Europe's prevention crisis
How can civil society respond?

**Protection
Approaches**

About Protection Approaches

Protection Approaches addresses the manifestations of identity-based violence that occur every day, all over the world, as a global but preventable challenge: when an individual or a group is attacked on the streets of London or in an unknown town on the other side of the world because of their gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, economic status, disability, race, culture, religion, or ethnicity, this is identity-based violence. Identity-based violence is not a phenomenon particular to certain countries, regions or groups. Almost everyone will witness, be the victim of, or – knowingly or unwittingly – play a part in the common pathways and processes that lead prejudice, exclusion, and identity-based violence.

Connecting rising domestic and global challenges to social cohesion, viewing these forms of violence through a wide lens, and understanding the shared responsibility to protect people as beginning with individuals and communities and stretching to global leaderships, is why we exist.

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Introductory note

In 2016 the public of the United Kingdom voted to withdraw from the European Union. At the time of writing, in October 2019, tensions between the UK Government and the EU were high. It was still unclear what path forward might be found.

Whether or not the UK leaves the EU, and under what terms, is of immense significance but irrespective of the Brexit outcome, the 2016 referendum caused a rupture in continental relations. As a UK-based organisation tasked with upholding commitments to prevent identity-based violence, our working relationships with European networks have already been affected.

Our relationships with European colleagues are not only cherished but crucial to the timely and effective delivery of our work. As the UK, the EU, and the wider European region, navigates this choppy period of regional relations –at a time when commitment to the multilateral, rules-based and human rights systems are coming under strain– cohesive civil society networks will become increasingly important.

Across the continent of Europe, the consequences of polarising identity politics, the globalisation of hate networks, and the pervasiveness of weaponised communications are being felt. In all countries, marginalised and minority groups are suffering the brunt. In the UK, we are deeply concerned by growing divisions and rising hate-based incidents. Many European states are on similar trajectories.

This report presents a picture of the varied and rich work European civil society is undertaking to address the various manifestations of identity-based violence – within Europe's borders and around the world. It was an affirming research process to speak with so many experts investing in a shared agenda.

It is my hope that this report, and our wider European mapping project, can facilitate new channels of communication, enable new relationships, and lead to the prioritisation of prevention here in Europe as well as in the region's contributions abroad.

It is our belief that whether or not the UK leaves the EU does not alter British responsibilities to protect populations from discriminatory violence nor diminish its obligations as a member of the European community of nations.

If we are to overcome this period of challenge and uncertainty, we will need to draw on global best practice and have the support of our regional networks. As the forces of division gather, so then must those tasked with upholding and defending our rights and freedoms.

Dr Kate Ferguson
Co-Executive Director, Protection Approaches
October 2019

A foreword by Adama Dieng

A groundswell of xenophobia, racism and intolerance, violent misogyny, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia is rising around the world. Europe is not immune to this challenge. Reports of physical and verbal attacks towards migrants and refugees are no longer isolated incidences, instead they are becoming frequent.

Europe is facing a challenge of promoting and maintaining harmonious coexistence both within and at its borders. Immigrants and refugees continue to test the capability of European countries to uphold fundamental rights and freedoms for all. These groups of people continue to suffer humiliation and dehumanisation.

At the same time, Europe's historical contributions to overseas development and human rights are being questioned, threatening not just the post-1945 hard won progress towards a more equal, multilateral world, but also its citizens, and those who cross borders to seek sanctuary on the continent.

The demonisation of immigrants by many of Europe's political leaders and commentators, and some sections of the public, has neither attracted widespread outrage nor condemnation.

Instead, politicians seem to exacerbate such attacks with hateful rhetoric. In many countries in Europe, an ultranationalist resurgence is legitimising hatred, racism and violence, threatening the safety of groups in Europe, those seeking sanctuary within its borders, and around the world.

What is presented as rational sovereigntist policy, centred on the protection of 'borders', deliberately disguises its racist and nationalist connotations. In fact, these leaders deny the problem: their racism is an 'invention' by its critics. In the real world, these attacks are manifestations of racist violence.

In one country, the government's anti-immigration drive has been linked to a significant increase in violence towards immigrants, including threats, attacks on minors and murder. For example, a senior government official was quoted in the media calling for a 'mass cleansing' of immigrants, street by street, with force, if necessary.

While its manifestations may look different, identity-based violence is a challenge from which no country is immune.

To prevent the further harming of innocent people, we need a resilient Europe that defends civil society, the rule of law and stands up for the universality of human rights.

The actions of those in power matter; but civil society is also crucial in the prevention of atrocity crimes. Vibrant civil societies with authority to create civic spaces for the resolution of disputes, combined with civil society actors aligned with peace, stability and economic well-being are crucial – yet often overlooked – sources of resilience. The building of societies resilient to atrocity crimes involves paying attention to the roles of non-State actors. These actors push back when politicians go too far.

More moderate politicians need to be "speaking out" but so too does Europe's civil society.

We need to bring an end to this cynical discourse. Identity-based violence, from hate crime to violent extremism, starts always with small actions and language.

The Holocaust did not start with the gas chambers. It started with hate speech. Hate is not innate. It is not something we are born with, but something we learn. Something we are taught.

The UN Charter was drafted after the world had witnessed genocide on an industrial scale, when hate speech against Jews, Roma, LGBT groups, political dissidents, disabled people, culminated into the Holocaust. Almost 75 years on, we are in danger of forgetting these lessons. Recognizing the risks associated with hate speech, the United Nations Secretary-General has launched the 'UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech' in June 2019 to identify, prevent and counter hate speech.

Europe should be proud of its robust and varied civil society that at its best nurtures a plurality of different views and defends the right of groups to hold and express alternative perspectives while protecting the population from hate speech and incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence.

Europe can and should be a global leader in protecting populations from the threats of identity-based violence, including atrocity crimes. This responsibility to protect people from these crimes begins at national level, including at state borders, and extends around the world. This responsibility is first and foremost a responsibility to prevent. It's time for Europe's politicians and people to take that responsibility.

Adama Dieng
Under Secretary General, Special Adviser of the United Nations Secretary General
on the Prevention of Genocide
October 2019

A foreword by Christian Leffler

Atrocity crimes do not emerge from nowhere but arise out of deep-seated fear and practices of marginalisation, discrimination and conflict.

In my role as Focal Point for the EU's Responsibility to Protect, I am committed to promoting a more conducive environment for European civil society organisations working towards the prevention of all forms of identity-based violence, from hate crime to mass atrocities.

I welcome this report and the important contributions it makes in setting out the scale of the challenge of identity-based violence facing in Europe as well as beyond its frontiers. As this mapping project illustrates, civil society organisations can be efficient and direct supporters of prevention, and policy makers have a responsibility to support their work.

