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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Trends and dynamics in international right-wing extremism and terrorism

Jihadist terrorism remains the main terrorist threat in the EU. However, the threat from violent right-wing extremist (VRWE) networks and individuals is on the rise in large parts of the world, including in Europe.¹ Youth radicalisation poses a major concern in this context; together with the use of new technologies and foreign state actors exploiting social divisions by inciting hate online, these are worrying and practically mutually reinforcing trends that could amount to a “perfect storm” from a counter-terrorism standpoint.

The issue of VRWE has been on the agenda of the EU for some time. It was discussed, in particular, during the Finnish Presidency in 2019, the French Presidency in 2022, the Swedish Presidency in 2023 as well as during the Belgian and the Hungarian Presidencies in 2024.

¹ United Nations, a report of the Secretary-General notes an increase in terrorist attacks described as motivated by “far-right” or “extreme right-wing” ideology as a growing concern and transnational threat [n2245052.pdf \(un.org\)](#); Agreed working definition of the EU: “Violent right-wing extremism (VRWE) are acts of individuals or groups who use, incite, threaten with, legitimise or support violence and hatred to further their political or ideological goals, motivated by ideologies based on the rejection of democratic order and values as well as of fundamental rights, and centred on exclusionary nationalism, racism, xenophobia and/or related intolerance.” https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/VRWE%20working%20definition_en.pdf

The work strands adopted at the time are still relevant but additional challenges have arisen in the meantime. **This note analyses the evolving threat and sets out recommendations to address it.**

1. Development of the threat

Violent right-wing rhetoric about the “**Great Replacement**” and the alleged threat posed by immigrants continues to **inspire terrorist attacks** against ethnic or religious minorities. In addition, demonisation of Jews, LGBTI people and other minority communities, notably online, is contributing to a rise in **hate crimes** in Europe, the US, and elsewhere.²

Even if the most devastating right-wing terrorist attacks in the past two decades took place outside the EU – in **Norway** in 2011 (Utoya and Oslo) and in **New Zealand** in 2019 (Christchurch) – Europe became a theatre for VRWE attacks as well.

To recall the recent history, the Dutch intelligence service AIVD marked 2019 as “the year of right-wing terrorist attacks worldwide”.³ Numerous other deadly VRWE incidents have taken place in this very year and in recent years in Europe and beyond.⁴ More recently, in June 2024 there were two stabbings in the **Finnish city of Oulu** motivated by far-right and racist ideologies.⁵

One of the perpetrators was of 15 years of age and both victims had a foreign background. At the same time, **France** stated a severe increase of “extreme right violence” attacks with 22 incidents since the year 2023.⁶ A recent case is sticking out: The racially motivated execution of a Tunisian resident by his French neighbour in **Pudget-sur-Argens** in late May 2025, which is being investigated as a far-right terror crime by the French authorities.⁷

² Global Project against Hate and Extremism: [Mapping The Far Right: The Movement's Conferences Illuminate Its Growing Transnational Networks - Global Project Against Hate and Extremism \(globalextremism.org\)](https://globalextremism.org/)

³ Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst (AIVD), Jaarverslag 2019, Den Haag 2020, page 17.

⁴ Notably in Germany (Hanau 2019 and Halle/Saale 2020), Slovakia (Bratislava 2022) and in the USA (Pittsburgh 2018, El Paso 2019 and Buffalo 2022). Noteworthy, in Germany there were previously other major cases of right-wing inspired terrorism such the Munich shooting 2016 in a shopping mall (9 people killed, another 36 injured) and the terrorist network of the “National Socialist Underground” between 2000-2007 (10 people killed).

⁵ Man with 'far-right ties' arrested for knife attacks on two children in Finland | Euronews <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/06/14/man-with-far-right-ties-arrested-for-knife-attacks-on-two-children-in-finland>

⁶ Le Monde ['Extreme right violence in France is on the rise'](#)

⁷ France 24 ['Why this hatred': French town reels over killing of Tunisian man](#)

In July, the French authorities stated that they had prevented an Incel attack – the first case of this kind in France. Some experts view the Incel worldview as a form of right-wing extremism.⁸

In August 2024 an 18-year-old man from **Türkiye** livestreamed his attack, **stabbing five people** outside a mosque in the country. Before the attack, he shared multiple posts from the terrorist online media outlet “**Terrorgram**”⁹ with others. Afterwards, one of the “Terrorgram” leaders confirmed in a group chat that the attacker was “100% our guy.”¹⁰

Many other attempts have been **thwarted** by law enforcement agencies across Europe.

