



CHAMPIONS

Cooperative Harmonised
Action Model
to Stop Polarisation
in Our Nations

Activity Brief #6

Progress of the CHAMPIONS project

October 2019 to March 2020 (Month 7 – Month 12)

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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 ‘siloeing’ 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 between October 2019 up to March 2020. The report will first provide a summary of the overall progress made, followed by a short overview of the continuous communication activities, leading to a detailed description of the main project accomplishments, for each month and work package respectively.

All deliverables were submitted on-time during the second quarter of the project. Major achievements include the design and creation of **Training Yard online learning materials** including multiple Practitioner Handbooks, Guidebooks and / or Toolkits (**D4.2**), several Training Yard Video Tutorials with accompanying exercise (**D4.3** and **D4.4**), 20+ Further Learning Resources mapped and tested by CHAMPIONS consortium partners (**D4.5**), and five Simulation Case Studies (**D4.6**). All materials were made available in English, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, and German.

In addition to this, the second quarter period also saw the successful launch of the **CHAMPIONS roundtables** in each of the pilot cities in Hungary, Romania, Poland, and Germany (**A5.3**) as well as having successfully implement the first roundtable trainings and workshops dedicated to offline cooperation in each city (**A5.4** and **A5.5**), resulting in confidential deliverable **D5.6** and public deliverable **D5.7**.

The **CHAMPIONS Online Platform** has also been under continuous development and is slated to be integrated onto firstlinepractitioners.com to ensure the sustainability of the platforms in development as well as usage of the abovementioned created materials. The design and development framework for CHAMPIONS' **ALERT** and **ARENA** platforms (**D3.2**) was uploaded and the consortium is currently refining the development of the platforms to be ready for the next series of roundtables on online collaboration (**A5.6** and **A5.7**) which were due to start in late March or early April; however, are being reconceptualized due to the COVID-19 pandemic Europe is currently facing.

In parallel to the development of the CHAMPIONS Online Platform (**WP3**) and Training Yard materials (**WP4**), as well as the implementation of the CHAMPIONS Roundtables (**WP5**), the internal monitoring and evaluation systems that were developed internally for the CHAMPIONS consortium and externally for the FLPs and key stakeholders were continuously implemented (**WP6**). Two series of internal and external monitoring fell under this project period, the first at the end of September 2019 (**D6.3** and **D6.4**) and at the end of December 2019 (**D6.5** and **D6.6**). The next scheduled MELI will be at the end of March 2020.

Communication Activities

Continuous project coordination (**A1.1**) was ensured during the second quarter with all WP and task leaders throughout the period, through combined and complementary methods.

The constant exchange of information and cooperation between the different WPs was ensured through **by-monthly consortium calls**. These supplemented the frequent **WP-focused and/ or activity focused calls**, organised by the task or WP leaders. On an individual level, PATIR engaged its project partners in **one-on-one calls or e-mails** to provide support where needed, or keep members, unable to attend a consortium call, informed about the discussions held.

In this regard, the consortium has also established a **Google Forum**, facilitating ongoing exchange and discussions. The consortium has also established a dedicated **Google Suit**, to store files and make them available to all partners.

In order to further facilitate information exchange between the consortium partners, WPs and tasks and provide a holistic image of the current status, progress and activities of the project to all members, PATIR implemented a **monthly internal newsletter**. These are distinct new-letters focused on internal use, rather than the **CHAMPIONS monthly newsletter**, designed to disseminate the project findings (**WP7**).

To further **strengthen the public outlook** of the project, the WP Lead of WP7 has been working in the **design** of further material created in the other WPs such as the Meet the CHAMPIONS report or the Training Slides for the FLPs. Furthermore, a set of **activity briefs, newsletters, infographics (factsheets) and press releases** have been created and disseminated, besides ongoing activities on the project's social media platforms, like **twitter** and are all available on the project's website.

Detailed Description

October 2019 (7th Month)

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

- Policy maker Roundtables were organised and implemented, with the detailed minutes of the meeting reported in **D7.5**.
- Additionally, public policy recommendations were extracted and provided on the project website, while also being promoted over social media.

November 2019 (8th Month)

WP1 Management and Coordination of the Action

- The report on the **four national advisory group meetings, D1.5**, containing the detailed minutes and recommendations made during the meetings was completed.

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

- The consortium organised the first implementation of the **external MELI**, resulting in **D6.4**. The MELI gathered data and feedback from the research phase of the project, the international and national advisory boards and the series of policy-maker roundtables.

WP5 Interact & Cooperate: Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONS Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONS Roundtable Actions

- Beginning in November, **roundtable kick-off meetings** were successfully launched in Romania, Poland and Hungary.
- On the **1st and 2nd of November** the **first Roundtable in Germany** was launched, with discussions focusing on several topics on the phenomenon group-focussed enmity.
- The **Roundtable Kick-off event** in Romania was held on the **15th of November** in Cluj-Napoca, where the Platinia Conference Hall generously provided a free venue. Based on the input of FLPs during the research phase and kick-off, a **two-day intensive CHAMPIONS Training and Workshop event** was designed. In additional one-day training event called “**MasterClass on Collaboration**” was implemented.