States have the primary responsibility to protect their own population; international organisations can play a role by encouraging and supporting states to fulfil their responsibility. But states do not operate alone, they exist alongside a range of civil society and private sector organisations that need to be included in the network of action.

The EU supports an integrated approach to conflicts and crises from early warning and prevention: particular emphasis is placed on early warning and risk assessment. Civil society is our bridge to communities at risk.

It is clear that we need to keep strategising to lessen the impact of a deeply concerning global and regional slide towards intolerance and polarisation. Our multilateral commitments must translate into concrete, cooperative action, at the international, regional and local level in partnership with our civil society.

The responsibility to protect is first and foremost a responsibility to prevent; it begins at home and extends around the world. Therefore, it is important to look into how we in Europe can better implement global commitments to prevent and protect within our own borders as well as in our contributions abroad.

The responsibility to protect is also a shared one. It is a commitment and principle that can only be achieved with the inclusive participation of all; we need our young people to be given a seat at the table because it is they who will inherit the consequences of how we respond to Europe's prevention crisis.

Guided by the values on which it is founded, the EU is committed to a rules-based multilateral international order, that today is facing growing threats. The EU is responding by strengthening support for the international system, finding new partners across the world and working in new ways and we pledge to keep working with our European civil society partners in this direction.

I particularly welcome the emphasis in this report on the need to build resilience both at home and abroad. The EU is committed to strengthening the resilience of states and societies by supporting good governance, accountable institutions, and to work closely with civil society that has to play a role to inhibit atrocity crimes.

The richness of civil society is very well reflected in this report which is not for the bookshelves: it demands to be read.

Christian Leffler
Deputy Secretary General, European External Action Service,
European Union Focal Point for the Responsibility to Protect
October 2019

Executive Summary

Europe – from London to Ljubljana to Lviv – can and should be a global leader in protecting populations from the threats of identity-based violence, whether hate crime, violent extremism or mass atrocities. This responsibility to prevent and to protect is as much the case within and at its own borders as in its contributions abroad. European civil society should likewise be leading by example, applying scrutiny to national and regional policymaking, and championing a bolder approach to prevention.

But Europe, like much of the world, is facing a prevention crisis. The rise in nationalist and exclusionary politics across the continent is increasing discrimination, marginalisation, and persecution, and threatening the fabric of Europe's societies. The crisis is both a symptom and a driver of what is a preventable global phenomenon of rising identity-based violence; its apparent resurgence risks undermining the hard-fought gains of recent decades.

Despite Europe's long history of mass atrocities and genocide, few people believe the region requires what is often described as 'atrocity prevention'. At the same time, it is commonly accepted that the region is experiencing a surge of online and offline hate speech. Hate speech, divisive propaganda, and conspiracy are symptoms of wider problems as well as propellants of violence in their own right. The innate connection between hate speech and extremism and genocide is one from which no region is, and ever will be, immune.

This report presents a view from European civil society on where the roots of Europe's crisis lie, what activities are being undertaken to stem the tide, what works, and where the gaps are. Drawing on the input of over 100 organisations based in Europe and around the world, and on a corpus of both academic and policy literature, it calls for three system changes and sets out concrete next steps for civil society.

System changes

- Reframe the challenge, rearticulating that what are too often seen as disconnected problems are part of the same cross-cutting issue

- Integrate and prioritise prevention, from bold, forward looking prediction of where the next challenges are coming from, to state and community level capacity building

- Connect the evidence, recognising that hate crime, violent extremism and the risks of mass atrocities share underlying factors, and can therefore be addressed in a joined-up manner

Next steps for European civil society

- Create an online hub for European civil society where information can be pooled and ideas shared

- Establish a European civil society virtual working group

- Constitute a European civil society proactive risk analysis forum to address threats we cannot yet see

The prevention crisis

The prevention crisis

"Prevention invariably succeeds through partnerships cultivated over time. We must plan and prepare now in order to establish the relationships we need to make prevention successful in the future."

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres[1]

The world faces a prevention crisis. Europe is not immune.

In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. This violence afflicts low and middle-income countries alike, including those with relatively strong institutions, calling into question 'the long-standing assumption that peace will accompany income growth and the expectations of steady social, economic, and political advancement that defined the end of the twentieth century.'[2] The rise in deliberate, systematic, and widespread violence against civilians, the globalisation of hate-based networks, and the growing polarisation in democratic politics have upended the belief that the prevention of identity-based violence is only required in some parts of the world but not others.

As Europe's commitment to the human rights agenda shows signs of stress, the vulnerability of many identity-groups and communities increases in all states. From women's autonomy over their bodies to the rights of refugees to seek sanctuary, Europe is seeing a resurgent political weaponisation of 'othering' and division. The rise in far-right and far-left extremisms across the continent threaten the social fabric of societies, and place minority groups at increasing risk of discrimination, marginalisation, and persecution. Political polarisation throughout the region between committed 'nationalists' and 'internationalists' risks reductions to the region's overseas political and financial contributions at a time when both global and domestic needs are deepening.

The crisis facing the human rights agenda in Europe was predictable – and should have been prioritised sooner. The failure of international human rights champions to make time to bring their own domestic populations along with them has created a cleavage that was not inevitable – and, for now, is still not unbridgeable – between those who look beyond borders and those who look inwards. This domestic and regional slippage undermines the traditional European bulwark at the United Nations, reinforcing risks of a rapid regional retreat from multilateralism.
Our analysis suggests that without timely and effective intervention, the challenges posed by growing nativism and intolerance across Europe will continue to worsen over the next decade. This crisis and its consequences will extend across and beyond the region.

Despite important steps forward, Europe has so far failed to effectively prioritise the prevention of identity-based violence in a genuinely systematic way, whether in its international contributions, at its own borders, or at the domestic level. In Europe, as elsewhere – despite the collective nature of the responsibility to protect populations – the manner in which this unanimous commitment is upheld, and wider objectives of atrocity prevention and positive peace are pursued, remains disjointed, disconnected, and imbalanced.[3]

The 2013 Task Force on the EU Prevention of Mass Atrocities – as with the European External Action Service's recently unveiled "Atrocity Prevention Tool Kit" – set out long term foreign policy prevention goals that included the need to protect and improve the economic, political, and social rights of minorities; to counter discrimination and take action against incitement and hate speech; to ensure exclusionist ideology is marginalised; and to support education for tolerance. It is difficult to argue that such measures and objectives are not sorely needed Europe-wide. Yet despite Europe's worsening trends, state-level and civil society engagement by European actors with the atrocity prevention and broader positive peace agendas remain disproportionately outward looking.[4]

This conceptual contestation rests upon a problematic premise that deliberate violence against populations and identity groups will only ever occur in some parts of the world and not others, implying that European states have already done everything they should internally to uphold their own domestic obligations.

