at the same time also tabooed the topic of refugees is with young people in schools and partly also in youth work today – mostly due to the lack of knowledge and skills among teachers and youth workers to address it in a proper way that does not only fuel the populist discourses around this topic. At the same time, it was also observed how powerful it is in pedagogical respect when the topic is openly addressed. Some EFS partners therefore decided to introduce specific methods around refugee issues, to provide a very simple but telling illustration about the distribution and flow of population and wealth around the globe – and triggers personal reactions on the part of the participants. Hence, it was concluded that in the contemporary situation – and in keeping with the EFS project's general abstinence from agenda and topic setting – it is instructive and helpful to include refugee issues in the procedure, even if including refugees in the work environment is not an option in the country.

To sum up, the overall key conclusion regarding the content and methods of the EFS prevent activities was that creative, self-expressive and open-process reflective and narrative work settings, expressly including emotional and relational issues as well as gender issues – also in group dynamic settings – are a must in preventive educational work against intolerance, group hatred, violent extremism and populism, as one participants poignantly said. For, these settings provide a safe space to articulate and commonly think about personal experiences, subjective perceptions, emotional views and impulsive thinking, and also to discuss individual and social grievances, as they also give room for developing a personal vision of the future of oneself and society – and of what to do about it concretely. Needless to say, a key requirement of this approach is that sufficient time, effort and personal investment are spent on allowing trust-based narrative exchange and relationship experiences to evolve – since these relationships are personal, yet not privat relationships and thus also support mutual exchange on personal matters to the degree it is done in mentoring, for instance.

As one participant in the Prevent Seminar in Bratislava put it, "since the 1990s we have been told what to say, what to think and what to do in order to be good democrats … and valid reasons were given. However, one doesn't become a democrat because somebody gives good reasons." There needs to be a "personal and transformative experience" and "especially in Central and Eastern Europe, in the new democracies, we need to make and facilitate personal experiences of what diversity, free self-expression, democracy and human rights mean to people personally – and how it feels like as an experience; and what happens in the absence of them".

c) The personal challenges of practicing prevent work in a conflict-ridden social atmosphere

The risks of burn-out and fatalism with youth workers and educators have already been mentioned above in passing when speaking about the argumentative and the moral appeal traps. The psychological challenges and strains of working as a practitioner of social prevent work with difficult-to-reach young people cannot be overestimated – even more so if practitioners have to work in a highly conflict-ridden social atmosphere which is fraught with widespread populist discourses of xenophobia, resentment, and anti-EU and anti-human rights

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

sentiments. It thus is unsurprising that often times there was a general sense of disheartenment, frustration and helplessness among EFS partners in the CEE countries about the difficult political circumstances in view of preventing intolerance, group hatred, and sometimes full fledge right-wing extremism. Particularly cumbersome sometimes seemed the challenge of establishing a trustful inter-agency cooperation between NGOs and governmental representatives on a local level and engage in European exchange, while strong anti-EU sentiments prevail in the political atmosphere of the country.

Overall, the increase of anti-European, populist, and anti-human rights discourses in CEE countries; the fact that major political parties and policy-makers have only little awareness about the risks and social cost caused by largely unchallenged intolerance and group hatred (in particular for young people who are vulnerable to being recruited by hate groups); the general lack of recognition for preventive youth work and education; and, on top of this, the above explicated Union wide one-sided Islamism awareness rhetoric that obfuscates the local hate group issues makes the engagement of social and societal activities difficult to maintain for any on the ground field practitioners both practically and psychologically.

Hence, in view of these multiple challenges – and thus returning to the level of context requirements of good practice prevent work – it was concluded that there is an urgent need to incorporate some measure of psychological support, supervision and intervision, and/or self-help groups for the practitioners into the planning of projects and initiatives around this issue. A somewhat related conclusion was that it is helpful to further include resources and skills of mediation, counselling, and psychotherapy into the teams – as they are already part of the youth work approaches on the level of pedagogical exercises. Especially if administrational victimisation and state-based populism/ polarisation that also endanger the very existence of NGOs and prevent projects are part of the challenge, such safety measures help to support the team in handling conflict and emotional dynamics within youth work and assist in the difficult task to successfully maintain the much needed mentorship attitude of "critical supportiveness" – and thus strengthen the young people's protective resources.

