



CHAMPIONS

Cooperative Harmonised Action Model to Stop Polarisation in Our Nations

Activity Brief #11

Progress of the CHAMPIONS project October 2020 to June 2021

October 2020 to June 2021 (Month 22 – Month 30)

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Project overview

The CHAMPIONS project's central goal is the creation of offline working groups – “CHAMPIONS Roundtables”. These roundtables combine first-line-practitioners (FLPs) of different disciplines, professions, and institutions or agencies, to jointly develop effective detection and response solutions to counter polarization, build resilience, and to protect vulnerable groups in their local communities. FLPs are trained to build capacity to design solutions and programs to address the drivers of polarization and to collaborate efficiently by breaking down institutional barriers. To facilitate these processes of offline joined- up solution development, an online platform is developed.

In the medium term, the goal is that FLPs' actions not only 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 FLPs become users of the developed platform. To achieve this, synergies with related EU-funded projects, platforms and networks are harnessed throughout the project and will continue 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: 30 Months

Topic ID: ISFP-2017-AG-RAD

Objectives

1. To improve the understanding and awareness of FLPs from Romania, Poland, Hungary and Germany.
2. To enhance capacities and capabilities of FLPs for local level inter-organizational collaboration and to improve information sharing.
3. To disseminate and share local and EU-level best practices among FLPs transnationally.
4. To facilitate access of FLPs to 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 polarization.
6. To develop the skills of FLPs to counter and reduce polarization and to encourage societal cohesion through offline and online training.
7. To improve capabilities for awareness raising on polarization and trust between civic society organizations, communities, and FLPs.
8. To utilize moderate voices and key influencers in the community for impactful awareness-raising activities.

Main activities of the CHAMPIONS project

This section outlines the progress of the CHAMPIONS project between October 2020 up to June 2021 (the fourth quarter of the project). The report provides a summary of the progress made during the final months of the project cycle, including the final outputs that will remain visible after the conclusion of the project.

All deliverables for the fourth quarter were submitted on-time as stipulated in the amended grant agreement. Since the project was extended for 3 months, the final deliverables were submitted by end of June 2021.

Major achievements during fourth quarter of the project include the finalization of the online tools [ALERT](#), [ARENA](#) and [TRAINING YARD](#), which were co-created with the help of the input of First-Line Practitioners in Germany, Romania, Hungary and Poland. All three modules are hosted on the FirstLinePractitioners.com Platform.

A project highlight during the fourth quarter was the successful implementation of the **European Conference on Preventing Polarization and Violent Radicalization 2021**. The [#EU Prevent](#) conference was a joint initiative of six ISFP-funded projects (Rhizome against Polarization, CHAMPIONS, YoungRes, WayOut, Bridge and ARMOUR), and included over 30 different organizations and representatives as well as local and regional authorities. In the 4-day conference that was held on 26th to 29th of April 2021, experts, practitioners, researchers and policy makers had the opportunity to discuss the issue of radicalization and polarization and share best practices to address these problems. During the conference, the project outputs of the CHAMPIONS project were also presented. The different presentations and project videos can be accessed via <https://www.firstlinepractitioners.com/european-conference-results/>

The partners in Germany, Romania, Hungary and Romania also implemented remaining roundtables, meetings, workshops and awareness raising events, to engage with local practitioners and to complete their trainings. In the last months of the project, the focus was on awareness raising events, to ensure that the tools and resources developed by the consortium are used after the end of the project cycle.

The consortium also continued internal and external monitoring and evaluation, which allowed the partners to improve their work, make it more accessible to external audience and users, and to ensure effective cooperation between the project partners within the consortium.

Communication and Dissemination

Communication and dissemination activities (WP7) were of pivotal importance in this final stage of the project, since partners needed to make sure that their work got recognized by a wide audience. In addition to the series of newsletters, activity briefs, fact sheets and press

releases (**D7.11**) produced by **SYNYO**, which are permanently accessible on the project website <https://www.championsproject.eu/>, the consortium also increased its social media presence and saw a sharp rise in interactions on twitter in April when the final conference took place. Profile visits that normally ranged from 400 to 500 visits per month (in February and March respectively) rose to more than 2600 visits in April.

