

P2P CHALLENGING EXTREMISM 2016

“DON'T FLIRT WITH EXTREMISM”



OUR **.EUNITED** TEAM
COLLEGE OF EUROPE STUDENTS INITIATIVE



Eva, 28 (Albania)



Edyta, 35 (Poland)



Andrej, 24 (Slovakia)



Thomas, 23 (France)



Lucie-Belle, 25 (France)



Paul, 27 (Gibraltar)



Giannis, 24 (Greece)



David, 24 (France)



Andrew, 27 (UK)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EUnited Team has decided to be part of this counter-extremism project in wake of the Paris and Brussels attacks that have changed European perceptions of which forms can extremism actually take.

In order to do that, we decided that raising awareness should be done via a thought-provoking video (mostly implemented on Facebook) and via an educational part: the "Human Library". In each aspect of the project, we try our best not only to raise questions, but also to answer them; to break stereotypes and to empower people to be part of such initiatives.

We know that the momentum is favourable, but it can also be a problem. Indeed, the media attention can make people be wary about speaking up.

Nevertheless, our team is motivated, competitive and international. EUnited team is composed of nine members from six different nationalities - which is our biggest strength, since we have a significant network both in Europe and abroad. As a matter of fact, this is also what helped us having our video seen more than 74,000 times.

Following:

- ✓ Academic research
- ✓ Strategic implementation
- ✓ Measurements
- ✓ Feedback and Assessment
- ✓ What comes next?



ACADEMIC RESEARCH

EUNITED
COLLEGE OF EUROPEAN STUDIES INITIATIVE





WE STARTED OUR PROJECT FROM ON THIS **ALARMING OBSERVATION** MADE
BY **PREDICTIFYME** COMPANY RUN BY COMPUTER SCIENTIST ZEESHAN UL-HASSAN USMANI

An estimated **71,000 people** in the West
(North America, Australia and Europe)
are “**ready to radicalize.**”

BEFORE ANYTHING, OUR FIRST QUESTION THEN WAS...
WHAT DO '**EXTREMISM**' AND '**RADICALIZATION**' EXACTLY MEAN?

EXTREMISM

The fact of someone having beliefs that most people think are unreasonable and unacceptable.

RADICALIZATION

The dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or engage in terrorism.

Source: OSCE, Definition, Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach, February 2014, p.35.



On February 23rd 2016, we visited the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GSCP, Switzerland) to meet with **Dr. Christina Schori Liang**, Senior Programme Advisor and Senior Fellow for the “Emerging Security Challenges” programme, to talk about the study she conducted and that would shape our project:

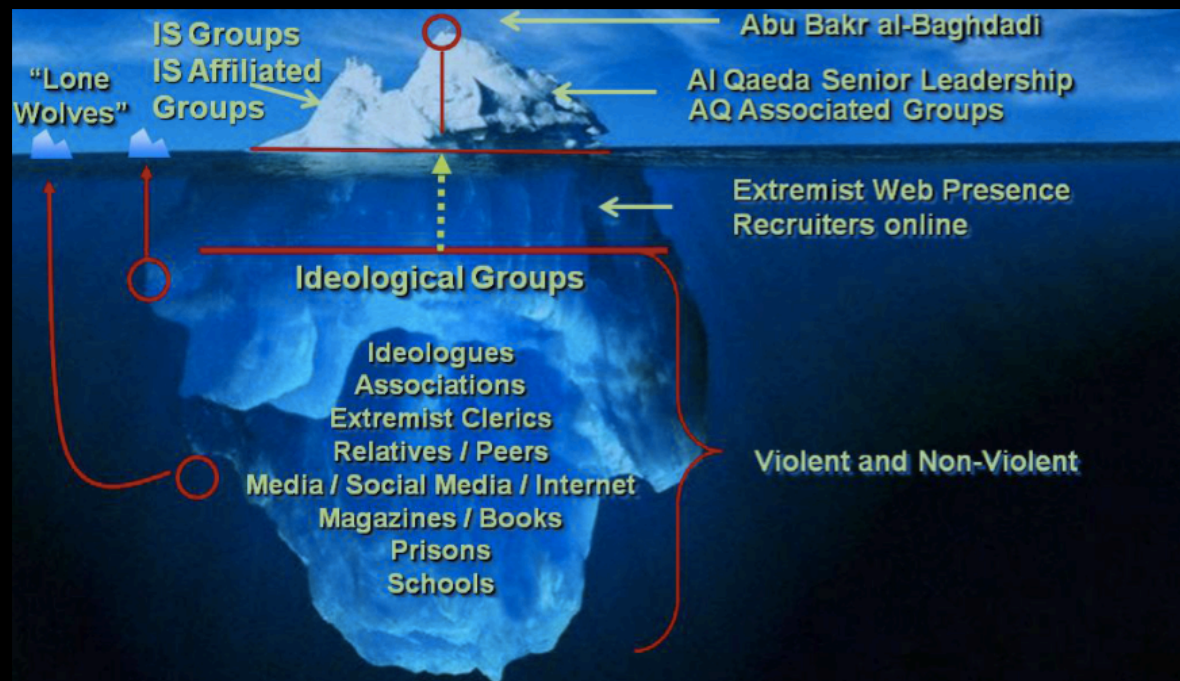
“CYBER JIHAD:
UNDERSTANDING AND COUNTERING
ISLAMIC STATE PROPAGANDA”

Source: “Cyber-Jihad, Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda”
By Christina Schori Liang, GSCP, February 2015.



Thanks to her help, we understood what is the real issue...

THE EXTREMIST PHENOMENON



Source: "Cyber-Jihad, Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda"
By Christina Schori Liang, GSCP, February 2015, p.7.



Dr. Christina Schori Liang provided us with

5 MAJOR KEY POINTS

It is important to build and extend international cooperation to support the creation and dissemination of credible content and **positive alternatives** to counter extremism narratives on- and off-line.

The Islamic State has a **sophisticated and effective communication strategy** that uses online media tools to disseminate its multidimensional propaganda. It has populated social media platforms and has attracted a global network of supporters that articulate, magnify and circulate its violent extremist messages worldwide.

Throughout the world, there is a need to **better address the roots of radicalisation**, which is being driven by the ideological appeal currently cultivated by extremism groups online.

