



CHAMPIONS

Cooperative Harmonised
Action Model
to Stop Polarisation
in Our Nations

Activity Brief #2

The CHAMPIONS Roundtables

National Roundtable in Germany

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Introduction

CHAMPIONS' central action is to establish permanent offline working groups – 'CHAMPIONS-Roundtables' – bringing together FLPs (first-line-practitioners) of different disciplines, professions and institutions or to which jointly detect risks and challenges and elaborate feasible responses to counter polarisation, and to build resilience and protect vulnerable groups in their local communities. During the course of the Roundtables, FLPs will be trained to enable them to design solutions and programmes which address the drivers of polarisation and collaborate in breaking down institutional barriers.

In the medium term, their actions will impact both vulnerable individuals who will be engaged in awareness-raising events and their community – as well as local and national policy-makers. In order to facilitate these processes of offline nature an online platform will also be developed.

In the long-term, the project will be used as a pilot model and transferred to other communities. To that end, synergies with related EU-funded projects, platforms and networks will be harnessed throughout the project and after its implementation period.

Find the full roundtable report in different languages on <https://www.championsproject.eu/media/>

National Roundtable in Germany

The participants of the first CHAMPIONS-Roundtable in Berlin, Germany, which took place from 01.11. - 02.11.2019, were mainly social workers and youth workers, alongside NGO staff in the field of prevention of extremism, who also took part in the training. Future social workers, who are still studying but have a part-time job in this field, also attended the training.

Cultures Interactive e.V. (CI) is a non-profit organisation for the prevention of right-wing extremism and human rights-oriented youth cultural work. With its youth cultural approach, Cultures Interactive ties in with the life of young adults (e.g. through skateboarding, graffiti or YouTube) and combines it with civic education. In addition, CI consults associations and youth workers and trains specialists and local teams to implement holistic political education in local contexts. The aim is to strengthen an attitude of active tolerance, human rights and physical and psychological avoidance of violence among young people and adults.

On this basis, it was important to us to align the CHAMPIONS-Roundtables with the needs of professionals in youth work and prevention work. Within the framework of a total of six 2-day roundtables, their work, their wishes and their challenges will be the focus of attention. The aim is to strengthen the participants in their professional handling of the phenomenon of right-wing extremism and group-focused enmity, to jointly develop strategies and to impart knowledge with targeted, subject-specific presentations. In Germany, the CHAMPIONS-Roundtables will focus on educational work with young people to strengthen a human rights-oriented attitude.

The roundtables are taking place in Berlin, Neukölln. The district of Neukölln was chosen because of the challenges posed by right-wing extremism on the one hand and religious extremism (so-called Islamism) on the other. Overall, there are numerous tensions and polarising effects in Berlin Neukölln, especially among young people. With the concept of group-focused enmity, which refers to the recognition and handling of inhuman attitudes in society and is not limited to the concept of (violent) extremism, new strategies are to be jointly developed and the structures of cooperation in Neukölln improved.

The main goal of the CHAMPIONS-Roundtables in Berlin, Neukölln is to support practitioners of youth work and prevention work in the social and institutional challenges they face, to strengthen their attitudes and their handlings against all forms of group-focused enmity.

Although not all participants come into direct contact with young people who need to distance themselves from the right-wing extremist scene, it became clear that phenomena of group-focused enmity are highly present in all areas of work. In the context of a joint case collection of problematic situations and/or statements, the participants drew particular attention to homophobic and sexist statements/situations in their field of work. In addition, the phenomenon of 'online radicalisation' was put into focus as a major current danger for young people. Regarding the phenomenon of 'online radicalisation', the participants saw both a gap in their knowledge and an uncertainty in the pedagogical handling of this phenomenon. Anti-Muslim and racist resentments also play a central role for the participants, especially when working with young refugees.

Furthermore, the participants want to explore and discuss the potential and limits of their own work and look into different possibilities for creating local alliances and cooperation.



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