SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FROM RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM IN EUROPEAN UNION

Tanja Miloshevska[22]

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje,
Institute for Security, Defence and Peace

Tatjana Stojanoska-Ivanova[23]

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje,
Institute of Sociology

Marjan Gjurovski[24]

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje,
Institute for Security, Defence and Peace

Abstract: This paper aim is an analyze how right-wing terrorism seeks to change the entire political, social and economic system to a right-wing extremist model.

One cause for concern is the increasingly young age of suspects linked to violent online communities of varying degrees of organization. In this paper we draw attention that video games and video game communication applications were increasingly used in 2020 for spreading rightwing terrorist and extremist propaganda, in particular among young people. In 2020, transnational sources of inspiration, such as the Siege culture, popularized in the virtual world, were observed to gain more traction especially with extremists that were younger in age than previously typical on the extreme right at national level.
COVID-19 was observed to accelerate the trend of spreading right-wing extremist propaganda online, rather than offline. Right-wing extremists exploited COVID-19 to support their narratives of accelerationism and conspiracy theories featuring anti-Semitic, anti-immigration and anti-Islamic rhetoric. Also, they seek to extend their influence to other circles or sectors of activity (e.g., sports hooligans).
In general, the right-wing extremist scene can be described as very heterogeneous, with differing manifestations in terms of organization, political objectives and the preferred means of achieving these.
The right-wing extremist spectrum is a mixture of prejudices, contemptuous and totalitarian ideologies that, each in their own way, had security implications.

Key words: right-wing terrorism, extremism, attacks, security.

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[22] Contact address: tanja@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

[23] Contact address: tanjaosi@yahoo.com

[24] Contact address: marjan.gjurovski@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

Introduction

Right-wing violence in Europe is not new, however, in the last decade a revival of militant right-wing extremist groups, networks, and incidents have occurred. Since 2012 xenophobic and racist incidents have increased in almost all European countries, Europe is experiencing a new wave of violent far-right radicalisation. This increase of incidents come along with a surge of anti-immigration and Islamophobic violence, as well as: anti-government attacks, assaults on political opponents, ethnic minorities, and homosexuals. Nevertheless, there is an issue: right-wing terrorist attacks are seen mostly as isolated events; one of the many problematics in the study of right-wing terrorism is that such attacks have been classified as hate crimes instead of terrorism.

Terrorists and radicalized groups resemble an iceberg. Only a small minority of radicals use strategic violence to attract media attention. The majority of extremists are not visible and use non-violent methods, which are more effective in achieving their stated goals. Below the water level, there is a support base which occasionally agrees with the actions of the most committed militants and an even larger "silent minority" with a distaste for targeting non-combatants.

Counter-terrorism must target the visible part of the iceberg, whereas counter-radicalization needs to aim at the underwater section of the iceberg, which is much larger. Not the other way around (Muro, 2016).

Although acts of terror are not exclusively a product of the radicalization process, understanding the correlation is principal to successfully countering violent right-wing extremism.

Terminology, forms and manifestations

(Violent) Extremism

Any ideology that opposes a society's core values and principles. Many distinguish political from religious extremism. Although extremists do not necessarily engage in violence, the phrase violent extremism is used in contexts where extremist worldviews are accompanied by the justification and use of extreme violence (such as atrocity crimes) against those who do not share the same belief or ideology. Violent extremism may be expressed by individuals or groups through speeches or media posts, by carrying out isolated acts of violence in the name of extremist ideologies, or by physically joining violent groups. (Aroua, 2018).

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The OSCE has specific and intentional terminology for these concepts: violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. "Radicalization that leads to terrorism" refers to "the dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or to engage in, terrorism" (OSCE, 2018).

As argued by Schmid, what is generally meant by radicalization is the "individual or group process of growing commitment to engage in acts of political terrorism" (Schmid, 2013). Finally, a working definition of "violent radicalization" is provided by the European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalization which has defined it as "socialization to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism" (Expert Group, 2008).

Radicalization leading to violence is not a new phenomenon. It may take diverse forms depending on the context and time period, and may be associated with different causes or ideologies. In the last century many countries suffered from violence of different forms including, amongst others, urban violence, the emergence of a violent sub-culture, right and left-wing extremist violence, nationalist and religiously motivated violence. The following descriptions are based on the report by the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (2018).