Until Europe and the global North as a whole can better connect the prevention of identity-based violence at home with the prevention of identity-based violence abroad, development and foreign policies will retain their problematic political and conceptual biases – and European states will leave themselves increasingly vulnerable to often justified accusations of double standards.

This report is part of a broader two-year Europe-wide initiative being undertaken by Protection Approaches, aimed at facilitating greater harmonisation and encouraging a bolder vision across European civil society organisations that are engaged in the prevention of identity-based violence. The UK's impending exit from the European Union increases the urgency of this work: civil society across the continent needs, more than ever, to pull together, cooperate, and collaborate.

The report fulfils three key functions. It maps the work of a significant sample of Europe-based civil society organisations working both within the region and internationally. Drawing on this data and the discussions of a three day online consultation, it argues that what are too often seen as disconnected problems are part of the same global challenge. And it makes recommendations that will help to reverse the trajectory of Europe's prevention crisis.

We propose three system changes for Europe:

- **Reframe the challenge**, rearticulating that what are too often seen as disconnected problems are part of the same cross-cutting issue

- **Integrate and prioritise prevention**, from bold, forward looking prediction of where the next challenges are coming from, to state and community level capacity building

- **Connect the evidence**, recognising that hate crime, violent extremism and the risks of mass atrocities share underlying factors, and can therefore be addressed in a joined-up manner

The prevention of identity-based is a shared responsibility and no state, no community, and no sector should be expected to shoulder that burden alone. This paper is concerned with civil society contributions from across the European region.

Preventing identity-based violence

"Contrary to the popular obsession with moments of drama and crescendo, violence emerges in painfully slow motion."
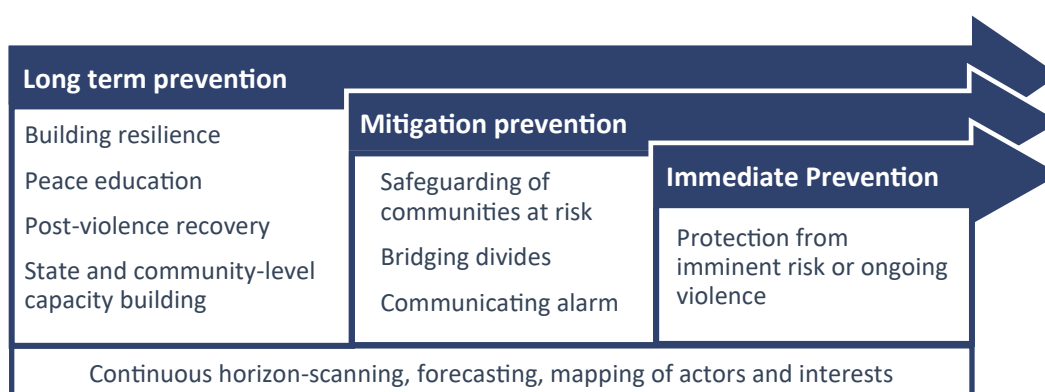
- Terri Beswick, Peace Policy Research

Identity-based violence

Any act of violence motivated by the perpetrator's conceptualisation of their victim's identity, for example their race, gender, sexuality, religion or political affiliation. It encompasses hate crime, violent extremism, and genocide and affects individuals as well as entire groups or communities all around the world.[5]
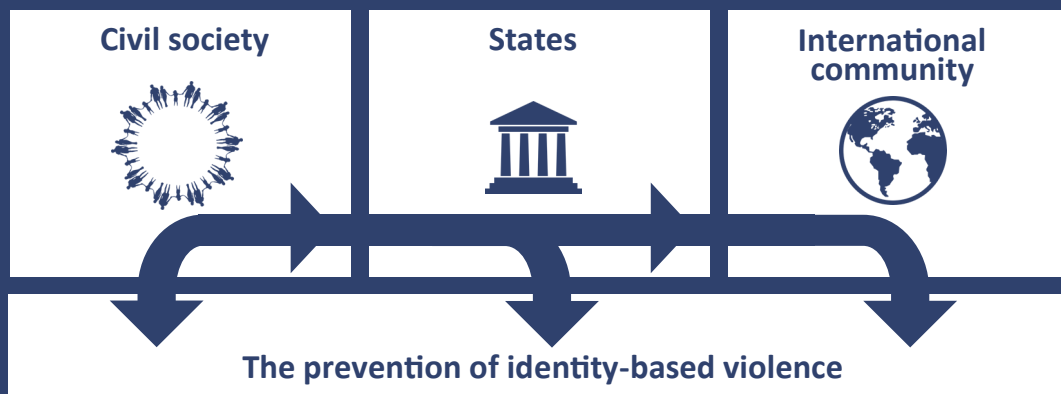
Most manifestations of violence that are motivated by prejudice or hate are best understood as processes rather than as singular events. Processes can be recognised and identified – and processes can also be interrupted, diverted, and reversed. In other words, much of the violence described and anticipated in these pages can be predicted and prevented.

Although both its victims and the ways in which it manifests often look different, the causes of identity-based violence are often the same. By understanding the common causes of these seemingly disconnected forms of violence, we can develop and promote more effective and well-evidenced strategies of prediction, prevention, and protection. The language of identity-based violence allows us to see that what are too often viewed as unrelated problems are in fact part of the same shared challenge.

A genuinely effective response to violence means that prevention work should itself also be conceived of as an ongoing process. This work can be seen to fall into three broad categories – immediate prevention aimed at addressing imminent or ongoing acts of violence, mitigation prevention seeking to de-escalate or reverse warning signs, and long-term structural prevention that addresses the root causes of violence.

Long term prevention

Building resilience

Peace education

Post-violence recovery

State and community-level capacity building

Mitigation prevention

Safeguarding of communities at risk

Bridging divides

Communicating alarm

Immediate Prevention

Protection from imminent risk or ongoing violence

Continuous horizon-scanning, forecasting, mapping of actors and interests

There is an increasing focus across the breadth of the UN system on the value of prevention – from the Sustainable Development Goals, to the Human Rights Up Front Initiative, to the recent UN-World Bank Pathways for Peace report on 'Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict', which makes the case for early and sustained prevention and highlights the vital role that civil society actors can play in this process. The UN Secretary-General's 2017 report on the Responsibility to Protect similarly called on all states – including those within Europe not traditionally viewed as being 'at-risk' societies – to replicate multilateral commitments to prevention in their national mechanisms and processes.[7] If the rules-based system is to survive, multilateral agreements must translate into concrete, cooperative, action, at the regional and bilateral and the local level.

