

Article – Radicalisation in the EU: what is it? How can it be prevented?



How and where do people become radicalised?

Radicalisation processes draw on social networks for joining and staying connected. Physical and online networks provide spaces in which people can become radicalised and the more closed these spaces are, the more they can function as echo chambers where participants mutually affirm extreme beliefs without being challenged.

The internet is one of the primary channels for spreading extremist views and recruiting individuals. Social media have magnified the impact of both jihadist and far-right extremist propaganda by providing easy access to a wide target audience and giving terrorist organisations the possibility to use “narrowcasting” to target recruits or raise “troll armies” to support their propaganda. According to the [2020 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend report](#), over the last few years, encrypted messaging applications, such as WhatsApp or Telegram, have been widely used for coordination, attack planning and the preparation of campaigns.

Some extremist organisations have also been known to target schools, universities and places of worship, such as mosques.

Prisons can also be fertile ground for radicalisation, due to the closed

environment. Deprived of their social networks, inmates are more likely than elsewhere to explore new beliefs and associations and become radicalised, while understaffed prisons are often unable to pick up on extremist activities.