

# Suggested actions for prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in the university and college sector

*"It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent radicalization and violent extremism"*

*- Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg*

## 1. Background on the Preparedness Council

The Preparedness Council is established to strengthen the work of civil protection and preparedness (CPP) throughout the knowledge sector. The Council was established by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (KD) in January 2017 and consists of 14 members from higher public and private educational institutions, folk university colleges, vocational schools, student organizations and student unions and the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR).

The aim is for public and private institutions to acquire knowledge in the field of CPP so that they can work systematically and well with this. Current topics include prevention, risk and vulnerability analyses, contingency plans, crisis organization and management, exercises, information security, and other issues interfacing with civil protection and emergency preparedness.

Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among students in the university and college (UC) sector should be given particular priority, and this document is included as a central component in this effort. The theme has been subject to thorough discussions in the Emergency Preparedness Council and in the Sekretariat of UiS, and also among the academic institutions the Council serves.

## 2. Academic Foundation and Basic Values

The content of this document is based on a number of laws, official governance documents, action plans and guidelines, national and international research literature, media items and features, as well as lectures and presentations at various relevant conferences (see list of sources).

The document is based on the principles of academic freedom and the basic values on which higher education is grounded and of which students and staff must have a conscious awareness. Academic freedom means that researchers and students can freely investigate any field of study and express their professional views. Thus, academic freedom implies that researchers can disseminate ideas or facts, including any that may be unpleasant for governments or political/religious groups.

### 3. Key Concepts and Definitions

The terms "radicalization" and "violent extremism" are difficult to define precisely, and experts disagree on their actual meaning. Originally being radical was as a virtue, especially in academic circles. Radical from Latin (*radix*) means "root" or "basic". Etymologically speaking, being radical can denote going to the root of a problem to be able to make a fundamental change. The term does not originally carry a connotation relating to terror or violence.

In the national guidelines of 2015, the Norwegian government describes radicalization as "*a process whereby a person or group increasingly condones the use of violence as a means to reach political, ideological or religious goals, and whereby violent extremism may be a result*" (Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness, 2015:13). The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) and several other actors in Norway apply a similar definition of radicalization. In this document, we shall use the Government's definition of radicalization.

When discussing undesirable events related to radicalization, it is important to point out that the undesirable aspect in this context is that violence is encouraged or carried out, and not that students and staff have radical and/or extreme points of view. An important principle is that freedom of speech is fully guaranteed, but limited to exclude hate rhetoric and incitements to illegal acts, such as making threats, defaming character, violating personal privacy, harassing and uttering pornographic, discriminatory and hateful expressions. What is illegal in society in this respect is also illegal in the UC sector.

Violent extremism in this context is understood to mean the actions of people and groups willing to use violence to reach their political, ideological, or religious goals. Extremism, in this respect, means that the extremist a) accepts only their own points of view and b) believes it is legitimate to resort to violence to gain support for their views (political goals). It is also worth pointing out that "extremism" is a relational concept, i.e. it is deemed extreme in relation to something else. What is extreme – and the scope of what extreme is – will vary in relation to time, geographical distance and cultural distinctions.

The term "preventive" can easily be *defined as work to prevent an adverse incident from taking place*. The UC sector is a natural venue for promoting democratic values and debating important social challenges. Academia shall demonstrate high tolerance towards extreme positions and radical opinions, be an inclusive arena that accommodates a large number of students having diverse cultural, ideological and religious backgrounds and views, and shall protect and cultivate free speech and freedom of organization. Also, the EU-funded radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) identifies the knowledge sector as a key social area having a unique opportunity to help in the efforts to prevent radicalization and violent extremism.

"Outsideness" is a term used in everyday speech to denote inadequate social affiliation with the wider community. The term describes a situation in which individuals or groups of people do not feel included in society because of bullying, marginalization or lack of linguistic or cultural affiliation.

### 4. Political Foundation

The responsibility for preventing radicalization and violent extremism is currently a joint social responsibility. The responsibility for prevention includes the knowledge sector as well. There are no easy solutions to the challenge. Radicalization and violent extremism are the result of complicated and complex processes that unfold over time and have many causes and many ramifications. As the former Minister of Education Torbjørn Røe Isaksen pointed out in the opening address on 5 January 2018 at the Emergency Preparedness Council's conference on this subject in Stavanger:

*"Radicalization and extremism are not challenges that universities and colleges can solve on their own. These are major societal challenges. We are not talking about many "sharp or pointed" measures to be taken on our part – the police are responsible for those. Nor do I think it is desirable to develop a control-and-surveillance culture at universities and colleges. That may even be counterproductive. But we need to remain aware of what's going on campus. This means primarily that we need to work preventively."*