Through various social media channels ([Facebook](#), [twitter](#), [linkedin](#)), CHAMPIONS informed the public about relevant milestones of the project. This included the promotion of the European Conference on Preventing Radicalization and Polarization, as well as the promotion of the online tools ALERT, ARENA and TRAINING YARD.

Internally, the project partners communicated regularly via bi-monthly consortium calls and additional work package (WP) related calls. Furthermore, the coordinator offered support through personal one-on-one calls and emails when needed.

Detailed Description

Work Package 1: Management and Coordination of the Action

- In cooperation with six ISFP-funded projects, CHAMPIONS implemented the European Conference on Preventing Polarization and Violent Radicalization in April 2021. The project team of **PATRIR**, **CULTURES** and **SYNYO** joined the conference Task Force and played a leading role in organizing the multi-stakeholder event.
- **PATRIR** collected input for the sustainability and exploitation plan, which was reported in **D1.12**.
- **PATRIR** guided the drafting of the final project reports, the status and progress report IV (D 1.11), covering the period of October 2020 to June 2021, which served as a basis for this activity brief.

Work Package 2: Identify & Assess: Joint Needs Assessment, Lessons Harvesting & Ex-Ante Evaluation and Baseline Mapping

- All activities for WP2 were completed on time in the first quarter.

Work Package 3: Identify & Communicate - Creation of the Digital 'Alert' and 'Arena' Tools and Services

- The ALERT module (A3.3) was improved by **TUDA** based on the feedback of the consortium members and based on the piloting and testing with FLPs in Germany, Poland, Hungary and Romania. In the ALERT module, users can fill out an online questionnaire about a case of polarization or radicalization. Based on the data submitted, they receive a list of recommendations. The recommendations are based on advice that has been provided to solve previous (similar) cases in a database. In addition, the tool allows the FLP-users to request a more in-depth study of the case,

by issuing an “alert request” which then involves other FLPs/domain experts in the case in the ARENA.

- Final technical issues were fixed by **TUDA** and the ARENA module (A3.4) was improved based on the internal feedback of consortium members within the CHAMPIONS project and the external feedback provided by FLPs. The tool allows FLPs to communicate, collaborate on, and solve polarization and radicalization cases in a collaborative manner. ARENA requires registration of experts, and the conversations are moderated by national moderators.
- Both ALERT and ARENA were enhanced graphically through the incorporation of factsheets in 5 languages (English, German, Polish, Hungarian and Romanian) produced by **SYNYO**, which explain the functions of the tools and provided a quick guide on how to use them.

Work Package 4: TRAIN – Creation & Harvesting of Online & Onsite Training & Learning Tools, Resources & Courses for FLPs: The CHAMPIONS Training Yard

- The final teaching and training materials were included in the online platform- the Training Yard (**A4.5**). The platform provides a dedicated service to enhance individual and institutional capacity through trainings, joint simulations, and case study exercises in English, German, Polish, Hungarian and Romanian.
- Based on the internal and external feedback the Training Yard development was finalized and optimized by **SYNYO**, now including additional functions to increase the usability of the information platform (such as a mouse-over function which explains the categories of materials on the platform, or the integration of the factsheet on how to use the Training Yard as a quick guide for first-time users).

Work Package 5: Interact & Cooperate – Creation & Capacity Building of CHAMPIONS Roundtables and Implementation of CHAMPIONS Roundtable Actions