4 Where we go from here: The CEE Prevent Net – Central and Eastern European Network for the Prevention of Intolerance and Group Hatred[9]

In light of the experiences and conclusions reached in the European Fair Skills project, CI has conceptualised the CEE Prevent Net initiative as a follow up to EFS – which began in fall 2018.

4.1 The CEE Prevent Net project – objectives and activities

In brief the objectives of CEE Prevent Net are:

- to compile tested good practices in preventing intolerance and group hatred through

---

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

youth work and education (incl. methods, tools, and training curricula), that are especially suitable to CEE regions – to be used for further exchange (inter-)nationally and also for transfer to different fields of prevention work (as prison/probation, police, health care, etc.).

- to enable the exchange and transfer of these good practices on local, national and CEE regional levels by providing peer-learning Prevent Seminars and train-the-trainer courses by practitioners for practitioners. Participating youth practitioners may come from areas as youth work, schools, sports/football/fan-work, police, prison/probation, health care, religious groups, NGOs and CSOs, inter alia – based on their personal interest and motivation for this kind of work.

- to thus raise the awareness and strengthen the capacity of prevention practitioners to professionally react to intolerance/ group hatred in their work environment in effective and sustainable ways.

- to provide an opportunity for the practitioners to implement the newly acquired methods and tools with young people in their local work context while being consulted and assisted by the developers of these methods.

- to thus strengthen the resilience of young people by engaging them in the implementation of good practices against intolerance/ group hatred – thereby also preparing some of them for becoming peer facilitators later on.

- to avoid the pitfalls of compartmentalised prevention programs by designing an intersectional approaches that has a holistic perspective on the different but intertwined forms of intolerance, also addresses both the cognitive and emotional dimension and takes into account primary and secondary prevention and to some degree also deradicalisation/ exit facilitation.

- to engage local and national authorities and similar stakeholders (policy makers/ politicians, community leaders, and high-level of police, probation, health care, religious groups, etc.) through roundtable meetings to form public-civil partnerships and devise community-embedded inter-agency responses.

- to formulate a new language and strategies of governmental advocacy and political communication, which more successfully communicate with negligent or complicit populist authorities.

- to use existing synergies to support a targeted CEE-wide dissemination initiative through important EU networks, creating a stronger recognition of CEE aspects of xenophobia, group hatred, anti-migrant sentiments and violent extremism within Europe – such as the RAN, especially the High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R) and also through DARE, OSCE, Efus, ENND, et al. in view of further transfer of the CEE Prevent Net's good practices.

In view of these objectives – and considering the overall aim to provide a minimum continuity, trigger long-term processes and thus create added value for the CEE region on the whole – the CEE Prevent Net project is planning to bring forth the following activities and deliverables.

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

a) The CEE Prevent Net Compendium of Good Practices

A compendium of good practices in preventing intolerance, group hatred, violent extremism and anti-human-rights populism will be produced by the consortium which is geared towards the needs of CEE countries' practitioners. After a process of quality and impact assessment by way of peer evaluation among partners, good practice methods and approaches from the project countries will be identified to be included into the compendium. The compendium is understood as a handbook in process which is embedded in an on-going procedure of peer exchange and team intervision, in order to enhance the methods' quality and impact continuously over time. This process specifically includes systematic peer trainings, seminars and on-the-job coaching measures from experienced practitioners among the project partners. Hence, the compendium will present the practices/ methods and provide training curricula for peer trainings. One additional dimension of the compendium process will be to develop options of transferring the methods between different fields of preventive educational and youth work, as youth prison/probation, sports coaches, (mental) health care, religious groups, NGOs and CSOs, inter alia.

b) The International Summer School

A 5-days summer school will be organised in Slovakia in which practitioners from the project consortium offer peer train-the-trainer workshops on their good practices, based on the previously developed training curricula. The summer school will allow for a hands-on training, exchange and transfer in order to disseminate and further test and elaborate the good practices from the draft compendium.

c) On-site peer coaching and youth workshops

About 4 practitioners from each project country who have been trained in one or more of the project's good practices, will be provided an opportunity to implement and test the newly acquired tools and methods with young people in their immediate work environment by way of youth workshops. For this purpose, youth workshops according to the CEE Net compendium methods will be organised in the partner countries, which are designed to strengthen the young participants' resilience toward intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism or to engage them in a process which may lead up to deradicalisation in case they had adopted extremist views and are part of extremist milieus. Other participants will be prepared by these workshops to become peer facilitators themselves later on.