Just before the editorial deadline of this paper, two executive measures of EU member states law enforcement agencies illustrated the threat posed by VRWE: On 21st May 2025, the **German authorities** arrested members of an alleged **right-wing terrorist network**. The so-called “**last line of defence**”-group presumably committed attacks on refugee premises and has been preparing further attacks. Among the arrested suspects there is a 14-year-old boy and two teenagers of 15 years.¹¹

On 17th June 2025 the police dismantled an **armed “far-right group” in Portugal**¹² and arrested six people. The suspects are accused of creating an illegal armed militia and of procuring firearms and explosives for this purpose.

⁸ Le Monde, *Projet d’attentat masculiniste déjoué : une première en France, où la menace « incel » est émergente*, https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2025/07/02/projet-d-attentat-masculiniste-dejoue-une-premiere-en-france-ou-la-menace-incel-est-emergente_6617439_3224.html

⁹ UK Government, *Terrorgram collective now proscribed as terrorist organisation* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/terrorgram-collective-now-proscribed-as-terrorist-organisation>

¹⁰ Courtesy of Europol.

¹¹ *Razzia gegen mutmaßliche rechte Terrorgruppe - fünf junge Männer festgenommen*, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/razzia-terrorgruppe-100.html>

¹² Reuters: *Portugal police dismantle armed far-right group, arrest six*, <https://www.reuters.com/world/portugal-police-dismantle-armed-far-right-group-arrest-six-2025-06-17/>

Transnational links between foreign VRWE groups are increasing, with the phenomenon of **accelerationism**¹³ posing the most concerning threat. Numerous planned attacks were orchestrated by young individuals, highlighting the growing vulnerability of younger demographics to extremist recruitment, particularly via digital platforms.

1.1. Multi-layered and diversified threat¹⁴

The VRWE landscape has become more diverse in recent years, ranging from “**traditional groups**” like “Blood and Honour” and **accelerationists** such as “The Base” and the Nordic Resistance Movement to the somewhat distinct trend of the “Reichsbürger”¹⁵ and **sovereign citizens**¹⁶.

¹³ Brookings Institution: *Riots, white supremacy, and accelerationism*, “Accelerationism is the idea that white supremacists should try to increase civil disorder - accelerate it - in order to foster polarization that will tear apart the current political order. The System (usually capitalized), they believe, has only a finite number of collaborators and lackeys to prop it up. Accelerationists hope to set off a series of chain reactions, with violence fomenting violence, and in the ensuing cycle more and more people join the fray. When confronted with extremes, so the theory goes, those in the middle will be forced off the fence and go to the side of the white supremacists. If violence can be increased sufficiently, the System will run out of lackeys and collapse, and the race war will commence.”,

¹⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/riots-white-supremacy-and-accelerationism/>
This paper focusses on the threat posed by VRWE actors, the policy implications arising from this and recommendations for the response. The analysis comprises extremist and terrorist right-wing actors only; any right-wing populist movements or legal right-wing political parties of the EU member states are not subject of this analysis. Regarding the extremist phenomena within this subject, there are numerous other aspects beyond the scope of this paper that would merit separate in-depth attention. For instance, analysis about links to state actors and state sponsorship. There are various reports about the Russian Federation supporting VRWE actors in Europe and hosting relevant stakeholders of VRWE internet fora. Partial overlaps in right-wing and left-wing ideologies, e.g. on Antisemitism, would require a separate up to date in-depth view. Furthermore, there are non-European VRWE groups like the Turkish “Grey wolves” active within the EU. Moreover, emphasis of further research could be placed on the aspect of gaining active combat experience in conflict zones. The war in Ukraine, for example, has caused friction within the VRWE landscape; with some elements actively seeking to participate in the war on the side of Russia and some on the Ukrainian side. Returning VRWE fighters from conflict zones pose a threat category sui generis for the home countries. Finally, sports and extremism with regard to VRWE is still a relevant field – this is true for combat sports but also for football, given the links between hooliganism and VRWE groups.

¹⁵ Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz (BfV), “*Reichsbürger*” and “*Selbstverwalter*”
https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/EN/topics/reichsbuerger-and-selbstverwalter/reichsbuerger-and-selbstverwalter_node.html

¹⁶ De Volkskrant, *Soevereine ‘terroristen’ hadden burgemeester van Deventer in vizier voor aanslag* | de Volkskrant <https://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/soevereine-terroristen-hadden-burgemeester-van-deventer-in-vizier-voor-aanslag~b1d1686a/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

While only a small core of these “sovereignist” actors are considered to be an active part of the VRWE communities, there is a significant overlap in ideological views and propaganda.

In many EU Member States, violent right-wing extremists have latched onto anti-system protests and appropriated their political grievances. Violent anti-system extremism has sometimes contributed to a normalisation of violent right-wing extremist views¹⁷.