The online internet frontline needs to be better defended. **Censorship and removal of extremist content is ineffective.**

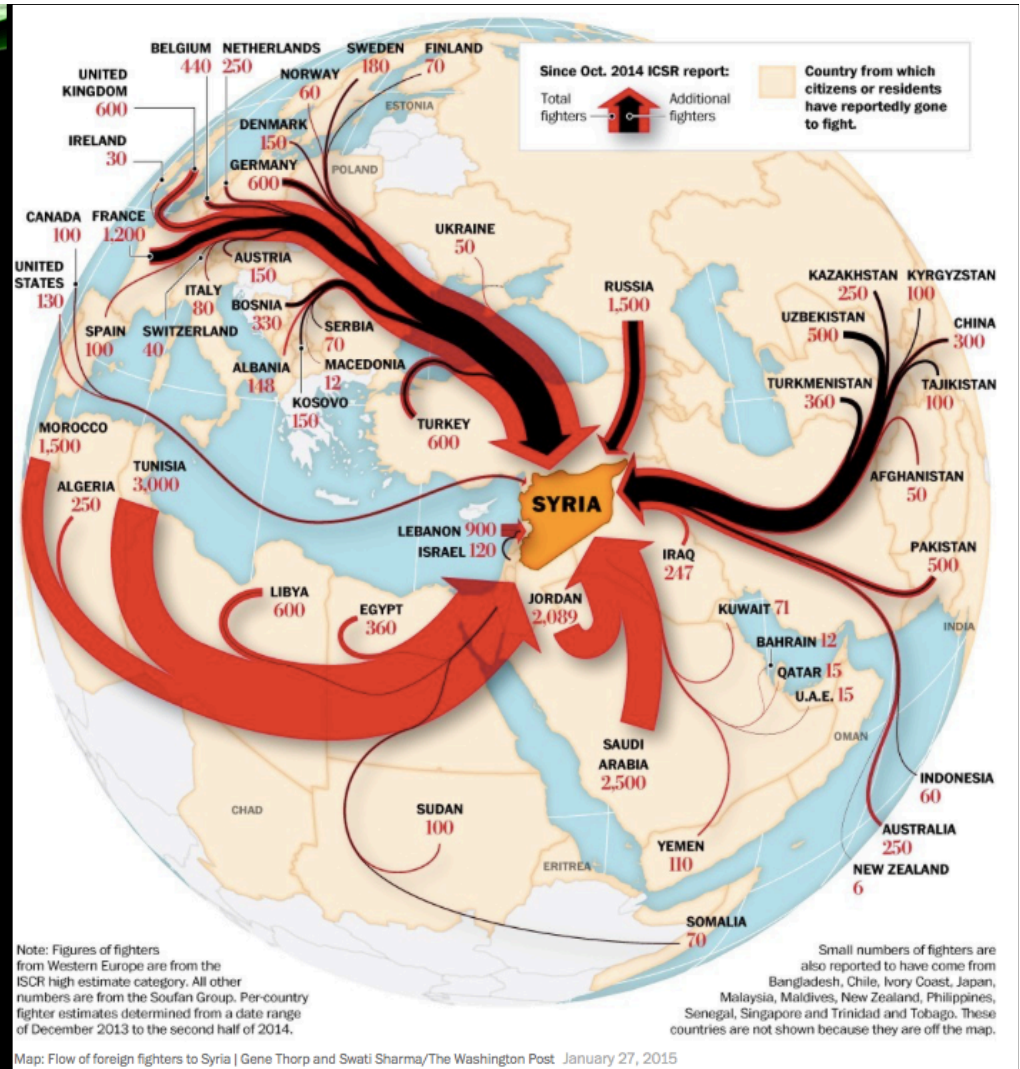
IS is strategically recruiting young men and women worldwide, using Internet sites, online magazines but mostly social media tools, including **Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and AskFM.**

THEN WE THOUGHT...