## **5. The UC Sector's Responsibility**

The university and college sector's independent responsibility is stated in various governance documents and guidelines that are the basis for the present document. In the new "Guide to the regulation on municipal preparedness duty" (2018) published by The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB), page 16 underscores that: *"Upper secondary schools, colleges and universities etc. are responsible for safety and emergency preparedness for their employees and pupils/students."*

In addition, "Instructions for the ministries' work on Civil Protection", Section 4 point 3 requires that each ministry *"implement necessary compensatory measures to reduce the likelihood of – and the consequences of – adverse incidents in its own sector."*

The responsibility for preparedness, prevention and warning is thus formally stipulated, but must not be seen in isolation. Norwegian municipalities are obliged to ensure the safety and security of the population, cf. The Norwegian Civil Protection Act and the regulations on municipal emergency preparedness duty, and this includes staff and students in the academic sector within the individual municipality. Again, the work of prevention is a complex task requiring cooperation between institutions, the authorities, organizations and other actors throughout all of society.

According to paragraph 139 of the Norwegian Penal Code, every person has a duty to ward off specified criminal acts. The threshold for the duty to prevent is when it is deemed certain or most likely that the criminal act in question will be or has been committed. In such cases, the duty to prevent annuls any duty of nondisclosure that may be in effect. It is also punishable by law to be instrumental in any breach of duty to prevent, for example by persuading someone not to report to the police. This duty to prevent also applies in the UC sector, but at the same time, students and staff's freedom of speech and entitlement to protection under the law must be fully safeguarded.

## **6. Threat scenarios**

The authorities such as the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) are tasked with providing official threat assessments, and these also apply to the UC sector.

## **7. Prevention at Various Levels**

Prevention takes place at different levels and in different phases. A common categorization consists of distinguishing between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. All three approaches may apply to the UC sector, depending on the perspectives and time horizons in question.

- **Primary prevention** (general prevention) is about countering radicalization and violent extremism in the general population in the common sense of prevention, that is, before the problem has occurred.
- **Secondary prevention** (selective prevention) is aimed at people who are at risk of being radicalized or who show signs of being in a radicalization process; in other words, when the problem may potentially be or is already in the process of occurring.

- **Tertiary prevention** (indicative prevention) is about implementing measures against clearly radicalized persons who, for example, openly advocate extremist views.

The UC sector's primary mission is to promote knowledge and inculcate academic and democratic values. Students at Norwegian universities and colleges are of legal age and should therefore be distinguished from other levels of education. It is important that the measures are relative to the threat that radicalization represents. So far, Norway has been largely spared from being a crucible for radicalization as has been seen in certain other countries. However, threat scenarios change over time, and it is important that the measures suggested can endure over time and prevail in the encounter with different types of threats.

No matter how many measures are implemented and how thoroughly prevention work is carried out, it must ultimately be accepted that it is impossible to reduce all risks. We must live with the fact that an open and free society can also be a vulnerable society. Safety and freedom are two fundamental values that most people cherish. The problem is that these two values cannot be fully realised simultaneously.

## **8. List of goals and measures**

In the introduction above, goals are listed that the following measures can help to achieve. Goals and measures are divided into three main categories – **resolution of controversy/confidence building and raising of ethical awareness, student welfare and learning environment** and **security-related measures** – with several subpoints under each of these. The vast majority of measures qualify as preventive, while some may be said to be on the threshold of "intervention management", i.e. initiating actions as tertiary prevention or to avoid acute incidents.

The measures should to the extent possible be mainstreamed into existing structures and functions, and should be incorporated in the effort to strengthen the overall learning environment. A good, inclusive learning environment not only promotes students' learning, but also lays the foundation for individuals to become secure, creative and critically minded. This also supports the overall objective of cultivating academic freedom.

### **I. Resolution of controversy, confidence building and raising of ethical awareness**

**Goals:** Universities and colleges should stimulate even more debate and free exchange of opinions, both internally on campus and outwards toward society. In this respect, controversy/clash of opinions is defined as a value in itself, as a part of a counteraction against polarization of society. The intention is to ensure that individuals and the voices of minorities are seen and heard, rather than merely those who speak loudest or have the majority on their side. Norwegian students and academic staff have the right to express opinions and ideas, develop research and projects without having to fear censorship or sanctions.