These selected practitioners are supported in becoming anchor practitioners for the national pool of good practice facilitators to be built in each country. For that purpose, these practitioners will receive additional training and supervision by on-site peer coaching events which provide a tailor-made preparation for the youth workshops they are set to implement. As far as possible, the youth workshop itself will then be co-facilitated, i.e. the local trainers for whom the approach is new, will co-facilitate together with the experienced trainers from the project consortium.

d) Prevent Seminars for local practitioners

Local prevent seminars will convey skills in recognising, analysing and responding to threats of intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism – addressing staff and stakeholders in the educational sector in a broad sense, including youth workers, teachers, sports coaches, police, prison/probation, health care, religious groups, NGOs and CSOs, inter alia. The seminars

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

support the build-up of public-civil partnerships and the development of community-embedded inter-agency responses – thus offering strategies to address the issues in a professional and sustainable manner on a local level.

e) Regional round table for stakeholders and multipliers

Regional roundtable meetings will be held which address a similar group of persons as the Prevent Seminars and will have partly overlapping attendants in order to enhance cross-sectorial exchange and inter-agency cooperation and relationship building. However, the regional roundtable will also include local and national authorities, community leaders, policy makers/ politicians, school board representatives and other administrational stakeholders and potential multipliers of preventive youth work and education.

The regional roundtables are designed to raise awareness and create a better understanding of the breadth of challenges which come with intolerance, resentment, group hatred and extremism/ populism – with a special emphasis on the risks for young people. The roundtables will also serve as an inclusive platform for exchange about the stakeholders' and practitioners' different perceptions of these phenomena as well as of the existing approaches for prevention and skill building with young people, also from social hot spots. Moreover, roundtable participants will be equipped with concrete strategies and tools to develop community-embedded, inter-agency responses.

f) Advocacy workshops and recommendations

Advocacy workshops will be organised which will be based on previously worked-out recommendations for how to establish a minimum common ground and modes of dialogue which are successful in talking to authorities in CEE countries who are either unaware or negligent of the enormous risks which intolerance and group hatred imply for young people. This may also include interlocutors who are complicit with populist attitudes which may be supportive of intolerance and who are challenging to communicate with on these matters. At the same time strategies are developed on how to build inter-agency collaborations, interpersonal trust and informal advocacy networks with key people in national and local administration who already have a good understanding of the challenges and can be helpful in beginning to build a local and national network around preventive youth work.

The advocacy workshops thus will convey a new language and new strategies of advocacy and political communication, which more successfully communicate with statutory interlocutors across the whole project region, including specific strategies for individual countries. These new strategies are key in order to be able to improve the conditions and circumstances of implementing preventive forms of youth work and education in different political contexts.

One advocacy expert in each country will be identified as being sufficiently well positioned and experienced to serve as advocacy expert for the country. Based on her/his prior experience and the actual project's advocacy endeavours, each national advocacy expert will draft: (i) a short analysis of the challenges and potentials of sustainable prevention work under the currently adverse political conditions of the country, (ii) a strategy for establishing specific pathways to, building dialogue with, and obtaining some degree of commitment from chosen authorities and policymakers who seem promising for dialogue. (iii) On the grounds of this draft, a concrete advocacy action plan for each country and for the CEE region as such will be developed.

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures–interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

In so doing, the experts will also liaise closely with the practitioners and collect their experiences of communicating what they do to others and to authorities. Hence, the topic of how to communicate with authorities – and also with stakeholders that have little awareness and/or populist sentiments with regard to issues of (in)tolerance and prevention – will be a leitmotiv throughout project activities. In order to bundle the results on advocacy strategies on a CEE regional level, the project will bring the experts together to establish a task force that will then together draft the recommendations for the advocacy working paper in view of CEE advocacy strategies.