Civil society	States	International community

The prevention of identity-based violence

Europe's prevention crisis: How can civil society respond?

No community, society or country is immune to identity-based violence. Constant and consistent effort is required from local grassroots to political leaderships to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of all are protected and respected. In times of political, economic, or social crisis, societies become more vulnerable. When a sense of local or national anxiety becomes widespread, minority and marginalised groups very often pay the greatest price. There are certain risk factors that can reduce a society's resilience to divisive and hate-based behaviours. These indicators of hate, rising in Europe, are used all over the world to assess the resilience of states and societies.[8]

Society-wide conditions:

- National level political or economic crisis

- Intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against identity groups

- Widespread perceptions of grievance, threat, or inequality between groups

- Sense of group, community, or national insecurity

- Normalisation of hate speech, dehumanising language, and incitement to violence against identity groups

- Widespread disinformation, propaganda, and fake news

- Widespread delegitimisation of expertise

- Widespread lack of trust in the media

- Widespread lack of trust in the government

- Widespread belief that the democratic process cannot lead to positive change

- Removal of or failure to uphold human rights protections

- Growth in number and legitimacy of groups who use violence or the threat of violence

- Impunity for those who commit, incite, or threaten violence

Individual risks:

- Not feeling valued by those around you

- Not feeling represented by those who make decisions affecting your life

- Not feeling in control of your life or its direction

- Believing that certain groups are responsible for problems or pose a threat to your security or prosperity

- Believing that certain groups are 'less legitimate', 'less human', or deserving of punishment including violence

- Having a violent or criminal history

- Having a history of psychological ill health

- Personal networks or relationships with corrupting individuals

Identity-based violence in Europe

Different manifestations of identity-based violence are becoming increasingly visible across the European region – even if the prejudices that are propelling this rise are not themselves new.

Hate crime

Communities across Europe are under attack. Roma – Europe's most persecuted minority – face more hate-motivated harassment than any other ethnic minority population, despite national and regional efforts at combatting discrimination and exclusion.[9] Islamophobia has become mainstream and antisemitism remains similarly widespread; 90% of European Jews believe it has increased significantly within their own countries over the past five years and almost 30% have experienced harassment during the past twelve months.[10] Anti-LGBTQI+ hate persists; violence and public expressions of prejudice against those with disabilities remain entrenched in much of the region; and the intimidation of women and minorities in public life is more visible, whether online or offline.[11] Political efforts to challenge women's autonomy over their bodies are strengthening, as are calls for a 'return' to conservative ideas of the family. At Europe's frontiers, and within its borders – from the UK to Italy to Hungary – the region is witnessing both physical and rhetorical attacks on refugee, migrant, and other minority populations by members of the public and politicians. [12]

Violent extremism

Like hate crime and mass atrocities, violent extremism is a global problem that can manifest itself in all places, regardless of culture or ideology, and with different, localised characteristics. Extremism in all of its various forms has been rising across Europe and raising public fears and anxieties. In 2017, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator estimated there to be approximately 50,000 Islamist extremists currently active across Europe.[13] Right-wing extremism in particular is surging across the continent, joining up with international networks of violence and hate. Western Europe has seen a rise in the number of such terror incidents, with 27 in 2017 compared with just one in 2007, and the number of arrests linked to right-wing terrorism increasing for the third year in a row.[14]

Mass atrocities

2020 will mark 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz, and the 'moral weight of the Holocaust in Europe' continues to make '"Never Again Auschwitz"' a profoundly -felt imperative across European governments.'[15] Europe has a long history of mass atrocities – committed against Christians in Bulgaria in the 1870s, Armenians in the 1920s, during the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, and in the states of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. These legacies of the region's history of atrocities continue to be felt and to reverberate across geographies and across generations. Continuing violence and frozen conflicts on the island of Ireland, in Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia, Chechnya, Bosnia, and elsewhere represent a more immediate set of challenges. Armed conflict is not the only source of threat to populations under European care, with recent submissions having been made to the International Criminal Court that the EU and its member states should be prosecuted for crimes against humanity as a result of the avoidable deaths of thousands of migrants that have drowned in the Mediterranean since 2014.[16]

Mapping existing European contributions to prevention

Mapping existing European contributions to prevention

In looking to bring together a broad range of opinions on what is needed in Europe, Protection Approaches convened an online consultation on the prevention crisis in August 2019, crowdsourcing a wealth of civil society expertise from across Europe and around the world. Three days of discussion across nine separate conversation threads were moderated by 12 experts with a range of backgrounds and specialties.

The consultation served as an innovative, digital, and carbon-friendly alternative to in-person conferences – allowing a wide range of campaigners, researchers, and practitioners to collaborate and communicate fluidly, within tightly defined threads and spaces. Supporting questionnaires, follow up interviews, and desk research also served as further data gathering to build on the insights generated from the consultation.

Protection Approaches has mapped European civil society activities across ten different key fields. Advocacy & Campaigning and Training & Capacity building are the most common activities. The majority of organisations we consulted undertake an average of four activities, with varying scales of reach and resource. Very few organisations, including research institutions, are working on predicting and preventing future crises in the mid- to long-term.

The ratio of organisations that work to prevent identity-based violence in the countries where they are based and those that perform their work in other countries is nearly 50:50. However, only one in six organisations have a remit that encompasses both domestic and international preventive activities. More than half of these are international NGOs with multiple country offices. The majority of other civil society organisations that work both at home and abroad are small and do so on a micro level through a focus on specific country situations such as Sudan, Sri Lanka, or Rwanda, while also working with domestically-based diaspora communities.

