



International Conference Terrorism and violent extremism: the radicalisation of youth



Présidence de / Presidency of
MONACO
Conseil de l'Europe / Council of Europe
05/2026 - 11/2026



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Introduction

The Council of Europe works to support its member states in addressing emerging terrorist threats. As part of these efforts, this Conference aims to launch high-level discussions to raise awareness of the growing involvement of youth in terrorism and violent extremism, as well as of possible avenues to reverse this trend. The Conference aims to provide a platform for dialogue and exploration, allowing the analysis of challenges and the exchange of perspectives. It will be the opportunity to develop joint actions between member states and private and public actors.

Objective of the Conference

The Conference seeks to address the issues in two main ways. Firstly, it will provide a space for practitioners from member states in the fields of security, criminal justice and disengagement to exchange views on challenges and actions in response to the growing number of young people involved in terrorism and violent extremism. Secondly, it will aim for a strategic sensitisation in order to strengthen awareness raising within high-level political and decision-making institutions, so that concrete solutions can be considered, and follow-up actions subsequently implemented.

The Conference will explore social, psychological and identity-related vulnerabilities that can render youth more receptive to terrorist and violent extremist influences, as well as broader contexts that may provide fertile ground for radicalisation, such as the dissemination of extremist rhetoric, the spread of misinformation, and the rise in social tensions. Attention will be devoted to the influence of digital spaces, including online platforms, social media and gaming environments. These spaces are now key vectors for the dissemination of terrorist and violent extremist content, as well as recruitment. Particular consideration will be given to the legal and practical challenges that

arise when youth become involved in terrorism or violent extremism. Finally, the Conference will highlight the urgent need for co-ordinated and integrated approaches, emphasising the contributions of law enforcement, judicial authorities, and social services in strengthening and developing preventive measures, early intervention and resilience. The debates will highlight measures to address the unprecedented challenges posed by digital platforms, such as the speed of content dissemination, the difficulty of content moderation, and the transnational nature of online interactions.

The intended audience for the Conference is high-level representatives of governments, security services, judicial institutions, the private sector, the education sector, as well as expert speakers from partner organisations and academia.

Building on this initiative, the Council of Europe intends to follow up by mapping the risks arising from the involvement of youth in terrorism and violent extremism, especially within the context of democratic security, by compiling the challenges in addressing this trend with existing tools and resources, and by assessing possible avenues to be considered for the future.

Agenda of the Conference

26 May 2026 – Room 1, Palais de l'Europe	
09:00 – 09:45	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Gianluca Esposito, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe • Mr Samuel Vuelta Simon, Justice Secretary of State, Monaco • Ms Natalia Gherman, Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate of the United Nations (CTED), United Nations • Ms Gabriele Scheel, Head of International Cooperation against Terrorism, Drug Trafficking, Organised Crime and Corruption, Federal Foreign Office, Germany
09:45 – 11:15	<p>Introductory session</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr Gianluca Esposito, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Bartjan Wegter, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, European Union • Mr Olivier Christen, National Counter-Terrorism Prosecutor, France • Mr Giovanni Melillo, National Anti-Mafia and Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor, Italy • Mr John Lucas, Chief Public Prosecutor, National Public Prosecution Service, Netherlands • Mr Lars Otte, Deputy Federal Public Prosecutor General, Germany
11:15 – 12:15	<p>Session I: Pathways to radicalisation: Understanding youth vulnerabilities and emerging trends</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms Ileana VISOIU, President of the CDCT, Legal Adviser, Ministry of Justice, Romania</p> <p><i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Basile Jomier, Ministry of the Interior, France • Mr Lucio Pifferi, Director of the Prevention Police, Central Directorate of the Prevention Police, Italy • Mr Kamal Patel, Detective Chief Superintendent, Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre, United Kingdom

