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**Master's Dissertation**

***PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION AND  
VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH EDUCATION  
PROGRAMMES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS***

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*Evangelia Georgaki*

*To my children,  
Phoebus and Lydia*

# PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS<sup>1</sup>

Evangelia Georgaki

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία εξετάζει την υπάρχουσα πολιτική των Διεθνών Οργανισμών για την Πρόληψη της Ριζοσπαστικοποίησης και του Βίαιου Εξτρεμισμού (ΠΒΕ) μέσω της Εκπαίδευσης χρησιμοποιώντας την θεωρία του συμπλέγματος καθεστώτων. Βασίζεται στην συγκριτική μελέτη των πολιτικών πέντε Διεθνών Οργανισμών και μερικών από τα εξειδικευμένα όργανά τους: 1) τον Οργανισμό Ηνωμένων Εθνών (ΟΗΕ) και 1.α) την Εκπαιδευτική, Επιστημονική και Πολιτιστική Οργάνωση Ηνωμένων Εθνών (UNESCO) και 1.β) το Πρόγραμμα Ανάπτυξης Ηνωμένων Εθνών (UNDP), 2) την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση (ΕΕ) και 2.α) το Δίκτυο Ευαισθητοποίησης για την Ριζοσπαστικοποίηση (RAN), 3) το Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης (ΣΤΕ), 4) τον Οργανισμό Οικονομικής Συνεργασίας και Ανάπτυξης (ΟΟΣΑ) και 5) την Διεθνή Τράπεζα (ΔΤ).

Η εργασία προέκυψε με στόχο να καλύψει την ανάγκη παροχής στους εκπαιδευτικούς και σε άλλους ερευνητές μίας εμπειριστατωμένης κατανόησης της εξέλιξης των πολιτικών των Διεθνών Οργανισμών, οι οποίες εμπλέκουν την εκπαίδευση στην Πρόληψη της Ριζοσπαστικοποίησης και του Βίαιου Εξτρεμισμού και μίας παρουσίασης του σκεπτικού που βρίσκεται πίσω από τις παρεμβάσεις και τα προγράμματα που εκπορεύονται από τους Διεθνείς Οργανισμούς και είναι ειδικά σχεδιασμένα για να εφαρμοσθούν στα σχολεία.

Μετά από μία συνοπτική παρουσίαση του ιστορικού πλαισίου, μία επισκόπηση των κρίσιμων για την μελέτη όρων αποκαλύπτει την έλλειψη συναίνεσης σχετικά με τους ορισμούς που δίνονται από τους διάφορους παράγοντες που ασχολούνται με την Πρόληψη της Ριζοσπαστικοποίησης και του Βίαιου Εξτρεμισμού. Η εργασία αυτή επιχειρεί να εντοπίσει τη χρονική στιγμή όταν η εκπαίδευση μπήκε στο πεδίο ενδιαφέροντος των πολιτικών των Διεθνών Οργανισμών για την Καταπολέμηση του Βίαιου Εξτρεμισμού και την Πρόληψη της Ριζοσπαστικοποίησης και του Βίαιου Εξτρεμισμού. Η συζήτησή μας είναι κυρίως για τον ρόλο που ανατίθεται στην εκπαίδευση για την Πρόληψη του Βίαιου Εξτρεμισμού από τους Διεθνείς Οργανισμούς και πώς αυτός έρχεται σε αντίθεση με τις βασικές αρχές και αποστολή της εκπαίδευσης. Η εργασία καταλήγει με προτάσεις για περαιτέρω έρευνα και δράσεις.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Εκπαίδευση, ευθραυστότητα, Διεθνείς Οργανισμοί, πρόληψη, ποιοτική εκπαίδευση, ριζοσπαστικοποίηση, ψυχική ανθεκτικότητα, τρομοκρατία, βία, βίαιος εξτρεμισμός

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<sup>1</sup> The study was undertaken as a master's dissertation at the Postgraduate Programme on International and European Policies on Education, Training and Research at the University of Piraeus, Greece, under the supervision of Dr Foteini Asderaki, Associate Professor, Jean Monnet Chair on European Union's Education, Training, Research and Innovation Policies.

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## Abbreviations

BIS	Building Inclusive Societies, CoE's Action Plan
CDC	Competences for Democratic Culture
CoE	Council of Europe
CONTEST	UK's Counter Terrorism Strategy
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child by UN
CT	Counter Terrorism
CTC	Counter Terrorism Committee by UN
CTCED	UN' Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
CT MORSE	Counter Terrorism Monitoring, Reporting and Support Mechanism
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCD	OECD's Development Co-operation Directorate
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
DISCO	Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation
EDC	Education for Democratic Culture
ERA	Education Resilience Approaches, a WB's programme
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty)
EU	European Union
FCV	Fragility – Conflict – Violence
FCS	Fragile and Conflict affected Situations
FST	Fragile States Reports by OECD
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GCF	Global Competence Framework by OECD
GEC	Global Engagement Center
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
HRE	Human Rights Education
IDA	International Development Association by WB
IO	International Organisation
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IS	Islamic State
KKK	Koma Komalen Kurdistan – Kürdistan Demokratik Konfederalizm
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NESTA	National Endowment for Science Technology and Atrs (in UK)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RPBA	Recovery and Peace- Building Assessment
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PKK	Kurdistan's Workers' Party (Kurdish Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan)
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
PVE-E	Preventing Violent Extremism through Education
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
RFCDC	Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture
RRA	Risk and Resilience Assessment
SABER	System Approach for Better Education Results by WB
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STRIVE	Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism programme
TE-SAT	Terrorism Situation and Trend, Europol's annual Reports
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UIS	UNESCO's Institute for Statistics
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Women Peace and Security agenda by UN



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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation<sup>2</sup> examines the existing policies of the International Organisations on the Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism (PVE) through Education using the regime complexity theory. It is based on the comparative study of the policies of five International Organisations and some of their specialized organs: 1) United Nations (UN), and 1.a) United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and 1.b) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2) European Union (EU) and 2.a) Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), 3) the Council of Europe (CoE), 4) the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and 5) World Bank (WB).

The dissertation came up to cover the need to provide educators and other researchers with a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the International Organisations' policies that engaged education in PVE and a presentation of the rationale that lies behind the interventions and projects which derive from the IOs and are specifically designed to be implemented at schools.

After a concise presentation of the historical context, an overview of the terms critical to the study reveals the lack of consensus on the definitions given by the various agents involved in PVE. The dissertation tries to pinpoint the time when education came into the scope of the International Organisations' policies on Countering Violent Extremism and PVE. Our discussion is mainly about the role assigned to education on PVE by the IOs and how this contradicts its core values and mission. The dissertation ends with recommendations for further research and actions.

Key words: Education, fragility, International Organisations, prevention, quality education, radicalisation, resilience, terrorism, violence, violent extremism

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<sup>2</sup> The study was undertaken as a master's dissertation at the Postgraduate Programme on International and European Policies on Education, Training and Research at the University of Piraeus, Greece, under the supervision of Dr Foteini Asderaki, Associate Professor, Jean Monnet Chair on European Union's Education, Training, Research and Innovation Policies.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Defining the problem and its significance**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century there has been an increasing concern about the rise of terrorist attacks in all continents and a need to tackle all forms of violent extremism. Since violent extremism knows no boundaries and can affect the security, well-being and peaceful way of life in any country and community, all International Organisations got involved and addressed it, first, as a security issue that threatens peace and security both at state and at international level. But gradually they realized that the phenomenon should be analysed in depth in order to understand the underlying conditions that breed it and try not only to tackle it effectively after its manifestation but also to prevent it. The fact that the young generation is prone to be allured by the extremists' narratives and more vulnerable to recruitment alerted both international organisations and national governments which developed their policies including institutions such as education, civil society, religious and community leaders as part of a long-term solution. Summits and International Conferences have been held, Strategies and Action Plans have been adopted, Resolutions have been signed in which Education has been involved in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) or Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE).

Apart from the official documents produced by the International Organisations, which consist the bulk of this literature review, there also exist several studies commissioned by the International Organisations themselves (Jackson, R 2014, by CoE), (Silva, S 2017, by WB), (Nordbruch, G., & Sieckelink, S., 2018, by RAN), (Holland, P. A., Sundharam, J. et al, 2022 by WB), publications of International Conferences held by IOs or data retrieved by online platforms created and sustained by them. In the literature review papers by educators working in the Preventing Violent Extremism through Education field are also included (Sieckelink, Stijn, Femke Kaulingfreks & Micha De Winter, 2015), (Davies Lynn. 2009), (Ragazzi F. 2017) (Davies Lynn, 2018) presenting the issue through the lenses of education.

Being an educator myself, actively involved in designing and implementing with my students several extra-curricular activities and projects which are fully aligned with the IOs initiatives I wanted to comprehend and gain insight into their strategies and policies. Along with other educators, we have witnessed and experienced the shift of the IOs' attention towards education, the setting up of international networks and learning platforms, the launch of initiatives specifically designed and directed to schools and the introduction of terms orbiting tolerance, democracy, sustainability, citizenship, inclusiveness etc.

What is really missing is a comprehensive study that would include all the various policies of the IOs and would follow their evolution over the years so that a thorough understanding of the rationale that lies behind them would emerge.

This study comes to fill in this gap in research. It explores the existing policies of International Organisations on the Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism through Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is based on the comparative study of the policies of five International Organisations and some of their specialized bodies: 1) United Nations (UN) and its selected agencies: 1.a) United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and 1.b) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); 2) European Union (EU) and 2.b) its Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN); 3) the Council of Europe (CoE), 4) the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and 5) the World Bank (WB). These International Organisations and their selected agencies are leaders in PVE as they have developed strong comprehensive CVE/PVE policies.

### **Research questions**

The rise in number of incidents of extremist violence and the recruitment of youngsters by non-state violent groups have raised apprehension among states especially in the northern part of the world. Since the issue of radicalization of youngsters was included in the International Organisations' PVE agenda, another concern has arisen: the involvement of Education in the International Organisations' operational plans of action.

The questions that this comparative study attempts to explore are:

- First, what was the exact time when Education was included in the International Organisations' CVE or PVE agenda?
- Secondly, what is the role that each of these organisations assigned to education in the context of countering radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism?
- The evolution of the IOs' PVE policies as well as the proposed ways of implementation is another focal point of this study.
- How far has each of these organisations proceeded in defining their procedures and setting protocols of cooperation between education sector and security authorities and what are the ethical implications? We specifically examine if schools, as learning institutions, should be involved in identifying or even reporting learners as being at risk of radicalization.

**The research is organised in the following order:**

In Chapter 1 the methodology, the limitations and the theoretical framework of research are presented. Chapter 2 provides a concise presentation of the historical context within which violent extremism has risen.

In Chapter 3.1 the terms critical to the study and the definitions given by both the international organisations and academics are discussed.

In Chapter 3.2 the factors of Violent Extremism as they are analysed by the organisations or by scientists over the last decades are presented.

In Section 3.3 we outline the evolution of the International Organisation's policy on CVE/ PVE and the types of education interventions that are supported or recommended in their action plans and proposals of policies as part of their effort to prevent radicalization and violent extremism among children (aged 1-18) and the youth (aged 18-25).

A discussion about the role of education on PVE and the contradictory assignments given to educators follows. The paper ends with conclusions and recommendations for further research and actions.

## **Chapter 1: METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

### **1.1: Methodology**

The methodology applied in this paper is literature review and qualitative analysis of both official documents issued by the International Organisations and academic literature on the subject of “radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism” related to the role of Education. The literature review includes an overview of the definitions of the key terms, the factors of the phenomenon of radicalization and a survey of the IOs’ policy as it emerges through their official papers, including Strategies, Action Plans, Resolutions, Frameworks, Guidances, Reports, Policy proposals on Preventing Violent Extremism that have been published by the IOs and have been suggested for implementation in the field of Education by member states.

In this comparative study, the evolution of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and/or Prevention Violent Extremism (PVE) policies of the following International Organisations and their selected agencies has been explored:

- 1) United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies:
  - 1.a) U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and
  - 1.b) UN Development Plan (UNDP),
- 2) European Union (EU), and its specialized agent:
  - 2.a) Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN),
- 3) Council of Europe (CoE),
- 4) Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and
- 5) World Bank (WB),

The data processed in the Tables come from the following documents:

- 1) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016)
- 2) UNESCO Preventing Violent Extremism through Education – A Guide for Policy-makers (UNESCO, 2017)
- 3) CoE Prevention of Radicalisation through Intercultural Policy (Gruening, 2018)
- 4) EU Strategy, 2020 (European Commission, 2020)
- 5) RAN Manifesto, Migration and Home Affairs (RAN Manifesto, 2015)
- 6) RAN Companion, Transforming Schools into Labs for Democracy (RAN Companion, 2018)
- 7) OECD States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence (OECD 2016)
- 8) World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-2025 (World Bank, 2020b).

Their selection was ostensive among the plethora of documents which were accessed for the research and was based on their content as they present the IOs’ PVE policy in a concise way containing information about the definition of terms, the factors and proposed measures.

### **1.2: Limitations of research**

The International Organisations have been chosen as they all have been involved in Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education and have developed comprehensive strategies. Nevertheless, it should be noted that they are all founded after the initiative of the Northern – Western part of the world, leaving out the perspectives of other International Organisations which act in the Southern – Eastern world. Even the discussion over the impact of violent extremism is seen under the prism of the Western world.

Secondly, only large-scale international programmes run by the IOs are included whereas national PVE policies or projects are not.

Finally, if a further step of this research is to be taken, the USA policy will have to be included and examined thoroughly in combination with the IOs policies as it has been a powerful and influential actor that has played a key-role in the evolution of CVE/ PVE policies.

### 1.3: Theoretical Framework

The subject of Countering /Prevention Violent Extremism (CVE/PVE) is so complicated and so multidimensional that it has been approached with the analytical framework of regime complexity. An international regime consists of “a set of implicit and explicit principles, norms and decision - making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area” (Krasner , 1982). The term “regime complex” is defined as “an array of partially overlapping and nonhierarchical institutions that includes more than one international agreement or authority” that govern a special political issue and four stages of evolution can be discerned in its life-cycle process (Asderaki, 2019).

In this regard, CVE/PVE can be understood as a global regime that includes an array of differentiated actors like International Organisations (IOs), such as UN, UNESCO, UNDP, CoE, EU, OECD, World Bank, whereas NGOs, civil society, experts, transnational organisations of private interests and powerful donors have also developed an interest and exert pressure in shaping it. Its scale, defined by the number of institutions and actors involved, has been gradually increasing, which has also added up to its complexity and diversity as it includes a number of heterogeneous actors ranging from international Organisations, to NGOs or state and non-state actors. Over the years the interactions among them have also increased to the point that it now enjoys a high degree of density where resources, data and processes are exchanged. As it shares the three systemic features of a global regime, namely scale, diversity and density (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Westerwinter, 2022) CVE/PVE also lies within a regime complex of multiple overlapping regimes governing different areas of international judicial system, intelligence, social and economic development which have included education in their scope of action<sup>3</sup>.

Another important point to take into consideration is that PVE through Education meets the progress and new approaches in the Education field that shifts from the theoretical accumulation of knowledge to the acquisition of knowledge through participatory learning and engagement in ‘real-life’ situations. Intercultural understanding, tolerance and respect of diversity, respect for human rights and the values of democracy are attitudes highly valued in the 21<sup>st</sup> century societies and most educators agree that they are more effectively learned through ‘experience’ rather than ‘formal teaching’ (UNESCO, 2021).

Considering CVE/PVE as a global regime operating within a regime complex allows its examination within a broader framework and the deeper understanding of the evolution of PVE policies as a result of contradictory approaches in an ongoing attempt to reach consensus around the role of education in Countering or Preventing Violent Extremism. The contradiction lies within the Framework of the Sustainable Development Goals where the emergence of international organisations which are primarily concerned with the economic aspect of sustainable development, such as World Bank and OECD, competes with international actors, mainly UN, UNESCO and CoE which foster sustainable human development. For understanding the role of the International Organisations and how global governance works and exerts its power this paper draws on Tikly’s analysis (Tikly, 2017).

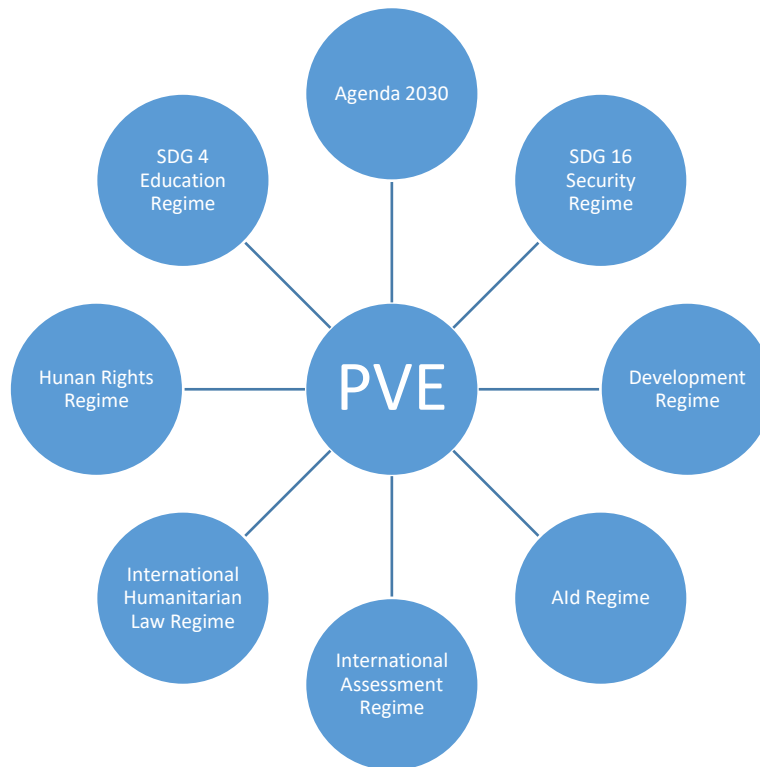
In figure 1 a schematic representation of PVE as part of a regime complex is presented trying to show the contradicting powers exerted on PVE policies by the development and security actors on the one hand, and the education and human rights actors on the other. Their relations are dynamic as the influence and pressure each regime exerts over the others is subjected to changes in a continuous tug-of-war of power. At present, the most dynamic players in this context are the OECD, and specifically the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and the World Bank (WB) which often determine the nature and direction of policy and financial aid as they have the power to demand compliance to the conditions of aid over governments and can also effectively mobilise funds derived by high-level donors, such as Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and channel them to education. In that respect, they directly compete with UN and particularly UNESCO which faces the challenge of a considerably decreased budget. OECD and WB have also developed their own powerful epistemic communities and assessment mechanisms which, especially through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), exercise

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<sup>3</sup> The emergence of the International Regime theory can be tracked back to the 1970s whereas the term ‘regime complex’ was first coined in 2004 and has been further elaborated ever since. For an overview of the evolution of the theory see: (Asderaki, 2019); (Tikly, 2017); (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Westerwinter, 2022)

pressure and influence the setting of the global agendas, overshadowing UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UN’s power of grassroots information gathering (Tikly, 2017).

PVE has also been closely interlinked with the global security regime through channelling development funds to education in an attempt to tackle terrorism at its first phases of radicalisation and prevent violent extremist actions at their conception before they are materialised. Within the development aid regime, donor governments have the freedom to use aid strategically in order to strengthen their security through controlling migration flows or funding PVE programmes in Fragile countries and conflict- or violence affected areas (FCV).