4.2 CI's Fair*in approach of Narrative Groups in Schools

CI's current Federal Model Project "Fair*in" has taken up on some of the insights from EFS and earlier CI projects. The governmental model project Fair*in, launched in fall 2016 mostly in Eastern Germany, aims to prevent ethnically polarising as well as sexist, homophobe and transphobe attitudes and other forms of intolerance and group hatred among young people. In the project, CI develops new formats of non-formal civic education, youth culture education and community-embedded prevention, in order to test them in two core regions in Brandenburg and Lower Saxony.

Among the new methods that have been developed in this project, the "Fair*in Narrative Groups in Schools" approaches seem particularly promising for being considered as one possible good practice to be fed into the peer review among process CEE Prevent Net partners. The main goals of these narrative groups in schools are: to address students personally and give them an open space during class time where they themselves can set the agenda and freely exchange among themselves (being facilitated by external practitioners); in so doing strengthen democratic and human rights-based attitudes and prevent intolerance, group hatred and violent extremism; to improve young people's social skills, such as taking part in group conversations, speaking about their own experiences , feelings, conflicts, and troubles; in this vein support students to engage in respectful and authentic personal dialogue with others; and to provide them with opportunities for gaining self-awareness and experiencing self-efficacy.

Methodologically, the Fair*in groups in schools are strongly based on the narrative-biographical group work approach as in the above-mentioned "We-Amongst-Ourselves-Groups" (Weilnböck 2013, 2014). The participants meet in small groups of 8-12 persons which are facilitated by two facilitators whose main task is to provide a confidential and trustful environment and maintain a maximally narrative mode of exchange which, thus, is not too opinionated or engaging in debates and discussions. Otherwise, the group process is open to the topics, issues and experiences of the young participants themselves. The experience in EFS and Fair*in has clearly shown that such open-process groups, if facilitated as a narrative, authentic and respectful process, always work in support of strengthening democratic and human rights-based values and behaviours and help to prevent intolerance, as values and behaviours of authenticity, narrative sharing and mutual respect are of crucial concern to the young participants themselves and pertain to their social environment. Hence, the young people feed these values into the group conversation themselves and from their point of view and hands-on experiences which makes it easier to reflect on the underlying issues in an interest-based and emotionally appealing way – while at the same time fulfilling syllabus requirements of

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

democracy education and social skills building.

Yet, the approach of Narrative Groups in Schools may be but one of several new methods to be identified and further developed as a good practice of the CEE Prevent Net Compendium – which aims to provide methods that prove helpful and effective in times of mounting societal polarisation and increasingly emotionalised political value conflicts.

In closing

Hence, focusing on the region of Central and Eastern European countries and at its potentials and challenges in terms of prevention and democratic resilience in a very hands-on, conceptually sensitive ad respectful manner – possibly, as said above, liaising with the newly build "High-level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation" (HLCEG-R) encouraging „project-based collaboration" between "smaller groups of Member States" which share common interests and issues – may make us learn some important lessons about existing blind spots and future avenues of policy making in the prevention area. The current unevenness of prevent approaches across Europe will then certainly be offset in the future by creating a truly inclusive, cross-phenomena and cross-border approach to securing and supporting tolerance and dialogue for democratic societies.

Bibliography

Baer, Silke, Oliver Kossack, Anna Groß, and Malte Pannemann (2017): ‚Da ist ne Menge möglich'.In: Anne Broden, Stefan Hößl, and Marcus Meier (eds.): Antisemitismus, Rassismus und das Lernen aus Geschichte(n). Weinheim: Beltz Juventa.

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2017): Love it, leave it or change it? Junge Europäer in Mittel- und Osteuropa bekennen sich zur EU, sehen aber Notwendigkeit der Reformen. URL: https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GrauePublikationen/EZ_flashlight_europe_2017_02_DT.pdf (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Budapest Centre for Mass Atrocities Prevention (2017): Capabilities of the Visegrad Countries in Preventing Extremism. Budapest: Foundation for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities – Hungary. URL: http://www.genocideprevention.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Report_V4_2017_A4_web.pdf (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Cultures Interactive (2019): Modellprojekt DisTanZ. URL: http://www.cultures-interactive.de/de/das-projekt-distanz.html (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Dzhekova, Rositsa and Mila Mancheva et al. (2015): Radicalisation in Bulgaria Threats and Trends. By The Center for the Study of Democracy. URL: http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=17621 (retrieved: 28 January 2019)