WHAT CAN WE DO,
AS STUDENTS, TO PREVENT

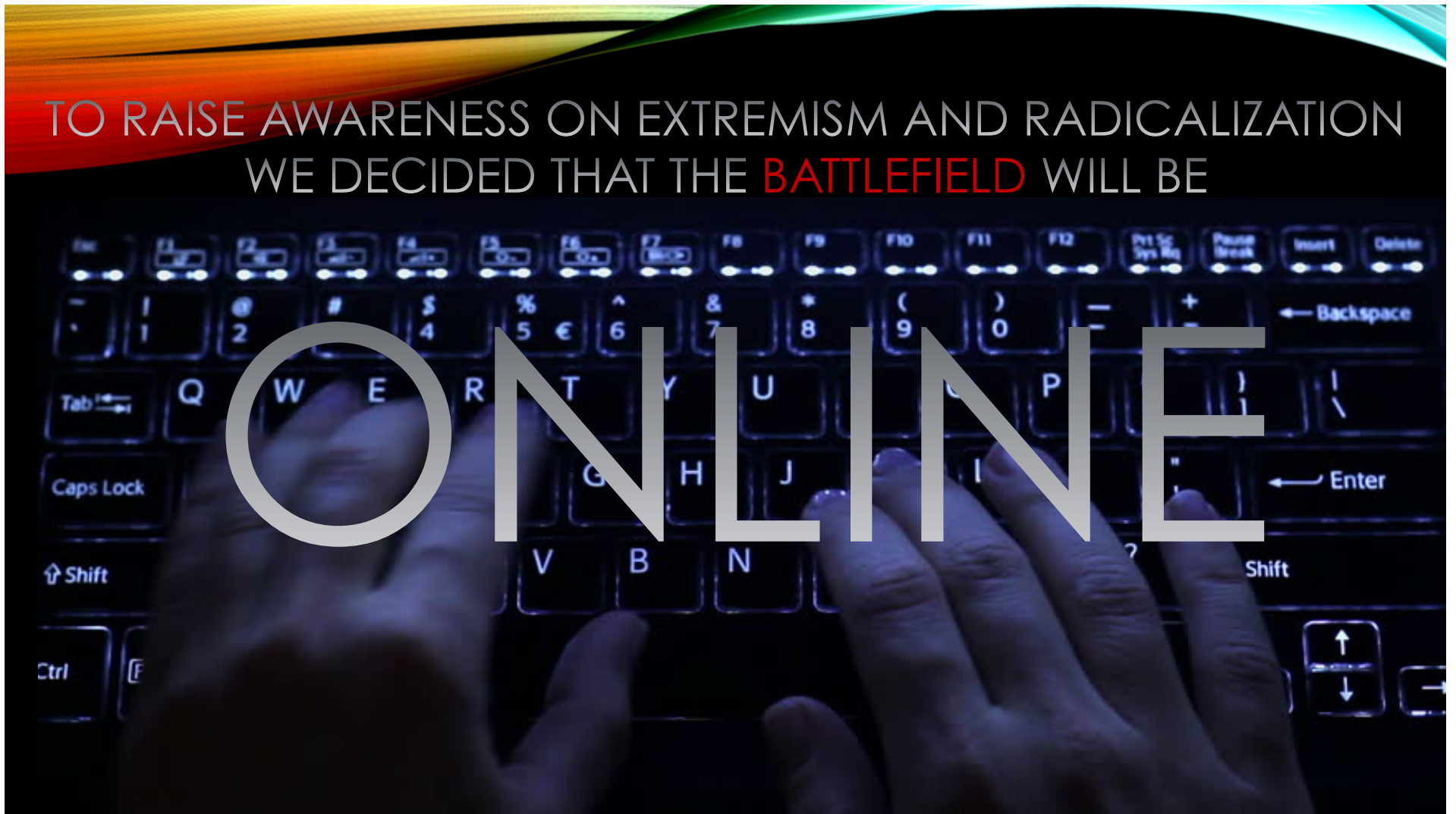
THIS →

FROM HAPPENING



TO RAISE AWARENESS ON EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION
WE DECIDED THAT THE **BATTLEFIELD** WILL BE

ONLINE





HUMAN LIBRARY

EXTREMISM:

Challenge what you have always
thought to be true



20 April 2016 - 5.30 p.m.
Room E, Dijver 11, Brugge



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

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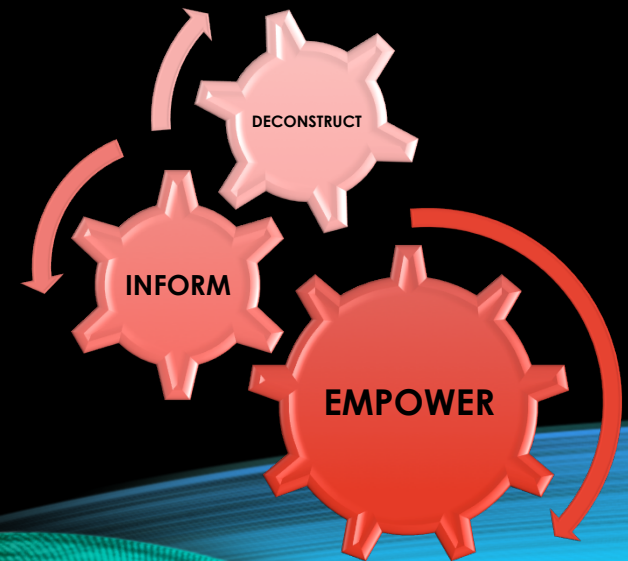


POSITIONING STATEMENT

ONE DOUBLE GOAL



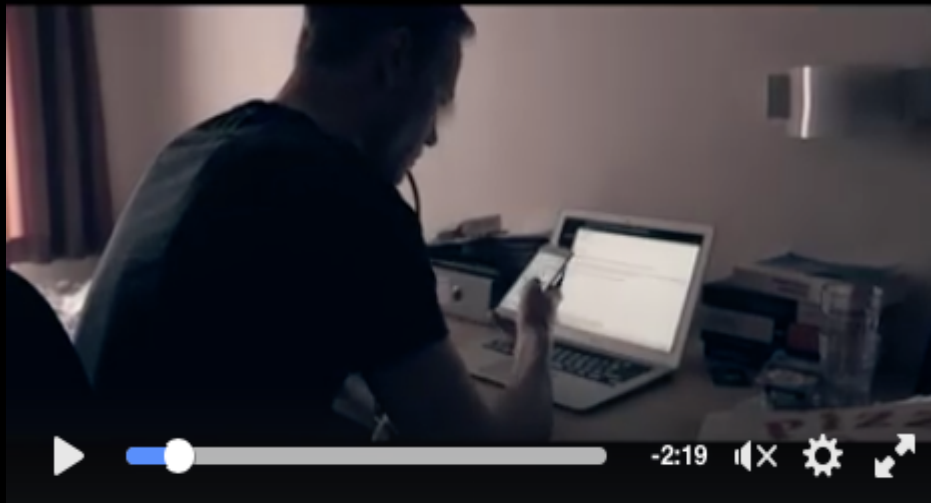
THREE OBJECTIVES



FIRST GOAL: RAISING AWARENESS

FIRST OBJECTIVE: DECONSTRUCTING PRECONCEIVED IDEAS

Our strategy?
Using our thought-provoking video



#Swipe Left On Extremism

A two-minute video shows a white young man with British accent, approximately 25 years old that bumps into a beautiful girl while searching for company on social media. Paul has just got fired and broken up with his girlfriend. This series of events made him feel frustrated, alone, and look for a meaning in his life. He believes to have found this meaning in the girl he meets, Isis.. and gets ready to go to Syria.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE #SWIPE LEFT VIDEO