**Figure 1.** A schematic representation of PVE as part of a regime complex (the Development and Security agents are on the right half of the scheme whereas the Education and Human Rights on the left). Source: author

On the other hand, within this regime complexity, UN and UNESCO have undergone much pressure due to the fundamental changes of the recent years. UN Human Rights Committee and UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism (UN A/HRC/40/52, 2019) voice their concern about the increasingly shrinking civic space and UNESCO is seen as a “threatened institution”. The concept of challenged institutions has been explored by Bett in his case study of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and can be applied to IOs that are affected by the rapidly changing competitive landscape of global governance (Bett, 2013). Currently UN and UNESCO are responding to the challenge by trying to re-establish their key role in shaping Education: they are working on *A New Social Contract for Education* on the Futures of Education based on the principles of human rights, social justice, and cultural diversity. They aim at “strengthening education as a public endeavour and a common good” (UNESCO, 2021). They recognize two universal principles, namely “respect for human rights and concern for education as a common good” as the foundations of education everywhere.

## Chapter 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before we examine the evolution of the International Organisations's policy on counter-terrorism in the field of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we attempt a concise presentation of the historical context. Apparently, radical ideologies and extremism have not been a recent phenomenon in human history as many social and political changes can be attributed to them. The problem arises when extremism adopts the use of violence as a means to impose their ideology and aims to cause fear to the public turning it into terrorism which has caused much suffering to the whole world.

In the western world, Europe had an extensive experience of terrorist attacks by extremist groups within its territory in the previous century: the Irish Republican Army (IRA) by North Ireland nationalists in Great Britain; ETA, abbreviation of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna ("Basque Homeland and Liberty"), an armed separatist organization of Basque nationalists in Spain; Red Brigades, a left-wing extremist group in Italy; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; the Red Army Faction known as Baader- Meinhof group which rejected the established global order in Germany (Kershaw I., 2018).

But actually, it is the rest of the world that has suffered the most. Conflicts, civil wars, uprisings such as the Afghanistan war (1999-2021), the invasion in Iraq (2003-2011), the Arab spring (2011), the Syrian war (2011 -ongoing) have marked the 21<sup>st</sup> century and have triggered the migration crisis in 2015-2016 when large numbers of people left their homelands in Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, in search for safety and security in stable countries mostly in Europe. Population movements from fragile countries and violence and conflict-affected areas (FVC) created new dynamics that had global political repercussions and affected developed countries as well.

Among the most prominent repercussions is the outbreak of violent extremism that spread across a vast territory in the Sahel region of Africa, North Africa and the Middle East in particular. Violent attacks were carried out by groups who claimed Islamist ideology and were interlinked in wide illegal networks. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) - or elsewhere called ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or simply Islamic State (IS) - whose activity spreads in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and ISIL's affiliates in Sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Mozambique etc), Boko Haram in Nigeria, terrorist groups in Afghanistan are some of them. The rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), in particular, has been attributed to the weakness of the states of Iraq and Syria. The group took advantage of the instability and conflict and quickly took control over the region of the Middle East. The group has also expanded its range of action at international scale and conducted attacks in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, in North Africa (Libya, Tunisia), in Europe (Belgium, France), Nigeria, and the United States of America.

Additionally, changes that have global effects like advances in the information and communication technology, demographic changes and population shifts, climate crisis and environmental degradation triggering a rise in pandemics have been exacerbating the volatility of the global context (United Nations & World Bank, 2017).

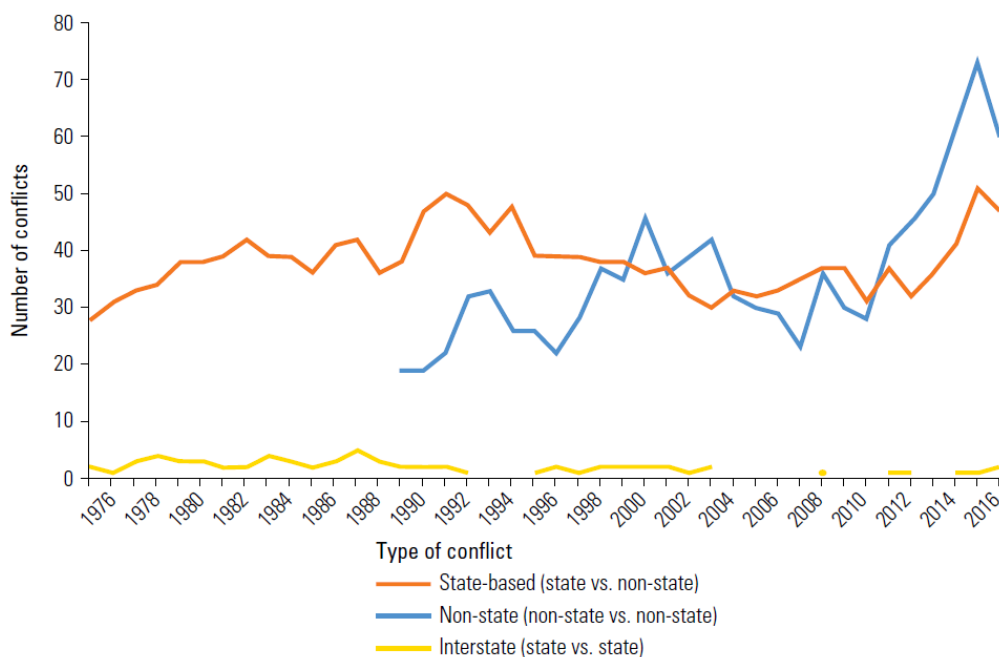
In short, terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has got new features: a) It is global as it takes action internationally trespassing borders, b) It exploits the advances of the information and communication technology, social media in particular, and makes use of the digital platforms to disseminate and recruit new members c) It has a high rate of unpredictability due to fact that the victims are not political targeted but selected at random. It is decentralized and can be implemented by individuals who are willing to sacrifice their lives (suicide bombers, martyrdom) and d) Many extremist groups can gain access to lethal weapons of mass destruction (UNDP, 2016).

As the phenomenon of terrorism is global and trespasses borders, it has become an issue of global concern. Not only the affected states, but also International Organisations have dealt with the matter realizing that the magnitude of the global Fragility-Conflict -Violence (FCV) challenge cannot be constrained within these areas but following the spill-over effect it has been transferred to the North-western world. Therefore, IOs took over the initiative to combine forces of all the powerful humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. They have also proceeded in analysing the phenomenon, its manifestation, its root causes so that they can understand its mechanisms and define their policies and procedures. Despite the accumulation of information, though, the lack of systematised data still makes them incomparable.



According to the World Bank Report, many countries, around 60, included on the list of fragile states every year, are mainly Low-income or Low-Middle-income countries, and nearly 30 out of them face chronic fragility, that makes them even more vulnerable to Fragility, Conflict and Violence situations. The drivers could be rooted in local issues, national or subnational or even global. Conflicts should be analysed within their specific geopolitical context, for example, the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, the Hindu extremists against Buddhists, Hutus against Tutsis in Rwanda etc. Muslim extremism should be seen within the context of the imposed violence and discrimination against Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan, or elsewhere even on European ground e.g. in Bosnia. According to data, violent conflict has increased significantly, especially since 2010 when the overall number of violent conflicts has risen sharply globally. In Figure 2, the graph shows that although the number of conventional wars among states is small, much of this increase can be attributed to non-state armed groups which have proliferated and expanded to 11% more locations worldwide.

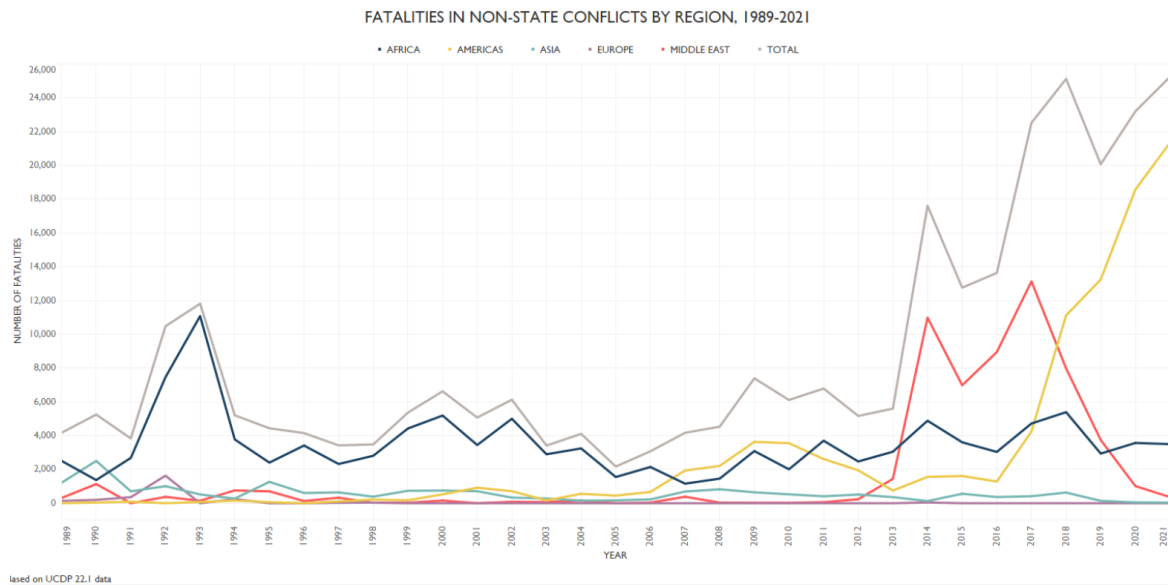
**FIGURE 1 Conflict Trends**



Source: UCDP 2017.

**Figure 2.** WB Pathways for Peace 2017: the rise of conflicts and the world map according to UCDP= Upsala Conflict Data Program since 1970s in the Department of Peace and Conflict Research) (United Nations & World Bank, 2017)

Another source of accurate data in worldwide conflicts is the Upsala Conflict Data Program of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research of Upsala University, which has been gathering and processing data related to conflicts at a global level for over 40 years. Figure 3 shows the fluctuation in the number of fatalities globally since 1989.



**Figure 3.** Fatalities in non-state conflicts by region 1989-2021, UCDP 2021

According to the UCDP, there has been a sharp increase of fatalities that are attributed to non-state violence incidents worldwide. Fatalities caused by terrorist attacks fall into this category as in the UCDP they avoid using the term “terrorism”; instead, they use the term non-state conflicts (see below). The chart shows that the regions most severely affected are Americas (North, Central, Latin) and Middle East, Africa follows whereas Europe is steadily low in fatalities (Shawn, Petersson, & Öberg, 2022).

The data collected by OECD adds to the consensus that there has been a significant increase in violence, especially since 2013 when 18,000 deaths caused by terrorist attacks were reported globally. This means a sharp rise of 61% compared to the deaths of the previous year. Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria were the most afflicted areas with the highest numbers of victims. Another aspect worth noting is the high toll that women and girls pay in terrorism-related violence. In the following years, 2014 and 2015, the number of terrorism victims were also record high since the Cold War (OECD, 2016).

The situation in fragile countries and conflict-affected areas has been constantly exacerbating by global changes such as climate crisis, natural disasters, environmental degradation and health pandemics causing increased population flows in search of peace and security. Africa, Central Asia and Middle East are the most severely impacted regions, from where large numbers of internally displaced people, refugees and immigrants originate. The majority of them leave FCV countries heading to more stable and developed countries causing not only financial stress but also political repercussions.

The Syrian war, for example, triggered the refugee and migration crisis in 2015-2016 that affected mostly Europe where it also acquired political dimensions. The continuous rise in numbers of migrants living in the EU, the rise in numbers of acts of terrorism and the rise in the number of deaths and generally victims related to violent extremism and terrorism that year (Institute of Economics & Peace, 2020) also demonstrated in a most dramatic way, that chronic conflicts and weaknesses can breed violent extremism that trespasses boundaries and no country is immune. This initiated hot debates about the need for protection of safety, the preservation of the values of democracy and led the international organisations to the adoption of a strategy that would create the sense of stability and security mainly by countering terrorism and by the prevention of violent extremism.

Counter-terrorism policies gained momentum after the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York and the announcement of “War on Terror”, an international campaign launched by Bush’s administration and led by the USA. The terrorist attacks in European cities such as in Madrid (2004), in London (2005) and especially Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris (2015), the jihadist threats and the situation in Iraq and Syria, the rise in migration all have resulted in Islam and Muslims being

connected with security reasons and in accelerating the adoption of Counter-Terrorism Strategies.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Boston Marathon bombing (April 5, 2013), the attacks in Paris (January 7, 2015) and the rise of ISIS raised apprehension and in February 2015 President Obama undertook the initiative of a 3-day CVE White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism where he defined terrorism and the CVE solutions as “a generational problem” and urged Member States of the United Nations to counter Violent Terrorism globally, thus setting the agenda for the next UN General Assembly in September 2015 (The White House, 2015). The UN Secretary General issued his Plan Action in December 2015. The US was shocked once again from the attack in San Bernardino, California (December 2, 2015). President Obama USA, addressed the American nation referring to the attacks that were carried out by individuals who “had gone down the dark path of radicalization” and the new phase that the threat of terrorism has evolved into by the Islamic State (ISIL). (Obama, 2015). In January 2016, the US Department of State introduced a new Global Engagement Center (GEC), to “*coordinate, integrate and synchronise messaging to foreign audiences that undermines the disinformation espoused by violent extremist groups, including ISIL and al-Qaeda, and that offers positive alternatives. The centre will focus more on empowering and enabling partners, governmental and non-governmental*” (US Department of State, 2016). CVE was on the global track. The UN reiterated its commitment to tackle threats to international peace (UN, S/RES/2242-2015, 2015). Fragility has been considered as a contagious phenomenon that crosses national borders (OECD 2016), can have spill-over effects (World Bank, 2020b) and has posed the challenge for the states to develop their governance so that they can meet the needs of increasingly diverse and multi-cultural societies (UNDP, 2016).

Nevertheless, violent extremism and terrorism is a double-edge sword and radicalisation can manifest itself in many different forms. On the one end, it is originated by Islam terrorists (religious extremism, Islamist radicalization, jihadists) and on the other end, it is directed against migrants and refugees. The issue of immigration has been introduced in right-wing extremist narratives and has been related with security issues in Europe since the 1990s when immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the 40-year-long Cold War (1991) were portrayed by political and societal forces as a threat, as agents who endangered the quality and security of life in the European societies and connected immigration and asylum with terrorism, transnational crime and cultural danger generating suspicion and hatred against them (Huysmans, 2000) despite the evidence about the positive impact migrants have had on their host countries (UNDP, 2016).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Islamist terrorism has triggered the revival of racism, xenophobic practices, ultra-right political ideologies and the formation of nationalistic movements and parties, especially in Europe, who ardently protest against policies of integration or deny immigrants having access to entitlements (right-wing extremism) (Huysmans J. , 2000) (Dzhekova, et al., 2017). Left-wing radicalization or even hooliganism are other forms of violent extremism that are characterized by the rejection of tolerance, freedom of expression and have proceeded to the acceptance of violence as an appropriate way of response (Huysmans J. , 2000).

Finally, from the Human Rights point of view, terrorism and violent extremism have brought about grave challenges to civil society. The threat of terrorism has been used as an excuse by many states to extend the jurisdiction and power of the security sector. Exceptional security measures which were taken under the pressure and insecurity caused by a terrorist attack have usually been integrated in the national judicial system and become the norm. In the name of national security many states have enacted strict counter-terrorism measures which infringe into the rights of civil society and civil space and frequently violate human rights and the rights of vulnerable people and minority groups according to the Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism (UN, A/72/495, 2017).

In conclusion, violent extremism has posed much strain upon the societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which responded by developing national or international counter- terrorism policies. The rise of populism and ultra-right extremism in Europe and the USA was another way of reaction to the rise of population movements and large-scale global changes. The Covid-19 pandemic has

imposed new stress on the issue and might have an impact on the radicalization on youth also. The Taliban return to power in Afghanistan and the war in Ukraine have initiated a new influx of refugees, asylum-seekers and immigrants to Europe and may contribute to a rise in violent extremism too. The dynamic changes in the global context demand for the international community be prepared to tackle new challenges.

## Chapter 3: RESEARCH

### 3.1: Defining the terms

The terminology surrounding violent extremism poses some serious issues as many different terms are used in this field, sometimes interchangeably. This problem has been pointed out by several researchers; yet, universally accepted definitions have not been given and if there is a consensus reached, it is that we are far from universally applicable definitions being provided (Dzhekova, et al., 2017). The matter gets even more complicated in the international context when the challenge of the translation of the terms comes up. In this context, the UN Secretary General’s Plan of Action (UN, A/70/674, 2016) and consequently the UN General Assembly in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy decided to follow a “*practical approach to preventing violent extremism*” bypassing the complex issue of definition.

The four basic political terms we come across are: radicalization, extremism, violent extremism and terrorism. We also discuss the definition of fragility, a new term introduced by the OECD and the WB. In this dissertation we use the definitions given in the online Cambridge Dictionary (Dictionary Cambridge.org, 2020) as the starting point of our discussion. Yet, as basic dictionary definitions fail to cover the different meanings of, and different contexts in which these terms are used worldwide, we also cite the definitions or the terms in context as they are used in relevant documents issued by the International Organisations.

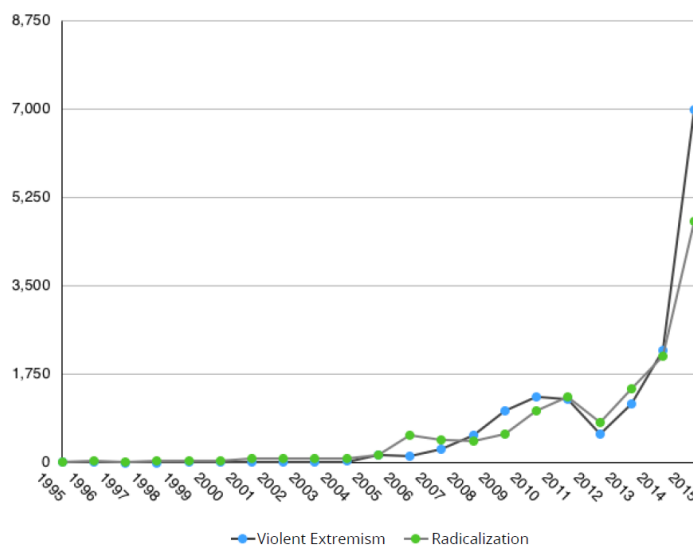
#### Radicalisation:

It is the most ambiguous of all the terms in the context of violent extremism. Certain collocations can be met in relevant texts: radicalization, political or religious radicalization, radicalization leading to violence, violent/ non-violent radical behaviour, etc.

The dictionary defines the term as “*the action or process of making someone become more radical (=extreme) in their political or religious beliefs*” whereas “radical” (adj.) means “*supporting change, believing or expressing the belief that there should be great or extreme social or political change, e.g. He was known as a radical reformer/ thinker/ politician*” (Dictionary Cambridge.org, 2020).

The term radicalism was first met in the nineteenth century texts to define innovative or revolutionary ideas with a positive perspective. But in the new context of violent extremism and terrorism, the use of the term “radicalisation” has increased since 2005 and sky-rocketed since 2015.