Right-wing extremist violence is a form of violent radicalization associated with fascism, racism, supremacism and ultranationalism. This form of radicalization leading to violence is characterized by the violent defence of a racial, ethnic or pseudo-national identity, and is also associated with radical hostility towards state authorities, minorities, immigrants and/or left-wing political groups.

Left-wing extremist violence is a form of radicalization leading to violence that focuses primarily on anti-capitalist demands and calls for the transformation of political systems considered responsible for producing social inequalities, and which may ultimately employ violent means to further its cause. This category includes anarchist, Maoist, Trotskyist and Marxist–Leninist groups that use violence to advocate for their cause.

Politico-religious extremist violence is a form of radicalization leading to violence associated with a political interpretation of religion and the defence, by violent means, of a religious identity perceived to be under attack (via inter-national conflicts, foreign policy, social debates, etc.).

Single-issue extremist violence is a form of violent radicalization essentially motivated by a sole and specific issue. This category includes the following groups if they use violence: radical environmental or animal rights groups, anti-globalization movements, anti-abortion extremists, sport-related violence, certain anti-trans and anti-feminist movements, and ultra-individualist or independent extremist movements that use violence to promote their causes. Murderers whose motivations are partially or wholly ideological may also fall under this category.

The range of violent actions and manifestations resulting from radicalization leading to violence can vary from verbal violence to terrorist attacks, including fires and damage to public goods, violent rallies, physical aggression, mafia-type activities and murders. Some forms of violence (e.g., verbal violence) can be the initial stage and foster other more severe and dangerous forms (e.g., physical violence or murders) (Glaser, 2017).

For this paper the definition by Wardlaw (1989) is most useful: "Political terrorism is the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators". Here the main focus we want to make is in that for this paper terrorism is a premeditated act to induce fear.

What is right-wing terrorism? There are many definitions of the far-right, and scholars have offered a variety of ways of thinking about this form of terror. The Institute for Economics & Peace provides a useful summary of the major components of the far-right:

'Far-right' refers to a political ideology that is centred on one or more of the following elements: strident nationalism (usually racial or exclusivist in some fashion), fascism, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, chauvinism, nativism, and xenophobia. (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019)

Given these disparate elements, Daniel Byman (2019) suggests that "right-wing terrorism should be seen as a label of convenience that lumps together various causes." Daniel Koehler (2014) also agrees that right-wing extremism is best viewed as a "family of ideologies." Tore Bjørgo and Jacob Aasland Ravndal (2019) identify three "families" of far-right political movements (cultural nationalists, ethnic nationalists, and racial nationalists), while acknowledging that some groups or individuals may embrace more than one of these identities.

Perhaps the most useful summary of these ways of understanding far-right terrorism comes from Koehler (2014): the term right-wing extremism covers a broad range of ideologies that essentially see violence as a legitimate tool to combat a political and ethnic 'enemy' (including individuals with different culture, religion, nationality or sexual orientation) seen as a threat to the (sic) own race or nation.

Right-wing terrorism refers to the use of terrorist violence by right-wing extremists. Violent right-wing extremist individuals and groups use, incite, threaten, legitimise or support violence and hatred to further their political or ideological goals. They seek to change the entire political, social and economic system into an authoritarian model and, in doing so, reject the democratic order and values as well as fundamental rights.

Violent right-wing extremist ideologies are centred on exclusionary nationalism, racism, xenophobia and/or related intolerance. Examples are neo-Nazism and neo-fascism. In addition, violent right-wing extremist ideologies feed on a variety of hateful sub-cultures, commonly fighting back against diversity in society and equal rights of minorities. For example, misogyny and hostility towards LGBTQ+ communities and immigration are common attitudes among right-wing extremists.

A core concept in right-wing extremism is supremacism or the idea that a certain group of people sharing a common element (nation, race, culture, etc.) is superior to all other. Seeing themselves in a supreme position, the particular group considers it to be their natural right to dominate the rest of the population.

Groups, structure of right-wing groups in EU and lone actors

The right-wing extremist spectrum in the EU varies from the more traditional, hierarchically structured and locally organised groups to individuals loosely connected in international online communities.