By raising consciousness about values and through ethical reflection, our goal is to develop universal democratic and academic values such as freedom of speech, freedom to organize, religious freedom, transparency, respect, dialogue, critical reasoning, originality and independence, scientific freedom in research and netiquette.

#### **Measures:**

- a. Encourage and inspire your own teaching staff to stimulate free debate and put new views in circulation, and invite guest speakers who can contribute towards this same purpose.

- b. Arrange several arenas for exchanging ideas, as a type of academic "Speaker's Corner", which can bring out several different perspectives on the topics that is on the agenda.
- c. Students and staff are encouraged to participate more fully in the public debate on societal issues.
- d. Get to know one another better: Make room for discussion and exchange of personal viewpoints in the lecture hall, study groups, group work, or when supervising and advising students. Invite students and staff to watch and listen to each other, and let them understand that lecturers, advisers, administrative staff and fellow students are people they can both trust and disagree with. Trust is key in these processes.
- e. Collaboration and exchange of experiences: Make provisions for the UC sector to learn and collaborate with other public and private community actors who have experience with similar prevention efforts, such as primary schools, police or different religious communities. If collaboration is to be successful, it is important to share research-based knowledge and practical experience, including experience from abroad. Scholars at Risk/Students at Risk and the Magna Charta Observatory are organizations of which many UC institutions are members and that offer good curricular plans for working with values and putting them into practice.
- f. It is important to be clear and specific about which events and activities that should not be permitted on campus and the person responsible for providing advice on this. Both institutional management, student unions and student associations must be aware of the organizations that actively use the campus. Here it is important to combine generous freedom of organization and debate with a scrutiny of what the various organizations and lecturers stand for and how they work, as well as of what is legal. It is advisable to stipulate specific guidelines along with self-declarations for events arranged on the institution's premises or on campus in general.

## II. Student Welfare and Learning Environment

Universities and colleges are responsible for the students' learning environment. Students are normally affiliated with a student union which, in cooperation with the place of learning, will accommodate the students' welfare needs.

**Goals:** One general goal is to strengthen inclusive work that cultivates and maintains a good learning environment and proper student welfare. It is especially important to focus on students' mental health and feelings of loneliness and outsidership, especially at the start of their academic career, i.e. during the first or second semester. This involves an increased commitment to student unions and student organizations' already established policies and tools that counteract loneliness and promote inclusion and integration. International support can be found in RAN's report: *«Awareness of the risk of recruitment and exploitation of vulnerable students by extremists is best integrated into existing student welfare capacities.»* This type of action will benefit all students, but can also have a positive effect in preventing radicalization. At the same time, it is important that such measures do not have the effect of stigmatizing, as this may be counterproductive. In particular, it is advisable to implement measures that strengthen the sense of community, counteract discrimination and safeguard the diversity of students.

### **Measures:**

- a. Strengthen the offer of psychological and counselling assistance. Clergy or other religious counsellors who are accustomed to being of assistance to believers from all religions also play an important role in student welfare.
- b. Provide targeted support for student organizations and support schemes that have inclusion, confidence building, and social togetherness as goals. This includes social gatherings that

- encompass as many people as possible, regardless of their religion, life philosophy and the like. This may mean increased financial contributions and transferred funding locally and nationally.
- c. Provide adequate academic, legal and practical training and support for elected student representatives and student associations in the work to ensure student welfare and social inclusion.
  - d. Bolster academic feedback and counselling: it is well documented that students want more of this. Professional follow-up of individual students or student groups may have a preventive effect.
  - e. Implement measures to limit the scope of digital violence deriving from or causing radicalization and violent extremism. Applicable keywords are online training and laws and regulations that apply to social media, discussion forums and apps. Official sources are [nettvett.no](http://nettvett.no), [dembra.no](http://dembra.no), [dubestemmer.no](http://dubestemmer.no), [slettmeg.no](http://slettmeg.no) and [sikresiden.no](http://sikresiden.no). See also section III C and additional information at [beredskapsradet.no](http://beredskapsradet.no) as well as the reference list below.

### **III. Security-oriented measures**

Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism is the responsibility of management. Relevant actors must be involved in the prevention work. One important aspect in this is the ability to detect risks and a proper understanding of risks and risk management.

**Goals:** Relevant actors are involved in the prevention effort, which in turn enhances the understanding and knowledge of risks and the ability to detect risks. The intention is to create ownership of the prevention and preparedness effort.