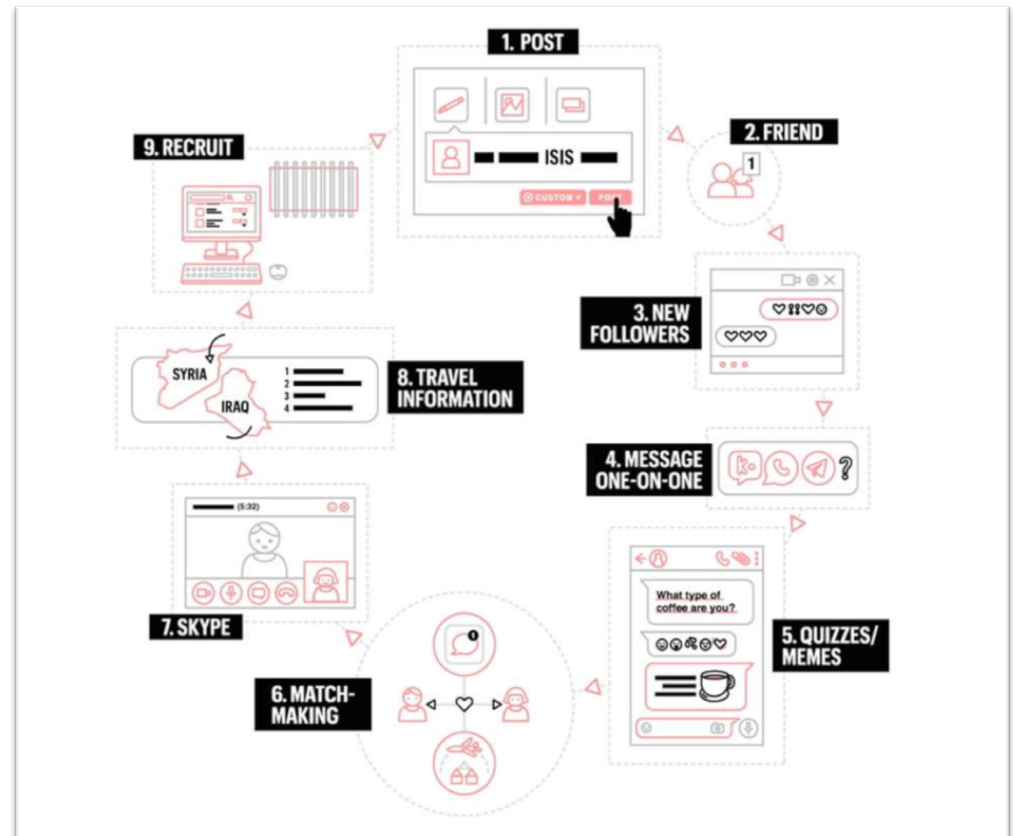
The video is based on the notion of an **allegory**.

The little known and often unpopular notion that the profile of those susceptible to being seduced by extremism extends to all races, religions levels of education and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The key factor, however, is **alienation or the perception of alienation that may drive an individual to consider changing his or her current circumstances** definitely for something objectively radical even violent. It is a modern tale of the ugliest aspects of globalization and the immediate spread of completely foreign yet attractive ideas via the conduit of the internet and smartphone communications.



“ IT MAKES IT FEEL MORE LIKE THE RECRUITER IS JUST LIKE YOU, A FRIEND”



Source: "The American Women of ISIS" by Kate Storey, *Marie Claire*, April 22, 2016.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE VIDEO: ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

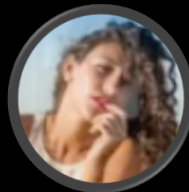
Paul Pullman

A young white British male at university, Paul represents the counter intuitive subject for radicalisation and as such attracts the viewer into the story from the start. He is also likely to arouse a discomfort in the viewer, as the target audience are more likely to identify with his circumstances than those of an intuitive profile of someone likely to get radicalised. Typified by a middle-eastern complexion and low socio-economic status.



'ISIS' (disambiguation)

'ISIS' the 'girl' that swipes right on Paul during his otherwise unsuccessful 'Sinder' session represents the only thing or entity willing to let Paul in when everyone else shuts him out, namely his job and his girlfriend. 'She' is the only one that gets Paul and the struggle he is going through and therefore wields a disproportionate power in such a vulnerable state in his life.



Girlfriend

The girlfriend represents the personification of rejection and is the situation where Paul experiences most of the anguish visible in facial expressions and aggressive gestures of resentment.



Friend

The friend is the third real person to appear in the story and is, in certain respects, both the cause and saviour of Paul as he is the trigger for Paul to come out of his delirium for ISIS and decides not to answer the Skype call and instead answer the door where his friend is present. This presence can be contrasted with the same friend's lack of presence just when Paul needed him the most and what led to the loneliness that made Paul go on Sinder in the first place.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE VIDEO: THEMES

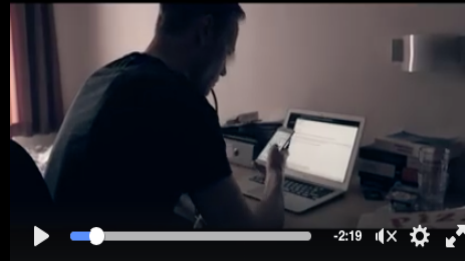
Uncertainty

The story starts with Paul being informed that he has lost his job. Such a story is common one for many young people in the midst of a global financial crisis and the subsequent recessions that continue to affect Western economies. Such precariousness at work causes a deep anxiety as to a person's role in society and notions of self worth. At the heart of it all is uncertainty and the many certainties that radicals can offer their subjects when convincing them to join their cause.

'Crisis of Masculinity'

The choice of a male as the main character was not an accident. Profiles of radicalized individuals show an overwhelming majority of males. The reasons for this is that there is a shift in traditional concepts of masculinity. The traditional roles for men in society are changing radically with greater gender equality and less defined gender roles, men are feeling increasingly insecure about their status.

As such, the attraction of 'traditional' conceptions of masculinity where a man has a wife he takes care of, a position of worthwhile work or being an instrumental part of a larger project that means something. Recruiters play on this deficit in masculinity by offering young men immediately, all the trapping of traditional masculinity immediately as opposed to the prospect of a wife and powerful job not materialising at all in their current circumstances.



Isolation / Alienation

The concept of isolation is explored through alienation. Alienation is the principal feeling that Paul experiences and what takes him to the lengths of considering 'turning' into a radical.

The sources of alienation, aside from rejections from work, girlfriend and friend, is a general existential emptiness that is characterised by the cinematographic dark tones and which is retrieved in Paul's close up to the camera just before he tears the airplane ticket.

