

# MIRAD Final Conference Summary Report



December 2023 | Brussels

# Event Overview

The goal of the MIRAD "**Multi-Ideological Radicalisation Assessment towards Disengagement**" Final Conference was to share the results achieved throughout 2 years of intensive work in the project and paved the way for future efforts in the field of radicalisation assessment and prevention.

The event was dedicated to the representatives of Prison Staff, probation officers, NGOs, policymakers and all other parties interested in the project scope.

MIRAD project objectives were accomplished through the cooperation of project consortium partners from 7 countries together with a group of experts from MIRAD's Advisory Board, KES Consultative Council and members of Islamic Extremism and Right-Wing Extremism Expert Boards.

The Final Conference took place on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Brussels. The event was attended by over 50 participants from 11 countries.



Participants



Keynote Speech



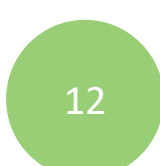
Countries



Moderators



Panels



Speakers

# Presented Products

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**NGO trustworthiness capability tool**



**Ideology-centred (Right-Wing extremism and Islamist extremism) and gender-centred add-on sheets to the IRS**



**Multiagency transition collaboration protocols**



**Mixed-method training approach (e-learning course; Train the trainer course; VR radicalisation risk assessment scenarios)**

# Event Audience

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NGOs working with extremists and radical individuals



Judicial Staff & Legal Experts



Prison, probation Staff & administrators



Researchers & Stakeholders involved in the domain



Policymakers



European Commission

# Agenda

Setting the tone
<b>09:30 – 09:40 Welcome session</b> Natalia Jarmuzek-Troczynska, Polish Platform for Homeland Security
<b>09:40 – 10:00 Keynote Speech</b> Christiane Hoehn, Principal Advisor to the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
<b>10:00 – 10:30 MIRAD in a nutshell</b> Pedro Liberado, IPS_Innovative Prison Systems
<b>10:30 – 11:30 – PANEL I “MIRAD Products #1   Promoting a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral P/CVE environment: Towards an effective interinstitutional approach”</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Cherie Townsend, International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology
<b>MIRAD’s trustworthiness and credibility assessment tool: A proposal to increase NGOs/CSOs involvement in P/CVE efforts</b> Markos Shangoyan, KMOP Social Action and Innovation Centre
<b>Understanding ‘what it not working’ to overcome national challenges: Establishing interinstitutional protocols at the national level</b> Mariyan Sabev, Center for the Study of Democracy Rasha Nagem, Les Militants des Savoires
<b>11:30 – 12:00: Group photo &amp; Networking coffee break</b>
<b>12:00 – 13:00 PANEL II “MIRAD Products #2   Building knowledge and shaping minds: Responding to field gaps and practitioners needs”</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Rhianon Williams, Bremen Ministry of Justice and Constitution, KES Council Member
<b>Specifying the role of ideology in radicalisation risk assessment</b> Daniel F. Pérez-García, Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies Mariyan Sabev, Center for the Study of Democracy
<b>Training prison, probation and community staff on radicalisation and violent extremism: Results from a cross-sectoral and mixed-method training initiative</b> Vânia Sampaio, IPS_Innovative Prison Systems
<b>13:00 – 14:00 Networking Lunch break   Place Centrale (0 floor)</b>

# Agenda

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**14:00 – 15:30 PANEL III “Expert panel #1: Current and future challenges in the extremist landscape”**

**Moderator:** Nadia Moussa, RAN Policy Support Researcher & Expert

**Islamist extremism: Lessons learned and operational changes**

Magdalena El Ghamari, MIRAD IsE Expert Panel, Collegium Civitas

**Right-wing extremism: Current trends, recruitment strategies and social adherence**

Daniel F. Pérez-García, Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies

**Beyond common threats: A new extremist architecture ahead of us?**

Lorenzo Marinone, European Foundation for Democracy

**15:30 – 15:45: Refreshment**

**15:45 – 16:45 PANEL IV “Expert roundtable: Current and future challenges for the criminal justice system”**

**Moderator:** Pedro Liberado, IPS\_Innovative Prison Systems

Nadya Radkovska, Head of International Cooperation and Staff Training at the General Directorate “Execution of Sentences”, Chair of the Council of Europe's Council for Penological Co-operation