Some VRWE attackers cite “**eco-fascist**” ideas alongside other motives to justify their acts,¹⁸e.g. in Norway and Sweden in 2019¹⁹.

Another new aspect of the VRWE threat concerns **physical training and radicalisation “on the spot”** in so-called “**Active Clubs**”²⁰, neo-Nazi athletic and fight clubs popular among European and North American white nationalists. Active Clubs promote a white supremacist worldview, advocating for the elevation of “white racial consciousness.” Positioned as patriotic crusaders and champions of a perceived victimised white population, these semi-autonomous groups have been proliferating across the EU. They are particularly growing since 2022 and spreading globally.

¹⁷ EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, ST 13177/22 LIMITE “Violent Anti-System Extremism”

¹⁸ The perpetrator of Christchurch referred to himself as eco-fascist in his manifesto and vowed to “kill the overpopulation” and to “save the environment”. The perpetrator of the 2019 attack supermarket in El Paso, Texas – killing 23 people of Latino origin – justified his attack based on environmental damage caused by consumerism and what he called “a Hispanic invasion of Texas” – see *The white-supremacist perpetrator’s views*, cf. Luke Darby, “*What Is Eco-Fascism, the Ideology Behind Attacks in El Paso and Christchurch?*”, GQ, 2019: <https://www.gq.com/story/what-is-eco-fascism>

¹⁹ EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Document ST 5982/24 LIMITE “The role of climate change and environmental concerns in violent extremist and terrorist radicalisation in the EU”

²⁰ Active Clubs can be best characterised as localised neo-Nazi groups centred around the notion of engaging in physical workouts and martial arts training together. Although explicitly white nationalist, these groups, akin to some modern racist organisations, attempt to conceal their true intentions. Operated semi-autonomously on a local level, they maintain international relations with other Active Clubs. The rapid expansion of these groups can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, there is an ease of entry for starting clubs, allowing anyone, anywhere to initiate one. If a club gains sufficient traction, it becomes recognised. Secondly, Active Clubs are part of the latest iteration of white nationalism, adopting a softer public image.

There are currently about 100 Active Clubs across the US, Canada and the EU, with multiple transnational links.²¹ Recruitment largely takes place offline and via personal contacts. Members of the Active Clubs pursue a **strategy of hiding “in plain sight”** by feigning an ordinary image. This is to avoid targeted scrutiny from law enforcement agencies. A common behaviour is using **disguised violence to gain practice** (such as violence in pubs or trains that, at first glance, cannot be attributed to VRWE motives) **without leaving manifestos**.

VRWE movements also seek to **exploit other sporting milieus to infiltrate their ideologies**²². In Italy, since the 1990s, there has been a shift in radicalised football supporters' groups ("ultras") from far-left ideologies to right-wing extremism, with the **instrumentalization of social concerns (e.g. economic welfare, housing, migration)** being reflected down to the local level.

VRWE actors often **combine features of various ideologies** that resonate with their worldview without fully adhering to any one in particular.²³ As a result, VRWE perpetrators can now choose from a range of justifications beyond “traditional” VRWE xenophobic patterns²⁴.

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- ²¹ BBC *Far-right group using sports to 'build militia', experts warn* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5ydnqdg38wo>, Counter Extremism Project (CEP) *White Supremacy Groups in the United States* https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/supremacy_landing_files/U.S.%20White%20Supremacy%20Groups_090624.pdf
- ²² PBC *Radicalisation in Sports – Conclusion Paper of the first meeting on 3-4 March 2025*.
- ²³ Europol, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend report 2023*, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/European%20Union%20Terrorism%20Situation%20and%20Trend%20report%202023.pdf>
- ²⁴ The European Commission has been addressing the issue of radicalisation in Right-wing Extremism by several initiatives together with the Member States via the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). For example, cf. Digital small-scale expert meeting - *The impact of right-wing extremist narratives on societal debate, increasing the breeding ground for VRWE*, 28 May 2024 - European Commission, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/publications/digital-small-scale-expert-meeting-impact-right-wing-extremist-narratives-societal-debate-increasing_en and [ran vrwe in western balkans overview 072022 en.pdf](#)

1.2. Social media and artificial intelligence

VRWE networks and single actors increasingly use new technologies, benefiting from social media (for **both advertising and conspirative purposes**) and dedicated online spheres like “Gore Networks”.²⁵ Their strategy is to **mainstream extremist content through mass proliferation** and to **make themselves attractive to young people**.