Articles mentioning radicalization and violent extremism in English-language news sources, 1995-2015



**Figure 4.** The increase in number of articles related to radicalization and violent extremism published from 1995 to 2015 in English (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018)

The ambiguity of the term, though, is generated because, when used in a countering-terrorism context, no distinction is made between violent actions or intentions (behavioural conceptualization) and beliefs or innovative but peaceful ideas for social change (cognitive conceptualization) (Dzhekova, et al., 2017). Many positive social or political changes in human history, such as the human rights or civil rights movements, gender equality, were brought about by people with non-violent radical thoughts who believed in and pursued progress and positive changes in cultural, economic or political sphere. This distinction is explicitly stated by the UN: “...*non-violent radical behaviour - especially if undertaken purposely with the objective of reforming systems or generating innovation – can be an asset to society and promote positive change. Danger arises when radical movements start to use fear, violence and terrorist activities to achieve their ideological, political, economic or social aims; it is then that radicalization turns into violent extremism*” (UNDP, 2016).

UNESCO shares the same concern that the use of the term may serve to justify limitations to the freedom of speech. In certain contexts, it can simply mean “*wanting to cause political change*”. *In the context of efforts to prevent violent extremism, “radicalization” is commonly used to describe the processes by which a person adopts extreme views or practices to the point of legitimizing the use of violence. The key notion here is the process of embracing violence. If one wishes to point to the process by which one becomes a violent extremism, the expression “radicalization leading to violence” will be more appropriate than “violent extremism”, which focuses on the ideologically motivated resort to violence*” (UNESCO, 2017).

The same distinction between radicals as peaceful “*advocates for fundamental and far-reaching change or reconstructing of a social or political system*” and “*radicals who advocate or use violent extremism or terrorism to try to achieve social or political change*” is made by the CoE. According to CoE “*radicalization is defined as a process through which an individual moves towards supporting, advocating, assisting or using violent extremism or terrorism in order to bring about social or political change*” (Council of Europe, 2017a).

On the other hand, the European Commission adopts an operational approach that defines radicalization as “*a phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence, including acts of terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose*”. It acknowledges that radicalization is not a new phenomenon but it focuses on its new patterns and related it to “*home-grown lone actors and (returning) foreign terrorist fighters [that] raise security issues and specific challenges for prevent work. Internet platforms, including social media, can be abused by violent extremists, terrorist groups and their sympathisers by providing new opportunities for mobilisation, recruitment and communication*” (European Commission, 2022).

The World Bank turned to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) or the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) for the definition of the term “radicalization” which closely associate it with terrorism and has used radicalization, violent extremism, and radicalisation into violent extremism interchangeably. It also tries to analyse radicalization through the economic perspective applying the demand and supply rule of the marketplace and cost-benefit analysis: “...an individual decides to join a terrorist organization after weighing costs and benefits. Such costs and benefits are not solely financial; they could include family ties or loyalty to certain groups” (Devarajan, Mottaghi, & Do, 2016).

### **Extremism:**

The term is defined as “*the fact of someone having beliefs that most people think are unreasonable and unacceptable e.g. political extremism. Extremism thus refers to attitudes and behaviours that are deemed outside the norm*” (Dictionary Cambridge.org, 2020)..

In this plain dictionary definition, at least three words can be detected that require further definition as they can be explained subjectively: what is the “norm” and who decides on what is “(un)acceptable” or “(un)reasonable”?

The Council of Europe explicitly states that, from a human rights perspective, “*individuals who adopt an extremist position are entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination*” under the European Convention on Human Rights as long as they do not undermine democracy and they do not violate the human rights of others.

However, “in cases where an extremist position undermines, threatens or violates the human rights and freedoms of others, uses non-democratic means, or aims for non-democratic social or political change, restrictions need to be placed” but within law for the protection of a democratic society and proportionate to the need (Council of Europe, 2017a).

### **Violent Extremism:**

The term as it is used in UNESCO’s Guide, refers to “*the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and sectarian violence. Typically, “violent extremism” also identifies an enemy, or enemies, who are the object of hatred and violence. The conceptual core of violent extremism is that it is an ideologically motivated resort to the use of violence, commonly based on conspiracy theories*” (UNESCO, 2017).

“*Violent extremism kicks in when radical behaviour starts making use of indiscriminate violence as the means of expression*” and elsewhere “*Violent extremists are those who have chosen violence as a means for imposing their world view on society. Violence gradually moves from being instrumental to becoming symbolic. Ritualised murder, such as practiced by ISIS, al-Shabaab or the KKK<sup>4</sup>, becomes a means for branding and for providing collective inspiration*” (UNDP, 2016).

Violent extremism is the ultimate threat to any democratic society and as such is approached by the Council of Europe which defines it as “*not necessarily have a transparent social or political goal*” as it may “*express hatred of the members of a particular racial, ethnic, national, religious or other cultural group, on whom the violence is inflicted directly with no further explicit goal in mind*” (Council of Europe, 2017a).

### **Terrorism:**

Terrorism is defined as “*(threats of) violent action for political purposes e.g. Governments have to cooperate if they are to fight/combat international terrorism*” (Dictionary Cambridge.org, 2020)

In the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/297, a landmark in the process of combating terrorism, the General Assembly “*reiterates its strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security*” (UN, A/RES/64/297, 2010)(UN, A/RES/64/297, 2010).

The 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report defines terrorism as “*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation*”.

The terms “violent extremism” and “terrorism” are often confused as meaning the same and therefore are used interchangeably. However, violent extremism is considered to be a broader and more inclusive term while terrorism is a form of it, often ideologically motivated. According to UNESCO “*the conceptual underpinning of terrorism that distinguishes it from violent extremism is the [deliberate] creation [and exploitation] of fear or terror as a means to an end*” (UNESCO,2017).

The Council of Europe defines terrorism as a “*more complex phenomenon than violent extremism*”, a special type of it aiming at “*generating terror in order to pursue political goals.*” It is defined as “*violent action, or the threat of violent action, without legal or moral restraint, that is designed to inspire fear, dread, anxiety or terror in a population. .... The victims are chosen either randomly or selectively from the target population in order to generate a threat-based political message... designed to manipulate its audience (either the government, the public or a section of the public), and to intimidate, demoralize, destabilise, polarize, provoke, or coerce that audience in the hope of achieving from the resulting insecurity an outcome that is desired by the perpetrator*”. Nevertheless, CoE does not avoid referring to state terrorism too (Council of Europe, 2017a).

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<sup>4</sup> The KKK (Koma Komalên Kurdistan / Kürdistan Demokratik Konfederalizm) is an umbrella organization grouping pro-PKK sectorial organizations and allied movements ([http://www.freemedialibrary.com/index.php/Declaration\\_of\\_Democratic\\_Confederalism\\_in\\_Kurdistan](http://www.freemedialibrary.com/index.php/Declaration_of_Democratic_Confederalism_in_Kurdistan))

The European Union refers to violent actions as terrorism which is linked to radicalization in its strategy. As a matter of fact, neither the United Nations nor the European Union have an official definition to each term. Even the Council of Europe, an organization which has Human Rights and International Law in its core, provided definitions on these terms as late as 2016; it gave the definitions of “radicalization”, “extremism”, “violent extremism”, “terrorism” and “dynamic security” in Guidelines which provided the general framework for prison and probation services in order to prevent and deal with radicalization and violent extremism on March 2, 2016 for the first time (Council of Europe, 2017a).

The definitional differences in the use of the term “terrorism” have been recognized by OECD which keeps a regularly updated comparative table titled “Definitions of Terrorism by countries in OECD countries” on the “OECD International Platform on Terrorism Risk Insurance” (OECD, 2022).

The World Bank uses the definition for terrorism given by Global Terrorism Database (GTD) as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation” (World Bank Group, Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism, 2016).

### **CVE and PVE**

Two acronyms have emerged, CVE and PVE, which stand for Countering Violent Extremism and Prevention Violent Extremism respectively and are worldwide recognizable abbreviations when it comes to implementing policies and taking measures against violent extremism. For some time, these two terms had been used interchangeably. Admittedly, though, since 2015 great progress has been made in the use of these comparable terms as a result of the more systematic cooperation among International Organisations and the establishment of their communication on a more regular basis. Especially after the shift of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to include PVE activities in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) linking them to development and leaving out the CVE activities as belonging to the security, the terms have somehow been differentiated (OECD DAC, 2016).

The bottom line is that Counter Violent Extremism is more related to public safety which is increasingly linked to European and global public policy on security whereas PVE stands for Preventing Radicalisation and Violent Extremism and can be related to soft policy and proactive measures which can involve social groups, social workers, religious leaders and educators. PVE-E specifically stands for Prevention Violent Extremism through Education.

### **Fragility**

Fragility is another term used to define the fragile situations which states or economies fight to overcome. The term, which was coined after the collapse of the Somalian state in the 1990s, has been adopted by OECD and WBG. Especially the OECD’s Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) has been using the term in the series of Fragile States Reports since 2005 for fragile and conflict-affected states and economies. Fragility was given a new multidimensional concept beyond states in State of Fragility Report 2015 as OECD attempted to address fragility issues in the new more ambitious framework that was set by the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (OECD, 2015). It is defined as “*the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and /or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes, including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies*” (OECD, 2016).

Terrorism and violent extremism are examined within this broader context also by the World Bank Group (WBG) which has finally created its own vocabulary when referring to radicalization and violent extremism. It defined the Fragility, Conflict and Violence and in its publications it uses the abbreviation FCV for Fragility, Conflict and Violent situations that mainly affect low-income and low-middle-income states. As a matter of fact, the majority of countries which suffer from fragility, conflict and violence and resilience is low are located in the global South.



## Discussion

The gradual emergence of this common framework and use of the same vocabulary demonstrates the growing interrelation of the International Organisations and the greater extent of their coordination which can be seen as evidence of the existence of regime complexity.

The issue of combating terrorism and preventing radicalization has been on the agenda of the International Organisations tensely since 2001. The fact that they have not managed to come up with concrete comprehensive definitions of the main terms cannot be a coincidence. It is an issue that has been highlighted by members of the civil society and by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Prevention and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism (UN/A/HRC/40/52, 2019). The problem lies in that these terms, which are defined broadly and with lack of precision, become the basis for official documents such as Action Plans, Guides, Frameworks, Resolutions, Recommendations which are addressed to states with the recommendation to integrate them in their national legislation against violent extremism and terrorism. It is not surprising that through national implementation this vagueness is the source of human rights violations since states exploit citizens' feelings of insecurity and unsafety to adopt highly intrusive disproportionate measures which do not respect the principle of proportionality in the name of national security. Such legislations carry the potential of human rights abuse and can be used against minority groups, activists, journalists, civil or human rights defenders or members of political opposition. Non-violent protests or expression of dissent and opposition are forms of freedom of expression and are protected by the International Law and should not be limited.

The main reason why definitions of radicalization, violent extremism and of terrorism must be comprehensive and precise, and not vague and/or broad, is the need to protect the legitimate expression of opinions and thoughts. They should be narrowed down so that non-violent activists, members of civil society, peaceful protesters or dissidents are excluded and can exercise their political and civil rights, voice their opinions without the fear of persecution. The terms should be accurate and objective so that each incident or individual can be characterized as such regardless of the researcher, the policy-maker, the state or organization that looks into the matter.

To this direction, there have been steps taken by the Upsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) who avoid using terms that are emotionally loaded or carry a negative connotation. The UCDP, which has been running for over 40 years as a reliable provider of high-quality and accurate data on armed conflict and organized violence with global coverage, has contributed a lot to research by providing the definition of armed conflict that has been accepted globally for being neutral and allows systematic and scientific approach and study of each case. In their website and publications the word terrorism is not used. Alternatively, they define actions of violence as state-based Violence, Non-state Violence and One-sided Violence. Terror attacks fall into the category of Non-state Violence carried out by informally organized groups who are known with an announced name, make use of armed force and *“whose violent activity meets at least one of the following requirements: there must be a clear pattern of incidents which are connected, or there must be evidence that violence was planned in advance”*. IS in Syria or al-Quaida fall in this category.

In conclusion, the vagueness of the terms undermines the scientific approach and allows subjectivity as to what should be defined as radical or extremist, which cases should be addressed and in which way it should be tackled. As long as PVE is not scientifically defined, it will remain a political concept, subjected to its relative implementation and not a scientific one.

### 3.2: The Root Causes – Factors

Terrorism can be manifested in dramatically different contexts and can be triggered by multiple causes. Because of the magnitude of the challenge and its severe impact and long-term consequences it has on individuals, states and societies, all the agents that have been actively engaged in the field of PVE went to great lengths to understand the multiple personal, sociocultural, economic and political factors that drive an individual or whole groups from alienation to radicalization and to violent extremism. The International Organisations, with the contribution of Institutions, academia and think tanks, have conducted thorough research and systematic analysis on the factors that involves exhaustive collection of data, the study of patterns that emerge, case-studies, collaborations and sharing of information. The analysis of factors is action-oriented which means that the in-depth understanding of social dynamics and the mechanism of violent extremism aims at bringing the I.O.s in a better position to predict and prevent radicalization and to identify entry-points of intervention so as to draw up comprehensive action plans and risk management strategies that will allow them to cope with violent extremism effectively.

To their support each organisation has established analytical tools such as UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTCED), Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs) by the WB, Fragile States Reports (FSRs) by OECD, the foundation National Endowment for Science Technology and Arts (NESTA) Standards of Evidence, in UK, Upsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) by Upsala University, Global Terrorism Database etc.

In the pursuit of a broader and deeper understanding of the main factors that may drive an individual to radicalization, violent extremism, terrorism and political violence several analytical approaches have been applied making use of several theoretical and political schools and disciplines: psychology, neuroscience, sociology, social movement theories, psychological, social-psychological or cognitive theories, social-structural theories or theories of organizational development, group dynamics, criminology, constructivism, religious studies, development and security studies (Dzhekova, et al., 2017), (Gupta, 2021).

Even the adoption of the approach of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to combat epidemics has been used in order to gain insight into the ways violence can manifest in epidemiological terms and try to interrupt “contagion” (OECD, 2016). For example, the case Cure Violence, which was implemented in the US interrupt A on chosen communities whose members were taught to anticipate, respond to and prevent communal violence applies the “disease control” model from healthcare sector to cure social violence (UNESCO 2018). Others, who adopt the psychological perspective, depict radicalization as a psychological virus afflicting those who suffer from a psychological deficit and others, who adopt the social perspective, suggest that it afflicts those who are vulnerable due to their socio-economic environment (Sieckelinck, S., Kaulingfreks, F., & De Winter, M., 2015).

The multidisciplinary approach of the topic in the attempt to decipher the factors that lead an individual to adopt an antisocial and violent behaviour has broadened the scope of examining and understanding radicalization. Nevertheless, it has also created polyphony and confusion in the way the topic is discussed (Silva S. , 2017). For example, UNESCO distinguishes between the “push” and “pull” factors. Push factors are related to socioeconomic conditions and regional and global policies whereas pull factors are related to individual drives and predisposition that make individuals vulnerable to adopt violence as a legitimate way of acting and be recruited by extremist groups (UNESCO, 2017). CoE refers to predisposing (personal, social, political) conditions and enabling conditions, psychologists and social workers refer to “Individual Needs and Risks”, others speak of “trigger factors” or “enabling factors” etc.

On Tables 1-4 we have processed the main factors of radicalization as they are presented in basic documents issued by the International Organisations following the three-level model of analysis:

Micro-level, i.e. the individual level (Table 1)

Meso-level, i.e. the community level, the conducive factors found in the social surroundings or the

reference group of the individual (Table 2)

Macro-level, i.e. the state level; the role of government and society at national (Table 3) and international level (Table 4).

At micro-level analysis, the emotional predisposition of the individual, the psychological and mental state, their existential disposition / motifs, the developmental stage, the politicization process or identification with collective grievances are analysed as “pull” factors that might drive a person to radicalization (Table 1). From the thorough analysis the following factors have been mentioned/ related to:

- The emotional predisposition and state of the individual (Feelings of alienation, frustration, humiliation or anger, the lack of sense of belonging, feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability)
- The existential or spiritual search for identity and purpose in life, a utopian world vision and sense of mission and heroism, attraction to violence
- The developmental stage of the individual (adolescent crisis and peer pressure, the transition to manhood and identification with violent role-models, attraction to power/ money)
- The mental state and potential (Simplistic thinking style, “Black and white” world views, “us vs them”)
- The politicisation of the individual (the perceptions of injustice and inequality, the disenchantment with socio-economic and political systems, the rejection of growing diversified societies, allurements to charismatic leaders, need to belong to social communities and networks)
- The adoption of collective grievances
- The powerful negative feelings of victimization after having experienced racism or discrimination
- strong feelings of anger and desire to take revenge because of a loss of a close friend or a family member

At the meso-level analysis, the structural drivers that a person encounters in his immediate social surroundings or within his group (“push” factors by UNESCO) according to the research of the IOs are presented. These factors are:

- Problematic family background (substance abuse, alcoholism or mental illness of parents, domestic violence, abusive parenting)
- Lack of socioeconomic opportunities (economic deprivation, poverty, unemployment, economic exclusion)
- Lack of social opportunities (difficult access to services, failure in education, growing horizontal inequalities, limited opportunities for upward social mobility, alienation and social isolation, estrangement from parents, peers, and society)
- Political exclusion and shrinking civic space (lack of positive models, lack of opportunities to express opinion or take part in debates)
- Personal experiences (exposure to personal mistreatment, victimization or discrimination due to their race, religion, or ethnicity, exposure to violence, discrimination, marginalization, stigmatization, humiliation, attack or imprisonment)
- Breakdown of communication between authority figures and youth, securitized response to radical movements
- Exposure to extremist ideology through the Internet or written materials, recruitment by a social group, a religious leader, that satisfies the deeper sense of belonging, a sense of adventure, excitement or heroism, works as moral, religious or political awakening

At the macro-level analysis, factors that can be attributed to state's failure have been referred as follows:

- State's failure to provide basic services and rights (health, education, security)
- Poor governance, weak institutions and weak law enforcement
- Political instability
- A culture of impunity for unlawful behaviour
- Widespread corruption
- Gender inequality, gender-based violence
- Sustained mistreatment of certain groups
- Systemic social violence – negative feedback
- Failure of socialization processes that aim to foster social cohesion
- Growing (horizontal and vertical) inequalities
- Violations of international human rights law in the name of state security

At the macro-level analysis, the analysis of factors has shown that changes that happen at international level and global trends can exacerbate the FCV situations and lead to violence.