David Hansen, Head of the Department of International Studies and Interpreting at OsloMet University, Associate Professor at the University College of the Norwegian Correctional Service

Rositsa Dzhekova, Deputy Director, International Department at Violence Prevention Network

Eva Jiménez González, Head of Institute of Forensic Psychology at the Spanish Minister of Justice. Associate professor at University of Menéndez Pelayo. RAN HEALTH Working Group Leader. RAN Policy Support

**16:45 – 17:00 Closing session**

Jeanne Dubroca, CNAM Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers

Natalia Jarmuzek-Troczyńska, Polish Platform for Homeland Security

# Keynote Speech



CHRISTIANE HOEHN, PRINCIPAL ADVISOR TO THE EU COUNTER-TERRORISM COORDINATOR

## Terrorist threats:

- The threat remains high. Islamist terrorism is the main threat. However, there is a growing threat of right-wing extremism – international threat, not locally restricted.
- We must be vigilant because terrorist groups are trying to regain their capacity to plan attacks in the EU, specifically Daesh in Afghanistan and Pakistan (ISKP). They already have a strong online presence, and plots have been prevented within the EU.
- What is happening in Gaza and Israel influences internal security, as it increases the attacks risk.
- We currently observe rise in: antisemitism, online hate speech and anti-system violent extremism.

## Important areas:

- Prisons.
- Internet (a priority of the EU): there is an abundance of terrorist content and hate speech. Especially because of the algorithmic amplification of this content, the EU created a framework to combat this.
- Ukraine: we have not seen any terrorist threats for our internal security, but we are vigilant. (Foreigners want to fight in Ukraine to help out, but there are extremists on both sides.).

## Prisons:

An important focus is the multiple attacks committed by prison leavers. Many people were sentenced for e.g., being foreign terrorist fighters, but they often received rather short sentences. We did not have battlefield info about what they did there, and now they are getting released. Huge issue. Risk assessment, reintegration and desistance are very important on the political level.

## Several categories of inmates:

- Convicted for terrorism.
- Extremists convicted for other facts (e.g., murder).
- Inmates who were not radical when entering prison but radicalized throughout their sentence.

Important topic: what to do with people who leave prison? We should focus on information exchange, rehabilitation in & outside of prison: exit continuum. We need to assess what needs to happen after prison. Many people released from prison remain active in extremist circles and could recruit. Reasons for radicalisation vary. Prison circumstances have a huge impact (e.g. overcrowding: alienation, impossible to do appropriate interventions).

## This is why MIRADs contributions are so important, in particular:

- Importance of multi-agency work in deradicalisation.
- Cooperation with civil society (MIRAD's NGO trustworthiness tool should be tested more broadly).
- Risk assessment: absolutely key and very difficult. Ideology and gender centered add-ons for IRS are interesting elements that maybe we did not look into before.
- Training development & the new technology: Virtual Reality, e-Learning, train the trainer, etc. Modern mixed method approach helps translating theory into practice.

# MIRAD in a nutshell



PEDRO LIBERADO, INNOVATIVE PRISON SYSTEMS

The continuous threat of radicalisation (and terrorism) in Europe:

- Strategic orientation for 2022-2023 EU approach to prevention:
  - Risk assessment;
  - Continuity & consistency between activities before & after release;
  - More attention to practitioners in the field.
- Europol EUTST report 2023:
  - Largest number of arrests mainly concerned RWE and ISE.
- Far-right violent extremism on the rise: increase of far-right groups manifestations (online and offline); concern over the support these groups receive from young people and adults.
- Russia war on Ukraine: Disinformation and distorted narratives related to the conflict might still fuel terrorist and violent extremist narratives, regardless of the ideology propagated.
- COVID-19 and new disturbing dynamics: Conspiracy theories seem to be increasingly filling the space between left-wing and right-wing ideologies, providing motivations for violent actions to individuals lacking clear ideological belonging. (i.e., QAnon, anti-vax, anti-5G, anti-technology).