A common characteristic of right-wing terrorism is the lack of public communication in regard of the attacks, and that the use of terrorism by right-wing extremists is a natural consequence of extreme-right ideologies. Therefore, claiming responsibility through letters, statements, and communiques are not done. (Koehler, 2016). Another element is that right-wing terrorism has operated both traditionally and tactically using small groups, cells, and

lone-actors to target government representatives and minorities with explosives and targeted assassinations. (Hamm, 1993).

The traditional neo-Nazi scene and its various subcultures, generally more focussed on nationalist narratives and organised locally, engaged in activities such as gatherings, marches, stickering, music concerts and sports events. While they are active online, they place high value on physical meetings and group activities. These groups in general are currently not very likely to be involved in the planning and committing of terrorist acts, although it cannot be excluded.

If we look at the distribution of perpetrator types over time since the 1990s, the most notable trend is that (skinhead) gangs and unorganized perpetrators are decreasing, both in absolute numbers and relative to other perpetrator types. Autonomous cells (e.g., NSU) are also decreasing, even though they never really constituted a significant perpetrator type. Right-wing terrorism and violence by organized groups (including affiliated members) continue to be marginal. Finally, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the number of lone actor attacks has remained quite stable. However, due to the gradual *decrease* in attacks by the other perpetrator types, the proportion of fatal attacks perpetrated by lone actors has actually increased. In other words, so-called 'lone actors' carry out most of the right-wing violence in contemporary Western Europe.

Currently, lone actors or small leaderless cells, radicalised in transnational online communities and not belonging to any established right-wing extremist group, have the biggest potential for carrying out right-wing terrorist attacks in the EU.

Notably, two fatal attacks inspired by the Christchurch shooter in New Zealand took place in countries covered by our paper; one targeting a mosque in Bærum, Norway, and one targeting a synagogue in Halle, Germany. Additionally, UK police intercepted a similar plot in Luton, stopping the perpetrator from carrying out his plans of committing an atrocity. It remains to be seen whether this new modus operandi will become an enduring characteristic of right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe. In any event, these developments confirm that lone actors have become the most common perpetrators of severe right-wing violence in contemporary times, and are likely to pose the main terrorist threat also in the nearby future.

In the categorization of right-wing terrorists Pantucci (2011) proposes three categories:

1) **loners**, who have vicarious relationships with wider far-right cultures and, have little to no two-way interaction with wider far-right communities and are almost entirely self-radicalised;

2) **lone actors**, who have long-lasting, two-way relationships with far-right cultures and much more engaged set of interactions with far-right organisations (a characteristic element of the lone actors is the personalization of their attacks); finally,

3) **small groups**, clusters of activists who develop into self-directed, autonomous cells.

As such, the process of radicalisation itself is set to become more independent and decentralised from targeted recruitment or propaganda strategies enacted by established terrorist groups and organisations.

Yet, these global right-wing extremist communities share the same codes and emblematic figures. In general, they all share an interest with past right-wing terrorists,

such as the Oklahoma City bomber (1995), the Oslo attacker (2011), the Christchurch attacker (2019) and many more, referring to them as 'saints'. They are also frequently mentioned in manifestos of right-wing terrorists and publications of right-wing extremists.

Transnational right-wing communities place a strong emphasis on preparing for and instigating an inevitable 'race war'. Their main concern is the salvation of the 'white race' rather than national sensitivities. They see themselves not as aggressors, but as defenders of the 'white race', protecting it against the perceived invasion of immigrants and the harms of globalisation. Right-wing extremist ideologies and groups from the USA continue to represent an important influence on right-wing extremists in the EU who participate in transnational online communities. English is the main language used within these communities (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, 2023).

Targets

When defining the targets of violent right-wing extremists it is important to underline that examples of targets given below do not form an exhaustive list. The targets, as history shows, are quite diverse in nature and have shifted over time. They also differ between EU countries, while non-EU countries and regions present other formulations of violent right-wing extremism, which exceed the considerations of this paper.

The targets can be individuals, groups or communities that are considered by violent right-wing extremists as "others" (according to the abovementioned meaning) and/or those associated with those "others". The targets are selected because of their (real or perceived) ethnic, racial, ideological, religious background and/or sexual identity and/or gender, and because they are perceived in opposition to what violent right-wing extremism stand for. A property (such as a building, school, refugee centre, place of worship or cemetery, or monument) can also be a target of violent right-wing extremists. These properties get selected because they are, or are perceived to be, linked to the targets described below.

Immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities are at present the main target of right-wing violence in the EU. Among such minorities, in particular Muslims and Jews constitute targets.