December 2019 (9th Month)

WP3 Identify & Communicate: *Creation of the Digital ‘Alert’ and ‘Arena’ Tools and Services*

- During **Activity 3.2**, the conceptualisation of the design and development of the online platform as well as the Alert and Arena frameworks was completed.
- The results of the activity, the development framework and the architecture of the CHAMPIONS platform were described **D3.2** “Online platform & ‘Alert’, ‘Arena’ and ‘Training Yard’ frameworks”

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

- Under **Activity 4.2** the **five required** and **one additional** manual for FLPs were developed, like a manual on organising Roundtables or a hate speech guide.
- The so developed material was summarised in **D4.2**
- Additionally, in **Activity 4.2** six top-class interview partners were secured for the production of video tutorials and resultingly a total of **six video tutorials** on topics like, polarisation and the culture of remembrance in political youth, were produced and attractively prepared. The video tutorials were then uploaded to You-Tube and will be uploaded to the Training Yard-
- The detailed process and final outcome of the videos was then reported in **D4.3**
- Based on the created videos, PolCap developed accompanying **exercises** with multi media functions, to test users understanding of the presented content. **Five sets of exercises** for five corresponding videos taking approximately 2-3 minutes to complete. The exercises consist of multiple choice, true or false and drag and drop questions.
- The completed exercises were subsequently reported in **D4.4**

WP5 Interact & Cooperate: *Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONS Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONS Roundtable Actions*

- The **Kick-off Roundtable** event in Poland was held on the **4th and 5th of December**, with around 19 attendants the event the event focused on familiarising the participants with the topic of radicalisation in Poland.
- On the **12th of December** the **kick-off Roundtable in Hungary** was conducted, with 15 participants representing the local municipality, policy makers, the education sector, the church, police, members of ethnic minority groups and the civil sector.
- The second **Roundtable** event in Germany was held on the **13th and 14th of December** and focussed on the exercises of self-reflection on the needs of the participating practitioners

- By the end of December **Activity 5.3**, the organisation of **Kick-Off Meetings** for the 'CHAMPIONS-Roundtables', was completed, with Roundtables held in Germany, Romania, Hungary and Poland).
- The detailed minutes and decisions made during these meetings were collected and presented in a structured manner in **D5.5**.

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

- In **D6.5** the second iteration of the **internal MELI** was conducted via an anonymous online forum. The MELI identified key indicators related to the (1.) Project Management and Coordination, which was further split into: (a.) Overall; (b.) Among Partners; (c.) Consortium Calls; and (d.) Internal Project Newsletter; (2.) Project Overview; (3.) Research; (4.) External Communication, both the CHAMPIONS Website and CHAMPIONS Social Media platforms; and (5.) Consortium Meetings.
- A **second external MELI report** was conducted in **D6.6**. The report focused on the CHAMPIONS Roundtable Kick-Off events and unpacked the feedback received directly from the participants themselves and/ or their organisations and institutions during the launch events in each of the implementing countries

January 2020 (10th Month)

WP5 Interact & Cooperate: *Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONS Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONS Roundtable Actions*

- On the **31st of January** the **second Roundtable event in Hungary** was held, analysing the main challenges in the district and laying the ground for building teams, to elaborate action plans during the forthcoming rounds.

February 2020 (11th Month)

WP5 Interact & Cooperate: *Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONS Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONS Roundtable Actions*

- The **second Roundtable in Poland** was held on the **12th and 13th** of February, designed as training and workshop event.
- A **third Roundtable event in Hungary** took place on the 26th of February, based on an open discussion, two working groups were formed to design an action plan to solve the two most important problems: the segregation in schools and the misuse of housing opportunities provided by the municipality for those in need.
- By the end of February all partners had successfully held their first Roundtables, completed the first Champions Roundtable training (**Activity 5.4**) and the first linked workshop (**Activity 5.5**).
- Consequently **D5.6**, collected the results of the first roundtable workshops,
- while **D5.7** summarised and presented the collected recommendations and solutions for joint solution development established by the Roundtables in the workshops

March 2020 (12th Month)

WP1 Management and Coordination of the Action

- The **second quarter Status Update Meeting**, originally planned to be held in Budapest, was conducted virtually, due to the Covid-19 impact on travels, over a two-day period on the 18th and 26th of March. The consortium focused its discussions on CHAMPIONS ALERT, ARENA and Training Yard platforms (**WP3 and WP4**), the impact of Covid-19 on the project implementation and the CHAMPIONS Roundtables (**WP5**) as well as project reporting and financial management. The meeting concluded by placing emphasis on the awareness raising activities (**WP7**) and a discussion on co-funding status (**WP1**).

WP5 Interact & Cooperate: Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONS Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONS Roundtable Actions

- A **3rd Roundtable** event was held in **Germany**, however impacted by the COVID-19 situation the event had to be cut short.



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