In recent years, a **drastic increase in VRWE material** has been noted on mainstream platforms like Facebook and X. In addition, TikTok and Telegram²⁶ provide a permissive environment and often serve as entry points to the scene. In VRWE communities, lists are shared of online platforms and tools with limited or even no restrictions on content that can be uploaded. Where there is content moderation, VRWE actors pass filters by creative means – recommending supporters, for instance, to **embed memes and messages** in landscape pictures (far-right figures produced a ‘guide to memetic warfare’ advising others on how to use AI-generated image tools to create extremist memes²⁷). Advice can be found online on how to slightly adjust swastika or prohibited SS symbols to pass filters. Another tactic is to **use “journalistic freedoms”** like satire or to feign an academic motive, allegedly “analysing” propaganda.

²⁵ Gore sites serve as digital hubs for the sharing of real-life killings, torture, and other forms of violence (for further information confer to “*Gore and violent extremism: How extremist groups exploit ‘gore’ sites to view and share terrorist material*”(isdglobal.org), https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/gore-and-violent-extremism-how-extremist-groups-exploit-gore-sites-to-view-and-share-terrorist-material/

²⁶ In the aftermath of the arrest of Telegram's founder in August 2024 by French judicial authorities and subsequent charges against leaders of the Terrorgram Collective, many extremist groups have transitioned to platforms like SimpleX Chat. This shift was motivated by concerns over Telegram's privacy policies, perceived as insufficient for avoiding law enforcement scrutiny. SimpleX Chat has become particularly attractive to these groups due to its robust privacy features, including default end-to-end encryption and the absence of requirements for users to provide personal identifiers like phone numbers or email addresses. These security measures significantly enhance user anonymity, making it challenging for authorities to track and intercept communications. The preference for SimpleX Chat among neo-Nazi and accelerationist groups is chiefly due to its enhanced ability to shield user identities and its network structure that minimizes external monitoring. This high level of security is crucial for extremist groups intent on keeping their operations hidden from law enforcement agencies.

²⁷ ICCT, *Exploitation of Generative AI by Terrorist Groups*
<https://www.icct.nl/publication/exploitation-generative-ai-terrorist-groups>

The takedown of the “**Terrorgram Collective**”, following its designation as a terrorist group by the UK and the US, has shown that accelerationist networks are creating their own spheres of influence. Terrorgram consisted of a network of VRWE channels posting violent and terrorist content (such as glorifying white-nationalist shootings: “Between 1968 and 2021, 105 men have waged the war for our race on their own”). Many extremists active in Terrorgram committed acts of violence previously, which demonstrates that they do not just present a rhetorical threat.

Furthermore, VRWE networks are **infiltrating other communities** attractive to young people, such as **gaming spaces**. These offer an even stronger **sense of belonging and identity** than mainstream social media and provide secure and **covert communication channels**.

Finally, “**Gore Networks**” serve as platforms for VRWE actors to exploit apolitical minors who harbour a **fascination for violence**. Some of these are hidden in the deep web while others are part of online communities that are more easily accessible (e.g. on Telegram and Discord). VRWE networks also use specific areas of the internet for either **licit collection of revenue (donations, merchandising livestreams of events²⁸)** or **illicit procurement (theft, fraud, drug trafficking)**. Some rely on **crypto accounts** to conceal their activities.²⁹

²⁸ Also, crowdfunding platforms, concerts, tickets and merchandise sales, advertising, acquiring sponsors and offering premium membership by offering access to exclusive content etc.

²⁹ U.S. Treasury: *2024 National Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment* (NTFRA), <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/2024-National-Terrorist-Financing-Risk-Assessment.pdf>

VRWE networks and individuals are capitalising on **artificial intelligence**³⁰ (including Generative AI) for “jailbreaking” (technical manipulation) and collective intelligence efforts (where applicable, e.g. ChatGPT). A popular method of steering AI is “crowdsourcing”³¹, a collective intelligence approach based on the procurement of certain information – the greater the number of users, the more sustainable the impact. They also use **artificial intelligence** to make content more attractive and to broaden their target audience across borders. For instance: AI recently produced original videos of the “Third Reich” with Adolf Hitler’s real voice in English.

Additional challenges are posed by non-cooperative legislations - such as the Russian Federation – offering a safe haven for right-wing extremist online content and actors.³²

1.3. Involvement of minors

Recent cases, e.g. from Scandinavia and the US, show very young individuals embroiled in VRWE. There is a trend of involvement of ever-younger boys, with some plotters as young as **11-years old**: Many of these very young individuals are described as **lonely, disconnected adolescents searching for community and identity**. Other motives are “rebellion against authority”, a **predisposition for violence, exercising power over others and obtaining a “hero status” online** and among real-life peers. VRWE actors are keenly aware of the vulnerability of male teenagers to their messages, designing online iconography and aesthetics that appeal to them.