MOTIFS

Electronic Communications

Most of the communication in the story happens electronically. It serves to highlight the hyper-connectivity of young people nowadays and the accessibility that such communications provides. The point of accessibility is an important one when describing the phenomenon of radicalisation. Radical groups worldwide have access to people anywhere in the world 24/7 meaning that ideas and the sustained communications needed to radicalise an individual are made easier with electronic communications. Gmail, WhatsApp, and Skype as well as the ubiquitous Tinder are all used by Paul in his journey towards radicalisation. Otherwise beneficial technologies, become a burden of disappointment and a route towards pursuing the wrong path either actively or passively.

Seduction

The creative idea behind using Tinder or 'Sinder' as a conduit for radicalisation was not a literal one in that Tinder is not typically (as far as we know) by ISIS or by any organisation for radicalisation. However Tinder does represent the latest technologies in social interaction online and its premise of material 'seduction' is one that is transferable to the tactics employed by radicalisers in selling the idea of an ideal life if he would only accept the solution offered.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE VIDEO: MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

SYMBOLS

Airline Ticket

The airline ticket is perhaps the most important symbol of the story. Firstly, it highlights the facility with which airline travel is available and the ever increasing affordability of travelling long distances, which make the radicalisers scope a greater one. Secondly, the tearing of the airline ticket represents the seminal moment in Paul's story as it is the physical manifestation of an active rejection of the path he was almost about to embark upon and represents the breaking of the 'spell' under which he had been in order to get to the point of having purchased the ticket. This is accompanied by a passive rejection as evidenced by the non-answering of the Skype call at the same time his friend is knocking at the door.

FIRST GOAL: RAISING AWARENESS

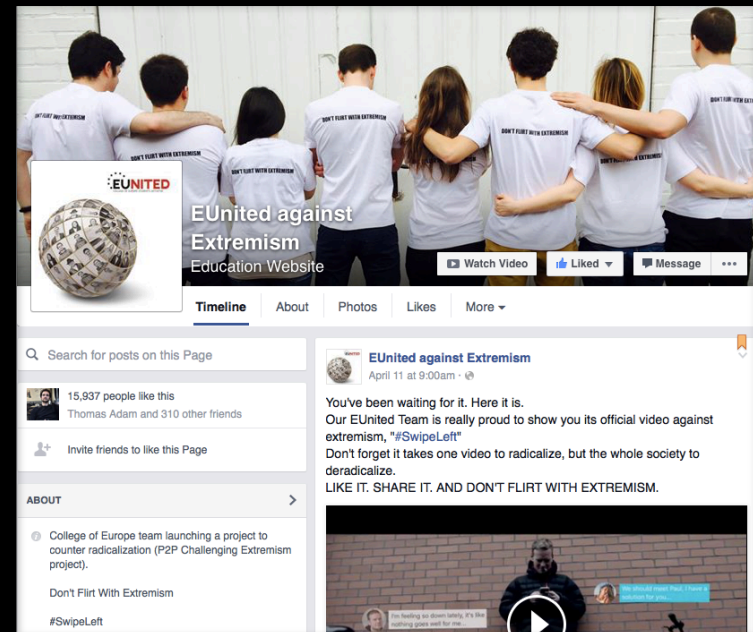
SECOND OBJECTIVE: INFORMING PEOPLE

Through our Facebook page "[EUnited Against Extremism](#)", we disseminate articles from various sources in order to let people know about extremism and radicalization.

More specifically, we stress studies and articles that contradict the preconceived ideas often heard. We make sure to share information from expert websites such as the "Radicalisation Awareness Network" or other source.

We verify our sources before posting any information and try our best to answer every comment or questions raised.

We use our Twitter [@Eunited_CoE](#) as a second channel to reach out to more people – especially the media - by emphasizing specific hashtags.



SECOND GOAL: EDUCATING

THIRD OBJECTIVE: EMPOWERING PEOPLE BY LEARNING



HUMAN LIBRARY

EXTREMISM:
Challenge what you have always
thought to be true

20 April 2016 - 5.30 p.m.
Room E, Dijver 11, Brugge

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As part of our campaign, we organized an informal 'Human Library' conference on radicalization in **Bruges on 20 April 2016**.

The idea of a human library is to **invite people who have been affected both directly and indirectly by extremism** to share their experiences with students at the College and the wider Bruges community.

At this "Human Library", whose theme was "**Extremism: Challenge what you have always thought to be true**", a Syrian student, the imam of Bruges community and our EUnited Team leader talk about many people to raise awareness on what Islam really is, what forms do extremism radicalization really take and how life is in Syria.

WHAT IS THE **RATIONALE** BEHIND THE HUMAN LIBRARY ?

- ✓ **Format** Sharing knowledge in an **intimate format** is the best way to approach the topic, since it can happen to everyone – directly or indirectly. Proximity is key to legitimacy when tackling the root causes of radicalisation.
- ✓ **Objectives** Encourage **discussion**, create **bridges** and enhance civic-minded people's **understanding** of the topic.
- ✓ **Actors** Invitation of **non professional speakers** integrated in the local community was our choice (the imam was actually a mechanic and Ibrahim and Lucie-Belle are students in daily life). In the end, the former person who was radicalized and the mother of a victim decided not to share their experience.



A 90-minutes event in a cosy atmosphere, with tea and biscuits.

MEASUREMENTS

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SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS OVERVIEW