Overall, there are very few organisations working to prevent violence in Western European states and beyond the continent's borders – highlighting the gaps that exist between where different kinds of preventive activity are performed. Likewise, there are few organisations working across different manifestations of IBV.
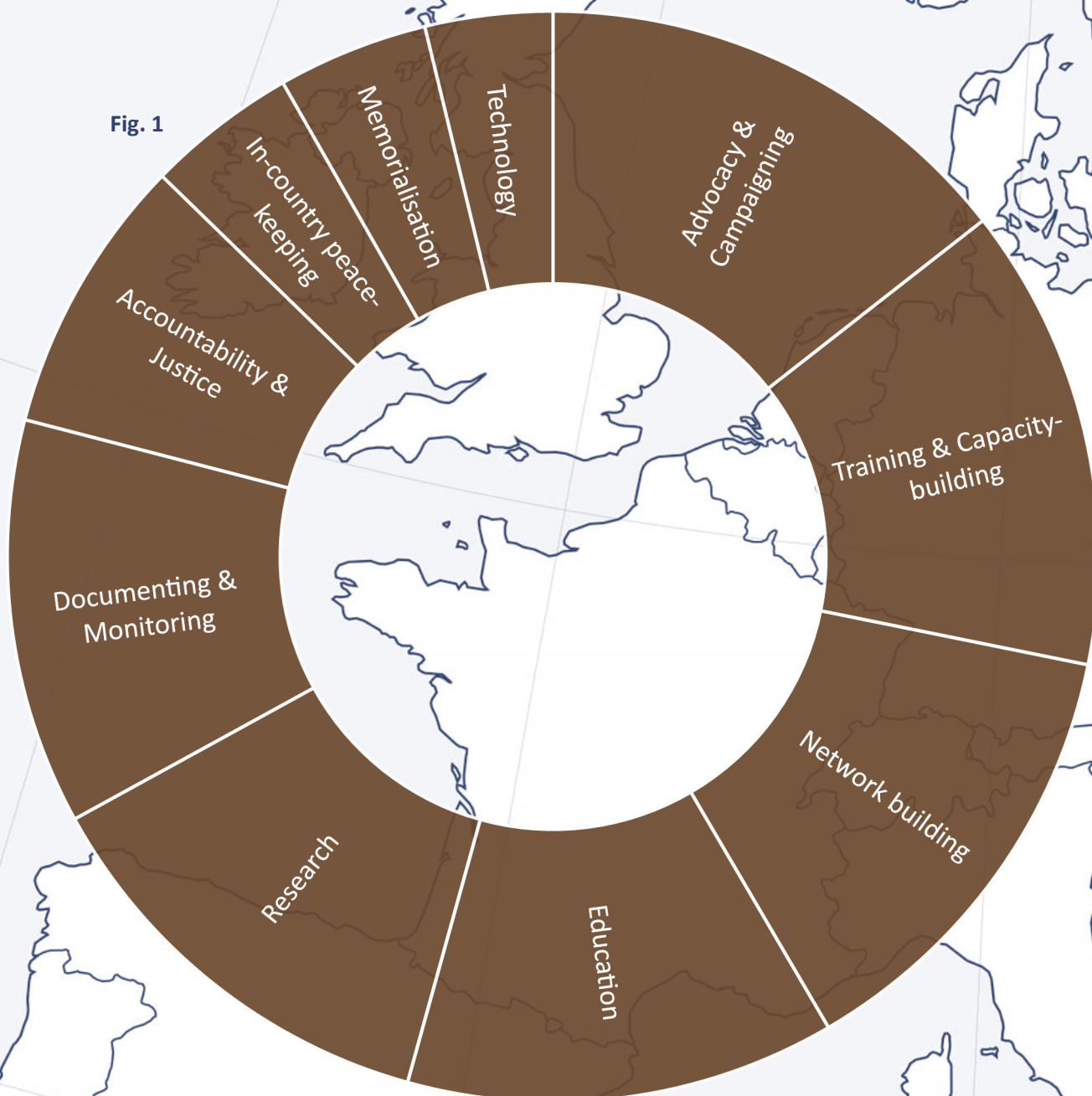
There is substantial appetite to bridge these disconnects. More than 90 per cent of those consulted agreed that there would be significant value in bringing together a more diverse array of stakeholders involved in the prevention of identity-based violence. The opportunities to better connect lessons from prevention efforts undertaken across Europe, in Europe's contributions abroad, and through wider global best practice remain untapped.

Moreover, as warning signs within Europe and elsewhere in the global North continue to emerge, traditional donor states and flagbearers of the international human rights order will leave themselves increasingly vulnerable to justifiable accusations of double standards, with this in turn risking the long-term protection of populations both inside and outside of the region.

However, if European civil society is able to better connect the prevention of identity-based violence across Europe with its prevention around the world, development and foreign policies will follow suit.

A Picture of Prevention

Fig. 1

Technology

Memorialisation

In-country peace-keeping

Accountability & Justice

Documenting & Monitoring

Research

Education

Network building

Training & Capacity-building

Advocacy & Campaigning

Figure 1 (left): Illustrates current Europe-based civil society prevention activities mapped during this project, and their relative breakdown. It presents a picture of the different European civil society contributions to prevention both within Europe and beyond its borders. Advocacy and campaigning is the most common activity while technology is the least. Most participating organisations undertake more than one, but fewer than five, of these activities.

Figure 2 (below): Demonstrates the ratio between the Europe-based organisations that prevent identity-based violence only in counties where they are based, those that perform their work only in other countries, and those that do both. Just one in six organisations carry out preventive work both at home and abroad; of these the majority are multi-HQ international NGOs or very small organisations based in one country and focused on one country abroad, such as Syria or Sudan, but also work with domestically based diaspora. This demonstrates one of the key disconnects in preventing and predicting identity-based violence; key insights from work done at home can carry over to work done abroad, and vice versa.

Domestic Prevention

International Prevention
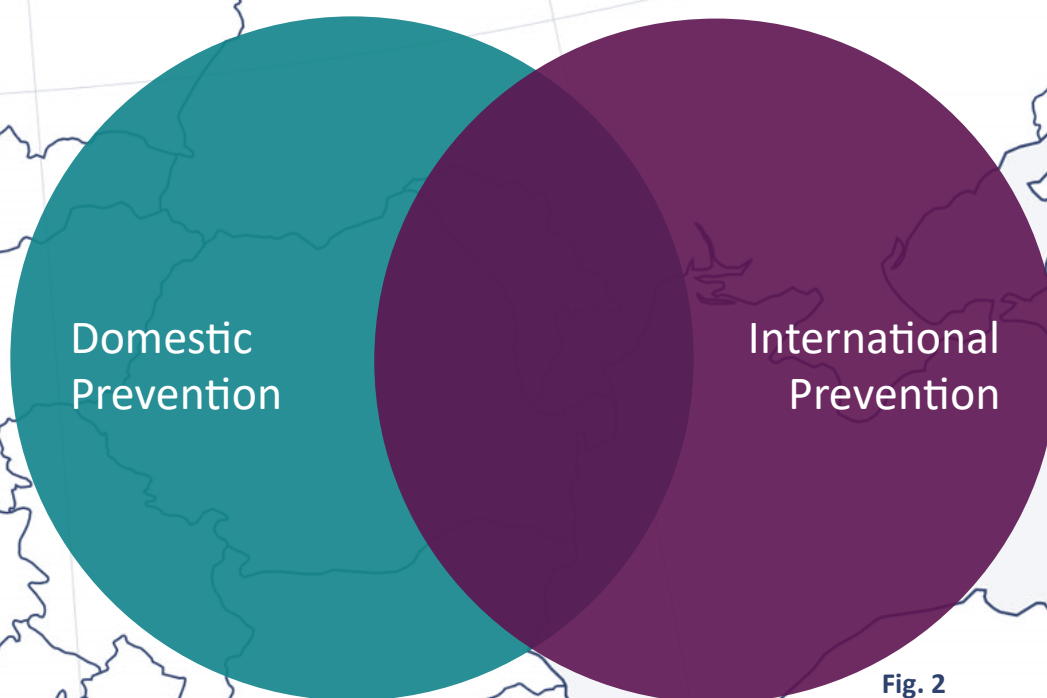
Fig. 2

What works and what is needed

The online consultation produced a rich diversity of insights from a broad range of perspectives. Across the days and discussion threads, three key themes emerged of what works, and what is needed, to address the prevention crisis in Europe.