**MIRAD in a nutshell**  
Strategic orientation on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation for 2022-2023

**Key Takeaways**

**Prisons, Radicalisation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration**

- “Prison environment is where radicalisation processes can advance [...], but also **where [rehabilitation and reintegration] processes can start**”
- “If **cooperation between inmates and P/CVE practitioners [exist]**, and **information exchange among the latter [improves]**, prison can provide valuable opportunities to **work on rehabilitation**”
- “Risk management, **proper risk assessment** and preparedness of prison staff in the detection of signs of radicalisation is crucial”
- “Transition between detention period – release – time after release is a challenge for several [countries]. [...] Furthermore, **how to reach continuity and consistency between activities conducted before and after release** needs to be further explored”

This project is co-funded by the European Commission's Internal Security Fund – Police (ISFP) (GA no. 101035878)

Why is MIRAD needed and what have been done to overcome the assessed gaps.

- Community organizations are crucial to be involved but there is a reluctance in some governments, as they are unsure of which to trust. One of MIRAD products was developing an evaluation framework to assess NGOs trustworthiness and capability (Evaluation framework to assess credibility & sustainability) -> NGO Trustworthiness Tool (NTT).
- The identification of vulnerable inmates at risk of radicalisation is the basis of prevention and disengagement efforts. MIRAD adapted a risk assessment tool (IRS) to consider the role of gender and ideology in the radicalisation process. The IRS was adapted to consider the role of gender and ideology in the radicalisation process by: updating towards a Right-Wing Extremism centred assessment (IRS RWE), updating towards an Islamist Extremism centred assessment (IRS IE) and adapting for implementation during exit programmes towards inmates'. disengagement/deradicalisation.

# MIRAD in a nutshell




PEDRO LIBERADO, INNOVATIVE PRISON SYSTEMS

- MIRAD designed and promoted cross-sectoral and interinstitutional collaboration models and protocols. These addressed the need for fostering a smooth transition process of the offenders, from prison to probation and their full reintegration into society, through agencies' adoption of a transversal cooperation mechanism.
- CSOs/NGOs play a critical role in the promotion of reintegration programmes and volunteers have become a cornerstone of the criminal justice system work. MIRAD addressed this need by fostering multiagency cooperation.
- MIRAD delivered innovative and needs-based training programmes which intended to upscale the practical capacity of practitioners from prison, probation and NGOs in working in the field of P/CVE: Mixed method training (including VR scenarios).

## MIRAD in a nutshell

Who are we?




**Funded by:** Internal Security Fund – Police (DG HOME)

**Duration:** 24 months (1 January 2022 – 31 December 2023)

**Project coordinator:**  
Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM)

contact@mirad-project.eu


**8 Partners  
7 Countries**



This project is co-funded by the European Commission's Internal Security Fund – Police (ISFP) [GA no. 101035878]


## MIRAD in a nutshell

### 1. How to increase NGOs involvement in P/CVE and within the Criminal Justice System?




**Creating a database of European NGOs working within the CJS**

The database was developed and then implemented online thus centralising contacts and communication between 3 stakeholders (prison, probation and community) into a single network.



**Developing an evaluation framework to assess NGOs trustworthiness and capability**

A Consultative Council was set up to conceptualise and validate the developed tool and a set of indicators/dimensions under evaluation will be established.