- Ongoing armed conflict and prolonged unresolved conflicts in an area that can destabilise regimes
- Climate change, natural disasters related to increasing flows of internally displaced people, refugees and immigrants
- Environmental degradation
- Pandemics
- Globalisation and migration increasing cultural and religious diversity in societies
- Failure of integration and peaceful governance of increasingly diverse multi-cultural societies
- Demographic challenges (high fertility, high percentage of young people)
- Gender inequalities
- Rapid unregulated urbanization
- Changing global culture and norms
- Growing economic inequality
- Illicit trafficking and criminal networks
- Digital transformation
- Culture clash when international human rights and gender equality come in conflict with local traditions and customs
- Legitimization of violence in prison
- Extensive exposure of young people to violence in media and entertainment that leads to its banalisation

<b>Factors at individual level</b>	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>RAN</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>WB</b>
Alienation, Frustration, humiliation, anger	x		x	x		x
Lack of sense of belonging		x	x	x		x
Vulnerability, Feelings of powerlessness	x			x		x
Existential or spiritual search for Identity and purpose	x	x	x	x		
Utopian world vision/Sense of mission and heroism	x	x				
Adolescent crisis/ peer pressure		x	x	x		
Attraction of violence, transition to manhood	x	x	x			
Attraction to power and/or money	x	x	x	x		
Simplistic thinking style (the attraction to simple world views that divide the world into “us vs them” etc.)		x	x	x		
Distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences		x				
Perceptions of injustice and inequality	x			x		x
Disenchantment with and rejection of socio-economic and political systems	x	x	x	x	x	x
Rejection of growing diversity in society	x		x			
Attraction of charismatic leadership and social communities and networks (i.e. charismatic recruiter providing access to power and money, a sense of belonging to a powerful group, community, etc.)	x	x	x	x		
Identification with collective grievances and narratives of victimization that provoke powerful emotional reactions	x	x	x	x	x	x
Loss of family member – revenge for previous mistreatment	x					x

**Table 1: Factors that lead to radicalization at individual level (personal, emotional, psychological etc) (author)**

<b>Lack of socioeconomic opportunities</b>	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>RAN</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>WB</b>
Problematic family background (domestic violence, parental substance abuse or mental illness, abusive parenting)				x	x	x
Economic Deprivation / Poverty	x	x	x	x	x	
Unemployment	x	x		x	x	
Economic Exclusion	x	x	x	x	x	x
Difficult access to services/ failure in education	x			x		x
Limited opportunities of upward social mobility	x			x	x	x
Alienation, Social Isolation, Enstrangement from parents, peers, society	x		x	x		x
Growing Horizontal inequalities	x				x	x
Political exclusion and shrinking civic space	x	x	x		x	x
Lack of experience in/ exposure to processes of dialogue and debate/ lack of positive role models		x		x		
Lack of means to make voices heard	x	x				
Experienced personal harassment, victimisation or attack due to their race, ethnicity or religion-exposure to violence	x			x	x	
Discrimination	x	x	x	x		
Marginalisation		x	x	x	x	
Stigmatisation / Humiliation	x	x				
Securitized response to radical movements, Previous mistreatment or imprisonment	x			x		x
Breakdown of communication between authority figures and youth	x		x		x	
Exposure to Violent Extremism Ideology through a social group, a religious leader, the Internet of written materials that satisfies deeper psychological needs, gives a sense of belonging / a sense of adventure, excitement or heroism, works as moral, religious or political awakening	x	x	x	x		x

**Table 2: Factors that lead to radicalization at community level (author)**

<b>State's failures</b>	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>RAN</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>WB</b>
To provide basic rights	x				x	x
To provide services	x				x	x
To provide security	x				x	x
Poor Governance, Weak Institutions and weak law enforcement	x	x		x	x	x
Injustice	x	x	x	x	x	x
Widespread corruption	x	x			x	x
Violations of international human rights law committed in the name of state security	x	x				x
Sustained mistreatment of certain groups	x			x	x	x
Gender inequality, gender-based violence	x				x	x
Growing (horizontal and vertical) inequalities	x				x	x
Failure of socialization processes that aim to foster social cohesion	x				x	
A culture of impunity for unlawful behaviour	x	x			x	
Political instability	x				x	
Endemic social violence -negative feedback					x	

**Table 3: Factors that lead to radicalization at state level (author)**

<b>Role and Impact of Global and Regional Politics</b>	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>RAN</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>WB</b>
Ongoing Armed conflict areas/ Prolonged unresolved conflicts/ destabilised regimes	x	x			x	x
Impact of Climate Change and Natural Disasters that fuels the waves of refugees, immigrants and Internally Displaced People					x	x
Environmental degradation					x	
Globalisation and migration increasing cultural and religious diversity in societies	x		x			
Failure of integration/ peaceful governance of increasingly diverse multi-cultural societies						
Demographic challenges (high fertility and youth dependency rates)						x
Rapid unregulated urbanisation					x	
Gender Inequalities						x
Changing global culture and norms	x		x			
Growing economic inequality	x					x
Illicit Trafficking and criminal networks	x				x	x
Digital transformation			x			x
Pandemics					x	
The promotion of international human rights and gender equality interfering with traditional local customs	x		x			
Radicalisation processes in prison leading to the legitimization of violence	x					
Banalisation of violence in media and entertainment	x					

**Table 4: Factors that lead to radicalization at international level (author)**



## Discussion

From the analysis of the Tables 1 - 4 some interesting remarks can be made:

First, all the examined International Organizations acknowledge the fact that the factors that lead an individual or social groups to violent extremism are multifaceted and structurally interwoven with the social, economic, political environment.

The Organisations that have done a thorough analysis of factors at individual level are UN, UNESCO, RAN and CoE which in their publications have contributed the most in the identification of the root causes that may lead an individual to violent extremism, having human rights principles at their core, a fact that can be explained by the norms of the Organisations (Νάσκου-Περράκη, Αντωνόπουλος, & Σαρηγιαννίδης, 2019).

Another important remark is that all identify the micro- and meso-level factors that are conducive to violence. Especially, the influence of the direct social environment of the individual (meso-level) is recognized by all and much attention has been given to its analysis. But when it comes to attribute radicalization to state failures or global malfunctions the EU and RAN are very cautious. Even the Council of Europe, an International Organisation with Human Rights in its core values, in its Convention on Prevention Violent Extremism devoted to the state's failure only one paragraph out of 17 when dealing with the factors that lead youth to radicalization on the grounds that the document focuses on analysis at the individual level since the Framework can be used at this level in order to build resilience to students (Council of Europe, 2017).

The fact is that structural factors which affect the whole sociopolitical system cannot be addressed easily and require long term systematic interventions and a lot of funds in order to change. Nevertheless, the cost of violence is even more substantial. Beyond the immediate consequences: mortality and physical injury, displacement, loss of property and destruction of infrastructure, it has severe medium-term impact on health and well-being of the individuals and productivity of the state and over the longer term it jeopardises the political stability, the social and economic development. (United Nations & World Bank, 2018); (OECD, 2016). As prevention is cost-effective and has high value for money, it has been interlinked with the concept of development and has come into the scope of action of UNDP, OECD and WB.

UNDP, OECD and the World Bank Group apply a broad analytical framework mainly focused on the social, economic and political environment, in their attempt to reach a multidimensional in-depth understanding of the risk factors and grievances that exacerbate FCV that will allow them to promote prevention and strengthen resilience. This approach can be explained and expected within their mandates and according to their comparative advantage, since they are the main agencies which provide economic assistance for development.

The added value that the WB claims that it has brought since its shift of focus on prevention is the thorough joint analysis of risks and factors that can increase vulnerability in both low- and middle-income countries: Economic and social exclusion, lack of opportunities, rising inequality and poverty, discrimination are some of the objective factors which lead an individual to feelings of injustice. Changes at global level such as, technological transformations, environmental degradation, climate change or demographic changes pose challenges to the global community as they usually trigger migration, illicit financial flows which in their turn can also fuel violent extremism. Mechanisms have been developed to monitor early FCV signals and partnerships such as Recovery and Peace- Building Assessment (RRBA), which has been established among WB, UN, EU and other relevant organisations, that allow them to share data and analyses and discuss methods, and good practices in a coordinated approach. The WB's strategy is action-oriented on the grounds that early identification and continuous monitoring and assessment can predict and successfully prevent crises. These partnerships take data into consideration when moving on to propose their strategies, policies, operational measures and their joint support is continued throughout the implementation phase (World Bank Strategy, 2020a).

The rationale that lies behind this great interest in the exhaustive analysis of causes and drivers is the conviction that all these interventions, initiatives, activities and programmes can make the difference as they are based on a conflict analysis and a theory of change, which relies on "cause and effect" approach. In other words, the PVE experts believe that a specific action will bring about a

respective outcome. The theories of change relating to PVE through education rely on certain assumptions about causality and effects and cultivate the expectations that if we find the exact reason why an individual is at risk of turning to violence, we can specify which action would bring the desired change. For example, if there is a deficit in trust between the state and the population, it could be addressed through providing equitable access to justice and basic social services; if a person is identified as vulnerable because of unemployment and economic exclusion then the provision of vocational education might be the correct response. If a person is characterized of simplistic thinking of “black and white”, then they should be taught complexity, critical thinking and so on (Davies, 2018).

Another remark is that the discussion about deep multidimensional understanding of factors, even the vocabulary used to describe how the factors work, disclose the underlying theory of changes of this approach that presupposes a linear path from alienation to radicalization and then to violent extremism. This is also implied by the use of expressions like “they have gone down the dark path of radicalisation” (Obama, 2015) or the “entry points along the pathway” (Silva S. , 2018), “to understand the personal journeys of radicalization”, the “road map” or “no standard pathway...leading to violence” (UNESCO, 2017).

Nevertheless, the radicalization process that leads to violence is not linear. It is deeply personalized, hard to comprehend and be detected, not to mention to predict it. Another thing that we should bear in mind is that, although there are numerous factors that may lead an individual to radicalization, a single factor alone does not suffice. There must be a combination of “push” and “pull” factors present in the process of the radicalization of an individual and the adoption of violent extremism. The list of factors is indicative and should be evaluated in local context. It should not lead to generalisations or stigmatization of people or communities as this might cause grievances, feelings of mistreatment and discrimination and may fuel violent extremism. As *“there is no single pathway to violent extremism, nor is there a single response”* or set of solutions for the PVE through Education. (UNESCO, 2017) (Mattei & Zeiger, 2021).

Finally, state violations of human rights in the name of state security or state’s failure to implement policies of cohesion or sustained mistreatment of certain groups are underscored. There is evidence that the main factor that pushed an individual to violence is the personal experience of discrimination, injustice, violation of human rights of even imprisonment. The loss of a member of the family can also fuel violence. Yet, these are not touched upon in the International Action Plans or national legislations. Only human rights activists, representatives of civil society, NGOs, or agencies of UN or CoE refer to the matter and make it clear that in many cases it is the government action that has provoked such powerful emotions of resentment to individuals, minorities or groups that accelerated their process of radicalisation and “pushed” them into recruitment (UN A/HRC/40/52, 2019).

### 3.3: The Evolution of the International Organisations' Policy on PVE

Since the prevention of violent extremism was perceived as a global issue, all IOs have agreed to the need for international responses to violence. In the first years the issue was primarily addressed from the security perspective. Education has gradually gained more attention as its transformative power in organizing a person's thoughts and in shaping our societies' values has been acknowledged. It was assigned the task of addressing the risk factors that might lead someone to violent extremism, of detecting early signs of radicalization among children and the youth and of early intervention and prevention. Here follows a concise presentation of the most relevant documents released by the International Organisations chronologically so that the evolution of the International Organisations' strategy can emerge.

#### UN, UNESCO, UN

Before starting mapping the evolution of the UN PVE policy, it should be made clear that it is an ambitious, yet not exhaustive but selective task since there are 222 ongoing or planned UN PVE activities at all levels: global, regional, national (UNESCO, 2018b) led by 38 UN entities.

Countering the scourge of terrorism has been on the agenda of UN for decades since the 1960s. But it was after the 2001, September 11 attacks against the United States with 3,000 victims that led the UN Security Council to the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1373 (2001) which charted the way forward in the fight against terrorism and founded the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) in 2001. (UN, S/RES/1373 /2001).

Education appears in UN official documents four years later. The UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1624/ on September 14, 2005 in the preambulatory clauses stresses the "*importance of the role of the media, civil and religious society, the business community and educational institutions in the international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilisations, in promoting tolerance and coexistence, and in fostering an environment which is not conducive to incitement of terrorism*" whereas in the operative clauses it only calls upon all States to join their forces internationally "*in an effort to prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures*" and to "*prevent the subversion of educational, cultural, and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters*" (UN, S/RES/1624/2005) (UN Security Council, 2005).

On September 16, 2005, the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/1, 2005 World Summit Outcome refers to Education (paragraphs 43-45), migration and development (paragraphs 61-63) and refugees protection and assistance (paragraph 133). It states UN's recommitment to the protection of human rights, the promotion of the rule of law and democracy and strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms. Although there is commendation for various initiatives to promote understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among civilisations, there is no clear link to the prevention of terrorism through education (UN, A/RES/60/1/ 2005).

The UN General Assembly with its Resolution A/RES/60/288 on September 8, 2006, adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, a fundamental document in combating terrorism. It is the first time that the UN sets a Plan of Action and encourages the UNESCO to play the leading role in coordinating the intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and communication among civilisations (UN, A/RES/60/288. 2006). The UN Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly by consensus, is reviewed every two years making it a living, constantly updated document that incorporates all the new trends and priorities set by the international community at their effort to combat terrorism. The reviews of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy are: UN General Assembly, 2008; A/RES/62/272, 2010; A/RES/64/297, 2012; A/RES/66/272, 2014; A/RES/68/276, 2016b; A/RES/70/291, 2016.

UN faced the issue of migration in its Human Development Report on Human Mobility and Development in 2009. This report challenges negative stereotypes and common misconceptions about migrants and applies a new approach to the study of migration focused on human development. It proposes reforms in six areas, one of them being mainstreaming migration into national development strategies. It has also acknowledged the value of education in people's lives as it improves their future prospects by increasing their potential in earning higher income and social integration. It calls for closer

cooperation of several stakeholders in their effort to change public opinion about migration forwarding a bold vision for future intercultural societies and competent leadership. It does not mention any correlation of migration to violent extremism though (UN, Human Development Report, 2009).

In the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/297 (2010), a landmark in the process of combating terrorism, the General Assembly “reiterates its strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security” (UN, A/RES/64/297, 2010).

The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/10 on November 18, 2011 welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre at the United Nations Headquarters, within the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office (UN, A/RES/60/10, 2011).

The UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2178 on September 24, 2014, *Threats to International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist Acts* restated its strong condemnation of violent extremism and called upon Member states to respond to violent extremism narratives “by empowering youth, ..., religious, cultural and education leaders, ... and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion”. This Security Council Resolution is the first UN document which specifically refers to civil society and education in its operative clauses and involves them in the UN Action Plan as it becomes clear three months later when the Secretary General’s Plan of Action is published in January 2016 (UN, S/RES/2178, 2014).

The year 2015 was a landmark year for international policy making. At the outset of 2015, on January 7 the world witnessed the terror attack at the offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris when 12 people lost their lives.

In the UN Summit that was held in the New York Headquarters from September 25 to 27, 2015 the General Assembly adopted the *Resolution on Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, A/RES/70/1, 2015). The 2030 Agenda is of unprecedented scope and significance since it sets the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core. The 17 SDGs are universal and apply to all countries aiming at eradicating poverty, reducing inequality and promoting peace and justice over the next 15 years through sustainable development. All its three dimensions are addressed: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. What sets the SDGs apart from previous universal attempts to achieve development, is their strong commitment to implementation through combined action of both public and private sectors, the engagement of science and institutions, the mobilization of financial resources and technology. It is a strategic milestone since it gave a huge political push and triggered the convergence of all major International Institutions, such as the World Bank, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OECD, and, of course, all entities and agencies of the UN, which aligned their Action Plans to the 2030 Agenda and integrated SDGs in their own agendas. The way for the cooperation of the International Community on an Action Plan for Education was paved in 1990 when five (5) International Organisations, namely UN Development Plan (UNDP), UNESCO, UN Population Fund, UNICEF and World Bank worked together and coordinated their actions at a global level in order to reach the goals of the programme Education for All (Τσαούσης, 2007). It has set the precedent on how International Organisations tackle international issues such as education, pool their resources together, get access to their data, set goals and combine their forces towards achieving them. The prevention of violent extremism around the world is incorporated in the broader framework of SDG 16 to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institution at all levels”. (UN, A/RES/70/1, 2015).

Two days after the adoption of Agenda 2030, on September 29, 2015, a UN Leaders’ Summit Countering Violent Extremism was held where the President of the USA Obama and the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced that they had been working on a comprehensive Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism so as to further strengthen the international consensus which had emerged through the SDGs that the Agenda 2030 had set (UN, Secretary General, September 29, 2015). They had reached the realization that no matter how important the Security responses to violent extremism were, as always, there was the need for their effectiveness to be reinforced with preventive actions. The

objective had already shifted beyond countering violent extremism to preventing it in the first place. Education, culture, information and communication had to be engaged.

The work done by the UN was intensified during the last 3 months of 2015 and three important resolutions passed:

The UN Human Rights Council Resolution (UN A/HR/RES/30/15, October 2, 2015, on Human Rights and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism where the important role of education was acknowledged once more and the member states were encouraged to join their forces under the Education For All Movement” (UN, A/HR/RES/30/15, 2015).

The UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) (UN, S/RES/2242, 2015). The WPS agenda set an international framework for gender equality and addressed discrimination related to gender.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on December 2015, on Youth, Peace and Security (UN, S/RES/2250, 2015)

The last two resolutions, in line with the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognized the positive role of both women and youth as agents of peace and security and the fact that they are the most severely affected by the rise of radicalization and violent extremism. Therefore, they stress the importance of addressing factors and conditions that impact on women and youth respectively. Some of the WPS agenda’s provisions were broadly adopted and also incorporated in the analyses and Counter Terrorism (CT) and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) Strategies of other International Organisations (OECD, WB etc).

The *UN Secretary General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* was presented to the General Assembly by the Secretary General on January 15, 2016 (UN, A/70/674, 2016). The Action Plan, as it was declared, encompassed not only essential counter-terrorism security measures but also systematic preventative actions to address the underlying conditions that potentially cause the radicalization of individuals in a comprehensive approach. The Secretary General initiated an “All-of-UN” approach and offered his assistance to Member States to develop their own National Action Plans in an attempt to prevent violent extremism internationally. The UN SG’s Plan of Action was adopted by the General Assembly on February 12, 2016 as a Resolution that “*welcomes the initiative by the Secretary General*” and was further elaborated in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy 5<sup>th</sup> Review six months later, in June 2016.

In the meantime, the twin resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace that were adopted on the same day, April 27, 2016, by both the General Assembly and the Security Council (UN, A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282, 2016 respectively) introduced the term “Sustaining peace” “*aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict*” recognizing that a sustainable solution to conflicts should address not only the symptoms but also the causes. Human rights, development, peace and security were interlinked and in this way all UN entities, as well as other international organisations, could strategically cooperate, plan together within their mandates and act according to their comparative advantages aiming at achieving the goals of 2030 Agenda and the Sustaining Peace Agenda. Both Agendas are people-centred and international human rights laws, principles and standards lie at their foundations.

The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/L.55, July 1, 2016 adopts the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy 5<sup>th</sup> Review, the 5<sup>th</sup> review of A/RES/60/288, 2006. Apart from the security part, it addresses institutional shortcomings of the states and urges its member-states to proceed with institutional reforms and capacity building in their national context with the support of the United Nations. It also reaffirms the need for multilateral cooperation and encourages all relevant international, regional and subregional organisations and forums and UN related agencies and bodies to cooperate with the UN system in accordance with their existing mandates in combating terrorism by supporting the Strategy and sharing their best practices and information. As for the role of education, the Strategy affirmed its importance as a tool and appointed the UN Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as the leading UN agent to implement PVE strategies through education in cooperation with Member States. Paragraph 54 is devoted to Education, Skills and Employment Facilitation. Secretary General openly

states the UN's commitment "to support Governments seeking to develop and implement education programmes that promote civic education, soft skills, critical thinking, digital literacy, tolerance and respect for diversity including, for example, peace education modules for the use of school-age children in order to promote the culture of anti-violence". It recommends youth participation, leadership and empowerment and encourages the member states to promote institutional reforms that involve youth in the promotion of global citizenship, values of peace, democracy, coexistence, respect and interreligious dialogue and to promote media and information literacy (UN, A/70/L/55, 2016).

On June 1, 2016 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the largest UN development aid agency, issued its conceptual Framework entitled "*Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity*", fully aligned with the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action (UNDP, 2016). The UNDP explicitly states its commitment to respect the rule of law and to apply a human rights-based approach to PVE. It is a call for an integrated and multi-dimensional approach that rely on global research and the involvement of a wider group of partners. The momentum has started building up.