Political opponents, perceived as enemies (e.g. left-wing activists, pro-immigration activists, anarchists, anti-fascists, public figures, different representatives of the media, including certain journalists) and parts of the establishment (e.g. politicians, government officials and police) are other possible targets.

Hostility towards individuals and groups like the homeless and persons with disabilities is common, as they represent an internal threat to those who should compose the "in" group according to violent right-wing extremist ideologies.

Violent right-wing extremists regularly target lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) individuals and advocacy groups, falsely contending that non-heteronormative identities are a threat to the patriarchal norm and to the present and future of the "in" group, most specifically the group's children. As a result, violent right-wing extremists often maliciously equate these identities with criminal acts, such as paedophilia and bestiality.

Gender equality and feminism challenge violent right-wing extremist worldview where women are responsible for bearing children and raising them in line with their

traditional role.[25] Individuals and groups challenging this patriarchal order, such as feminists and publicly visible women, are also among targets.

Arrests for right-wing terrorist offences in European Union, convictions and penalties

Jacob Aasland Ravndal (2018), found that six countries in European Union had experienced considerably more right-wing violence than others: Sweden, Germany, Italy, (the UK), Greece and Spain. Figures for 2016-2018 show that these countries are still among those with the highest records of both fatal and non-fatal events (fatal attacks in parenthesis): 68 (5) in Germany, 23 (2) in Greece, 22 (1) in Italy, 20 (3) in the UK, 7 (0) in France, 6 (1) in Spain and 6 (1) in Sweden.

45 individuals were arrested in 9 Member States on suspicion of involvement in right-wing terrorist activities. This is a decline compared to the 64 arrests in 2021 but more than the 34 arrests made in 2020. The suspects arrested were predominately male (27) and nationals of the countries where they were arrested. The arrestees were between 15 and 75 years old (the gender has been specified for 27 suspects. The age and citizenship were specified for 28 suspects).

The most frequent offence leading to terrorism-related arrests in 2022 was membership of a terrorist organisation, often connected to terrorism propaganda offences (the offence leading to the arrest has been specified for 27 arrests).

The increase in the number of convictions for right-wing terrorism-related offences continued in 2022 (23, compared to 15 in 2021). Cases of right-wing terrorism were adjudicated in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovakia (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, 2023).

Right-wing extremist propaganda

The online environment acts as a key medium for terrorist propaganda, and law enforcement agencies are observing a diversification of themes in online discussions that are taken over into terrorist narratives. This further lowers the threshold for entering the world of violent extremism and terrorism, broadens the range of individuals that can easily become exposed to radicalisation, and increases the volatility and unpredictability of the violent extremist and terrorist scene. Moreover, the same online environment ensures the endurance of propaganda material, which remains accessible to potential new recruits.

Emerging online mediums, such as the metaverse, might be utilised for the dissemination of propaganda, recruitment and the coordination of terrorist and violent extremist activities. A similar development might be observed with open source decentralised platforms, as these are becoming more popular among terrorists and violent extremists.

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[25] Violent right-wing extremists can also harbour misogynist beliefs. In a video live streamed prior to the attack, the Halle synagogue shooter was seen listening to misogynist music and railing against feminism, arguing it was
to blame for declining birth rates in the West. He intertwined this with a perceived threat from mass mmigration, a common conspiracy theory known as the "Great Replacement": https://icct.nl/publica-tion/male-supremacism-and-the-hanau-terrorist-attack-between-online-misogyny-and-far-right-vio-lence/

SIEGE[26] **and accelerationism**[27] remained the most popular ideologies propagated in such online networks.

Right-wing extremists within this online spectrum often create their own worldview by combining several features of various narratives which resonate with them, without fully adhering to one particular ideology alone.

New accelerationist publications once again endorsed that attacks by lone actors on soft targets and large-scale attacks on vital infrastructure, such as the electricity network, telecommunications and oil transport, must contribute to the intended unleashing of a 'race war'.

Terrorgram released two pieces of propaganda in 2022: The Hard Reset (July) and White Terror (October).

The Hard Reset is a 261-page, multi-authored manifesto based on white supremacy, anti-Semitism, eco-fascism and accelerationist ideas. Together with ideological pieces, the document contains concrete recommendations on actions to take to destabilise modern societies and instructions on how to carry out acts of sabotage and terrorism.

