



## Preventing Extremism and Radicalization through Local Inclusion

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Radicalization as a catalyst for violent extremism is a fast spreading phenomenon. European cities have experienced it directly in the past years, having been the place of dramatic and tragic events. The recent terrorist attacks and the hate crimes related to religion, ethnicity and political affiliation have shown the urgent necessity for tackling the issue of extremism. Until now, the responses by the political actors, be it at the local, national or European level, have been mostly of judicial and military nature. These responses usually are on the wave of emotional sentiments, always repressive, and mainly related to the restriction of freedoms and rights.

However, prevention has rapidly emerged as a necessary alternative. Prevention in this sense develops around the idea of inclusion and early integration, which views security and safeguard of our public spaces as a shared and common good. Along these lines, it is undeniable that acts of violence characterized by hate and ideology present important local components. They manifest themselves locally, through the formation and feeding of cells and secret groups. It is therefore necessary to engage the local institutions and organizations in the elaboration of a strategy aimed at the support of families and groups, the close collaboration with formal educational institutions, the building of local networks based on cultural dialogue and solidarity, and, ultimately, at the deradicalization and integration.

In putting forward a policy proposal for the prevention of radicalization and extremism, the working group could target the issue of how to foster cohesion within a community, how a network can be created between and within ethnic, religious and political groups, and how to encourage a civic consciousness related to the sense of belonging to the local community.