UNESCO, the UN's specialised agency for education, was appointed to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda. It was also entrusted to implement the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action on PVE through Education (PVE-E), which was adopted by its Member States in the 197<sup>th</sup> Conference, October 8-22, 2015, with the landmark decision 197/EX/46 on "*UNESCO's role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism*". Ever since, UNESCO has driven forward the importance of quality education systematically including leading contributions in Preventing Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E) and has undertaken preventive actions that build young people's resilience to violent extremism narratives. All these are carried out within the broader framework of the 2030 Agenda, Global Citizenship Education and Education for Human Rights.

UNESCO, through its global network that allows global inter-sectoral approaches, provides assistance to key education stakeholders to develop their own strategies. For this purpose, it has developed resources:

*A Teachers' Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism* (UNESCO Teachers' Guide, 2016) (UNESCO Teachers' Guide, 2016) and

*A Guide for policy-makers on Preventing Violent Extremism through Education* (UNESCO, 2017) which is more detailed and provides technical support to school-staff, educators and policy-makers. In these guides it is acknowledged that as there is no single set of factors that leads to violent extremism consequently there is no single set of solutions. So, UNESCO provides policy makers and educators with action areas and principles which they are free to apply according to their context, the country's capacity needs and priorities.

UNESCO also develops a wide range of initiatives devoted to the empowerment of women and youth, peace building, digital citizenship, building resilience to changing realities, cultural heritage.

Finally, a widely known programme has also been running by UNICEF entitled *UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools* aiming at encouraging schools to organize their school life and value system according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

## **European Union**

The European Union (EU)'s determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and act against radicalization and recruitment to terrorism was to a large extent "crisis-driven". The 9/11 New York attacks but mostly the major shocking terrorist attacks that happened on European ground, i.e. in Madrid with 192 deaths in 2004 and in London in 2005, acted as accelerators to the institutionalization process. The EU Leaders exploited the massive attention brought about by the threat of terrorist attacks and the apprehension they caused to all its citizens for the security of EU and their lives and in 2005, under the UK Presidency, they adopted the EU's counter-terrorism agenda, broadly reflecting the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, called CONTEST, which was put in practice in early 2003.

The European Union's Strategy on Counter-Terrorism 2005 has been updated in 2008 and in January 2014 and most recently 2020, incorporating all the recent research findings and methods to tackle new trends and patterns of radicalization. The EU recognized the need to complement the repressive measures with preventive action as early as 2005 since prevention was one of the four pillars of the EU Strategy (i.e. Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Respond) and reiterated its commitment to *"the promotion of good governance, human rights, democracy as well as education and economic prosperity, and engaging in conflict resolution"* and to *"target[ing] inequalities and discrimination where they exist and promot[ing] intercultural dialogue and long-term integration where appropriate"*. EU recognizes terrorism as a global issue that calls for international collaboration and consensus among the United Nations, international or regional organisations and key partner countries including the USA (Council of the European Union, 2005).

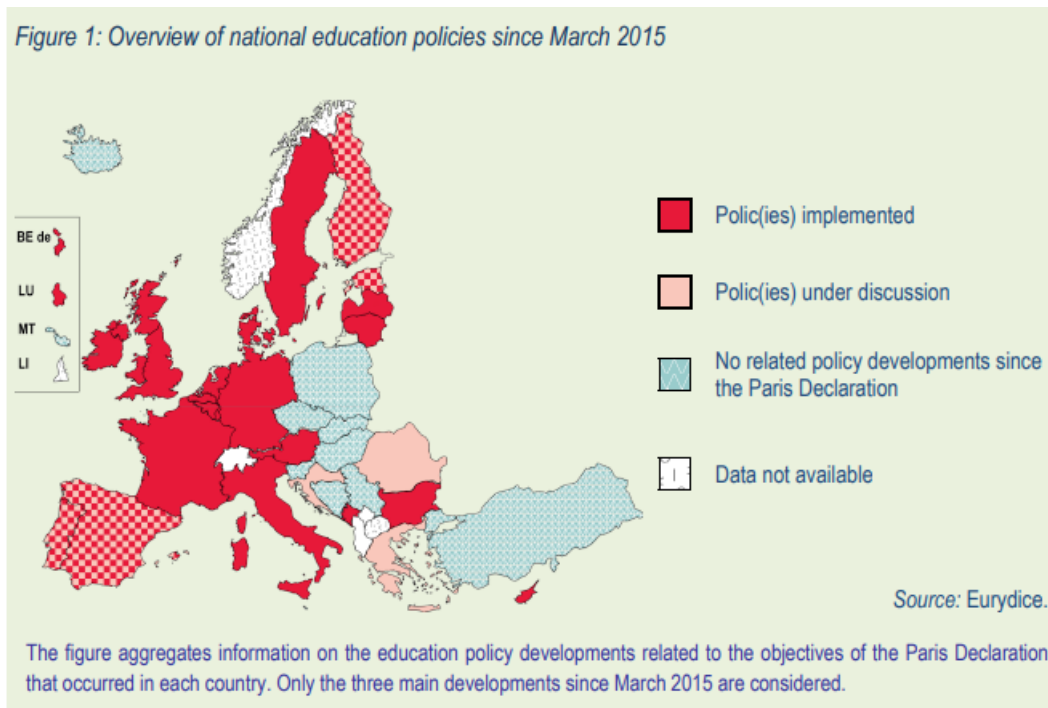
In paragraphs 38 and 39 it explicitly refers to the importance of promoting *"education, training of young people, mainly by means of Schools and Universities on issues related to nationality, politics, religious and national tolerance, democratic values, cultural differences, and the historical consequences of nationally and politically instigated violence. The members of the education sector supported by field practitioners, in particular, could play a significant role by raising awareness of terrorism-related issues and identifying and providing support to individuals at risk"*. In paragraph 52 it mentions the need for closer cooperation with *"UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE<sup>5</sup> and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum to develop projects overseas in this sphere"* (Council of the European Union, 2014).

The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), founded by the EU in 2011, is a particularly useful network that brings together frontline practitioners from different domains such as social and youth workers, healthcare professionals, civil society representatives, religious leaders, police officers, prison and local authorities' representatives and, of course, teachers to work on both preventing and countering violent extremism in all its forms including rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists in their scope of action. There are nine working groups. One of them is the Education working group (RAN EDU) which consists of school professionals. In March 2015 a manifesto was published containing 24 recommendations for preventing radicalisations to leading to violent extremism (RAN Manifesto, 2015). Building on the Manifesto for Education and on the outcomes of the various meetings of the RAN EDU working groups it proceeded with the publication of a companion that offers recommendations to the educational community and policy-makers (Nodrbruch & Sieckelinck, 2018) and a revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Manifesto (RAN, 2022).

According to RAN, schools should play an important role at the primary prevention stage, targeting broad audiences, building up resilience to their students and raise awareness of the rise of radicalization leading to violent extremism among youngsters. This is, according to educators in RAN EDU, close to the educational aims to prepare active, democratic citizens who can peacefully coexist in pluralistic societies. Democratic school Ethos is a prerequisite to schools which are to serve as "laboratories" for democracy. Educational policies targeting the prevention of violent radicalization should focus on Citizenship Education and Media Literacy while curricula, textbooks and teaching material should be adapted so that they respond to new topics and current educational needs (Nodrbruch & Sieckelinck, 2018).

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<sup>5</sup> OSCE stands for Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, with 57 states from Europe, Central Asia and North America, one of the largest Security Organisations operating since the 1970s (<https://www.osce.org>).



**Figure 5.** Overview of national education policies in EU since the Paris Declaration 2015 (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice, 2016).

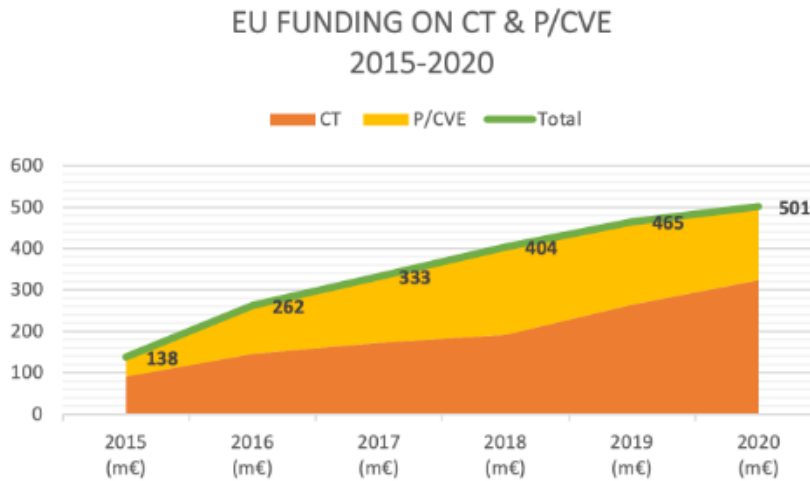
As a response to the recent violent extremist and terrorist attacks across Europe the EU created the tools, strategies, programmes, networks to facilitate its counter-terrorism strategy and encouraged its member-states to develop their own national strategy as it falls under their sovereign authority. The Ministers of Education of the member-states adopted the Paris Declaration on “*Promoting Citizenship and Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance and non-discrimination through Education*” in March 2015. They acknowledged the key role of education for instilling the fundamental values of the EU to the young Europeans, for the successful prevention of radicalization and for building their resilience to violent extremism recruitment. Within the following year around two-thirds of the European countries implemented developments in their national education policy which varied from national strategies or action plans, new regulations or changes to existing regulations such as in national curricula, large scale programmes or projects as well as new expert groups or specialized bodies (see Figure 5).

The EU considers terrorism as one of the main threats that it faces and consequently has highly prioritized its security through creating mechanisms of monitoring and anticipating and preventing violent extremism. In January 2015 it established the *Counter Terrorism Monitoring, Reporting and Support Mechanism* (CT MORSE) project in third countries whose aim is to provide coordination, monitoring, knowledge and technical support for the Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention Violent Extremism activities.

In the 2016 *Global Strategy for the Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union*, the need for enhanced international cooperation on CT and VE globally was highlighted, but actually the EU focused its interest in specific areas that directly affect European matters, that is the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), West Africa (Sahel), Central/ South East Africa. For this reason, EU has launched a number of P/CVE specific actions under the umbrella of *Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism* programme (STRIVE) aiming at building resilience to local populations through the implementation of innovative projects in collaboration with local communities (CT MORSE, 2022). Over the last decade the EU has increased the money spent on Countering and Prevention of Violent Extremism in partner countries. The money invested on P/CVE projects in 2020 more than tripled since



2015 and was 501 million euros, 36 million euros more than the previous year. Although it refers to P/CVE specific programmes, the amount spent on education is not clear. But it is indicative on the general trend to increase money on prevention which was established after 2015.



**Figure 6.** EU funding of Counter Terrorism and Prevention/Counter Violent Extremism specific programmes from 2015 to 2020 in partner countries (<https://ct-morse.eu/projects/>).

On 24 November 2020 the *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027* was released where it makes specific reference to the prevention of radicalization and “the spread of all forms of extremist ideologies that can lead to terrorism and violent extremism” through Radicalisation Awareness Network. Providing young people at risk with opportunities and promoting inclusion are to be promoted “through education, culture, youth and sports” (EU, Action Plan 2021-2027, 2020).

The new Counter Terrorism Agenda for the EU launches a new four-pillar strategy to counter terrorism: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect and Respond. This strategy includes actions that are of broad scope such as security, protection, investigation, law enforcement, restriction, prison, etc. Education’s contribution to the first stages of prevention is indisputable and for that reason it was assigned the great mission to promote inclusion, to provide equal opportunities to all young people regardless of race, origin, religion, gender of sexuality, to create a safe environment to all. (EU, A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU, 2020).

It also addressed its efforts and actions to include migrants, not only newcomers but also to third-country nationals who have become EU citizens who fall in the category “EU citizens with migrant background”. It includes clearly set objectives, proposed actions to support them and increased their opportunities for EU funding under the 2021-2027 Multi-annual Financial Framework.

EU promotes an inclusive society, fully respectful of diversity and of the rights of all, takes pride in its emblematic European way of life and is not willing to give up on its democratic and fundamental values because of the belief that those who seek to undermine them will find it more difficult. It invests on social cohesion, education and inclusive societies where everybody feels that his or her identity is respected and they have the feeling of belonging to the community as a whole, thus building its strong defense against violent narratives and preventing recruitment from terrorists.

## Council of Europe

The prevention of radicalisation through intercultural policies is a core issue for the Council of Europe (CoE) (Gruening, 2018). In the Convention held on 16 May 2005 the Council of Europe called its members for appropriate measures on the Prevention of Terrorism within the framework of their national prevention policies, also mentioning “*the fields of education, culture, information, media and public awareness raising*” on the full enjoyment of human rights. All parties had to ensure that the implementation of the measures “*respect the rule of law and democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as other provisions of international law, including where applicable, international humanitarian law*”. The Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (2005 – N0196) was signed and ratified by 39 countries (CoE/CETS/No196, 2005).

In 2015, the Council of Europe signed the “*Fight against violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism*” - Action Plan for the years 2015-2017 making special reference to its experience and expertise on sensitive issues related to counter-terrorism and violation of fundamental forms of freedom: of religion, of expression, of assembly. It set two main objectives: “*to reinforce the international legal framework against terrorism and violent extremism and to prevent and fight violent radicalization through concrete measures in the public sector, in particular in schools and prisons, and on the internet*”. In order to succeed its second objective, the CoE turned to social sector, places of worship, prisons and detention centres, youth-activity centres and vulnerable neighbourhoods, places of formal and informal education and the media where it could start planning its tailored measures by applying new methods. They acknowledged that the best way to prevent violent radicalization is through education and they announced the development of tools to assist and empower the key actors, such as social workers, local authorities, youth and sport representatives, religious leaders, teachers and women who can influence youth and build up their resilience to all forms of extremism. They produced a Teacher Training Pack for Teaching Controversial Issues (Council of Europe, 2015c); they launched projects on democratic citizenship, cultural diversity, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and actions on “Building Inclusive societies”. The perils of the digital world were also addressed and the CoE announced the extension of the “No Hate Speech” Campaign to combat hate speech on the Internet and the social media till 2017. Nevertheless, only a summary of the Action Plan is public, much information remains classified (Council of Europe, 2015a).

In the Declaration signed by the Committee of Ministers they declared that no matter how necessary the combating of terrorism is, the prevention of radicalization in the long-term is equally important (Council of Europe, 2015b).

The Council of Europe in the overview of the implementation of Action Plan of the years 2015-2018 on “*The Fight against violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism*” acknowledges the need for strong action against terrorism especially after the recent terrorist acts, focusing on facing the root causes and aiming at long-term prevention which can be better achieved through education and social inclusion policies (CoE, SG/Inf(2018)7, 2018).

In the Final Report (2018) on the Implementation of the Action Plan and with reference to its second objective the projects related to preventing and fighting radicalization are mentioned. Specifically, among others, two major Action Plans and two Campaigns, along with many initiatives taken at local and regional level:

- “Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse and Democratic Societies: Setting Out Competences Required for Democratic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue” Action Plan
- “Building Inclusive Societies” (BIS) Action Plan (CoE 2016)
- “Democratic Schools: Safe Spaces for All” campaign
- “Guidelines on the protection and promotion of human rights in culturally diverse societies”
- “No Hate Speech Movement” campaign
- “Signposts” CoE publication

*Signposts* provided a counter-narrative to mispractised religious and non-religious world views with material not only on religions but also on broader themes such as respect of human rights, the right of freedom of expression, etc. (Jackson, 2014).

As a matter of fact, in the Final Report it was explicitly stated that 17 out of the 28 operational programmes carried out by the CoE during 2015 – 2018 contained activities related to the implementation of the “*Fight against violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism*” Action Plan. These programmes tackled issues of extremism with simultaneous respect for Rule of Law, Human Rights and Democracy which consist the core principles of CoE. This Action Plan is considered among the most successful ones based on its visibility, open access and potential use of the material, toolkits and publications produced, its far-reaching results, its approval by the educational sector and the impact of its campaigns.

On 11-12 April 2016 the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the CoE Standing Conference of European Education Ministers was held in Brussels to discuss how to strengthen education for democratic citizenship and how to tackle radicalisation and prevent terrorism. At this conference a new educational tool was launched, officially called a “*Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*” especially designed for schools (CoE, Conference Education Ministers, 2016).

Following the publication of these two action plans: the *Action Plan on the Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation leading to Terrorism*, and the *Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies*, the CoE (Council of Europe, 2016) proceeded with the publication of the *CoE Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)* in 2018 as one of the main instruments of the Action Plans that provides a holistic approach to the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization. It is a set of materials at the disposal of ministries and educators to equip their learners with all the competences and skills to live peacefully in multicultural societies and to take action to promote human rights and democracy (RFCDC, 2020). One of the eight areas of application is “*Guidance for Implementation: CDC and Building Resilience to radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism*”. The guidance document addresses the two action plans of CoE (Council of Europe, 2017) and builds on the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) (Council of Europe, 2010).

After an initial two-year testing and piloting phase, in 2018 it was put in use in the 50 countries which attended the conference and resulted in the creation of a set of materials and a “Democratic School Network” under the project “Free to Speak, Safe to Learn – Democratic Schools for All” which has incorporated all the principles of prevention radicalisation as integral parts of the project. CDC is considered one of the main contributions of CoE to PVE as it is referred to in a variety of publications, it is found in many education policy contexts and has been presented in international fora ranging from prevention of radicalization to Global Citizenship Education or Sustainable Development Goal number 4 (CoE, Democratic Schools for All, 2018).

### **Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

Since the events of September 11, 2001 conceptions of state fragility, weakness and failure to provide basic social services and guarantee safety, rule of law and protection from external or internal threats have been included as top priorities in the international policy agendas and have been the focus of policy development of OECD and the World Bank (Baranyi & Powell, 2005).

The OECD has shown its concern about violent extremism, its severe impact on regional and national stability, social cohesion, economic growth and development progress and has started monitoring the situation in fragile contexts since 2005 when the OECD’s Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) started producing Fragile States Reports as a tool to direct resource flows.

States of Fragility Report 2015 marks a turning point of OECD’s policy as it presents a new multidimensional concept of fragility in OECD’s effort to address fragility issues in the new framework of the 2030 Agenda. Among the five dimensions of risk of fragility and vulnerability that should be targeted, political instability and all forms of violence, terrorism being one of them, are included. Another dimension refers to effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. In this report education is included as an area of financial assistance flow on the grounds that it can provide safe, inclusive and non-violent environment that can safeguard effective learning (OECD, 2015).

This change came with its practical implications. In February 2016 the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) updated its guidelines for development aid and determined the criteria for the eligibility of the activities for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) in accordance with the

principles of accountability, transparency and democratic governance. In the field of peace and security, activities for the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) undertaken in the sector of education, research, rule of law or activities organized by NGOs and other civil society organisations would from now on be eligible as Official Development Assistance (ODA). Allowing PVE activities, integration and deradicalization projects to be included on the list of eligible ODA activities signaled a crucial conceptual shift of OECD given that PVE was previously considered to be the same as Counter-terrorism (CVE), related to the security sector and not linked to social development and therefore ineligible as ODA (OECD DAC, 2016).

These revised DAC guidelines that gave the legal and political permission to PVE activities and programmes to receive ODA practically meant that donors could allocate as ODA-eligible some of the resources that had previously been excluded. In this way PVE was linked with development and gained the official financial support of the international community. Of course, we should bear in mind that it is the development actors who decide where to allocate their funds and this is usually done according to their specific interests.