Building resilience

"Old modalities may no longer be relevant to address the ongoing challenges. In this case, we need resilient individuals and communities"

— Andriy Korniychuk, Programme Manager, PAX

"It is easier for policy makers and governmental leaders to focus on negative peace indicators (such as the absence of war or violence) than positive peace indicators such as tolerance and resilience, because the data is much more simple to track and the solutions to negative peace indicators can be short-term, and superficially, less expensive solutions."

— Sarah Gough, Executive Director, Play for Peace

While early prevention will always be crucial to saving lives, there are deep concerns among those we consulted that a disproportionate emphasis on 'firefighting' and largely reactive programming continues to detract from the necessary work of addressing root causes and building resilience. Recent efforts to 'counter' or 'de-platform' online hate speech, for example, have attracted political and financial resources on the premise that this will reduce the risks to vulnerable groups, but often at the cost of working to reverse the causes of harmful behaviours rather than just their symptoms.

The concept of resilience is key. This shift in thinking recognises that while root causes should be addressed, they do not inevitably lead to violence – and that the emergence of sources of risk is often unavoidable. An emphasis on resilience therefore places the focus on developing more localised coping and support mechanisms, where sources of resilience are able to mitigate and manage risks as they emerge. The emphasis is on taking precautionary measures that allow for societies to withstand challenges and potential triggering events which may – in the absence of mitigating factors – become an enabling environment for acts of identity-based violence.

From reconciliation efforts within European countries that have experienced mass atrocities, to activities to respond to refugees and migrants seeking sanctuary in the region, the implementation of human rights programmes is being pursued across Europe without this longer term view of prevention – it is always a necessary lens to apply.

What is needed?

- A return to community social cohesion as the bedrock of safe, sustainable, thriving societies
- Political and donor backing for mitigation-prevention and long-term, forward looking prevention

- Evidence-based approaches to prevention: behaviour change and public attitudes can be measured yet continue to be absent from civil society and state-level analyses

- New fora and opportunities to discuss and prepare for risks or crises we cannot yet see

Peace education

"Drawing on insights from my empirical work on identity-based violence and strategies of local civil society in Pakistan […] a major driver of identity-based violence is intolerant education systems - both curriculum and pedagogy."

- Qamar Jafri, PhD Researcher, RMIT University

Peace education has traditionally only been seen as relevant to conflict-affected states, but there was consensus in both the consultation and follow up interviews that 'what works' to prevent identity-based violence is inclusive, values-based, civic and peace building education.

If manifestations of identity-based violence, whether hate crime, extremism, or mass atrocities, are processes from which no society is immune, then education itself plays a crucial preventative role at every stage. School years are formative socialising moments and present the opportunity for institutions to promote the values, attitudes, and behaviours needed by young people to be better informed citizens and future change makers. Civic education equips people with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to be active, responsible members of a broader community.

Schools should be understood as much as sites for meaningful social interactions as places of formal education. Significant time spent with those who may be perceived as different can enable the breaking down of stereotypes, foster real connections, and help identify common ground in diversity - whether between students in a school setting, or between students and the wider community. School ethos that promote inclusiveness and respect for difference – from school policies on bullying to everyday classroom practice – can enable learners to constructively deal with conflict and find positive solutions together.

What is needed?

- Whole-school approaches to peace and civic education that embed values in the school ethos that promote student inclusion and wellbeing

- Opportunities for young people to apply and practice knowledge and skills outside of the classroom, such as through inclusive student leadership or community engagement

- Evidence-based approaches to technological literacy and critical thinking, to ensure that young people and adults are equipped to navigate the huge volume of information they are presented with online and make their own informed judgements

Improving cross-sectoral collaboration

"Greater efforts need to be made to collaborate between actors. Not only does this need to happen across geographical borders, but it could also happen more widely across disciplinary borders"

- Louise Pyne-Jones, Head of Research, International Observatory of Human Rights

Competition over ideas, networks, agendas, and funding continues to leave civil society divided. However, consultation participants also pointed to a common skills gap of not feeling equipped to communicate well with those outside of their own field or sector. The scarcity of forums for genuinely interdisciplinary and multisectoral dialogue on issues relating to prevention has had the effect of entrenching siloed thinking and limiting lateral or creative recommendations.

The overemphasis on 'firefighting' crisis situations reinforces these dynamics within broader European civil society, as those tasked with immediate prevention – whether state authorities or civil society – feel unable to also justify time or resources necessary to engage in more forward-looking horizon scanning or problem solving activities.

Likewise, connections between civil society actors engaged in prevention activities within Europe and those working abroad remain weak or wholly absent. While some organisations do work successfully across geographies, the conceptual link is largely absent in programme development, political advocacy, and public communications in both European-focussed and internationally-oriented activity.

What is needed?

