



CounterR

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19 Organizations from 11 EU Member States Unite Efforts to Counter Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

CounterR - Countering Radicalisation for a Safer World: Privacy-First Situational Awareness Platform for Violent Terrorism and Crime Prediction, Counter Radicalisation and Citizen Protection

With funding from the European Commission, H2020 programme, 19 organisations from 11 EU Member States including SMEs, NGOs, and industrial, research and academia entities, along with six public law-enforcement agencies in the domains of justice, police and interior security¹, on May 1, 2021 started a three-year project for supporting the fight against radicalisation and thus preventing future terrorist attacks.

The ultimate goal of the CounterR solution is to provide law enforcement agencies and Internet providers and social media platforms with an early-warning tool to be used in the detection of potential radical content for the prevention of radicalisation spread and ultimately life-threatening terrorist attacks.

Radicalisation, enabled by propaganda online and offline indoctrination, has been the main driver for violent terrorism in virtually every terrorist attack, in Europe and globally, over the last decade.

Under this project, an open platform for analysis and early alert - **the CounterR solution** - will be launched, collecting and analyzing data from dispersed sources in order to predict critical communities at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism and aid law enforcement to more easily detect radicalisation processes.

The system aims at supporting the fight against organised (cyber) crime and terrorism threats and at fostering information-sharing and collaboration between diverse European agencies in charge of countering radical propaganda, fundraising, recruitment, and planning of terrorist acts. The CounterR project will develop a tool for taking down quickly and accurately the terrorism content online, and, at the same time, preserve the privacy protection and data anonymization of the content.

“The CounterR platform aims to be a frontline policing tool that looks at risk factors at the community level for the law-enforcement agencies to be able to understand the when, where and why of radicalisation and,

1. ASSIST Software SRL, INSIKT Intelligence S.L., Imagga Technologies Ltd., ICON Studios Ltd, Consorzio Ineruniversitario Nazionale per l'Informatica, Institut national de Recherche en Informatique et Automatique, Eötvös Loránd University, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Malta Information Technology Law Association, European Institute Foundation, Association les Militants du Savoir, ERC Research and Consulting, Elliniki Etairia Tilepoikinonion kai Tilematikon Efarmogon A.E.-Forthnet S.A., Ministério da Justiça, Hochschule für den öffentlichen Dienst in Bayern, State Police Latvia, Serviciul de Protecție și Pază, National Police General Directorate at the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria, Ministère de l'intérieur/ direction générale de la sécurité intérieure



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therefore, allow them to implement more effective prevention programs. To date, technology has been focusing on detecting rather than on preventing. Counter will leverage online data tracking, combined with culture-dependent and socio-psychological knowledge”, Jennifer Woodard (CEO of INSIKT Intelligence) said.

The system will cover data from dynamic sources such as social media and a wide range of offline open sources, combined with world-renowned expertise in the psychology of radicalisation. Information gained by the system would allow law enforcement agencies and other community stakeholders to employ counter narratives to extremist propaganda and manipulation rather than relying solely on surveillance.

*“The Counter solution will target **hotspots of radicalisation** rather than surveilling individuals. This is a key point in protecting the privacy of citizens, an issue that has been of great concern to policymakers and law-enforcement agencies alike, who must balance the important work they do with the need to comply with legal, regulatory and ethical frameworks”, Catalin Trufin (Head of EU Projects at ASSIST Software SRL) shared.*

In spite of the massive efforts being made by both the EU and the European and international law enforcement agencies in recent years, radicalisation - online in particular - is harder to stop than ever, especially in the context of social disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A project **kick-off e-meeting** held on May 19-20, 2021, outlined the collaboration mechanisms between the 19 partners in the Counter consortium, the project timelines, expected outcomes, along with other organizational matters related to the activity implementation.

The Counter consortium brings together an illustrious group of international subject-matter experts in counterterrorism, radicalisation and privacy law, six European law enforcement agencies with practical in-field knowledge, as well as a group of technical SMEs and academic partners.

For more information about the Counter project, please visit www.counter-project.eu.

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