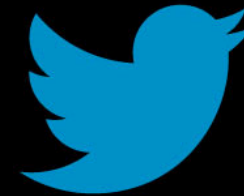


Likes **16,024**

Total Reach **832,648** people

Video Views (+YouTube) **74,433**

Page fans come from **45** countries

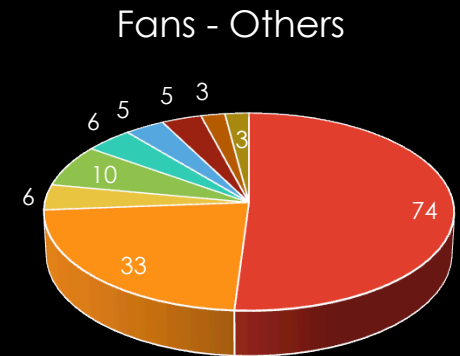
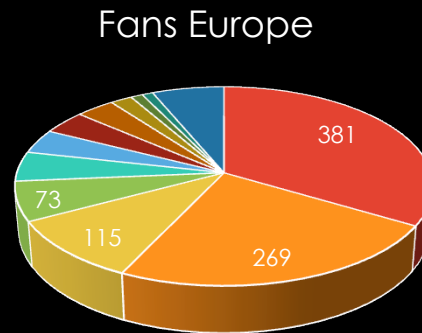
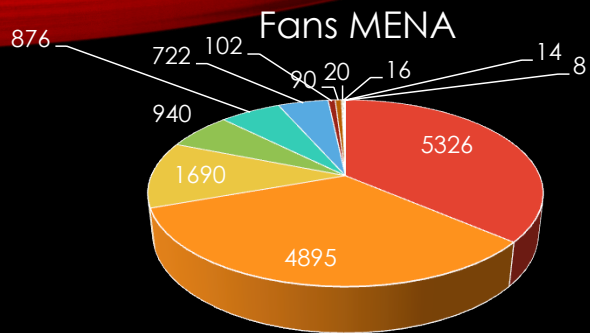


Visits **592**

Followers **124**

Impressions **31,2K**

METRICS PER COUNTRY



- Pakistan
- Algeria
- Iraq
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Libya
- Yemen
- UAE
- Lebanon
- Saudi Arabia

- Belgium
- Italy
- Spain
- Germany
- Slovakia
- Netherlands
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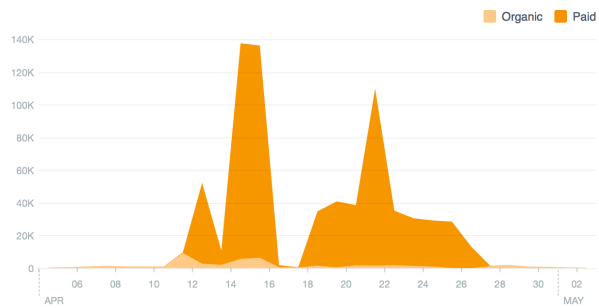
- USA
- Canada
- Afghanistan
- Armenia
- Russia
- India
- Turkey
- Australia
- Georgia

f SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS

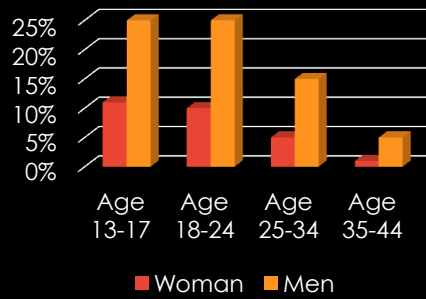
% of fans in our defined target group

Post Reach

The number of people your posts were served to.

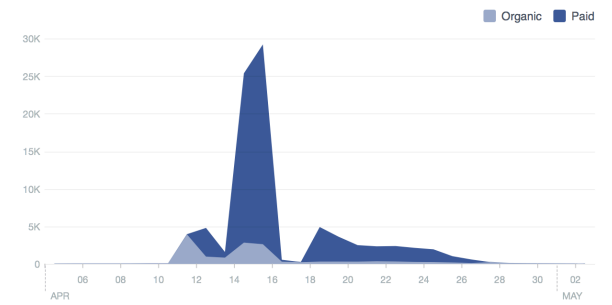


Fans



Video Views: 87,724

Number of times your Page's videos were viewed for 3 seconds or more (from Apr 4, 2016 to May 2, 2016).



NB: Release of the video on April 11th & Advertising campaign from April 13th

BUDGET STRATEGY

❑ Focusing on the return on investment of each dollar invested

❑ Maximising the visibility potential of each dollar invested

Program budget (\$1959 spent of \$2000)

Video: \$1722

Thanks to Sky Robber Film & Aerial Production work, we have benefitted from professional film-making and editing for a student budget.

Tee-Shirts: \$168

Logo on the chest, slogan on the back and eco-friendly: tee-shirts gave us an immediate and positive recognition.

Extra Facebook Ads: \$70

Facebook coupon (\$400 of \$400)

\$160 for the EUnited Page to attract targeted people.

\$140 for boosting the video and generating likes and shares.

\$60 for doping our Twitter account via Facebook.

\$40 on articles about radicalization to raise awareness on radicalisation phenomena.

86% of our budget went to the video,
backbone of EUnited Against Extremism



FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT

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WHAT DID OUR CAMPAIGN ALSO TRIGGERED?

EUNITED CAMPAIGN

A French professor of Philosophy in a Normandy high-school wrote us after debating during two hours with his 18-years old students on extremism and radicalization. We received an overall feedback of the students' comments.

Our Team leader, Lucie-Belle Dissirier, got invited to the annual workshop of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Center of Excellence, part of the Directorate General Home of the European Commission, to share her experience working on the topic (Vienna, Austria, 1 & 2 of June).

The Bruges mosque decided to open to the public after the intervention of the imam at the College of Europe in order to reconnect the dialogue and help people discover Islam.



MEDIA COVERAGE

"It's catchy. It's worthy." (04/12)



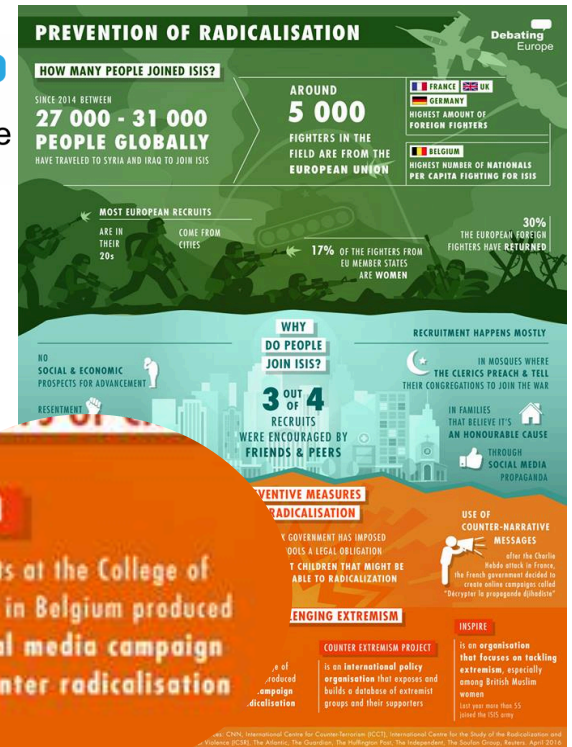
"Simple but effective." (04/21)