In the 2016 States of Fragility Report the main focus was on Understanding violence in all its forms (OECD, 2016). OECD recognised fragility as a multidimensional issue and recommended moving from post-conflict interventions to systematic, long-term interventions focused on the prevention of violence. It was also stated that ODA financing should be adequate and adopt a whole-of-society approach. For more effective programming and financing OECD suggested thorough research and exhaustive data collection in order to understand the multiple risk factors and dynamics and channel the financial aid to address the root causes (agriculture, industry, health, education) rather than the symptoms (emergency response, food assistance, reconstruction (OECD, 2016). Actually, the OECD's key contribution and strategic advantage derives from its data collection and analysis such as the OECD iLibrary, a sophisticated online platform.

OECD also stated a shift towards an approach that *“puts people at its centre, recognizing that a stable state and strong institutions do not automatically lead to a reduction in violence. Instead, focusing on stopping those individuals most likely to engage in violence can be a better strategy, by positively influencing social norms and behaviour change. Reconciliation is a critical part of healing the social cleavages that perpetuate and exacerbate violence, and can therefore help reduce a key driver of fragility”* (OECD, 2016). So, OECD, as well as CoE, adopted the UN's “people-centred” approach to PVE but gave its own meaning to it and shifted the focus from structural and institutional aid to interventions at the individual level.

Since the OECD decided a shift to a “people-centred” approach, it prepared a list of features that young people should have to make them resilient to risks of radicalization. In an article published in the same year, 2016, Andreas Schleicher, the OECD Director, coined the term “global competence” as a set of skills, attitudes and values that enable people to appreciate different perspectives, understand global and intercultural issues. He concluded that if a person acquired these competences and had the ability to understand diversity, it would be one of the most powerful defense mechanisms to extremism and radicalization (Schleicher 2016).

Two years later, the OECD put forward a new Global Competence Framework (GCF) (OECD, 2018a). It is strongly related to other relevant frameworks proposed by other International Organisations and builds upon their ideas and models such as intercultural education, global citizenship education (UNESCO 2014) or Democratic Citizenship education (CoE 2016c). It makes reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and to schools as a safe space (CoE). Its aim is to prepare students for the challenges of the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nevertheless, the word radicalization is only mentioned once in the introduction and in the conclusion, it calls upon all people to reflect on “the causes of racial, religious and hate violence” inviting them to contribute to the creation of a respectful, integrated and sustainable society. OECD has included the assessment of Global Competence in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) since 2018.

Although the revised ODA facilitated funding for PVE activities the challenge remains: just a small percentage (only 2%) of total gross of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) went to conflict prevention and associated assistance in 2016 which falls far behind the goals set by the 2030 Agenda. One among other goals is to step up the efforts to prevention, peace and security (OECD, 2018b). As OECD is oriented to Donors' interests, it attributed their reluctance to invest on programmes whose assessment cannot lead to conclusive results and highlighted the need for more evidence so that donors

would be persuaded to invest on prevention of radicalisation (Desai, 2020). The fact remains that prevention is hard to measure as it involves intangible concepts such as trust, cohesion, resilience and its effects are long-term so OECD insists on rigorous assessment.

## **World Bank**

The World Bank Group, initially founded to support the reconstruction of Western European countries after the end of the World War II, has gradually shifted its focus on more complex challenges offering financial and structural assistance to fragile states all over the world. Education has been recently included in its agenda on such a scale that it now boasts to be, as it states on its website, “*the largest financier of education in the developing world*”<sup>6</sup>.

The traces of the evolution of the WB’s approach to conflict from delivering post-conflict reconstruction to redefining its role in a more comprehensive approach to development, turning to research in the factors causing fragility, violence and conflict and delivering education services in fragile settings can be traced back to 2005 (Collier & Sambanis, 2005). Since its First Classification of Fragile Situations in 2006 two significant Reports followed. The World Development Report 2011 on *Conflict, Security and Development* made the case that the issues of security and development should be addressed as interlinked by international assistance since violence and conflicts were interrelated with weak governance (World Bank, 2011). The World Development Report 2017 on *Governance and the Law* showed the major shift in the way the WB conceived fragility and its role to resolve it by creating jobs and implementing long-term institutional reforms that establish justice and safety (World Bank, 2017).

Since it was realized that the global Fragility- Conflict – Violence (FCV) challenge was huge and required the engagement of all sectors: humanitarian-development-peace, time was ripe to a joint study to be launched on the prevention of violent conflict undertaken by the United Nations and the World Bank entitled “*Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*” (United Nations & World Bank, 2017) (United Nations & World Bank, 2018). These two institutions took the pioneering initiative to cooperate bringing in their unique expertise while keeping their distinctive character and mandates: the UN, dedicated to peace keeping and the protection of human rights whereas the WB focuses on achieving its two main goals of reducing poverty and bringing prosperity in the developing world. Their shared commitment was founded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (a successor to the Millennium Development Goals) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which cover every aspect of our lives, not leaving out the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies. UNDP was part of the integrated team who worked on this study which was based on comprehensive academic research but also produced a series of in-depth, new thematic background papers and commissioned original case-studies on several countries. One of them is “*The Role of Education in the Prevention of Violent Extremism*” by Samantha Silva (Silva S. , 2017).

The conclusion of this joint UN-WBG report “*Pathways for Peace*” was that the WB should turn its efforts to prevention rather than curing. It was a further shift to a more inclusive approach to development that could be more feasible if it focused on preventing and mitigating FCV risks before conflict and violence break out and set in. The WB committed to engagement in different situations of fragility, and to further investment in conflict prevention, widening its agenda so as to include issues such as migration and refugee flows, injustice, economic or gender-based inequalities, endemic violence. WB has to play a pivotal role in prevention of the escalation of risky situations by providing tailor-made solutions appropriate for each context.

The evolution of WB’s approach reached a maturity point in February 2020 when the WBG FCV *Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020- 2025* was released (World Bank Strategy, 2020a) which reflects how the World Bank views its role to serve populations living in FCV situations. It is a systematic approach to address the severe challenges that mainly the low- and middle- income countries face. The situation is looming over the international community as it is expected that by 2030 the number of people living in extreme poverty will rise and up to two-thirds of them will live in FCV contexts (Corral , Irwin, Krishnan, Mahler, & Vishwanath, 2020).

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education> (worldbank.org, n.d.)

The WBG started with setting up a whole framework of analytical tools in its effort to gain insight into the drivers and factors of fragility but also to understand what helps societies and individuals to build up resilience against threats to stability and peace. For this purpose, they have created the appropriate tools to assess early signs of radicalization: The WBG's *System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)* is an online platform with a lot of comparative data that cover various aspects of national education systems which serves as a benchmark tool at every country's disposal. Complementary to it is the WBG's *Education Resilience Approaches (ERA) programme*, a wide array of tools that measure resilience within the school communities and in other societal contexts. They examine the education systems, their weaknesses and strengths, the results of the education policies in each context, the school-community relations, the sense of safety and security in the school-environment, the local context, and adverse conditions (World Bank, 2016).

Along with the on-going analysis of FCV factors, the WB does not confine its contribution to the phase of active conflict only but it has organized a sustainable development model aiming at supporting low- and middle- income countries to regain stability and gradually leading them to development by implementing a set of measures and activities. Its strategy is based on four pillars that cover the whole-spectrum of FCV situations before, during and after crisis (Holland, et al., 2022) .

First comes prevention. It takes measures for all the challenges of the FCV context, emphasising at tackling every form of violence: interpersonal, among groups or gender-based and at dealing with active violent conflicts. It draws on the analysis results and proactively addresses the conducive factors of conflict and violence such as unemployment, economic, social or political exclusion, lack of socio-economic opportunities etc. WBG also takes into consideration global or regional changes such as climate crisis, environmental degradation, natural disasters, demographic changes and their impact on FCV countries such as internally displacement of people, migration waves in order to effectively intervene before tensions escalate into destabilization of regimes or armed conflicts.

The second pillar is related to the phase of active conflict and the culmination of crisis when WB states its commitment to stay fully engaged in providing the most vulnerable with the bare necessities of food, health and education services and at the same time working at institutional level trying to keep state services and people's security running.

After the end of crisis, the third pillar of WB strategy is about providing assistance to countries to facilitate their transition to stability and progress again. It focuses on long-term support of financial resources and on providing expertise advise on how to plan their route out of fragility. At this point, according to the WB sustainable development model, the WB introduces in FCV settings the private sector in the form of investments, setting-up of enterprises and in creating jobs that will play a key role in achieving economic growth.

Finally, the fourth pillar is addressing the spill-over effects of FCV. It is realized that long-lasting conflicts that remain unresolved tend to spread, crossing borders and have severe implications on the developed world countries as it happened with the migration crisis in Europe triggered by the Syrian war. The mitigation of spillovers calls for immediate action to meet the needs of displaced people, refugees or migrants but also the needs of host communities.

The requirements set by the four-pillar approach signify the WBG's new perception about development which is imprinted in its development strategy.

What is most important is that the institutional shift of the WB is accompanied with generous increase in financial resources, both through the *World Bank's General Capital Increase* and through the *International Development Association (IDA)*, the World Bank's fund for the poorest countries. The recent replenishment of IDA included over \$20 billion for FCV countries. Since the publication of the first *Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (FCS) Harmonised List* in 2006, the budget on FCV projects has considerably increased and is mostly directed to the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa. Actually, since its commitment to the Prevention of the FCV approach, the WBG is steadily increasing the amount of resources and is scaling up not only the volume but also the types of financial support to address FCV issues in a number of vulnerable countries. The *International Development Association (IDA) 18 Replenishment* which was launched in 2016 was the largest since IDA's establishment in 1960. It was a positive response of the WB to play the role of a critical implementation agent for achieving the 2030 Agenda and it continues to raise the funds to \$93 billion in IDA 20 Replenishment ([www.ida.worldbank.org](http://www.ida.worldbank.org), n.d.).

What singles out the WBG is its international and intersectoral view of development. As it works across different sectors, both state and private, it has accumulated robust analysis evidence and has a clear overview of the global settings especially in FCV areas which gives it a strategic advantage compared to other International Organisations. Because of its mandate, WB sits at the same table of negotiations with state governments or various stakeholders and simultaneously can mobilise large funds from the private sector and channel private investments to FVC areas. This strengthens its comparative advantage even more compared to NGOs or private donors whose programmes no matter how innovative they are, they are limited in scope and size (Silva 2017). As WB is at the position to bring together ministries, such as finance or planning, which do not generally coordinate with each other, in order to implement large-scale interventions or good practices that cover and may have an impact on entire countries, they can also support institutional reforms and sustainable responses to the factors that lead to violence at national level (Holland, et al., 2022).

The success of the WBG FCV Strategy on peace keeping and prevention of violence largely depends on education as it has so much transformative potential on people's lives. The fact that youth are considered to be the most vulnerable group to radicalization has brought them to the spotlight and therefore, many programmes and attempts have been made to engage them in international counter-terrorism strategies. This amplified attention has brought about both positive and negative results: on the one hand, it attracted more funds to education, on the other, it has raised much apprehension and criticism about the securitization of education. As a response to the latter, although there are many main programmes funded by the WB that involve education (primary, secondary and higher), vocational training and lifelong learning and include specifically designed components to address issues of radicalization and violent extremism, WB avoids mentioning CVE as one of their main objectives in order to bypass criticism (Silva S 2017).

Nevertheless, despite the high potential of education sector to bring about the desired changes, it continues to be underfunded. The Bank Group's FCV Strategy attributes the low flow of funds to education to a leadership void in the coordination of education actors in FCV settings and aims at taking the initiative to streamline both development and humanitarian actors to work together through strategic partnerships whose mission would be to cover the short- and long- term needs of education streamlining their frequently overlapping and competitive mandates. WB takes a step forward proposing UNESCO to play the central role in coordinating these actors as it already holds the *Secretariat of the SDG 2030 Education Steering Committee* and has extensive experience in conventions (Holland, et al., 2022).

### **3.4: Discussion: The Role of Education**

#### **1) When was Education included in the International Organisations' CVE / PVE agendas?**

The answer to this question is: relatively recently. It is only since the early 2000s after the 9/11 attack and the "War on Terror" initiated by the USA.

Although there has always been reference to the importance of education in the preambulatory clauses of the official counter- terrorism documents they issued, at the beginning of tackling terrorism and violent extremism the international organisations did not include education in their tools. Over the years, though, it has become clear that prevention could play a pivotal role in combating terrorism and preventing radical youth from turning into violent extremism. It was understood that the provision of good quality education to all, the reform of school curricula and the creation of a safe place at schools could build the positive conditions to build defenses and resilience within learners against violent extremism and create a space free of violence and rich in respect for diversity that fosters dialogue, democratic values and freedom of expression.

In 2014 it was the first time that education and civil society in general were mentioned in the operative clauses of the *UN Security Council Resolution (UN, S/RES/2178, 2014)*. But it was especially after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, when Education became one of the 17 SDGs (SDG 4) and since then, it has been interlinked with development.

We have discerned three distinctive phases:

- a) from 2001 to 2005/2006 an initial phase. After the 9/11 attacks in New York most countries and International Organisations considered counter-terrorism mainly as a security issue. The USA

Bush's administration issued the *US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* in February 2003. In Europe it was the United Kingdom which first took the lead and pioneered in involving education in the counter-terrorism fight trying to detect early traces of radicalization in schools with the help of teachers as early as March 2003. In 2005 the EU, under the presidency of the UK, adopted the EU Action Plan which was considerably influenced by the UK national action plan. In the same year the Council of Europe held the Convention in Prevention Violent Extremism. In the following year, 2006, the UN developed the *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy* (Resolution No1624).

- b) Since the mid-2000s and for the next decade several European governments have adopted their own counter-terrorism strategy not limiting its scope to the security sector but engaging the society as a whole, the education sector included, in their effort to tackle the issue effectively (Ragazzi, 2017). But as they were independent responses not centrally coordinated, they were characterized by a high level of fragmentation. Another remark is that since the terrorist attacks in countries of the developed world were decreased and the threat was considered being under control, the counter-terrorism agenda lost impetus.

These two phases can be described in terms of the regime complex theory as the first stage of fragmentation and independent operation.

- c) 2015 was the turning point. Since 2015 it has been the ongoing phase of convergence when all the International Organisations have shifted their focus from curing the symptoms of terrorism to prevention and have fostered a pre-emptive approach aligning their policy with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. All the International Organisations have adopted a more comprehensive and systematic strategy for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism through education stating their commitment to the principles of human rights and international rule of law. They promoted institutionalized interaction through the organization of global conventions, summits, global initiatives where they presented detailed Guides for policy makers, teachers and other stakeholders, they launched programmes and well-designed material ready for use on online educational platforms and urged their member-states to proceed to design and implement their own national strategy and PVE action plans.

This phase might coincide with the second phase of regime complexes when the dynamic interplay among the involved regimes is prevalent and the intentional exercise of influence on some of them by the more powerful ones can be discerned.

The evidence presented in this paper shows that there have been interrelations among the international organisations and that the USA influenced their political agenda into adopting a comprehensive CVE strategy. However, the USA was more focused on controlling international terrorism and was left behind in applying a CVE/PVE strategy in its territory as its homegrown violent extremist threat was relatively low and the Muslim communities well-integrated. The USA acquired its first formal CVE strategy in 2011 with no sufficient funding for its nation-wide implementation but only in a "Three-cities Pilot programs" (Vidino & Hughes, 2015; NRC, 2017).

In all the policies considered here, the EU, mainly responding to the shocking deadly terrorist attacks in Madrid and London after the 9/1, has drawn up a comprehensive counter-terrorism Strategy as early as 2005 while its member-state Great Britain was a pioneer in this field as it launched its own counter-terrorism strategy in 2003 and the programme entitled PREVENT, one of the key-elements of it (UK Home Department, 2011). The EU Strategy has been regularly updated, and the EU member-states after having adopted the Paris Declaration 2015 proceeded with the development of their own national education strategies and policies to promote citizenship and democratic values and address discrimination and violent extremism (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice, 2016). EU has set up cooperation with security stakeholders and strategic partners and has set up interoperable EU databases and networks, among which the most renown is the Radicalisation Awareness Network in 2011. The 2016 Action Plan, and more explicitly and elaborately the 2020 *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027* have set in their core the promotion of inclusive education and EU common values in its effort to prevent radicalization and violent terrorism.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and



Development (OECD) and the World Bank (WB), which consist the pillars of the international development assistance, recognized the severe economic and social impact of violence and they invest on education for its prevention power. Their financial capacity to intervene with large-scale programmes makes their participation in PVE so important. They have set their own mechanisms for financial assistance, they proceeded with thorough analysis of all the factors of fragility, data collection and assessment methods and they have adopted a new preventive approach towards PVE within their mandate.

Now we are at the point where all PVE holders use detailed diagnostic tools and they have set up educational platforms for collecting and analysing comparative data on education systems, on the effectiveness of policies on prevention radicalization. The vocabulary that is loaded with negative connotations (radicalization, extremism) is gradually replaced with new terms (fragility, resilience, civic competences, citizenship).

The decisive turning point was when UNDP, OECD and the WB, the three pillars of the development with substantial financial power, included PVE in their development agenda making its funding eligible. For example, since the OECD DAC included PVE activities as eligible for ODA there has been an increase in development funds for prevention violent extremism through education. As a result, many programmes have been designed and attempts have been made to engage them in international counter-terrorism strategies.

### **Partnerships, Convergences and Synergies**

In the beginning, each institution worked independently, within each one's mandate and focused on the aspects that answered the problems their member-states faced.

The urge for effective collective mechanisms to identify the issue, understand the risks and tackle them not in a fragmented way but at international, intergovernmental way started with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets which address every domain of sustainable development: the economic, the social and the environmental (United Nations; World Bank, 2018).

Since 2015 the IOs' strategies have evolved and their synergies have built up momentum after realizing the complexity and the multiple facets of the issue. We have witnessed a closer cooperation of the international organisations which can be detected in the use of the same data and even the same vocabulary. This is not a coincidence as networks have been established and they have decided to meet in conferences and summits; joint conventions have been held so that they can provide new evidence and share information. Much can be attributed to UN's and UNESCO's convening power which is their comparative advantage and to OECD's and WB's demand for rigorous data bases and updated, evidence-based information.

The World Bank Group aims to increase its effectiveness and its influence in the emerging global governance regime through its FCV Strategy. It ambitiously attempts to take the lead in the coordination of overlapping and competing mandates of the various international humanitarian and development actors in order to form strategic partnerships that would combine their efforts to achieve sustainable development. It also proposes UNESCO to be the central coordinator of these actors given its long and well-established global convening power and ability to reach and network in FCV settings and the fact that it already holds the Secretariat of the SDG 2030 Education Steering Committee (Holland, et al., 2022). This touches upon the challenges that UNESCO has been facing over the last decades. The fact is that despite the wide breadth of its mandate in education (SDG 4), world heritage and science, UNESCO has a very limited budget, only a fraction of the WB's budget that is channeled to knowledge and capacity building activities in the education sector (UNESCO, 2021).

UNESCO and CoE have to re-negotiate their role and comparative advantages within a complex regime that has mobilized global and regional actors but also agile actors from the private sector, such as the *Global Partnership for Education (GPE)* with their *Fast Track Initiative*, or NGOs such as the *Global Campaign for Education (GCE)*.

