# CHAMPIONs

## Cooperative Harmonised Action Model to Stop Polarisation in Our Nations

# Activity Brief #1

Progress of the CHAMPIONs project

March to September 2019 (Month 1 – Month 6)

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## Project overview:

*The CHAMPIONs project central goal is the creation of offline working groups – "CHAMPIONs Roundtables". These roundtables will combine first-line-practitioners of different disciplines, professions and institutions or agencies, to jointly develop effective detection and response solutions to counter polarisation, build resilience and protect vulnerable groups in their local communities. FLPs will be trained to build capacity to design solutions and programmes to most effectively address the drivers of polarisation and to collaborate most efficiently by breaking down institutional barriers. To facilitate these processes of offline joined- up solution development, an online platform will be developed. Medium term: their actions not only directly affect vulnerable individuals, but also the wider community – who will be engaged in awareness-raising events – as well as local and national policy-makers.*
*The long-term aim of the project is to transfer the CHAMPIONs pilot model to other communities across the EU where other FLP Roundtables are established and become users of the developed platform. To achieve this, synergies with related EU-funded projects, platforms and networks will be harnessed throughout the project and after its implementation period.*

## Key Information:

Project Coordinator:  Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania

Consortium:          8 members (Romania, Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary)

Duration:            24 Months

Topic ID:            ISFP-2017-AG-RAD

## Objectives

1. To better the understanding and awareness of first-line-practitioners from Romania, Poland, Hungary and Germany.
2. To enhance capacities and capabilities of FLPs for local level inter-organisational collaboration and improve information sharing.
3. To disseminate and share local and EU-level good practices among first-line-practitioners transnationally for EU-wide knowledge exchange.
4. To facilitate access of FLPs to at relevant resources, videos and online trainings for improving their professional skills.
5. To establish onsite models of cooperation in the partner countries to overcome 'siloing' and improve information sharing, detection and response to polarisation.
6. To develop the skills of FLPs to counter and reduce polarisation and to encourage societal cohesion through offline and online training.
7. To improve capabilities for awareness raising on polarisation and trust between civic society organisations, communities and FLPs.
8. To utilise moderate voices and key influencers in the community for impactful awareness-raising activities.

## Main Activities of the CHAMPIONs project

*This section will outline the progress of the CHAMPIONs project to date. As several tasks of the project are still ongoing, the report will not provide a total overview of all the work done so far, but rather highlight the main accomplishments of the project so far. As such, 30 deliverables were produced, in line with the work plan.*

While the project will be concluded in 2021, it already has produced interesting insights into the stand of radicalisation and polarisation in the project countries. Furthermore, the project has advanced its objectives in several ways and created a solid basis to fulfil its mission in time and successfully.

As such, the first month was marked by the successful kick-off meeting, which also produced a final version of the work plan and codified this in a project handbook. Additionally, a crisis management strategy was formulated. As such, the consortium created a stable foundation to advance its mission and project.

As the project matured it was able to complete several tasks of great importance for the overall success of the project. By June it had conducted in-depth research surveys and mapped the existing literature, tools, projects, resources as well as practices and programmes related to inter-institutional collaboration and polarisation/ radicalisation. Further, it had planned and successful implemented a series of national and European expert round-tables. These provided future direction, feedback and an early possibility to facilitate the distribution of the project.
These activities were supported by related outreach activities. As such, the project had by then successfully developed a website as well as opened several social media channels. Furthermore, an internal and external Participatory Action MELI Framework was developed in June, whose results were discussed in September and the project adjusted to ensure optimal performance, learning and uptake of findings and project quality.

Progress continued and by August another set of important tasks was completed. The research and mapping activities, which were completed by June, had progressed to the analysis and successful identification of trends and best practices. Also, the analysis of the results of the surveys and interviews conducted was concluded and several reports written, summarising their findings.

The successful end of Work package 2 could be announced in September, leading to the production of a report summarising all findings of the research, mapping and analysis tasks. But also in other areas progress was able to be reported. As such, September also saw the successful completion of a first round of meetings with international and national advisory boards, supplementing each other. The advisory boards produced feedback and also ensured the relevance of the project outcomes for the intended audience on a national and international level. These were accompanied by policy maker round tables with a related aim but an increased focus on dissemination.
Additionally, the online modules and courses constituting the CHAMPIONs "Training YARD" were designed as well as the online platform they would be home to. Related, the project was also able to complete the creation of training programmes for FLPs.