"It's the very first step to break out from our own prejudices and stereotypes." (04/27)



Debating Europe



OVERALL MEDIA'S COVERAGE: UP TO 2 MILLION MONTHLY VISITORS

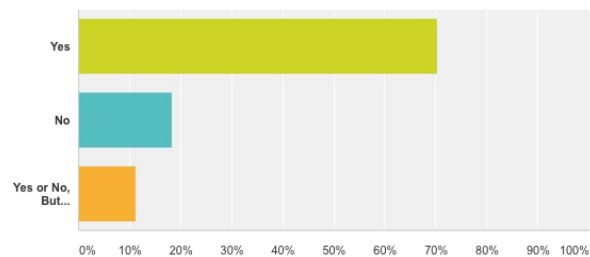
OVERALL EXTERNAL FEEDBACK



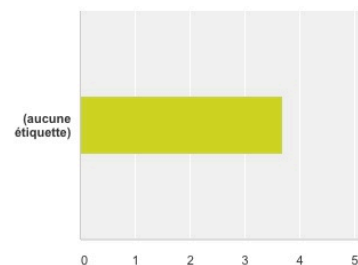
We opened for a few days only an online survey to get feedbacks on our project. The results are the following. Out of 100 answers:

- ❑ 3.7/5 for our video.
- ❑ 70% would like to be part of this project in the future.
- ❑ 80% thought a social media campaign was a relevant way to counter extremism and radicalization.

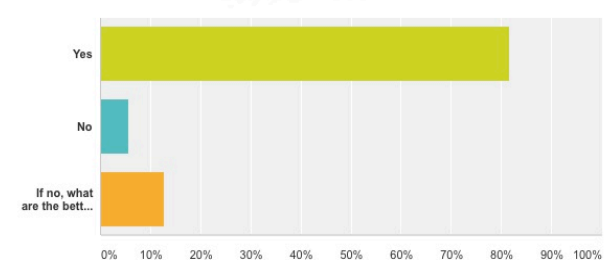
Would you be willing to be part of this kind of project in the future?



On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you evaluate the video? (1 being the lowest grade, 5 the maximum)



Do you think that a social media campaign is a relevant way to counter extremism/radicalisation?



OVERALL EXTERNAL FEEDBACK

DIRECT FEEDBACK

"The film helped to take away prejudices I had."

"The online articles were really useful to raise awareness."

"I researched more about it after seeing your video."

"I think that before I had a lot of stereotypes and thanks to this EUnited project I discovered that there is no specific type, and that it can happen to everybody."

"I realized above all that everybody might be a target, and a victim of extremism and radicalization."

"I learnt lot, thanks to your articles, comments and links."

"Yes, I think you did a good job trying to go beyond the stereotypes."


"I learnt more thanks to EUnited. Especially the video was remarkable. The visualisation always works."



(SurveyMonkey)

Radicalisation Awareness Network, European Commission



 **RAN CoE** a aimé votre Tweet

15 avr.

15 avr.: @RANEurope

Au @collegeofeurope, on encourage les initiatives étudiantes contre la #radicalisation, video: facebook.com/93023718374033...



Ms. Margunn Bjørnholt is a research professor at the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, NKVTS.



Margunn Bjørnholt @mbjornholt · Apr 25

Great initiative by @collegeofeurope students

EUnited @EUnited_CoE

@mbjornholt Video by @EUnited_CoE @collegeofeurope students to counter #radicalisation & #extremism! Retweet pls! youtube.com/watch?v=nSqf1s...

Dr. Daniel Keohane was former Research Director at FRIDE and is now a Senior Researcher at CSS.



Daniel Keohane @keohanedan · Apr 15

Very good video, excellent initiative - well done @EUnited_CoE @collegeofeurope #challengingterrorism #swipeleft

EUnited @EUnited_CoE

Wondering what @keohanedan thinks about our video and project on #challengingterrorism #swipeleft @collegeofeurope youtu.be/nSqf1sRacdA

Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe



OSCE UnitedCVE @UnitedCVE · Apr 13

@EUnited_CoE will do! Keep up the good work!



2



3



INTERNAL FEEDBACK



Lucie-Belle, team leader:

"I am really proud to have participated in such a project. I think it should get more publicity so that more youngsters join the initiative. I learnt a lot about the issue, but also about myself, as leader in a team made of different nationalities and perceptions. It truly is a great human experience!"

Thomas, team member in charge of the budget:

"The equilibrium between daily commitment to the team and one's courses was a real challenge to match. Throughout the campaign, we have strived for coherence between targets, strategy and tactics, which we eventually found; this is a very positive point. At times, communication was a bit lacking, especially when each team member was given specific tasks and acted quite autonomously. The team leader was absolutely instrumental to the success of the whole team."



Eva, team member:

"At the beginning, I thought we would never converge our ideas. But in the end, everything worked out pretty smoothly. Great team spirit!"

David, team member, in charge of the social network campaign:

"Summing up these last months is a *challenging* task! I have naturally learned a lot about the topic, but also about communication. I think the greatest memory I will have from this project is the incredible team spirit we managed to set up. G.R.E.A.T. experience!"



TEACHING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



"Is there a typical foreign fighter profile? Why do social media campaigns succeed in seducing new recruits? There is no one single pathway to terrorism. "EUnited against Extremism" calls on fellow youngsters flirting with extremism to think twice about their choice: will this "jihad" give the meaning to your life that you are looking for?"

Sieglinde Gsthöl
Director of the International and Diplomatic Studies Department

"The Students of the College of Europe are citizens, concerned with all the problems that affect our societies today. Radicalisation is one, and the video of the College student team demonstrates their ability to develop an original and powerful approach to this issue, and to underline the fact that extremism is not only the problem of the others, but can affect anyone."

Olivia Costa
Director of the Political and Administrative Department



"The team demonstrated a firm commitment to make the most of the P2P initiative as an opportunity to contribute to the fight against extremism, in Belgium and beyond and benefited from meetings with government officials and experts involved in the field. Thanks to the team, the College of Europe opened its doors to the Flemish Muslim community, which shared its views on extremism and terrorism with the students and the other participants in the event."