- High** trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability
- Moderate** trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability
- Low** trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability

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# MIRAD in a nutshell




PEDRO LIBERADO, INNOVATIVE PRISON SYSTEMS

## MIRAD in a nutshell

### 1. How to increase NGOs involvement in P/CVE and within the CJIS?

What have we done? → NGO Trustworthiness Tool (NTT)





**NGO Trustworthiness Tool (NTT)**

Framework for assessing the **trustworthiness** and **capability** of NGOs engaged in inmate rehabilitation and the prevention of violent extremism.

6 categories:

1. Quality management, reliability, and monitoring
2. P/CVE and VETO rehabilitation competencies
3. Financial management
4. Network and cooperation
5. Transformation and social change
6. Media

9 subcategories & 40 indicators





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## MIRAD in a nutshell

### 2. How can we improve current RA instruments?


What have we done? – IRS RWE & IRS IE



**MIRAD adapted a risk assessment tool to consider the role of gender and ideology in the radicalisation process**

The IRS was adapted to consider the role of gender and ideology in the radicalisation process by:


- ✓ Updating towards a Right-Wing Extremism centred assessment (IRS RWE)
- ✓ Updating towards a Islamist Extremism centred assessment (IRS IE)
- ✓ Adapting for implementation during exit programmes towards inmates' disengagement/deradicalisation



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## MIRAD in a nutshell

### 3. How can we increase practitioners' competencies?



**Tailor-oriented**

**Cross-sectoral**

- Prison staff
- Probation staff
- NGOs/CSOs practitioners

**Technical Staff**  
Inmate Rehabilitation Screening  
"Inmate Rehabilitation Screening"  
Assessing individual risk factors


**Objective**  
Assess inmates' vulnerability risk of radicalisation

Inmates psychological, emotional and cognitive dimensions

**Ensuring the prison-exit continuum**

To be included in disengagement efforts

**Tackle / Rehabilitate**  
(deradicalise / desengage)  
(exit work)



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# MIRAD in a nutshell

PEDRO LIBERADO, INNOVATIVE PRISON SYSTEMS



## MIRAD in a nutshell

### 3. How can we increase practitioners' competencies?

What have we done? → MIRAD Training Approach & Programme



**MIRAD Training Overview**

257 trainees successfully completed the training course



Begin your learning journey



Connections Learning Academy




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## MIRAD in a nutshell

### 4. How to move from paper to practice?


What have we done? → Series of initiatives to promote multiagency cooperation



**Analysing current cooperation procedures towards improving interinstitutional collaboration**

- Protocol screening
- European-wide survey
- Interviews
- Transition collaboration protocol baselines
- Recommendation paper to implement EU Directive 2016/680
- National & International events

Practitioners' perspectives on multiagency cooperation (challenges, needs, recommendations)



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# Panels I-III

PANEL I - MIRAD Products #1 Promoting a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral P/CVE environment: Towards an effective interinstitutional approach.

Moderator: Cherie Townsend, International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology

Panelists:

1. Markos Shangoyan, KMOP Social Action and Innovation Centre.
2. Mariyan Sabev, Center for the Study and Democracy.
3. Rasha Nagem, Les Militants des Savoirs.



PANEL II - MIRAD Products #2 Building knowledge and shaping minds: Responding to field gaps and practitioners needs.

Moderator : Rhianon Williams, Bremen Ministry of Justice and Constitution

Panelists:

1. Daniel Perez-Garcia, Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies.
2. Mariyan Sabev, Center for the Study and Democracy.
3. Vânia Sampaio, IPS Innovative Prison Systems.



PANEL III - Expert Panel #1 Current and future challenges in the extremist landscape.

Moderator : Nadia Moussa, RAN Policy Support Researcher and Expert

Panelists:

1. Magdalena El Ghamari, Collegium Civitas.
2. Daniel Perez-Garcia, Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies.
3. Lorenzo Marinone, European Foundation for Democracy.