12:30 – 13:00	Ceremony of opening for signature of the <i>Protocol amending the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, CETS No. 196</i>
13:00 – 14:15	Lunch offered by the Presidency of Monaco of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
14:30 – 15:30	<p>Session II: Youth and the digital age: Risks and opportunities</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms Päivi KAIRAMO, Ambassador, Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland</p> <p><i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Anna Sjöberg, Head of the European Counter Terrorism Centre, Europol • Mr Adam Hadley, Executive Director, Tech against Terrorism • Ms Claudia Wallner, Research Fellow, Terrorism and Conflict, Royal United Services Institute • Mr Skip Gilmour, Director of Trust and Safety Solutions, Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism • Mr Serkan Şafak, Colonel (Gendarmerie), Department of Counter-Terrorism, Türkiye
15:30 – 16:30	<p>Session III: Challenges in prosecuting youth</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms Hanne Juncher, Director of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law, Council of Europe</p> <p><i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Barbara Sargenti, Deputy National Prosecutor, Coordinator of the International Cooperation Department, National Anti-Mafia and Anti-Terrorism Directorate, Italy • Ms Christina Medici, Deputy Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor, National Counter-Terrorism Prosecution Office, France • Mr Dirk Grip, National Coordinating Prosecutor for Counter-Terrorism, National Public Prosecution Service, Netherlands • Ms Indira Fejzić, Legal Adviser, Counter-Terrorism Department, Prosecutor's Office, Bosnia and Herzegovina • Mr Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Independent expert, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

16:30 – 17:00	Coffee break
17:00 – 18:00	<p>Session IV: Preventing youth involvement in terrorism and violent extremism</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr Robert Örell, Independent expert, Senior Adviser on Disengagement, Rehabilitation, and Countering of Violent Extremism</p> <p><i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Kamal Patel, Detective Chief Superintendent, Counter Terrorism Operations Centre, United Kingdom • Mr Bohdan Liutnytsky, Assistant Head, Counter-Terrorism Department, Security Service, Ukraine • Mr Maximilian Campos Ruf, Director, Research Department, Violence Prevention Network, Germany • Mr Björn Berglund, Manager, EXIT Sweden • Ms Gerrit Zach, Programme Officer, Action against Terrorism Unit, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
18:00 – 18:15	<p>Closing remarks: Responses to youth radicalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Samuel Vuelta Simon, Justice Secretary of State, Monaco • Mr Carlo Chiaromonte, Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Secretary of the CDCT, Council of Europe
19:00	<p>Opening concert of the Presidency of Monaco of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe</p> <p>Hemicycle of the Palais de l'Europe</p>

Presentation of the sessions

Session I: Pathways to radicalisation: Understanding youth vulnerabilities and emerging trends

This session will explore the processes that shape the radicalisation of young people, with a focus on the vulnerabilities that may render them receptive to terrorist and violent extremist narratives. It will furthermore discuss how these factors are used by terrorist recruiters to form targeted narratives drawing individuals into radicalisation towards terrorism and violent extremism.

Session II: Youth and the digital age: Risks and opportunities

This session will examine how terrorist and violent extremist actors exploit the digital space to reach young audiences and the advantages and limitations of existing tools addressing the wide range of methods and channels through which radicalisation and recruitment take place. Discussions will pay particular attention to the ability of existing cross-sectoral efforts to address them. Lastly, the session will study opportunities for prevention and empowerment, highlighting how digital literacy, media education, and critical thinking programmes can equip youth, especially children, to recognise and avoid being influenced by the online terrorist and violent extremist content that targets them.

Session III: Challenges in prosecuting youth

This session will address the complex legal and practical challenges that arise when prosecuting young people, and more specifically children, involved in terrorism and violent extremism. The discussions will consider issues such as the possibility of applying specific investigative measures to young people, as well as the concurrent application of counter-terrorism and juvenile justice regimes which take into account, in particular, the best interests of the child and the appropriateness of measures adapted to young people.

Session IV: Preventing youth involvement in terrorism and violent extremism

This session will address prevention as the most effective response to stop young people from falling prey to terrorist and violent extremist ideologies. As young people across Europe are increasingly exposed to these ideologies, the discussions will explore how education and early intervention can mitigate these influences. Best practices will be highlighted, including initiatives that strengthen resilience and promote critical thinking as well as education on counter-narratives.