Nicola Del Medico
Academic Assistant IRD Department,

"It is well produced and looks professional. The emphasis on visuals rather than spoken language makes it easy for anyone to follow the story regardless of their language."

Zachary Selden,
University of Florida, NATO Fulbright Chair at the College of Europe 2016.



OPPOSITION SUMMARY

THREE KINDS OF CRITICISMS WERE RAISED ON....

OVERALL PROJECT

- Some said it is not the proper format to fight extremism.
- Some said that extremism was not an issue *per se*.

VIDEO

- Some blamed our choice of choosing a white blond blue-eyed British.
- Some did not believe that ISIS could be easily reaching out to people via dating applications.

TEAM

- Some said we were not legitimate to talk about such an issue (European students in private school from upper-classes...)
- Some insulted us in Arabic calling us "dogs", invoking "Allah's curse" upon us.



CREATIVE BRIEF vs. EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN

CREATIVE BRIEF



- ❑ A social media campaign targeting the 18-25, digital natives. → ✓ First male and female audience reached : Age 18-24.
- ❑ Use of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. → ✓ Facebook is the bulk of our campaign, Twitter served to reach out key persons and the video was posted on YouTube.
- ❑ A 2-minutes catchy and easy-to-remember video. → ✓ The 2.30-min video reached 73K views and generated media coverage.
- ❑ An educational part based on inspiring civic-minded individuals composed of 5 guests: a refugee, an imam, a formerly radicalized, a relative of a victim and the team leader. → ✓ Organisation of a "Human Library" with an attendance of 30 people, composed of 3 guests: a religious leader, a Syrian student and our team leader.

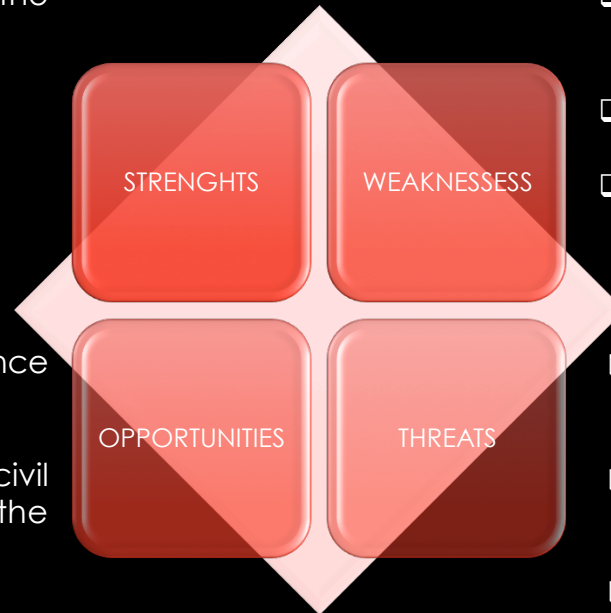
OUR A POSTERIORI S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

Strengths

- ❑ 6 nationalities in the team, 53 at the College of Europe.
- ❑ European sensitivity to terrorism.
- ❑ Expertise of the team leader.

Opportunities

- ❑ The first topic on the agenda since Paris and Brussels attacks.
- ❑ Burgeoning of institutional and civil society alike initiatives around the European states.
- ❑ Broad impetus for anti-radicalization projects following the momentum (Paris and Brussels attacks)



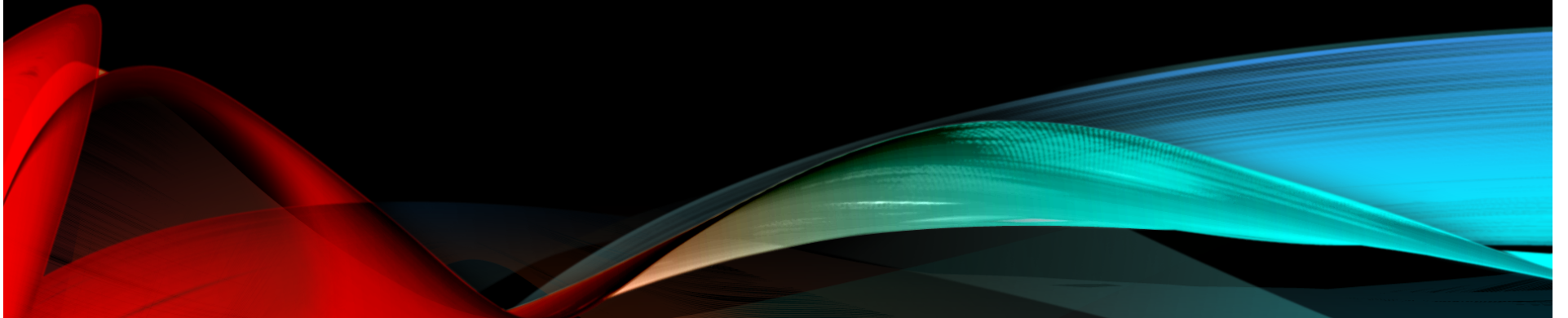
Weaknesses

- ❑ Sharp time-constraint and heavy workload besides the project.
- ❑ No knowledge of Dutch language.
- ❑ Legitimacy as students to be proven.

Threats

- ❑ Attempts of decredibilization ("white guys on anti-radicalisation").
- ❑ Security situation of the team and the College.
- ❑ Getting the refusal both from the former radicalized and the close relation to a victim, to come at the Human Library.

WHAT COMES NEXT NOW?



THE WAY FORWARD



- Continuation of the Facebook campaign thanks to the +16,000 likes on the page (new articles, associated events...)

BBC
WORLD
NEWS

- Deepening of the media coverage (current talks with *BBC World News*).

PRAY FOR
PARIS

- New “Human Library” to be organized on November 13, 2016, one year after the Paris attacks, either in Paris or Brussels.



- The “Human Library” setting shall be duplicated and gain support from schools, universities, public social services. In their respective environments, each team member will try to engage with the local community on this issue, to keep raising awareness and make EUNITED swarm.



- We shall find financial sponsors in order to expand.

THANK YOU EDVENTURE PARTNERS