- Capacity building and training opportunities for effective communications and trust-building beyond existing sectors and geographies

- New forums, both online and offline, that are able to bring together civil society actors working on issues of identity-based violence in different parts of Europe and the world

Three system changes to reverse the prevention crisis

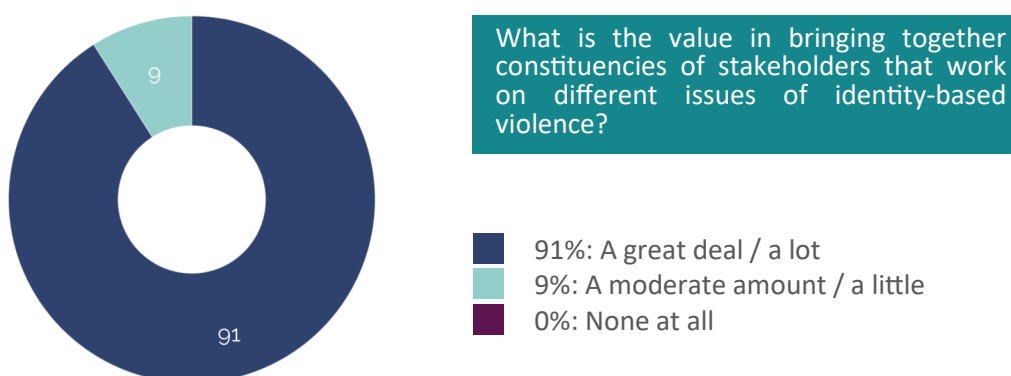# Three system changes to reverse Europe's prevention crisis

While those we consulted were clear on the activities that are needed, they also agreed that given Europe's failure to effectively prioritise prevention in an appropriately systematic fashion, wider changes were needed in order to reverse the region's trajectory. Conscious civil society contributions to the prevention of hate and violence are growing in confidence and reach. However, activities remain disconnected; many potential civil society allies do not always see how their work contributes to the goal or how the work of others could strengthen their own. Yet, our research has found a desire for a clearly articulated shared goal and desired outcome in more concrete terms. These challenges represent a wider struggle in human rights work towards joined-up, holistic approaches to global challenges, that pursue strategies inclusive of grassroots and international leaderships, that are genuinely cross-sectoral, and that make use of varied perspectives and tools.

We propose three system changes to reverse Europe's prevention crisis.

1. Re-frame the challenge

"How we frame prevention and how we frame identity has the power to help or hinder the efforts, empathy and action needed to assure the full enjoyment of freedoms and safety for everyone."

- Terri Beswick, Peace Policy Research

What is the value in bringing together constituencies of stakeholders that work on different issues of identity-based violence?

- 91%: A great deal / a lot
- 9%: A moderate amount / a little
- 0%: None at all

A major barrier to the prevention of identity-based violence is the disconnected relationship between those working to address its different forms, whether the phenomenon is perceived as hate crime, violent extremism, or mass atrocities. The regional proliferation of all forms of identity-based violence continue to be too often understood as distinct rather than interconnected challenges, splitting apart and unnecessarily replicating complementary efforts at prevention and response.

The responsibility that Europeans hold to protect people from being violently attacked for who they are or what they believe is a shared one that begins at home but extends around the world. All too often, however, this is not how the global principles that have been crafted to address these challenges - whether expressed through the Responsibility to Protect, Sustainable Development Goals, or core human rights treaties - are approached and communicated by European actors.

Our understanding of the perspectives, structures, causes and relations that inform our work remain all too limited by a set of implicit biases. Until we reframe the problem of identity-based violence in all its forms and understand the shared nature of the challenge then we will continue to fail.

2. Integrate prevention

Hate is a process, and is not innate to any particular community, society, or region of the world. Left unchecked, hate produces violence. We know that what is learned can be unlearned; that negative trends can be reversed. However, as evidenced by the findings of the Pathways for Peace report – and the recent European experience – economic growth and political democratisation is not sufficient to turn the tide.
The UN Secretary General's 2017 annual report on the Responsibility to Protect called on states to strengthen their own accountability for contributions to atrocity prevention, which included a specific call to integrate prevention concerns into the work of national mechanisms.

Few European states have succeeded in integrating or replicating their multilateral commitments into their own domestic policies; for donor countries, this means the conscious integration of prevention beyond foreign affairs, international development, and defence policy and into trade, home affairs, immigration, and local government and communities policy.

Similarly, development and conflict prevention NGOs have not yet meaningfully integrated effective early warning, preventative forecasting, or other mechanisms for sounding alarms. Civil society organisations can begin integrating prevention on a microlevel by ensuring their own activities – from hiring policies to field programmes – 'do no harm', that they do not exclude, and that they always contribute to making identity-based violence less rather than more likely. If we all start with our own tables, greater change will follow.

3. Connect the evidence

We know that there are commonly agreed risk factors and indicators that signal when a society or community is moving in a direction where identity-based violence becomes more likely. Many of these risk factors and indicators are worsening in Europe, and yet governments and civil society alike are failing to connect the dots.

Our consultation and outreach found that across the region civil society efforts are addressing the challenge of identity-based violence at all its stages, from the local level through to the international. However, very little of this work is well connected either geographically or thematically. Civil society efforts to prevent racism, for example, rarely overlap with efforts to prevent violent extremism. Efforts in Bosnia to build more cohesive communities after the atrocities of the 1990s rarely have the opportunity to connect with those who work in parts of Ukraine that are violently divided today.

Likewise, there is an untapped resource for European actors struggling with negative regional, national, and local trends. That resource is global best practice – developed in countries and communities outside of Europe that have traditionally been thought of as more at risk of identity-based violence, particularly violent extremism and mass atrocities. This disconnect came up time and again through our conversations with a range of organisations: examples of best practice developed outside Europe are sometimes funded, researched, or implemented by European civil society – yet those lessons are not brought home.

A number of people who work for large international NGOs and asked not to be named told us of internal tensions within their own organisations, where staff based in Europe were advocating internally for peacebuilding and prevention work to be done *within* Europe. This chimes with US-based civil society experts who expressed similar concerns about the widening conceptual and implementing disconnect in their work.
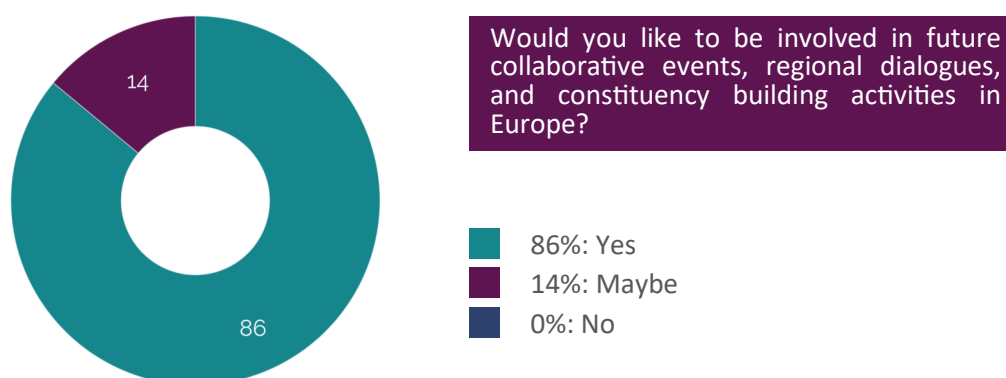
Next steps for European civil society

Next steps for European civil society

"I am convinced that we need to create a culture of dialogue, and this means investing time and resources on face-to-face and virtual meetings where we can exchange ideas, give and receive feedback, and develop a common language."