³⁰ VRWE groups continue utilising AI to enhance their activities. This ranges from interactive recruitment to sophisticated propaganda creation and behaviour manipulation on social media. By using AI, these groups produce highly targeted and impactful content, making the spread and normalisation of neo-Nazi and other extremist ideologies more effective. AI-generated content has the potential to amplify extremist messages.

³¹ Definition cf. University of Washington, Artificial Intelligence and Collective Intelligence,” In summary, crowdsourcing, a popular form of collective intelligence, has close connections to artificial intelligence. An increasing number of machine-learning applications are trained with data produced by crowd annotation. Furthermore, many AI methods can be used to improve crowdsourcing. In particular, expectation maximization may be used to aggregate the results of multiple imprecise workers, learning worker accuracies at the same time.”
<https://homes.cs.washington.edu/~weld/papers/ci-chapter2014.pdf>

³² e.g. *How Russia Uses Neo-Nazi Groups to Spread Chaos and Meet the Male State: Russia’s Nastiest Online Hate Group* – Bellingcat <https://www.voanews.com/a/how-russia-uses-neo-nazi-groups-to-spread-chaos/6629981.html>

In many democracies, there is a particular legal challenge linked to this kind of threat: law enforcement and intelligence agencies face **legal limits** in **monitoring minors**. This can lead to a **lack of surveillance**, may limit the exchange of information domestically and internationally, and could hamper prosecutions. In many cases, **youth welfare authorities** are responsible, but they do not always have procedures in place to deal with VRWE perpetrators. Therefore, early prevention and the exchange of best practices are key to cope with this challenge.

1.4. 3D-printed weapons

The popularity of 3D-printable weapons is persistent and likely to increase. 3D-printing presents a cheap alternative to the procurement of regular weapons and offers more room for conspirative preparations. Recent reports point to an **increase of 3D-printed homemade weapons in the possession of violent right-wing extremists**. The following cases are examples:

- In 2023, Europol and Eurojust supported police in Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Lithuania, Romania and Italy in an operation leading to the arrest of five VRWE suspects and the seizure of data carriers and weapons. The suspects allegedly belong to a right-wing extremist organisation that used an online platform for terrorist-related activities, including dissemination of propaganda, recruitment and sharing manuals of 3D printed weapons.³³
- In Finland, law enforcement agencies detected semi-automatic assault rifles among seized 3D-printed weapons, leading in 2023 to the first conviction for VRWE terrorist offences in Finnish history.³⁴ Members of the network continued to spread accelerationist material and 3D weapons manuals after their release from prison.

³³ Europol: *Five right-wing terrorists arrested throughout Europe with the support of Eurojust and Europol*, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol>

³⁴ Finland's National Public Broadcasting Company: *Court jails "race war" neo-Nazis in Finland's first far-right terrorism conviction* Yle News, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20057870>

- In 2022, an individual was arrested in Slovakia who had published instructions and diagrams for the production of improvised automatic firearms (made from a combination of homemade metal and 3D printed parts), manuals on the production of explosives and mines and guidelines on ways to carry out sabotage.³⁵

According to the data available, in most of the cases it was still necessary to include further external hardware components (that cannot be printed by 3D, e.g. full-metal pieces) in the production to create a functional 3D printed weapon.

2. Measures to address the VRWE threat

The EU has recently taken a number of initiatives with regard to VRWE and compiled internal and external expertise.³⁶

2.1. Terrorist designations

Terrorist designations are a powerful legal tool that enhance accountability and show **the resilience of our democracies**. Democracies outside the EU have designated many VRWE groups,³⁷ including the United Kingdom’s aforementioned designation and takedown of the “Terrorgram Collective”.

³⁵ Eurojust: *Slovak and Czech authorities take action against right-wing terrorism*, <https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/news/slovak-and-czech-authorities-take-action-against-right-wing-terrorism>

³⁶ On 14 May 2024, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Policy Support hosted a thematic research Meeting (TRM) entitled, “European Right-Wing Extremist Transnational Linkages”. During the meeting, a group of researchers, policymakers, and experts from across the EU discussed and shared insights about this topic.