I.Os	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>USA</b>		National Strategy for Combating Terrorism					USA National Strategy				World Summit - President Obama's speech						
<b>UN</b>		Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy				2nd Review CT Strategy		3rd Review CT Strategy		4th Review CT Strategy	UNSG's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism	5th Review Global Counter Terrorism Strategy		6th Review of Global Counter Terrorism Strategy			7th Review of Global Counter Terrorism Strategy
<b>UNDP</b>					HD Report on Human Mobility & Development							UNDP Conceptual Framework of 11 blocks Action Plan					
<b>UNESCO</b>											Lead the 2030 Agenda for Education	A Teachers' Guide on PVE	Guide to Policy makers on PVE				
<b>EU</b>	Strategy on Counter-Terrorism-Action Plan			updated Strategy						Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation & Recruitment to Terrorism	Paris Declaration	Global Strategy for the Foreign and Security				Action Plan 2021-2027 on Integration & Inclusion 2021-2027	
<b>RAN</b>							RAN Foundation				RAN Manifesto	Action Plan 2016 on Integration & Inclusion		RAN Companion 2018-Schools into labs for democracy			
<b>CoE</b>	Convention on Prevention Violent Extremism										Action Plan Fight Against V.E Radicalisation	Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies		CoE 2018 Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture			
<b>OECD</b>	Fragile States Report										States of Fragility Report			Global Competence Framework			
<b>WB</b>														World Development Report Pathways to Peace		Strategy for Fragility, Conflict & Violence 2020-25	

Table 5: List of IOs Policies in chronological order

## **2)The role of education**

Another issue of concern is the role that each of these organisations has assigned to education in the context of countering/preventing radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism.

The fact that children and the youth are considered to be the most vulnerable groups to radicalization has brought them to the fore and consequently many programmes and attempts have been made to engage them in international counter-terrorism strategies. All IOs also fully realise the transformative potential of education that makes it the ideal route for intervening with the young generation, building resilience in societies and leading them to a sustainable way of life. Finally, it has been widely and well-understood that the prevention of radicalization cannot be succeeded with one-off events. It calls for a sustainable approach and comprehensive action (RAN Manifesto, 2015); (UNESCO, 2017); (Nodrbruch & Sieckelinck, 2018).

The education interventions that International Organisations recommend in their PVE strategy have gradually converged into accepting certain principles and pedagogies and into proposing certain policies.

### **Principles**

The analysis of the representative documents shows that the International Organisations recognize foundational principles that their PVE Policy should serve: inclusive and equitable ethos, zero-tolerance to violence, respect for Human Rights, Diversity and Human Dignity, Gender Equality.

RAN specifically mentions the Democratic School Ethos which is also the core in the CoE contribution to PVE whereas UN and its entities, i.e. UNESCO and UNDP, refer to the right to Quality Education and the Ethic of Global Citizenship.

### **Pedagogies**

Respect for Human Rights, tolerance and respect for diversity and no discrimination are the basis in all IOs' pedagogies.

In the analysed texts, UNESCO and RAN make explicit reference to pedagogies that should be followed in schools when they tackle sensitive issues like radicalization and violent extremism. Pedagogy should be organized around the principles of cooperation, inclusiveness, equity and solidarity.

Schools are meant to be violent-free zones, safe and supportive learning environments, safe spaces for constructive dialogue on sensitive and "burning" issues. In order schools to fulfill their broad and demanding role, it is recommended they adopt the whole-school approach and holistic interventions. The advantages of peer-to-peer education and using peers as facilitators can also be exploited.

Teachers are an influential role model that can lead by example so their role is strengthened. Teachers are expected to build learner's resilience to violent extremism narratives, foster learner's self-confidence and build their capacity to lead their lives in dignity and take full responsibility of their choices.

Students should be able to find at school people that are mindful for their interests and their well-being, show tolerance and respect diversity while not showing any discrimination. In an environment that they feel safe and respected, they can create the sense of belonging.

### **Policies**

All agree that these policies, in order to be effective, should not be one-off actions but should be sustainable and long-term to the radicalization challenges. UNESCO's and RAN's documents refer to the policies that should be implemented for effective prevention of radicalization in a more detailed way. More or less the policies that are recommended as effective in PVE are the following:

First, they should empower both the teachers and the schools. As for the schools, minimum academic standards should be set for all forms of educational institutions, e.g. religious schools, madrasas.

Teachers should be equipped with appropriate skills and tools and should be trained to tackle controversial issues and highly polarised opinions etc. They can find support in educator networks

or hotlines, or networks of teachers with other professionals that come from different but related sectors such as justice, social and child protection sectors etc.

As for organizational reforms early childhood education, technical and vocational education should be widely provided. Provision should also be taken for the linguistic integration of students in their new educational environment (for immigrants and refugees) so that they soon acquire the operational language.

Curriculum reforms that reflect the main principles of inclusion and respect for diversity are required. Hate speech should be removed from learning environments and teaching/learning materials. Global Citizenship Education, Civic Education, Democratic values, Critical Thinking, Digital Literacy, Media and Information Literacy, Interreligious and Religious Literacy should be integrated in the daily school life of children.

The students also need to be taught certain soft skills such as skills for intercultural dialogue, conflict resolution skills, behavioural and socioemotional skills (empathy, compassion, mindfulness), peaceful coexistence.

Schools are the right places for students to be exposed to a multitude of aspects and learn coexistence; to deconstruct exclusive identities and simplistic ways of thinking (“black and white”, “us vs them”). Schools should show zero tolerance to violence, hate speech and bullying and any discriminatory or derogatory behaviour and promote inclusive and equitable education policies. Additional support should be provided for the vulnerable children who belong to minority groups.

Apart from formal education, non-formal education can enrich school life. The introduction of clubs, debating societies, extra-curricular activities, art and sports is encouraged.

The opening of schools to community life, exposure of students to real-life situations and problem-solving is a recommended approach.

The involvement of parents and families as valuable partners, the representation and participation of the school to community life, the cooperation with other stakeholders and formation of intersectoral partnerships should be part of the school policies.

RAN and WB welcome NGOs and other organisations in education. WB, in particular, engages the private sector in school finance and governance

UNESCO and RAN have proposed the exposure of students to testimonials of victims or formers. Finally, three of these organisations, namely UNESCO, UNDP, and RAN, have proceeded with the suggestion of formulating indicators and referral procedures and protocols that schools and teachers should follow in order to be able to detect early signs of radicalization and spot children at risk. Schools have to file these cases following inside and outside of school hierarchies for assessing and reporting them.

In a nutshell, the IOs’ policies can be summarized in five points: the empowerment of schools and teachers, the organizational and curriculum reforms, the acquisition of soft skills, the introduction of non-formal education and the opening of schools to society and real-life situations whereas referral procedures and protocols are proposed by three of them.

<b>PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>EU</b>	<b>RAN</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>WB</b>
The right to Quality Education			x					
Inclusive & equitable Ethos	x	x	x	x	x			x
Democratic school Ethos					x	x		
Zero-tolerance to violence ethos			x					
Principle of Respect for Diversity and Human Dignity		x	x	x	x	x		x
Ethic of Global Citizenship	x	x	x					
Gender Equality	x	x	x					x
<b>Pedagogies</b>								
Lead by example			x		x			
Building learners' resilience to violent extremism narratives			x		x			
Foster learners' self-confidence and capacity to make responsible and healthy choices			x		x			
Create schools as violent-free zones, safe and supportive learning environments			x		x			x
Creating safe spaces for constructive dialogue on sensitive and "burning bridge" issues		x	x		x			x
Mindfulness for students' interests and well-being			x					
Creating the sense of belonging			x	x				
Respect for Human rights	x	x	x	x		x		x
Tolerance and respect for diversity- No discrimination		x	x	x	x			x
Whole-school approaches and interventions			x					x
Peer-to-peer education / peers as facilitators			x		x			

**Table 6: IOs Policies on Prevention Radicalisation leading to Violent Extremism through Education (Principles and Pedagogies) (author)**

<b>POLICIES</b>	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>EU</b>	<b>RAN</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>WB</b>
Sustainable response to long-term prevention radicalization by empowering teachers and schools	x			x			
Setting minimum academic standards for all forms of educational institutions	x	x					
Teacher training – equipping teachers with appropriate skills and tools (e.g. Depolarisation skills)		x		x			x
Create educator-networks /hotlines				x			
Create networks of teachers with other professionals (justice, social & child protection sectors)		x		x			
Early childhood Education		x					
Technical and Vocational Education	x	x					x
Linguistic Integration		x					
Curriculum reforms that reflect the main principles of inclusion and respect for diversity	x	x		x			x
Removing hate speech from learning environments and teaching/learning materials		x		x			
Inclusive & equitable Education policies	x	x		x			x
Zero tolerance to violence policy	x	x					
Additional support/Mentoring for all Vulnerable children who belong to minority groups		x		x			
Global Citizenship Education (to foster responsible action using non-violent means to trigger change)	x	x		x			
Civic education/ Democratic values		x		x			
Critical thinking		x		x			x
Digital literacy		x		x			
Media and Information literacy (MIL)		x		x			
Interreligious /Religious literacy		x		x			
Peace education/ peaceful coexistence/ Deconstruction of exclusive identities “us vs them”		x					
Behavioural and socioemotional skills (empathy, compassion, mindfulness) Stopping Hate Speech		x		x			
Skills for intercultural dialogue	x	x		x			
Conflict resolution skills		x		x			
Introduction of clubs, debating societies, extra-curricular activities, sports		x		x			x
Non-formal education and community-based approaches		x		x			x
Stakeholder cooperation- Intersectoral partnerships		x					
Involve parents and families as valuable partners		x		x			x
Representation and participation in community life	x	x		x			
Involve NGO-s & other organisations				x			x
Testimonials of victims or formers		x		x			
Formulate indicators and referral procedures, protocols/ inside & outside school hierarchies for assessing/ reporting cases of radicalisation	x	x		x			

**Table 7: IOs Policies on Prevention Radicalisation leading to Violent Extremism through Education (author)**

### 3)Way of implementation

When it comes to the way these strategies, action plans and policies were implemented, another concern and source of criticism arises.

UN and UNESCO have adopted a worldwide vision prioritizing human rights, values, principles and standards. UNDP, OECD and WB have similarly adopted a worldwide view to the problem because of their really international mandate but focusing on the developmental aspect whereas EU and CoE see the matter of radicalization through the lenses of Europe or North-western world and somehow narrow down their strategy and its implementation with specific focus areas including the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the Balkans, West Africa (Sahel), Central/South-East Africa.

In the IOs strategies, the EU included, the context described and the Framework addresses all kinds and forms of radicalization and violent extremism and their Action Plans are not limited to Islamic-inspired violence. But when it comes to their implementation, the vast majority of the initiatives and resources are devoted to the prevention and combat of the religious-driven radicalization and particularly the Islamic extremism rather disproportionately. The Muslim community has been pinpointed and, in this way, their rights run the risk of being violated. Muslims may be treated as a “suspect community” and consequently may feel discriminated against arising anger and grievances (Ragazzi, 2017), whereas the rise of populism and supranationalism or the emergence of ultra-right or ultra-left movements which resort to violence have gone underscored.

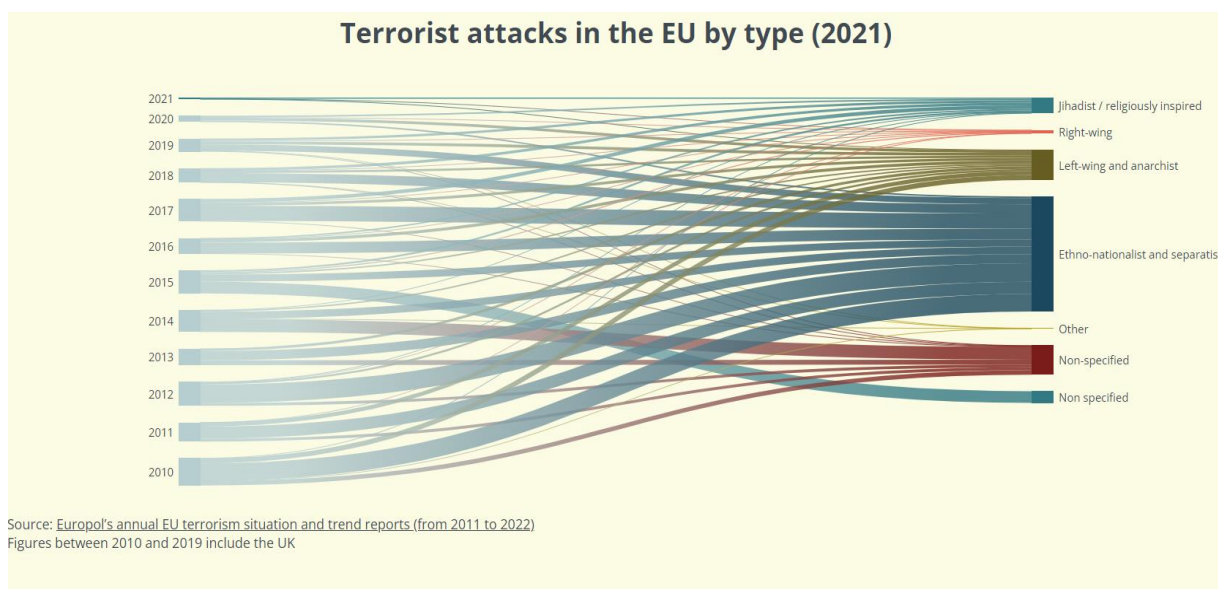


Figure 8. Terrorist attacks in the EU by type from 2010 to 2021 (European Council, 2022)

Source: Europol's annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Reports (from 2011 to 2022) (Europol, 2022)

In the infographic published by the European Council after drawing data from the *Europol's annual Terrorism Situation and Trend Reports (TE- SAT)* from 2011 to 2022, there is detailed information of the terrorist attacks in the EU by type that covers the span from 2010 to 2021. The fact is that since 2015, after the attacks that took place in France and elsewhere, counter-terrorism became an area of even higher importance. Jihadist terrorists, lone actors or EU citizens or residents travelling to Syria, Iraq or Mali became of major concern to all states. As it is obvious the ethno-nationalist and separatist attacks, conducted mainly by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) or Continuity IRA (IRA), outnumber the jihadist or religiously- inspired attacks but faced a substantial drop after 2017. (European Council, 2022). In 2019 the developed world witnessed a rising wave of right-wing violence including the attacks in New Zealand, in the USA, Germany, Norway and the UK. These people are driven by their hatred against minorities, Jews, immigrants, Muslims etc. but until 2018 attacks that were committed by right-wing extremists were not reported as such by the

member-states and therefore, were not covered in the TE-SAT reports of Europol. According to TE-SAT Report 2022 there has been a decrease in jihadist attacks, right-wing attacks and left-wing or anarchist attacks in the last three years in Europe, partially attributable to the rise of surveillance. Unfortunately, attacks happen outside Europe in growing numbers of locations like Syria, Libya, Mali, Afghanistan among others. What is becoming of great concern is the radicalization of very young adults, even minors, who are allured by right-wing propaganda on the Internet (Europol, 2022).

The bottom line is that while migration has been securitized by the international community, who has developed comprehensive Action Plans to tackle mainly the issues of Jihadist violent extremism and has spent a lot of resources on fighting terrorism, at the same time, the rise of xenophobia, nationalism and populism and right-wing extremism went under-recorded.

The CoE seems that embraces all this scepticism about human rights violations and has abstained. Instead, it has created a comprehensive programme for Democratic Citizenship, Education for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms with plenty of material for schools that voluntarily join their Democratic Schools Network and address the problem of violent extremism at individual level.

UN and UNESCO have thoroughly examined the issue and have described the factors that might lead to the radicalization of the youth and suggest a new contract for education based on the principles of human rights and quality education for all.

#### **“PVE specific” or “PVE related”?**

The PVE programmes and activities can be clustered in two categories:

- a) “PVE specific”, those which are specifically designed and directly address radicalization and violent extremism.
- b) “PVE related”, those which, although they are not explicitly designed as PVE programmes/activities, can contribute to mitigate the risks and channel youngsters’ grievances or doubts into positive activities.

The funding of counter-terrorism projects has increased with both positive and negative results. One of the most important negative ones is the securitization of education. As semantics and labeling are important, especially in the sensitive environment of education, the International Organisations take them seriously into consideration. They avoid labeling a programme as a specifically “*Countering Violent Extremism*” (CVE) or “*Preventing Violent extremism*” (PVE) programme in order to avoid negative reactions from educators and the civil society agents or being targeted by radical groups. They rendered that it is preferable these programmes to be integrated in the school curricula and daily school life rather than being introduced as distinct initiatives (Silva S. , 2017). So, they, in general, avoid mentioning their nature explicitly or labeling them as PVE programmes.

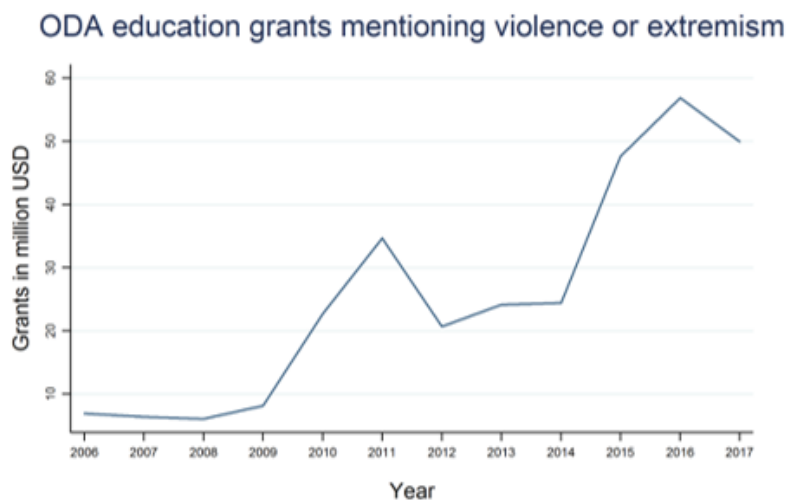
Is it a matter of the power and criticism exerted by the civil society and teachers for the securitization of the education sector?

Is it because of the criticism and pressure imposed by the Human Rights Regime, the *UN Special Rapporteur for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism*, or the Recommendations of the Council of Europe?

Or is it because PVE through education has proved to be unproductive?

The truth is that there are not enough data on the exact amount of money spent on either “PVE specific” or “PVE related” programmes published by the involved I.O.s and there is also lack of evidence on how effective these programmes are as it is difficult to evaluate PVE activities and their impact in short term. Some programmes follow “common-sense” assumptions which are not or cannot be measured (Davies, *Review of Educational Initiatives in Counter-Extremism Internationally: What works?*, 2018). In most cases the effects of education are long-term, intangible and not countable. An estimate of the education grants mentioning violence or extremism by ODA was published in 2019 on the blog of the *Center for Global Development Organization* (Fig. 1) that shows the rise of PVE funding especially after 2014.





Notes: Disbursements of ODA grants in millions of constant 2017 USD. All projects that mention violence or extremism in their project description are accounted for. The graph is based on all donors reporting to the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

**Figure 7.** ODA education grants mentioning violence or extremism (Kyburz, Beerli, & Ron, 2019) (<https://www.cgdev.org/blog/can-education-prevent-violent-extremism>)

All the Education Initiatives that have sprung up since 2015 and have been under the auspices of the above-mentioned International Organisations can be seen under the broader spectrum of Prevention Violent Extremism.

Of course, there are “PVE specific” programmes such as “*Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism*” (*STRIVE*), a global initiative funded by the EU whose objective is to prevent and counter violent extremism in regions of European interests: Central, South, South East Asia, South Caucasus, Turkey, Western Balkans and Middle East- North Africa (MENA). But the trend is to incorporate PVE objectives in whole-school approaches which address risk factors of radicalization within a broader framework.