- Hungary (**BCMAP** and **POLCAP**): In Hungary, PolCap and BCPAP implemented three roundtables, an online survey for ALERT/ARENA platforms, and an awareness raising event. All three roundtables were held with the group of FLPs working on the topic of school segregation. During these roundtables the main goal was to reach a common decision on what to do regarding school segregation in the 8th district of Budapest.
- Germany (**CULTURES**): In the last quarter CULTURES implemented two roundtables, one online survey for the ALERT/ARENA-Platform and two awareness-raising events which included an open exhibition on the topic of hate speech and workshops for young people in June 2021.
- Romania (**PATRIR**): In Romania, PATRIR implemented roundtables on inclusive education, training events on ALERT/ARENA and two awareness raising events: an online forum which was co-organized with FLPs in Cluj in May 2021, and an open exhibition in the central park in Cluj on the stake of collaboration for public trust in June 2021.
- Poland (**IBS**): In Poland, the local organization **IBS** held four roundtable meetings and workshops (both online and offline) with the group of representatives from the municipal authorities in Dąbrowa Górnicza. Furthermore, IBS plans to facilitate an

awareness raising and training event for upper and middle management in the last week of June 2021.

- The feedback of FLPs on the online tools was reported in the Report on collected results of the Workshops for Online Collaboration and Solution Development (**D 5.8**).
- The awareness raising activities were reported in detail in **D 5.11**.
- Decisions for final exploitation of project's deliverables were reported in **D 5.12**.

Work Package 6: Evaluate – Learn – Improve: Internal and External Monitoring, Participatory Action Evaluation, Improvement and Sustainability

- The Internal MELI and Recommendations Report VI was issued based on internal feedback within the project consortium.
- The External MELI and Recommendations Report VI (**D 6.15**) was written based on the feedback received from the participants of the second series of roundtables and workshops.
- Based on the successful monitoring and evaluation strategy, a newsletter was drafted to promote the CHAMPIONs participatory model for monitoring and evaluation to an external audience.

Work Package 7: Leverage & Promote: Communication, Dissemination and Leveraging of Outputs, Products and Deliverables

- The consortium organized the European Conference on Preventing Polarization and Violent Radicalization in collaboration with 5 sister projects. **SYNYO** played a leading role in promoting the conference on social media (twitter, facebook, linkedin) and via the distribution of newsletters and press releases. Moreover, **SYNYO** set up the conference website that hosted the program and list of speakers and facilitated the creation of leaflets and visuals for social media in cooperation with external partners.
- 5 activity briefs (Activity Brief #7 - Progress of the CHAMPIONs project April 2020 to September 2020; Activity Brief #08 – The Radpol conference; Activity Brief #9 – The European Conference on Preventing Polarization and Violent Radicalization; Activity Brief #10 - Awareness Raising Events, Activity Brief #11 - Progress of the CHAMPIONs project October 2020 to June 2021), 6 newsletters (FLP Training during the Covid 19 pandemic 02/2021, Monitoring and Evaluation 03/2021, Making M&E Work 03-04/2021, The European Conference 04/2021, Urban-based approaches 05/2021, Awareness Raising Events 06/2021), 3 press releases (the final conference; the finalization of First-Line Practitioners Platform; the conclusion of the project) and 3 fact sheets (How to use the Training Yard; How to use ALERT; How to use ARENA) were created and disseminated by **SYNYO** (as reported in **D.11**). The fact sheets on Alert and Arena were translated into German, Romanian, Polish and Hungarian, and embedded in the landing pages of ALERT and ARENA. All the communication and dissemination materials are available on the project website <https://www.championsproject.eu/media/>.
- The followership of the CHAMPIONs Twitter page augmented to a total of 321 followers as of the writing of this activity brief, and to 1,446 Followers on the First-Line Practitioners Twitter page.

- In October 2020, the consortium organized an online policy roundtable with representatives of municipalities in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, along with international institutions and organizations (as reported in **D.7.10**).
- Finally, **HSNR** edited a special Issue of the Zeitschrift für Demokratie gegen Menschenfeindlichkeit (Journal for Democracy against Enmity), which appeared as Volume 1/2021 edited by the CHAMPIONS team members Beate Küpper, Luca Varádi and Cathrine Lourde Dy, coordinated and edited by Ariane Olek with a total of eight publications from the consortium and external experts as well as four flanking, introductory country profiles on the situation in Germany, Poland, Hungary and Romania. These eleven contributions were published in June 2021 as a German print edition, and will be published in English in a digital format.



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PATRIR



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