³⁷ USA: Russian Imperial Movement, Nordic Resistance Movement
Canada: Aryan Strikeforce, Three Percenters, Blood and Honour, Comat 18, Proud Boys, Atomwaffen Division / National Socialist Order, The Base, Russian Imperial Movement
United Kingdom: Feuerkrieg Division, National Action, Sonnenkrieg Division, Atomwaffen Division / National Socialist Order, The Base, Terrorgram Collective
Australia: Sonnenkrieg Division, Atomwaffen Division / National Socialist Order, The Base
New Zealand: Proud Boys, The Base

In January 2024, as the first Member State of the EU, **the Netherlands listed “The Base”** at national level as a terrorist organization. Following the Netherlands’ designation at national level, on 26 July 2024 **the Council of the EU decided to add “The Base” to the EU Terrorist List (pursuant to CP931).**³⁸ This decision was particularly significant as this was the **first VRWE group designated by the EU** as a terrorist entity.³⁹ **“The Base”** is a violent neo-Nazi accelerationist group founded 2018 in the US by an individual now living in Russia, which **advocates a societal collapse in order to create a regime based on white supremacy.** Its ideology is inspired by the extremist so-called **“Siege culture”**,⁴⁰ one of the most extreme interpretations of fascism and national socialism, combining elements of anti-democracy, anti-Semitism and “Aryan” supremacy.

As legislation varies across EU MS, designations have different types of legal effects. Unlike the EU, France and Germany, for instance, can use legal means to bring about the dissolution of VRWE organisations. Since 2017, the French government dissolved 36 “ultra-right” entities.⁴¹ Germany banned 20 VRWE organisations due to their actions directed against the constitutional order and within the meaning of the constitutional Basic Law as well as of the Act Governing Private Associations (“Vereinsgesetz”).⁴²

³⁸ Council of the European Union: *Sanctions against terrorism: Council renews the EU Terrorist List and designates a new entity*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/07/26/sanctions-against-terrorism-council-renews-the-eu-terrorist-list-and-designates-a-new-entity/>

³⁹ ICCT: *The Base, and the Basis for Listing Far-Right Terror Groups*, <https://www.icct.nl/publication/base-and-basis-listing-far-right-terror-groups>

⁴⁰ ICCT: *Siege Culture After Siege: Anatomy of a Neo-Nazi Terrorist Doctrine*, <https://www.icct.nl/sites/default/files/2022-12/siege-culture-neo-nazi-terrorist-doctrine.pdf>

⁴¹ LES ECHOS : *La dissolution d'associations, une pratique record depuis 2017*, <https://www.lesechos.fr/politique-societe/politique/la-dissolution-dassociations-une-pratique-record-depuis-2017-2040012>

⁴² BMI: *Vereinsverbote - Vereinsverbote* <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/sicherheit/extremismus/vereinsverbote/vereinsverbote-artikel.html#doc9391486bodyText1>

Further encouraging examples include the ban of the “Nordic Resistance Movement” in Finland in 2020 due to its unlawful activities and promotion of violence. Apart from proscriptions as terrorist organizations, there are examples of holding actors accountable as criminal right-wing organization, such as the Greek “Golden Dawn” in 2020: “In a landmark verdict in Greece’s highest-profile political trial in decades, an Athens court (...) found the neo-fascist party Golden Dawn guilty of running a criminal organization as it rose to prominence during the country’s financial crisis, systematically targeting migrants and left-wing critics.”⁴³

Transnational freezing of funds and the swift tackling of successor structures and offshoots pose a challenge across jurisdictions.

2.2. EU Internet Forum (EUIF)

Given the gaps in terrorism designations, the EU Internet Forum⁴⁴ developed a **list of VRWE groups online, symbols, and manifestos** to inform online content moderation efforts by industry stakeholders. This list is not legally binding and based on input from Member States and vetted researchers. This was a step forward to tackle the emerging challenges posed by VRWE presence online. Furthermore, the **EUIF Handbook on borderline content** further informs tech companies on tactics and types of content that are misused by, among others, VRWE actors to circumvent content moderation efforts by industry. **VRWE's online fundraising activities** have been discussed with EUIF members, particularly in relation to merchandising and crowdfunding campaigns, with a view to **strengthening technology companies' Terms of Service** and developing a multi-stakeholder response framework, including private industry and law enforcement. Despite the need for a greater commitment of the tech companies, **maintaining the previous and current measures** is already a success **in the face of transatlantic, geopolitical and global uncertainties**.

⁴³ New York Times: *Greece's Golden Dawn Found Guilty of Running Criminal Organization* , <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/world/europe/golden-dawn-guilty-verdict-greece.html>

⁴⁴ The EU Internet Forum, launched by the Commission in 2015, brings together EU Member States, EFTA countries, tech industry and civil society organisations to take voluntary action against illegal and harmful content online.

2.3. EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation

Through the **EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation**, the European Commission plans to provide training programmes to policymakers and practitioners, giving them the knowledge and expertise to counteract extremist violent right-wing messaging online. The trainings are designed to provide guidance on using innovative tools and strategies to reach diverse audiences and to amplify alternative narratives.