# Detailed Description

<p align="center"><strong>April 2019 (1<sup>st</sup> Month)</strong></p>

*WP1* *Management and Coordination of the Action*

- The consortium organised and held a successful **kick-off meeting**. Here, a final version of the work plan was agreed upon and a project handbook in English produced. A report about the meeting and the produced documents was provided under **Deliverable 1.1**, marking the beginning of the project.
- Further a **crisis management strategy** was developed, outlining risks as well as risk-mitigation and crisis-management procedures and protocols, to mitigate risks and conflicts that might emerge between the activities and outputs of the campaign and public, or national governmental interest. The strategy was provided under **Deliverable 1.2**

<p align="center"><strong>June 2019 (3<sup>rd</sup> Month)</strong></p>

*WP2* *Identify & Assess: Joint Needs Assessment, Lessons Harvesting & Ex-Ante Evaluation and Baseline Mapping*

- Under **Deliverable 2.1 a literature review** and analysis of polarisation and its drivers and effects at the national and transnational levels was produced. The review placed particular emphasis on the countries the project is being implemented in and surveyed over 150 journals, articles, books and reports.
- Next the consortium set out to better understand which **tools / project outcomes**, relevant to local practitioners exists. To do so it mapped and evaluated EU-funded tools and projects in the field of counter-radicalisation and countering polarisation. This also done to share the gathered tools and project outcomes on the "CHAMPIONs Tools" digital platform and provide a report about them to the EU under **Deliverable 2.2**
- This was followed by **Deliverable 2.3**. Here the project **mapped** the direct and indirect **combined network** of the consortium to identify and select participants for direct participation, to involve in surveys / interviews, to facilitate implementation or be included in advisory groups. This was relevant to maximise the influence, engagement and impact in implementation of the project.
- In **Deliverable 2.4** the project mapped and evaluated the **best tools and resources**. This was done to integrate them into the platform so that they could be shared with FLP users and to identify best and worst elements of digital resources.
- **Practices, policies and programmes for inter-institutional collaboration** and platform models at local levels across EU Member States, which join FLP institutions and organisations in collaboration were **mapped**. Focus was placed on information sharing and detection to counter polarisation and radicalisation. The findings were summarised and provided in **Deliverable 2.5**.

*WP5* *Interact & Cooperate – Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONs Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONs Roundtable Actions*

- **Deliverable 5.1** developed a concept note and brief of the structure of the **CHAMPIONs Roundtable** working groups. Here, the participants, content, structure and format of the CHAMPIONs Roundtables were formulated. As such, it was based on the mapping activities under **WP2**, especially Deliverable 2.3.

- Consequently **Deliverable 5.2** the formulated list of participants in the round tables was provided.

*WP6 Evaluate – Learn – Improve: Internal and External Monitoring, Participatory Action Evaluation, Improvement and Sustainability*

- The successful development of an **Internal Participatory Action MELI Framework**, was achieved under **Deliverable 6.1**. This was done to ensure the Efficiency, Effectiveness and Inclusiveness of work conducted by the Consortium.
- Related, **Deliverable 6.2** addressed the outside dimension, by developing the **External Participatory Action MELI Framework**. This was done to ensure, the Impact, Sustainability and Relevance of the activities undertaken and products delivered by the consortium.

*WP7 Leverage & Promote: Communication, Dissemination and Leveraging of Outputs, Products and Deliverables*

- A project's **website** separate from the platform was developed under **Deliverable 7.1**. This was done to facilitate the dissemination of the project´s activities and to enable relevant practitioners, policy-makers, stakeholders and members of the public to see the actions of the project.
- Further outreach activities took place under **Deliverable 7.2**. The project developed its **social media channels** on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other channels to disseminate the project activities. Further, a mailing lists was created as well as newsletter, fact-sheet, activity brief, flyer and press-release templates.
- **Deliverable 7.3** utilised the created mailing list and additionally **mapped relevant press and media institutions** as well as blogs, related project / organisational websites, journals, and other opportunities for dissemination of project activities. These activities were accompanied by **reaching out** to the so mapped contacts.
- Under **Deliverable 7.4** international policy- and decision-maker **roundtables were organised and implemented**. They included key members from various relevant national and international institutions. These roundtables were held to support the dissemination of project activities as well as to facilitate the current and future implementation of the project and to gain feedback.

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**August 2019 (5<sup>th</sup> Month)**

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*WP2 Identify & Assess: Joint Needs Assessment, Lessons Harvesting & Ex-Ante Evaluation and Baseline Mapping*

- A **SWOT analysis** of available online / digital capacity-building tools & learning materials was conducted and the findings reported in **Deliverable 2.6**.
- **Deliverable 2.7** analysed inter-constitutional cooperation and provided "**Good and bad practices of collaboration**" and **lessons** identified. As such, its analysis was based on the practices, policies and programmes for inter-institutional collaboration mapped under Deliverable 2.5. The outcome was a report with recommendations for the project and evaluation of the existing cooperation.
- **Deliverable 2.8** provided an analysis of the **results of 58 interviews** with First line practitioners held by the project. It provided suggestions for the project and identified existing Strengths and weaknesses in the digital and non-digital

realms for countering polarisation and radicalisation in Europe at relevant national and local levels. Further, it also focused on approaches to as well as strengths and challenges affecting multi-agency collaboration and information exchange among relevant actors.