White Terror is a 24-minute video that celebrates right-wing terrorist attacks. Notably, the collective – already active in 2021 – had in 2022 at least once clearly influenced offline actions: the Terrorgram group was explicitly mentioned by the perpetrator of the Bratislava attack in his manifesto as a source of inspiration.

Anonymous but with similar aesthetics is the 14-page publication **Make It Count**: A Guide for the 21st Century Accelerationist (June) that melds ideological statements, violent narratives and instructions on how to sabotage infrastructures. (European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, 2023).

The growth of less known social media networks, together with a constantly expanding gaming industry and associated services, led to a further dissemination of right-wing extremist propaganda. At the same time, it led to further fragmentation. This trend has been nurtured by the increased use of decentralised platforms, built on blockchain technology

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[26] **SIEGE ideology** is inspired by a book comprising a 563-page collection of newsletters produced by USA neo-Nazi James Mason during the 1980s. SIEGE promotes leaderless, cell-structured terrorism and a white revolution, and calls on 'true' neo-Nazis to go underground and begin a guerrilla war against 'the system'. James Mason's SIEGE refers back to Charles Manson, Adolf Hitler and prominent USA neo-Nazi William Pierce, author of "The Turner Diaries", a novel depicting an imaginary breakdown of the political system in the USA and an allegedly ensuing 'race war'. Charles Manson's Helter Skelter, which describes a race war between 'blacks' and 'whites', seems to particularly resonate with some right-wing extremists.

[27] SIEGE culture encompasses the concept of **accelerationism:** the use of violence, including acts of terrorism, to bring about a 'race war' and the fall of existing social and political systems. Accelerationism is based on the idea that Western governments are irreparably corrupt. Therefore, white supremacists must accelerate their collapse by sowing chaos and creating political tension. The preferred tactic for achieving this is violence in the form of attacks on minorities, including 'non-whites' and Jews, as a way to bring society closer to a 'race war'. The ultimate goal is to bring down the 'system', so as to pave the way for a future dominated by 'whites'. While the concept of accelerationism in the extremist right-wing scene has developed significantly over recent years, it has existed for much longer. Some of the earliest examples can be found in the Marxist idea that the intensification of an unhinged force, such as capitalism, will inevitably result in that force's own self-destruction.

that facilitates content backup and has shown a high degree of resilience to moderation efforts.

Right-wing extremists supporting either side grounded their online propaganda on the same three topics: white supremacy, (ethnic) nationalism and anti-Semitism. Pro-Ukrainian right-wing extremists argued that Russia is a multi-ethnic state and influenced by Jewish interests. Pro-Russian right-wing extremists argued that Ukraine is ruled by Jewish interests and historically belongs to Russia. As a result, the right-wing extremist online landscape has inevitably fragmented on these topics. This division of the narratives has broadened the discourse thus possibly appealing to wider audiences.

With COVID-19 measures gradually relaxing, the online propaganda of the right-wing extremist sphere veered from conspiracy theories and anti-Semitism that had skyrocketed since 2020 toward new or reinvigorated topics. 2022 bore witness to the tightening of the nexus between eco-fascism, anti-capitalism and anti-immigration sentiments both in the online and offline right-wing extremist landscape. Pivoting on arguments that could be more easily and less ideologically tied to the matters discussed by the wider public, the right-wing extremist online propaganda highlighted the importance of securing borders, reinforcing ethno-states and rethinking capitalism as an economic model.

In 2022, economic problems featured more prominently among topics discussed by right-wing extremists. The online debate on economic models, cryptocurrency, fiat money and commodity-based economy intensified, pivoting on strictly politicised and ideological arguments. Some right-wing extremist actors grounded their preference toward cryptocurrency on anti-Semitic assumptions (e.g. the world banking system is ruled by Jews). Others opposed cryptocurrencies by arguing they perpetuate capitalistic systems which they claim have brought the Western world to the brink of extinction in the first place (Europol, 2023).

But recently, far-right terrorists have conducted or attempted more mass casualty attacks, setting "a novel standard for a new generation of extreme right terrorists." (Bjørgo, Ravndal, 2019) Perpetrators have also made a point of posting lengthy "manifestos" on the internet and even livestreaming their attacks to a global audience. Explanations for these frightening developments vary. Some analysts suggest that right-wing terrorists are emulating the methods of jihadist groups, while Crawford and Keen (2020:1) suggest that this new "gamification of mass violence" frames "terrorism as a competitive act" and "incentivize(s) violence as a way of generating subcultural status" among other far-right extremists.