- Chiara de Franco , Associate Professor, University of Southern Denmark

Would you like to be involved in future collaborative events, regional dialogues, and constituency building activities in Europe?

- 86%: Yes
- 14%: Maybe
- 0%: No

Following the consultation, participants were invited to complete an anonymous feedback and follow up survey. We were delighted that the respondents are overwhelmingly supportive of taking networking and collaborative activities in Europe forward. Protection Approaches and its partners are now exploring how to facilitate greater and more effective communication, collaboration, and coordination across European civil society in order to strengthen and elevate civil society contributions to the shared goal of preventing identity-based violence.

We recommend the creation of:

- An online hub for European civil society where information can be pooled and ideas shared
- A European civil society virtual working group
- A European civil society proactive risk analysis forum to address threats we cannot yet see

Increased investment in strengthening this network and facilitating cross-sector work is vital to enhancing future civil society contributions to the prevention of hate crimes, violent extremism and mass atrocities. We are now actively seeking funding to support these activities.

Methodology

This report was informed by a number of formal and informal conversations with over 200 civil society experts, including representatives from over 100 NGOs working on issues relating to the prevention of identity-based violence. The data underpinning the report was primarily collected during a semi-structured three-day online consultation hosted on the Peace Insight platform and through the use of structured online questionnaires.

Selection criteria for both the consultation and our wider research and outreach was based on participants' experience of working on issues of identity-based violence, broadly defined. We controlled for appropriate geographical, thematic, and gender balance, and sought to ensure representation from grassroots activists through to multilateral-level organisations operating across the Council of Europe region and beyond. A select review of over 100 academic, grey, and policy-related publications relevant to the prevention crisis also underpins the report, drawing in particular from the wider bodies of literature on hate crime, violent extremism, and mass atrocity prevention.

The research undertaken for this report also builds on our existing links across both the UK and European prevention sectors, and draws from our depth of experience in developing and coordinating the UK Civil Society Mass Atrocity Prevention Working Group. Our model of convening and coordinating civil society actors within the UK has been particularly influential in shifting public debate and recent government approaches to issues of atrocity prevention and identity-based violence.

Following a UK workshop that Protection Approaches hosted in London in June 2018 to explore ways in which organisations could engage more consciously with mass atrocity prevention, we were asked by the UN Joint Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and the EU External Action Service to facilitate a similar discussion between and mapping of European stakeholders. This report is a product of those endeavours.

Endnotes

1. Report of the Secretary-General, *Responsibility to Protect: from early warning to early action,* A/72/884-S/2018/525, p, 1, para.6

2. *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, UN-World Bank, October 2018, p.iii

3. The political commitment of a 'responsibility to protect' all populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity was unanimously adopted by UN member states at the 2005 World Summit. See paragraphs 1380149 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, A/RES/60/1, 16 September 2005.

4. For the report of the Task Force, see *The EU and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities: An Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses*, Budapest Centre for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, 2013. The 'EU Responsibility to Protect-Atrocity Prevention Toolkit" was issued internally by the EEAS in September 2018.

5. Protection Approaches Director Kate Ferguson developed the term identity-based violence in 2012. See *https://www.protectionapproaches.org/identity-based-violence.html*.

6. Stephen McLoughlin, *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Understanding Risk and Resilience*, Oxon: Routledge, 2014; Alex J. Bellamy, *Reducing Risk, Strengthening Resilience: Toward the Structural Prevention of Atrocity Crimes*, Stanley Foundation Policy Brief, April 2016.

7. Report of the Secretary-General, *Implementing the responsibility to protect: accountability for prevention*, A/71/1016-S/2017/556.

8. These indicators are drawn from Protection Approaches' own risk analysis framework and global best practice, including the OSAPG *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A Tool for Prevention*, United Nations, 2014 and UNDP *Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity*, United Nations Development Programme, 2016.

9. Andrea Carlo, 'We need to talk about the rising wave of anti-Roma attacks in Europe, *The Independent*, 28 July 2019. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights offers a broad statistical overview of recent trends against Roma and other minority groups within Europe. See in particular *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Main findings* (2017).

10. *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Muslims – Selected Findings* (2017); *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU* (2018).

11. *European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender survey: Main findings* (2014); For an overview the challenges associated with recording and addressing disablist violence, *see Disability Hate Crime: A Guide*, European Network on Independent Living, November 2014.

12. Benjamin Ward, 'Europe's Climate of Intolerance', *Human Rights Watch*, 6 March 2018.

13. Amanda Paul and Demir Murat Seyrek, 'Two years after the Brussels attacks, the terrorist threat remains very real', *EURACTIV*, 16 March 2018.

14. *Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*, Institute for Economics and Peace, November 20; *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019*, Europol, 27 June 2019.

15. Karen E. Smith, *Genocide and the Europeans*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.239

16. Owen Boycott, 'ICC submission calls for prosecution of EU over migrant deaths', *The Guardian*, 3 June 2019.

Selected further reading

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Council of Europe (2019) Annual report 2018 on ECRI's activities [link]

De Franco, C., Meyer, C.O. and Smith, K. E. (2015) 'Living by Example?' The European Union and the Implementation of the Responsibility to Protect [link]

Dieng, A. (2018) Keynote Speech of Special Adviser Adama Dieng, 6th Meeting of the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, 16 October 2018 [link]

Dieng, A. (2018) Street by Street: Systematic Dehumanization in Europe [link]

European Commission (2016) The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online [link]

EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2017) Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II) – Main results [link]

EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2018) Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU [report]

EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2018) Challenges facing civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU [link]

Godzisz, M. and Viggiani, G. (2018) Anti-LGBT Hate Crime in Europe [link]

Gowan, R. (2018) Separation anxiety: European influence at the UN after Brexit [link]

McLoughlin (2014) The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Understanding Risk and Resilience [link]

OSCE (2014) Hate Crime Data Collection and Monitoring: A Practical Guide [ODIHR report]

Protection Approaches (2018) Preventing mass atrocities: could UK civil society be doing more? [link]

Protection Approaches (2019) A gathering storm? Assessing risks… [link]

QCEA (2018) Peace Education: Making the Case

Smith, Karen E. (2018) The EU and the Responsibility to Protect in an Illiberal Era [link]

Stanley Foundation/Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung/ICRtoP (2016) Overcoming barriers: civil society perspectives on implementing R2P [here]

UN (2014) Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes [link]

UN-World Bank (2018) Pathways for Peace [link]

United Nations Development Programme (2016) Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity [link]

UNSG (2013) Responsibility to protect: State responsibility and prevention [link]

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