In addition, through the EU Knowledge Hub, the European Commission will implement a **Media and Social Media Monitoring Analysis service** aimed at analysing the challenges posed by violent right-wing extremist narratives and other ideologies. This service will systematically track and analyse content from traditional media, social media platforms and fringe outlets to identify and monitor extremist narratives that foster VRWE ideologies and equip policymakers with insights to disrupt these.⁴⁵

The EU Knowledge Hub identifies the **radicalisation of minors** as a cross-cutting priority, to ensure that it is addressed across all its strands of work. The Knowledge Hub collaborates with stakeholders beyond the security sector, implementing measures in education, social inclusion, digital literacy, and equal access to employment opportunities. It supports Member States in taking and implementing early preventive measures, involving all relevant national authorities.

⁴⁵ One of the thematic panels of the EU Knowledge Hub's work, bringing together policy makers, practitioners and researchers, is dedicated to "addressing violent and non-violent extremist ideologies, fragmented ideologies, and conspiracy theories and narratives". In the coming years this panel is expected to explore developments within VRWE and suggest new policy options to deal with those.

2.4. The criminalisation of illicit manufacture of firearms and essential components (including by new technology, such as 3D printers) at EU level

The **UN Protocol on Firearms**⁴⁶, which the EU signed and ratified in 2002⁴⁷, criminalises the illicit manufacture of firearms and their essential components, including those produced using advanced technologies such as 3D printing.

As part of the **2020-2025 EU Action Plan on firearms trafficking**, the Commission has identified the need to examine potential gaps and establish common criminal law standards on firearms. It has initiated work on a legislative initiative to harmonise criminalisation of firearms-related offences. In its impact assessment, the Commission will evaluate the use of emerging technologies, including 3D printing, in the illicit manufacture of firearms and components, and consider introducing the use of such technologies as an aggravating factor. Additionally, the Commission will assess the need to criminalise the creation, possession, and dissemination of digital blueprints for the illicit manufacture of firearms or essential components.

2.5. International cooperation

In the EU's meetings with third countries and Member States, VRWE is more frequently on the agenda than before. However, there is **still room for more information sharing**, in particular on **transnational links**. VRWE ideology is on the rise in many states **beyond Europe** and North America, for instance in Brazil and Argentina. To give an example: several cases of paramilitary **training camps in Brazil** and contacts between local VRWE groups and individuals in Europe have been reported.

⁴⁶ Article 5 of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

⁴⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001D0748&qid=1737558142217>

International CT cooperation between States should match transnational connectivity among violent Jihadism and violent right-wing terrorism alike. This requires the establishment of **a structured transnational response to VRWE, as already exists for the Jihadist terrorist threat**. In addition, the GCTF and the IIJ in Malta have developed a toolkit for governments to address the problem.⁴⁸ Interpol is now also developing projects to counter right-wing violent extremism. UNODC has published a manual for criminal justice practitioners.⁴⁹

Violent right-wing extremism is mentioned in the UN's Global CT Strategy, but discussion at UN level is highly politicised. **Russia** deliberately spreads disinformation that fuels VRWE in the EU.⁵⁰ Discussions are complicated because of UN Member States' divergent approaches (including regarding the role of civil society and human rights) and definitions. The **lack of a universally accepted definition of terrorism** facilitates the misuse of Counter-Terrorism policies for political motives, exacerbating this divergence. Some States belonging to the **"Global South" frame violent right-wing extremism as a problem of the "Western world" and of "White Supremacy"**, allegedly rooted in post-colonial arrogance. The upcoming review of UN's Global CT Strategy will provide an opportunity to align positions with like-minded partners and states of the "Global South".

⁴⁸ GCTF: *Toolkit on racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism* (REMVE), [https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Links/Meetings/2022/CC20/Documents/REMVE Toolkit/GCTF REMVE Toolkit.pdf?ver=0ulGjk8DJNGEIqHNmdYQrA%3d%3d](https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Links/Meetings/2022/CC20/Documents/REMVE%20Toolkit/GCTF%20REMVE%20Toolkit.pdf?ver=0ulGjk8DJNGEIqHNmdYQrA%3d%3d)

⁴⁹ UNODC: *Manual on Prevention of and Responses to Terrorist Attacks on the Basis of Xenophobia, Racism and Other Forms of Intolerance, or in the Name of Religion or Belief* (unodc.org) [https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/ManualXRIRB/UNODC Manual on Prevention of and Responses to Terrorist Attacks on the basis of XRIRB.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/ManualXRIRB/UNODC%20Manual%20on%20Prevention%20of%20and%20Responses%20to%20Terrorist%20Attacks%20on%20the%20basis%20of%20XRIRB.pdf)

⁵⁰ Russia uses terms like "Nazis" arbitrarily to justify its war against Ukraine. In the OSCE, the Russian aggression against Ukraine and its attempts to link the Ukrainian government to Nazism is overshadowing the work to prevent and counter violent right-wing extremism and terrorism.