UNESCO has driven forward the importance of quality education systematically including leading contributions in Preventing Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E) and has undertaken preventive actions that build young people’s resilience to violent extremism narratives. It incorporates these actions in broader frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda, Global Citizenship Education and Education for Human Rights.

UNICEF has been running a widely spread programme entitled *UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Schools* aiming at promoting the respect of Children’s Rights as they are stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in every school environment.

The Council of Europe stated in its Final Report (2018) that its *Action Plan on Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation* proved to be quite influential as activities related to its implementation had infiltrated in 17 out of the 28 operational programmes implemented by the CoE without openly stating so. Since 2018 CoE has been running the project *Free to Speak, Safe to Learn – Democratic Schools for All* with supporting material for teachers and a “Democratic School Network” which has incorporated all the principles of prevention radicalization as integral parts of the project (CoE, *Democratic Schools for All*, 2018).

*Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO)*, a joint project scheme cofunded by the CoE and the European Commission (EU) (Council of Europe, 2017b), *Living in Controversy: Teaching Controversial Issues* (Council of Europe, 2015c) can be filed as “PVE related” programmes that address extremism and radicalization of youth among other controversial issues such as gender violence, discrimination, violence and hate-speech.

Joint programmes have also been underway, such as the *From making students’ voices heard to active*

*civic participation in the digital age*, with the cooperation of CoE and UNESCO, which address PVE issues without labeling it.

RAN has published the guide for schools *Transforming schools into labs for Democracy, a Companion to preventing violent radicalization through education* (Nodrbruch & Sieckelink, 2018).

Now, once again, the UN has taken the lead by organizing the *Futures of Education*, a new social contract in education, emphasizing that there is not a ready, tailored-made answer that fits all cases and environments but each case should be examined in its own context and countries should design their own strategy out of the situation, adapted and responding to the specific challenges (UNESCO, 2021).

Similarly, there are many main programmes funded by the WB that involve education (primary, secondary and higher), vocational training and lifelong learning which, although they include specifically designed components to address issues of radicalization and violent extremism, they avoid to mention countering violent extremism as one of their main objectives (Silva S 2017).

### **People-centred approach**

The trend to shift the focus from institutional and structural level to the individual level is definitely a political decision not to address the states' failures to provide sustainable political solutions to problems of disadvantage, injustice and poverty but to hold the individual accountable for their failures.

This shift can be traced back in the 2030 Agenda that stated that their approach would be "people-centred". Gradually, all International Organisations and their agencies examined in this paper, aligned their policy and applied the "people-centred" approach:

The CoE (Gruening, 2018) has developed a wide array of tools for teaching democratic citizenship and intercultural respect and coexistence within its international legal framework against terrorism aiming at developing the competences of individuals and at building their resilience to radicalization (Council of Europe, 2017a).

In a Policy Brief, UNESCO explored two questions: what types of PVE-E activities tend to be more effective and what is the proven impact of PVE-E activities (UNESCO, 2018a). The study showed that impacts of PVE-E activities were more common at the individual level where behavioural, socio-emotional, attitudinal, knowledge or skill-based changes could be detected; structural and organizational changes were less frequent but still notable whereas changes at the community or social level were limited. Not surprisingly, the conclusion was positive that PVE-E works better at individual level and thus, it contributes to inclusive and quality education for all (UNESCO, 2018a). This is also reflected in UNESCO'S analysis of factors where more attention is paid to the psychological, cognitive and emotional state of the individual.

UNDP, World Bank and OECD (OECD, 2016) also adopted the "people-centred" approach by setting as their primary goal to address grievances rather than the objective situation that drives a person to them.

In the diagnostic tools that WB and OECD use, evidence has shown that grievances play a more important role than assumed. Identification with collective grievances and narratives of victimization can stir powerful emotions and lead people to violent reactions. For example, unemployment may cause stronger feelings of frustration to a person than the rest in his community and he may develop grievances potentially exploited by extremist recruiters. WB in its Strategy accepted the key role of schools in violence protection. As a matter of fact, education is included in the first out of the four pillars of its strategy and it is given the role to address long-standing grievances like the ones provoked by social exclusion, by correcting inequalities based on racial, ethnic, religious, gender or other discriminations (World Bank). It is worth noting the way it refers to addressing the drivers of fragility: it sets the perceptions of grievances and injustice caused by immediate and long-term risks in the spotlight and not the causes per se (World Bank Strategy, 2020a; World Bank, 2020b). Complex issues such as climate change, demographic shocks, economic exclusion, social marginalization, gender inequality can be tackled later since working with the individual can produce detectable results faster. In this regard, WB has set Education Resilience Approaches (ERA) (World Bank, 2016) and OECD has launched the

assessment of global competences of the individuals through the Global Competence Framework (OECD, 2018a).

### **Demand for rigorous assessment**

The epistemic communities set by OECD and WB persistently demand for more data, more evidence (reflection & evaluation of the outcomes) more transparency, more accountability of the agents involved in PVE and they have created powerful diagnostic tools and educational platforms for data gathering and analysis. *Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)* (World Bank, 2011) founded in 2011 by WB and the *Programme for International Students' Assessment (PISA)*, first performed in 2000 by OECD, are the most renowned. This demand for rigorous assessment can be explained by the pressure exercised by the powerful donors who ask for persuasive evidence before they proceed with the investment of their funds on PVE.

However, there is a lack of evidence on how effective the educational activities are in helping to prevent violent extremism, no matter how popular or prevalent they have been the recent years (UNESCO 2018a) (Davies, Review of Educational Initiatives in Counter-Extremism Internationally: What works?, 2018). The fact is that a great deal of important effects of education cannot be easily measured or counted as they are intangible, it takes long to manifest and they cannot be attributed to one factor alone.

UNESCO along with the education community raise their voice asking for evaluation on things that really matter, the values and principles of the humanitarian approach (UNESCO, 2021).

### **4)How far has each of these organisations proceeded in defining their procedures and setting protocols of cooperation between education sector and security authorities?**

Three of the examined Organisations, namely UNDP (UNDP, 2016), UNESCO (UNESCO, 2017) and RAN (Nodbruch & Sieckelinck, 2018) have referred to targeted measures for learners at risk. They refer to signs and sets of indicators of radicalisation leading to violent extremism that allow professionals to identify youngsters at risk. They have also designed referral mechanisms and protocols that should be followed in case schools cooperate with other professionals (e.g. social workers) and relevant authorities (e.g. law enforcement officers).

RAN is the network that has proposed the most detailed guide to PVE and has clearly suggested the creation of networks of teachers with other concerned professionals (justice, police, social and child protection sectors) and the cooperation with other organizations and NGOs. They also suggested the formulation of procedures and clearly defined inside and outside school hierarchies for assessing and reporting cases of radicalization following protocols.

Both UNESCO and RAN suggest that the referral process must be communicated both to the students and parents and the community and community leaders so as not to undermine the trust between the school and the community. In RAN, Manifesto for Educators, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, the RAN EDU work group explicitly urge schools to communicate PVE work openly to parents and stress its significance.

UNESCO (UNESCO, 2017) and RAN (RAN, 2022) promote the training and empowerment of teachers to enable them to tackle delicate issues such as polarization, radicalization or extremism and the participation in networks with other stakeholders and experts in the community. They insist on teachers and school staff being trained on how to implement the referral protocol in order to mitigate risks of over- or mis-reporting. This is considered as highly important because in case of misuse it might backlash into students losing their trust to their school, schools losing their power of influence and becoming hostile ground that fosters the breeding of violent extremism instead of the opposite.

An alternative educational approach has been suggested by educators such as Sieckelinck (Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks, & De Winter, 2015) and Davies (Davies, Educating Against Extremism: Towards a critical Politicisation of young people, 2009), in proposing a "safe learning environment", that is schools which are inclusive and have adopted the educational perspective and not the intelligence and security perspective. In this approach, schools care about students' wellbeing, foster open discussions on sensitive political issues and ideals and students are treated not as "villains or victims" but as young people in search of their own identity, experimenting with radical ideas and extreme views in their process of becoming future citizens and emerging political actors. To this concept, several programmes have been running such as UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools since 2004, comparable to other national programmes such as the Dutch "Vreedzame School" (Peaceful School) and the British initiatives such as

Resilience. Peaceful Schools teach their pupils essential social, emotional and citizenship competences that are a prerequisite in a well- functioning democratic society, such as empathy, decision-making, negotiating diversity, constructive conflict resolution, social skills and responsibility for the collective good. This knowledge, skills and attitudes are not taught in courses but they are experienced inside the school life as daily components of the school culture.

### **Should schools get involved in identifying learners at risk?**

Do counter-radicalisation policies in education undermine the social cohesion and resilience they aim to preserve?

Do counter-radicalisation policies in education give rise to contradictory demands on educators assigning them a contradictory mission to employ a logic of suspicion in spotting potential radicals in contrast to the key principles of education to build trust and an environment of safety?

Are counter-radicalisation policies in education effective?

All these questions reflect the growing concerns that bring us to the final question of our study: Should schools be involved in identifying or even reporting learners as being at risk of radicalization?

The rise in cases of violent extremist acts has led in creating indicators and protocols that can be used by educators to report individuals who might turn to violent extremism. This is a hotly debated issue which is based on assumptions.

The first assumption is that radicalization is a linear process whose course can be predicted and interrupted with the correct intervention at the correct point. It can be defined as a “pre-crime” zone that students might pass in the future and turn to violence. Admittedly, families, friends, religious leaders or teachers might be in a better position to observe the early signals of personality changes that may be the warning signs of radicalization and they have the time and intimacy to intervene before someone leaps irreversibly into violence. Nevertheless, radicalization is a highly individualized process and not an event. The identification and reporting of vulnerable students who show early signs of radicalization and may resort to violence is a very controversial issue for schools and the majority of teachers feel at least uneasy with carrying out this task.

The second assumption is that the detailed research on factors and indicators has produced a fully-operational toolkit. The fact is that the whole framework and the existing indicators are being questioned since they cannot be applied invariably in any context and any measures should be tailored to each unique case frequently resulting in mistakes. As it has been reported, applying these indicators has led to either misreporting or over-reporting cases with grave consequences for learners, their families and schools. If these indicators are applied improperly on in haste, they could lead to incidents of abuse of authority, the stigmatization or false accusation of innocent individuals who could, in turn, face discrimination, exclusion and humiliation by their offenders which consequently may arouse the victims’ feelings of injustice, consolidate their grievances and fuel their anger and desire for revenge. It is such a delicate issue that experts in the education sector argue that schools should avoid any attempt of identifying underage students as potential violent extremists as it may undermine the whole effort of building trust within school communities and deprive them of the ability to influence their students and keep them away from violence by implementing whole-school interventions that can be effective (UNESCO, 2017).

The counter-argument to that is that many of the terrorists, lone actors, suicide bombers or those who were recruited had received many years of formal education in state educational systems of developed countries of Europe or America. The obvious conclusion was that schools should take a step further than providing basic knowledge and they should also provide their students with critical thinking and civil competences. Despite the arguments that the role of education is not to detect signs of radicalization or identify individuals who may potentially turn to violent extremism, societies, such as in France, that have gone under great stress because of extremist actions, have already put in place a referral mechanism to report cases of students vulnerable to radicalization (Ministere de L’ Education Nationale, 2015).

France is not the only EU member state where security agencies tried to establish cooperation with schools asking teachers to feed them with information about individual student suspected of being at risk of radicalization. Although these demands are common practice in security services, they jeopardise school's main mission to provide safe educational spaces. Understandably, voices have risen that strongly question the bond between schools and prevention policies as they serve two opposing values: the value of security vs the value of good quality education. If education is to be included in any prevention scheme, it will run the risk of undermining / subduing the purposes and principles of education for the young learner over to political goals/ agendas (Norwegian Refugee Council, nrc, 2017). Davies has put forward her proposal for an education based on human rights, that provides young people with critical analysis skills which enable them to analyse political, religious messages or fake news on the media (Davies, *Educating Against Extremism: Towards a critical Politicisation of young people*, 2009).

In their effort to curb this resistance, European and American authorities compared radicalization to drug abuse, gang recruitment, or even pedophilia trying to persuade leaders, educators and teachers to overcome their uneasiness/ apprehension and report cases of underage individuals. This always holds the element of criminalization young people for their views. Instead, EU may invest more on trust-building initiatives.

The third assumption is that it is the individual who must be addressed as accountable and not the social or structural shortcomings. For example, instead of treating the case of a student who showed signs of alienation and had developed grievances against the political or social system because of experienced discrimination or exclusion as an opportunity to probe into state's failures and shortcomings and a challenge to proceed to social reforms and political amendments, it was the student who was stigmatized as suspicious for radicalization and was reported for further monitoring and possible intervention (Ragazzi, 2017).

The boundaries between freedom of expression and extremism have also become blurred.

In addition, anxieties that have been expressed by teachers are not unjustified, on the contrary, there have been reports that prove quite the opposite. An example of New York teachers who faced disciplinary measures or were even fired because they had addressed the 9/11 attacks in their classroom and cases of schools in the United Kingdom (UK) which were downgraded from "outstanding" to "inadequate" by the school inspectorate, Ofsted, because they had been held accountable for allowing students to access sites with Islamic extremist content during school hours or because they did not prevent them from using their social media accounts to share extremist content with other students, have been quoted in the *Living with Controversy* Publication of the CoE (Council of Europe, 2015c).

Anyway, it is also accepted that education alone cannot prevent violent extremism unless it adopts a whole-school approach that will address the wide spectrum of factors that may lead to it. The situation also requires the cooperation between education institutions and other stakeholders who play an educational role in prevention efforts. The list of these actors includes families, youth actors, religious communities and not-religious world views organisations, law enforcement agencies, former violent extremists, digital media, teachers as role models and change agents who can bridge school, families and the broader community (UNESCO, 2017). There is also a need for a legal framework that will empower schools and teachers to promote active citizenship and civic education. Media literacy and critical thinking should be placed at the centre. Prevention of radicalization is an on-going process that requires agile adjustments to the ever-changing context but these adjustments should be led by educators who place the students' interests as a priority.

However, no matter how important role can schools play through promoting active citizenship and democratic ethos inside schools, there are many institutional factors that fall outside the scope of education. The grievances over economic, social and political exclusion, injustice, corruption, state failures to provide services demand robust political actions, building infrastructure and long-term institutional reforms.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the literature review it appears that Counter Terrorism policy of the International Organisations was formed in the 2000s after the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and the “War on Terror”. It is also clear that the evolution of the Counter Terrorism/ Prevention Violent Extremism Strategies was causally connected with shocking deadly terrorist attacks that happened on the European and American ground in the following years which triggered the immediate and unanimous response by International Organisations centred in the North-western part of the world which prioritized terrorism as an emergency requirement for the peace and security.

In the beginning, terrorism and violent extremism were exclusively in the domain of the security sector but the importance of education has been increasingly recognized and emphasis on its role in the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) has been put on especially after 2015 when 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set the Framework for international cooperation for the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals along with plans for financing and other important means of implementation.

The year 2015 is not only an important milestone of international development cooperation but it is also the time when the prevention of violent extremism attracted the attention of the development sector. Many international actors, mainly UNDP, OECD and the WB, were mobilized and committed to offering long-term financial assistance to fragile states. Evidence has shown that they gradually played the central role through their wider and deeper collaboration, setting the rules of the game and controlling the North-South flows of financial assistance whereas UNESCO and CoE continued to approach the issue of the radicalization from the humanitarian aspect.

After the shift of the International Organisations’ policy to Prevention rather than curing the symptoms, they all proceeded with the adoption of Strategy Plans, Action Plans, Guidances, Frameworks and Resources and called their member-states to design their own national PVE policy. This paved the way to Prevention of radicalization and Violent extremism through Education (PVE -E) to be incorporated in many international and national policies.

The International Organisations converge on their interest in financing programmes that counter violent terrorism in fragile or conflict-affected countries and on their systematic incorporation of education in elaborate strategies which include “PVE specific” or “PVE related” activities and programmes. The current tendency is an integrated approach inside the school curricula and not specifically labelled programmes on PVE as they tend to raise apprehension of violation of Human Rights, over-reporting etc. Thus, the term CVE or PVE is cautiously used in the labeling of projects though its principles and objectives have been incorporated in whole-school approaches, global Citizenship Education, Active Democratic Citizenship, Education for Human Rights, Media and Internet Literacy, 2030 Agenda – 17 SDGs, Sustainable Development Education and so on.

The International Organisations also converge on another key point: they insisted on exhaustive data collection and analysis and on carrying out research on both factors and mechanisms in order to gain deep understanding of how radicalization that leads to violent extremism works. These data have been used to steer their policy and funding. Before implementing their PVE policy they conduct thorough analyses of the local context to write down the specific features, strengths and weaknesses and the factors that are present in each case and then they proceed with a tailored-made intervention. They also work on the evaluation of the measurements and assessment of the implemented programmes on preset indicators and measurable outcomes in order to assess how effective they were and to decide on which to finance. On this matter, there is conflict among OECD, WB and EU who ardently support rigorous assessment as a scientific tool and UNESCO and CoE which argue that many of the education values and contributions are not measurable, no matter how fundamental they are.

However, this lack of hard evidence on the effectiveness of educational activities in helping to prevent violent extremism results in low flows in investment on PVE programmes no matter how popular or prevalent they have been the recent years (UNESCO 2018a) (Davies, Review of Educational Initiatives in Counter-Extremism Internationally: What works?, 2018).

No matter how popular and widespread PVE-E policy is, it is a controversial issue as it contradicts the core mission of schools as a safe place for all. Many civil rights advocates have raised their voice and defended the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence of education and its distinct role in the formation of personalities. There has always been the fear of manipulation and securitization of education as a tool in the hands of active policy makers that might infringe the rights of underage and most vulnerable individuals by the misinterpretation of signs, over-reporting and stigmatization of individuals (NRC, 2017) (UN A/HRC/40/52, 2019).

If education is to be involved in any prevention scheme, it should be in building resilience to hatred speech, tolerance, critical thinking, respect to free expression and democratic values. The question is how schools and the education professionals can be empowered so that they can set the agendas of educational reforms and policies that serve the rights and well-being of children and learners and tackle antisocial behaviour.

From the educational perspective:

International Organisations should stay committed to providing long term assistance tackling institutional and structural issues in a sustained way. Including schools in their development planning should mean funding the infrastructure, equipment, and the empowerment of educators, whereas the protection and respect of human rights and the right to quality education should be at the core of any sustainable global strategy to prevent violent extremism acknowledging education as a common good entitled to all.

States should focus on building strong, democratic institutions and warranty equal access to quality public education to everyone throughout life without any discrimination or exclusion.

Societies should be open to embrace the youth with their radical thoughts and tendency to question the status quo as youth is more easily lured to radical thinking.

Schools should be a “safe place” where students venture to explore ideas and speak about controversial issues openly and without fear. Free expression of thoughts and ideas.

Teachers should feel confident enough to carry out dialogues on thorny issues, address stereotypes and prejudices and steer youngsters to positive ways of action. To be able to do that, teachers need first to reflect on their personal beliefs and values

Giving people voice and toleration of peaceful dissent is a sign of a healthy, strong, mature democracy that can channel people’s frustrations into constructive communication, to turn all this resentment and grievances into positive political activity.

## **Recommendations for further research**

Any attempt on further research on the issue should definitely expand so as to include the USA policy as it has played a key role in initiating the “War on Terror” and it has exerted much influence in shaping PVE policies.

It would also be interesting to study if, how and to what extent the IOs’ PVE policies have been integrated in the national policies of the EU member states.

Another field that should be explored is the way that the education sector has responded to the pressure of PVE policies.





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