- **Deliverable 2.9** reported on the **results of a survey**, including over 230 First line practitioners. It outlined existing perceptions on polarisation and radicalisation as well as the experiences and needs of those surveyed in addressing the topic, while also providing advice and feedback to the project.

## September 2019 (6ᵗʰ Month)

*WP1 Management and Coordination of the Action*

- A **progress and status report** of the project was sent to the EU under **Deliverable 1.3.** It also included achievements and challenges encountered by the consortium as well as key recommendations for its future development.
- The first **International Advisory Group meeting** was held and provided expert guidance on the implementation of the project and helped to ensure that the outputs of the project remain of most relevance to the European contexts. The results, recommendations and feedback obtained were summarised and reported in **Deliverable 1.4**
- **Deliverable 1.5** reported on the successful implementation of four **National Advisory Group meetings.** These national meetings ensured the relevance of the project outcomes to the national context of the participating countries and by this supplemented the International Advisory Group meeting.

*WP2 Identify & Assess: Joint Needs Assessment, Lessons Harvesting & Ex-Ante Evaluation and Baseline Mapping*

- **Deliverable 2.10** signalised the **successful end of WP2**, which was completed, as planned, in September. As such, it summarised the reports, joint evaluations, analyses and needs assessments from all WP2 tasks and deliver practical recommendations to **guide future WP implementation and deliverables**. To ensure the quality of this important Deliverable it was cross examined by the National and International Expert Advisory Groups and the consortium.

*WP3 identify & Communicate - Creation of the Digital 'Alert' and 'Arena' Tools and Services*

- Under **Deliverable 3.1** and in collaboration with the Project Lead and the Consortium the **design and aesthetics of the CHAMPIONs Online Platform** was developed. This included frameworks, formatting and layout of the content as well as of accompanying digital tools and resources hubs. This did not include the actual content, which arose from WP2´s mapping and research activities. The results were summarised in a brief and a report.

*WP4 TRAIN – Creation & Harvesting of Online & Onsite Training & Learning Tools, Resources & Courses for FLPs: The CHAMPIONs Training Yard.*

- **Deliverable 4.1** created online tutorials and mini courses by this creating the CHAMPIONs "**Training YARD**". In detail a report and brief outlining their training methodology, including modules, learning objectives and outcomes and how they will be delivered was produced. Further, **simulation exercises** were developed and their framework, process expected outcomes and related impact included in the report and brief.

***WP5*** *Interact & Cooperate – Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONs Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONs Roundtable Actions*

- Under **Deliverable 5.3 training programmes** were developed. This included a detailed report over their methodology, content and length. Further, the purpose, scope and learning objectives were also specified and included in the final report, alongside the relevant impact indicators.
- Next **handbooks** were developed and designed to act as guidance for CHAMPIONs FLP involvement in the roundtable including future expectations for participation and codes of conduct. The completed Handbooks were reported under **Deliverable 5.4**.

***WP6*** *Evaluate – Learn – Improve: Internal and External Monitoring, Participatory Action Evaluation, Improvement and Sustainability*

- Following the development and implementation of the **MELI Framework** in June under Deliverable 6.1, **the findings** of the framework were presented in **Deliverable 6.3**. This included the results of joint monitoring and evaluation of internal project activities, including communications, project implementation, task management, event organisation, quality of engagement and performance and other vectors which had been conducted. The findings were reviewed within the Consortium and with the FLP CHAMPIONs. This was done to ensure optimal performance, learning and uptake of findings and project quality.
- The same was done for the **external project actions**, in particular training tools, awareness raising events and on-site multi-agency FLP cooperation models. As such, the external **MELI framework**, developed under Deliverable 6.2, was used to identify adjustments needed to ensure optimal performance, learning and uptake of findings and project quality. The findings were summarised in **Deliverable 6.4**.

***WP7*** *Leverage & Promote: Communication, Dissemination and Leveraging of Outputs, Products and Deliverables*

- **Under Task 7.5** the project organised **policy- and decision-makers roundtables**. The roundtables supported the dissemination of the project activities as well as facilitating the current and future implementation of the project. The Minutes of Policy-maker Roundtables were summarised and made available through the Deliverable.