# Panel IV



PEDRO LIBERADO, INNOVATIVE PRISON SYSTEMS

## Panelists:

1. David Hansen – Dept. Head of Department at Department of International Studies and Interpreting at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet), Norway.
2. Nadya Radkovska – Head of International Cooperation and Staff Training at the General Directorate “Execution of Sentences”, Bulgaria.
3. Rasha Nagem – Director of the Association Les Militants des Savoirs and European, France.

## The main points discussed during the panel were:

- Prevention rather than reaction should be the norm.
- Crime is always one step ahead of academics and law enforcement, our task is to reduce the size of this step.

## Question 1: How do you see your sector addressing challenges for the criminal justice system?

### (key points raised):

- Time to see the problem from different angles, we must address the need for critical thinking approach regarding the radicalization process in general as the landscape is extremely dynamic.
- We need to answer the question if prisons are still a breeding ground for radicalisation. In many jurisdictions, inmates are isolated from rehabilitation activities due to a strict prison regime, segregated from the general population. When the regime is combined with other restrictions, contact with civil society is limited.
- There are so many new situations, not just in Europe, but also in Gaza, Mali, and Syria. This will influence European society but also prison and probation service.
- Role of families in exit programmes: new restorative methods, victim-perpetrator mediation => might be increasingly influential on our rehabilitation efforts.
- We should work more on the knowledge of Right-Wing Extremism as it is a big threat currently (in some countries main focus has been on Islamist Extremist so far).
- We must work on both social and political level with a strong focus on NGOs and cooperation with them.

## Question 2: MIRAD products - feedback from frontline workers (key points raised):

- Mixed method training approach (including VR) is of great value.
- Risk assessments: The IRS seems to be a promising tool, but it needs to be further tweaked and adapted to the realities. We need tools that are applicable for the right kind of people to work with them, which are location specific. Tweaking needs to be done in the national ways of working.
- IRS tool adapted is extremely beneficial and needed, as in many countries, there is no tool to assess risk of radicalization. The staff should be very well trained on using this tool, as it is very specific. Additionally, the tool should not be used as a stand-alone instrument, but instead, should be combined with other disengagement efforts.
- We need applied research projects like MIRAD and we need to ask “What do these results, this tool, mean for the practitioners?”.
- MIRAD goes a long way to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice.

# Panel IV



PEDRO LIBERADO, INNOVATIVE PRISON SYSTEMS

An example of the MIRAD trainings for Polish practitioners showed that participants were very happy to use VR technology to see how an interview works and to test it in a more realistic environment than the classroom setting. Those trainings should be available to more practitioners, because this way we talk the same language, we can use VR to see the first step of radicalisation, through prevention we can do more.

Question 3: Other challenges than the new trends in extremism related to PCVE within your specific setting? (key points raised):

- Future and current challenge is the continuing support during the reintegration process, the prison exit continuum. What happens with those who leave prison when they go back into society? This is a crucial moment - the importance of multi-agency cooperation & cross border cooperation.
- Challenges: geopolitical, Gaza, Ukraine, Pakistan repatriating Afghans, ISKP, migration crisis, returning FTF & the exiting of so-called foreign fighters all over Europe, role of women in extremism, the fluidity of extremism (example of FTF turned into RWE).
- Pedagogical tools for prevention, especially for young people, and resilience through (democratic) education are very important.

Wrap-up by the Moderator:

- The need for primary prevention.
- Continuous Education.
- The role of technology in the training and education process.
- The need to provide training of P/CVE to politicians.
- Continued support for the prison-exit continuum.
- Fostering increased attention to restorative justice if we want to strive for stabilization;
- Stabilization: after rehabilitation, reintegration, sometimes just integration.

## The MIRAD Timeline



Click [here](#)

# Event Summary Video

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The Final European Conference of the MIRAD Project - Brussels, Dec. 2023

Click [here](#)

# Download the MIRAD Booklet

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Direct link:  
[bit.ly/MIRAD-booklet](https://bit.ly/MIRAD-booklet)

**Presentation from the event - click [here](#)**

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# Event Photos



# Thank you for participating!