Social media and new technology are transforming the far-right in other ways. While use of the internet among right-wing extremists has existed for decades, social media may be qualitatively altering their self-identity and activities (Conway, 2019)

Hoffman argues that "the threat is evolving rapidly" as social media platforms "unite disparate, disgruntled individuals in an ideologically more cohesive echo chamber." (Hoffman, 2019). In this context, "online platforms serve as nonstop, virtual white supremacist rallies where coordination can happen in real time, regardless of location." (Lewis, 2020).

Koehler suggests that this facilitates "hive" terrorism, "committed by a spontaneously formed crowd that quickly disbands after the incident" (perhaps the terroristic equivalent of "flash mobs"). (Koehler, 2016:92).

More broadly, social media helps to enhance the perception of a global far-right movement with a unified purpose, so that a "challenge previously thought to be predominantly local is acquiring a transnational character."

A few reports show that Internet has served extreme right-wing groups in many ways, enabling them to:

✓ Disseminate hate speech and propaganda

✓ Come out of the margins and become mainstream by addressing the general public;

✓ Develop a sense of community and rally the so-called "lone actors" (Schafer, Mullins & Box, 2014);

✓ Bring resources to current members and praise violent methods (Kaplan, Weinberg & Oleson, 2003);

✓ Give the opportunity for small dispersed white supremacist groups, dedicated to the propagation of racial hatred in the United States and Europe, to converge and come together in a global movement (Parent & Ellis, 2016);

✓ Apply marketing strategies to attract and recruit young members (children and teenagers). A study of ten extreme right-wing websites shows that they use cartoons (average of 18.7 occurrences on each website), music (average of 21.7 occurrences on each website), and videogames (four websites out of ten, with an average of 1.6 videogame for each of these four sites) to convey their messages.

✓ Take advantage of Twitter's specificities to coordinate militant attacks (updates, photos, stolen identity) (Weimann, 2010)

Important actions have been taken at EU level in order to improve measures that address the causes of terrorism and to strengthen law enforcement agency cooperation and information sharing. Civil society is considered an important player in prevention of violent extremism, especially actors such as NGOs, religious communities, former extremists and even victims of terrorism, all of whom can make a valuable contribution to preventing radicalisation by strengthening social cohesion and a feeling of inclusion within the communities and individuals they work with. Policies in support of appropriate educational programmes and projects are fundamental to promoting social inclusion and active adhesion to European values of freedom, tolerance, mutual understanding and non-discrimination because, by doing so, the creation of so-called hotbeds of terrorism would be avoided. Education is, therefore, widely recognised as a key to preventing radicalisation, and the role of educators is very delicate as their main task is to ensure an educational process that promotes the development of skills and abilities and especially the capacity to think critically (Maniscalco, Rosato, 2019).

Conclusion

The lines between different types of terrorism, including right-wing, left-wing, anarchist, jihadist, and other ideologies, are likely to become more blurred in the future. Points of convergence have already been observed among terrorist and violent extremist actors across the whole ideological spectrum. While established groups' ideologies and long-

term goals remain unchanged, they share common elements, including the use of similar narratives on topics considered of great impact for propaganda purposes, the selection of targets for attacks and the borrowing of tactics.

Lone actors are expected to continue to perpetrate most of the terrorist attacks in the EU. The range of ideas, messages and grievances that can trigger radicalisation is expected to become even broader in the background of social polarisation and recurrent economic crises. Against such backdrop and strongly enabled by the almost unconstrained access to online extremist and terrorist content, more vulnerable individuals without prior and direct affiliation to terrorism or violent extremism can be exposed to radical content and ideas. Today, so-called 'lone actors' carry out most of the violence, a trend that has been reinforced by the emergence of various online platforms.

Right-wing terrorist activity is set to take on a more central role in EU's terrorist scenes. The current global landscape, influenced by multiple consecutive crises and ridden by uncertainty, combined with an all-round hyper connectivity, presents a fertile ground for radicalisation into terrorism and violent extremism.

Accelerationism is already appealing to large audiences, and is likely to further expand with an increasing number of vulnerable individuals exposed to online propaganda.

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