#### **Measures:**

- a. Systematic ROS analyses: The organisation shall routinely develop and update risk and vulnerability analyses (ROS) as a basis for mapping the measures that are suitable for preventing radicalization and violent extremism. The personnel conducting risk analyses must have access to relevant, updated knowledge pertaining to the emergence of radicalization and violent extremism.
- b. Infrastructure: In conjunction with new construction, localization and relocation, it is important to have prior ROS analyses and an architectural design that promotes an open, transparent and socially inclusive working environment for students and staff, while at the same time the need for security measures identified in the analysis is attended to.
- c. Handling of Concerns: If there is a concern about potential radicalization and extremist activity taking place in individuals or in groups, it should be possible to consult with experts in the field, employees, elected officials or other individuals in whom one has confidence. In this context, institutions should acquire knowledge of radicalization and extremist processes so as to support a mutual accountability principle. Sources of concern may be possible illegal statements made in public, in publications, in the classroom, on social media etc. Further information about signs that may cause concern can be found under section 9.
- d. Contact point: Establish a separate button or tab to [sikresiden.no](http://sikresiden.no), where advice and guidelines are provided on how to deal with a concern or uncertainty. The text on [sikresiden.no](http://sikresiden.no) is developed in collaboration with PST and scientific and academic resources in the sector. You may want to establish contacts with agencies such as the police or PST, where concerns can be communicated, including anonymously. The aim of the contact is more long-term prevention and not intervention in acute incidents, which are already described at [sikresiden.no](http://sikresiden.no).
- e. Assess potential threats to student associations affiliated with political or religious groupings. The risk that a Norwegian student association will be attacked is very likely low, but the risk

should be included in overall threat assessments. Additionally, some students and staff may be objects of surveillance by intelligence services.

This action list must be periodically reassessed and revised on the basis of changes in the threat situation and society in general. It is equally important to realise that one can never eliminate the risk of radicalization and violent extremism, but one can work to recognize the challenge and reduce the risk that such phenomena will grow.

## 9. Relevant documents and links, selected

- **The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2016:** "Styringsdokument for arbeidet med samfunnssikkerhet og beredskap i kunnskapssektoren (Governance document for work with Civil Protection and Preparedness in the Knowledge Sector)"
- **The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2014:** "Handlingsplan for radikaliserings og voldelig ekstremisme (Action plan to prevent Radicalization and violent extremism)"
- **The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015:** «Nasjonale veileder forebygging av radikaliserings og voldelig ekstremisme (National guidelines for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism)»
- **The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2016:** "Prevention of violent extremism - the role of the municipalities"
- **The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and The National Police Directorate 2015:** "Serious incidents in kindergartens and educational institutions - guidelines for emergency planning."
- **The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2015.** "Risk and vulnerability analysis of the knowledge sector."
- **Norwegian Government's website on radicalization,** continuously updated:
  - <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/sub/radikalisering/id2001759/>
  - About possible signs of concern:  
<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/sub/radikalisering/bekymret/Mulige-bekymringstegn/id762528>
  - About concepts, words and expressions in the effort to combat radicalization and extremism:  
<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/sub/radikalisering/veileder/begreper-ord-og-uttrykk/id2398413/>
  - See also the website of the Danish National Centre for Prevention of Extremism:  
<https://www.stopekstremisme.dk/er-du-bekymret/hvilke-tegn-skal-du-vaere-opmaerksom-pa>
- **PST 2018:** "Threat Assessment 2018"
- **PST, NSM & Norwegian National Police Directorate 2015:** "Terror protection. A guide to security and preparedness measures to combat intentional undesirable acts»
- **The Norwegian National Security Authority (NSM)** is the Norwegian expert organ for information and objective security, and is the national professional supervisory authority for ICT security. The directorate is a national warning and coordination authority for serious computer attacks and other ICT security incidents, [www.nsm.no](http://www.nsm.no).
- **Official Crisis Info Norway:** [kriseinfo.no](http://kriseinfo.no) is a web portal that conveys important information from the authorities to the population before, during and after crises. The corresponding

Swedish portal is called Krisinformation.