2.6. New U.S. Administration and the future of established fora

A significant contribution in the international fight against the VRWE threat was provided by the former U.S. administration. So far, there were **promising initiatives** to build on, including the informal **multilateral fora initiated by the US** to bring together experts on VRWE: the Counterterrorism Law Enforcement Forum (CTLEF) and the Transnational Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism Intelligence and Strategy Conference (TRISC). **Strengthening these efforts** was considered to be a key success factor. It would appear that the current US administration is reviewing existing counter- terrorism priorities and may set new ones. This may affect the existing multilateral cooperation platforms, although at the time of writing it is too early to draw conclusions about this. Nevertheless, it remains in the interest of the EU and its member states to advocate for a continuation of our joint efforts with the US and consider alternative fundings and European leadership of the above mentioned fora, if necessary. It should also be noted that the recent trend of nihilistic violent extremism is recognised by US counterparts and may be a topic on which to concentrate future CT dialogues and cooperation.

3. Recommendations

- a) **Reduce the permissive online environment for VRWE content and interaction**, inter alia by using existing formats like the EU Internet Forum and calling for a greater commitment of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT). These efforts should focus on addressing the misuse of social media and emerging technologies by VRWE groups, while exploring innovative solutions to counter harmful/borderline content and interactions. This work should also consider the **challenges and opportunities posed by generative-AI and the Metaverse**. Tech companies must take greater responsibility in areas such as content moderation and the **algorithmic amplification** of extremist content, ensuring their platforms do not inadvertently contribute to radicalising processes. **For the time being, preserve previous and current efforts of the tech companies in the face of global uncertainties.**

- b) **Work on improving the understanding of the transnational cooperation and dynamics among VRWE groups and single actors through the EU Knowledge Hub**, in particular, **by paying attention to dynamic characteristics like “Active Clubs”, gaming communities and accelerationist networks**. EU Institutions and Member States may do so by drawing on the expertise of EU INTCEN, Europol and Eurojust. CEPOL could also be involved in offering training courses in its catalogue that are more specifically dedicated to these manifestations.
- c) **Take into account the ever-younger age of perpetrators in cooperation across services**. Member States, also in the context of the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation, could strengthen their work with national youth welfare agencies and engage with local communities to address this explicit problem at an early stage. Protecting minors online is one of the a priorities of the upcoming Commission’s Project Based Collaboration on online radicalisation and Member States are encouraged to actively participate in it to share their views and concerns, as well as to work together.
- d) **Work towards a common understanding of the availability and imminent threat posed by 3D-printed weapons**. The Commission has launched a firearms trafficking initiative aimed at harmonizing the criminalization of firearms-related offences. Amongst other threats, the Commission has included the threat posed by 3D-printed firearms, essential components and ammunitions. A possible legislative step would be the criminalisation of possession, creation and dissemination of blueprints needed to illicitly print weapons.

- e) **Make greater use of the CP931 regime to designate violent right-wing individuals, groups and entities** when Member States have clear evidence to qualify their actions. Exchange between Member States on best legal and administrative practices, as well as on national mechanisms in place to enable the designation of VRWE individuals, groups and entities. **The EU institutions and Member States could work more closely with like-minded third countries that have already listed these groups**, particularly on the exchange of information and evidence to build strong cases in accordance with the European Court of Justice case law. The CT Dialogues can also be used to facilitate the exchange of views on these issues with third countries. Working towards common answers to pivotal related subjects like the transnational seizure of funds and tackling offshoots and successor models.
- f) **Maintain a close exchange of information with the European Parliament about the threats posed by VRWE** to the EU.
- g) **Enhance the information sharing bilaterally and multilaterally with like-minded third countries** beyond Europe and North America – in particular, extending the cooperation with affected “Global South” countries – and keep the threat posed by VRWE groups on the agenda of international organisations.
- h) **Maintain the existing informal fora - if necessary with alternative fundings and European leadership – while preserving the transatlantic cooperation on VRWE** as much as possible, e.g. by focussing on overlaps regarding nihilistic violent extremism and terrorism.
- i) **Advocate for including a clear reference to violent right-wing extremism and terrorism in the text of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**, in the context of its 9th review.
- j) **Maintain a strong joint EU position in international fora against the misuse of VRWE threats** by third States for ulterior political purposes.
- k) **Keep VRWE on the EU agenda of the Council with a view to updating the EU’s work strands on a regular basis** and passing the results to incoming presidencies for further consideration.