European Commission (2018): High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation completes its work. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/high-level-expert-group-radicalisation-completes-work_en (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Mancheva, Mila and Rositsa Dzhekova (2017): Risks of Islamist Radicalisation in Bulgaria: A Case Study in the Iztok Neighbourhood of the City of Pazardzhik. URL:

http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=17937 (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Mares, Miroslav (2014): The extreme right's relationship with Islam and Islamism in East-Central Europe: From Allies to Enemies. In: East European Politics and Societies and Cultures 28/1, 205-24.

Melzer, Ralf and Sebastian Serafin (eds.) (2013): Right-wing extremism in Europe: country analyses, counter-strategies and labor-market oriented exit strategies. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Minkenberg, Michael (2017): The Radical Right in Eastern Europe. Democracy under Siege? New York: Palgrave.

Minkenberg, Michael; Kossack, Oliver (2015): Conclusions: Actors, Interaction, and Impact in Comparison, in: Minkenberg, Michael (ed.): Transforming the Transformation? The East European Radical Right in the Political Process. London: Routledge.

Mudde, Cas (2005) Central and Eastern Europe, in: Cas Mudde, ed. Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe. London: Routledge.

Novak, Benjamin (2015): Századvég to create Migration Research Institute. Budapest Beacon, 11 September 2015. URL: https://budapestbeacon.com/szazadveg-to-create-migration-research-institute/ (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Pytlas, Bartek (2015): Radical Right Parties in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia: Discursive Influence, Party Competition and Electoral Fortune. London: Routledge.

Pytlas, Bartek and Oliver Kossack (2015): "Lighting the Fuse: the Impact of Radical Right Parties on Party Competition in Central and Eastern Europe," in: Michael Minkenberg (ed.): Transforming the Transformation? The East European Radical Right in the Political Process. London: Routledge.

Radicalisation Awareness Network (2016): Ex-post Paper RAN Exit – Minimum methodological requirements for exit interventions. Outline: deradicalisation interventions for violent extremism. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit-ex_post_paper_london_15-16032016_en.pdf (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Zick, Andreas, Beate Küpper, and Andreas Hövermann (2011): Intolerance, prejudice and discrimination: a European report. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert

Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und Gewaltprävention
Mainzer Straße 11, 12053 Berlin
Fon: 030 60401950 / Fax: 60401946
info@cultures-interactive.de / www.cultures-interactive.de

Foundation.

Weilnböck, Harald (2018): The Radicalisation Awareness Network/RAN – concept and reality. A policy essay on interagency cooperation to prevent violent extremism and support resilient European societies. URL: http://www.cultures-interactive.de/de/ran-essay-de.html (retrieved: 28 January 2019).

Weilnböck, Harald (2014): Die ‚Wir unter uns Gruppe' als ein nachhaltiges Verfahren in der Arbeit mit rechtsextrem affinen Jugendlichen. In: Silke Baer, Kurt Möller and Peer Wiechmann (eds.): Verantwortlich handeln: Praxis der Sozialen Arbeit mit rechtsextrem orientierten und gefährdeten Jugendlichen. Opladen, Berlin and Toronto: Budrich.

Weilnböck, Harald (2013): The Narrative Principle: Good Practice in Anti-Hate Crime Interventions, within the Radicalisation Awareness Network. In: Friedrich Ebert Foundation (ed.): "Right-Wing Extremism in Europe. Country analyses, counter-strategies and labor-market oriented exit-strategies."Berlin: Ebert Foundation, pp. 379-408.

Weilnböck, Harald and Robert Örell et al. (2015): RAN Derad Declaration of Good Practice – Principles of Sustainable Interventions in Disengagement and Rehabilitation (Deradicalisation) from Involvement in Violent Extremism and Group Hatred. URL: http://www.cultures-interactive.de/tl_files/publikationen/Fachartikel/2015_Draft%20RAN%20Derad%20Declaration%20of%20Good%20Practice_Summary%20in%20progress.pdf (retrieved: 28 January 2018).