- **The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB)** lists risks and vulnerabilities in society. DSB is subordinated to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and shall be a driving force in preventing accidents, crises and other adverse incidents, as well as contributing to good preparedness and effective accident and crisis management. DSB's Blog for day-to-day security is found at [www.sikkerhverdag.no](http://www.sikkerhverdag.no)
- **Isaksen, T., R. 2018: Beredskapskonferansen (Conference on Preparedness).** The knowledge Minister's speech from the Conference on Preparedness. <http://www.uis.no/getfile.php/13405289/SEROS/Beredskapsrådet/Kunnskapsministerens%20tale%20to%20BRConference%205.1.18.PDF>
  - **Emergency Conference 2018, other presenters:** Mona Wille, Kai Steffen Østensen, Charlotte Søyland, Sissel H. Jore, Anne Birgitta Nilsen, Ingrid Lund, Tore Bjørgo and others. Link to lecture: <https://www.uis.no/samfunn-og-samarbeid/konferanser-og-moteplasser/konferanser/beredskapsradets-konferanse-2018/foredrag/>
- **PST, NSM, Police and the Norwegian Business and Industry Security Council:** "Sikkerhet ved ansettelsesforhold – før, under og ved avvikling (Security in terms of employment relationships – before, during and after phase-out)", [https://nsm.stat.no/globalassets/dokumenter/veiledninger/sikkerhet\\_ved\\_ansettelsesforhold\\_endelig.pdf](https://nsm.stat.no/globalassets/dokumenter/veiledninger/sikkerhet_ved_ansettelsesforhold_endelig.pdf)
- **Radikalisering.no** is a website for those who want help, advice or knowledge about radicalization and violent extremism.
- **RVTS** is a knowledge portal on radicalization and violent extremism – processes leading into it and ways out – and is a result of the Government's action plan against radicalization and violent extremism.
- **Oslo Police District, Oslo municipality:** "HANDLINGSPLAN 2018-2021 mot hatkriminalitet og voldelig ekstremisme i Oslo, Salto - sammen lager vi et trygt Oslo (Action plan 2018-2021 against hate crime and violent extremism in Oslo, Together for a safe Oslo)", <https://www.oslo.kommune.no/politikk-og-administrasjon/prosjekter/salto-sammen-lager-vi-et-trygt-oslo/#gref>
- **Norwegian Defence Research Establishment 2018:** "Radikalisering – en studie av mobilisering, forebygging og rehabilitering (Radicalization – a study of mobilization, prevention and rehabilitation)" - Viten, research report no. 1. 2018, <https://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/18-01591.pdf>
- **Council on Civil Protection and Preparedness in the Knowledge Sector,** [www.beredskapsradet.no](http://www.beredskapsradet.no) The Preparedness Council's website provides links to specialist and research literature and other relevant sources.
- [www.sikresiden.no](http://www.sikresiden.no) is the result of a broad collaboration between many relevant actors in the UC sector. It provides preventive training and advice on what to do in case of concern, in preventive efforts and in a crisis situation. The website is mobile-adapted and specifically aimed at employees and students at universities and colleges.
- **The Norwegian Police University College, the HL Centre, the C-Rex Centre for Research on Extremism, UiO:** "Høyreekstremisme i Norge Utviklingstrekk, konspirasjonsteorier og forebyggingsstrategier (Right-wing extremist in Norway development traits, conspiracy theories and prevention strategies)"
- **Bergen Municipality, Hordaland County Council:** «Veileder forebygging av radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme (Guide for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism)»
- **Universities Norway's** Working group on bullying and harassment in the UC sector: <https://uhrmot.no/>

- **Dembra**, a competence enhancement programme for schools for the prevention of antisemitism, racism and undemocratic attitudes: <http://dembra.no/>
- **Dubestemmer.no** is a web-based resource on privacy, cybersense and digital discernment. It offers films, professional texts and discussion tasks.
- **Slettmeg.no** is a free advisory and guidance service for those who feel infringed online.
- **Scholars at Risk**, a network of academic institutions working to defend and support basic principles such as academic freedom and academics' human rights throughout the world: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org>
- **Students at Risk**, a programme that gives persecuted students the opportunity to complete their education in other countries, <https://www.studentsatrisk.no/>.
- **The Magna Charta Observatory** (MCO) is a foundation established by the EUA (The European University Association) that promotes, protects and strengthens central university values such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy, <http://www.magna-charta.org/>.
- **Radicalisation Awareness Network**: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network_en)
- **Dutch e-Learning program** in six modules as part of preventive work: <https://integraalveilig-ho.nl/instrument/e-learning-alarmed-behaviour/>
- **Competence Centre for Crime Prevention**, <http://kriminalitetsforebygging.no/?s=%22%22radikalisering>
- **The research group Professional Knowledge on Extremism and Radicalization at OsloMet – the City University**, which lays out information about the current literature and events on extremism and radicalization at <https://www.facebook.com/ekstremisme/>. OsloMet offers a course "Knowledge of Extremism and Radicalization" aimed at professionals who encounter young people in first-line service: <http://www.hioa.no/Studier-og-kurs/LU/Evu/Kunnskap-om-ekstremisme-og-radikalisering>