ACADEMIC FOCUS

CRESCEnt

Erasmus+

Strategic partnership project within
ERASMUS+ Program
AGREEMENT No. –
2018-1-RO01-KA202-049449[*]

**MIND THE GAP IN MEDIA
COVERAGE AND STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION IN CASE
OF SECURITY THREATS –
THE DEVELOPMENT
OF CRITICAL THINKING
AND RESPONSIBLE REACTION**
(October 1st, 2018 –
September 30th, 2020)

CRESCEnt project addresses the challenge of social polarization created by the propagation of disinformation and fake news. It is a proven fact that fake news have created in Europe, and in the three countries participating in the project, an acute miscommunication and lack of trust between the two targeted professional categories. As the media has been pressed into reaching large audiences, institutional spokespersons were forced into communicating what is necessary and not divulging aspects which could jeopardise security investigations and public safety. A gap of trust and efficient communication was, thus, created and later on widened by the phenomenon of fake news. While it is indeed the media professionals that shape the way information is delivered to the public, they themselves might get trapped in particular "narratives" and share common mental frames. Recognizing that the media professionals are themselves the locus of potential influence by external actors is crucial to developing strategies to combat misinformation and hostile influence. CRESCEnt aims to address this divide through innovative solutions and multiplication of best practices of both spokespersons and journalists.
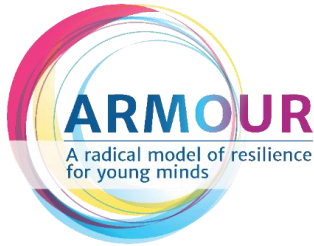
CRESCEnt project creates a training platform and a set of communication and cross-sectorial strategic communication instruments, which aim to capacitate institutional spokespersons and journalists from security and LEA fields, in order to use media reporting to the public in a conscious and ethical manner. CRESCEnt's main target group consists of spokespersons in the field of national security and LEAs. The secondary group is represented by (young) journalists who are active in the field of security.

Participating organizations are: "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy (MVNIA) – Romania; University "Rey Juan Carlos" (URJC) – Spain; Kentro Meleton Asfaleias (KEMEA), Centre for Security Studies – Greece; Ministry of Internal Affairs, Directorate for Information and Public Relations (MAI-DIRP) – Romania.

Objective of the project are:
- to develop a toolkit of techniques, methods and instruments for institutional spokespersons and journalists who communicate on issues related to security and law enforcement, as support in their professional activity;
- to enhance key-competences and skills of the spokespersons and journalists so that they become resilient to fake news, build an ethics of reporting, perform double fact checking, provide and obey ethical grounds in handling sources, report security threats and handle truth for the preservation of democracy and the rule of law.

The CRESCEnt project is part of the ERASMUS+ program and it is funded by the European Commission. See more about the project on the official website: https://crescentproject.eu.

**A RADICAL MODEL OF RESILIENCE FOR
YOUNG MINDS – ARMOUR**
Grant Agreement No. 823683
(January 1st, 2019 – December 31st, 2020)

The Euro-Arab Foundation leads ARMOUR (*A Radical Model of Resilience for Young Minds*) consortium and the project aiming to address the social polarization caused by the adoption and spread of extremists ideologies by creating an interdisciplinary learning model that helps individuals and communities develop resilience to the specific ideologies and behaviours of violent extremism. The ARMOUR's consortium, led by the Euro-Arab Foundation, is also made up of the Centre for Security Studies – KEMEA (Greece), the "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy (Romania), SYNYO GmbH (Austria), the Italian Ministry of Justice, Agenfor (Italy), LIBRe Foundation (Bulgaria), the University of Malta (Malta) and the University of Groningen (Netherlands).

ARMOUR Project aims to address societal polarization via strengthening resilience of individuals, communities and vulnerable groups (such as children, youth, etc.) to polarisation, and to promote interaction and cooperation between different local actors from public sectors, i.e. law enforcement, social services etc., that specialise in working with vulnerable groups in preventing extremism through development of cooperation models. The project will design and create a Toolkit for first-line practitioners to employ in reducing polarization among children and youth.

The Toolkit, capitalizing on previous work carried out by project partners, takes the form of experimental laboratories (experimental

labs) which together work towards: strengthening individual capacity to resist push and pull factors of radicalization; creating community empowerment and resilience to social polarization and violent extremism and assisting states deploy proportional responses against provocations and latent conflicts. The model will then be promoted through a social media campaign.

The expected impact of the project covers the following aspects:

- Increasing awareness and capacity of first-line practitioners: ARMOUR achieves this through the experimental labs and the related training programme. The first tool will help practitioners better understand and identify instances of radicalization and polarization among children and youth while the second one will help them improve their ability to use the project toolkit.
- Promoting interaction and cooperation among different stakeholders: ARMOUR achieves this by organizing the experimental labs in which practitioners and members of vulnerable communities have trusted interactions.
- Promoting the views of moderate voices by engaging with the silent majority and integrating them into the experimental lab.
- Developing and promoting concrete tools targeting vulnerable groups: the experimental lab combined with the best practices identified in the project and the online campaign are concrete tools which key actors can use when working with vulnerable youth.

The project is financed by the Internal Security Fund, a funding package of the Directorate-General for Home Affairs (European Commission) to promote the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy, law enforcement cooperation and the management of the Union's external borders. See more about the project on the official website: https://armourproject.eu/a/privacy-policy.

**Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships
and Youth Entrepreneurship
Programme in Romania, funded by the EEA Grants –
Financial Mechanism 2014-2021**
Grant agreement no.: 18-COP-0017
(October 1st, 2019 – September 30th, 2021)

THESEUS Project aims at Connecting the Disconnections between Disparate Data, in order to provide knowledge for building Insightful Analysis. The broad availability of data has led to increasing interest in methods for extracting useful information and knowledge from data, determining the emergence of new fields of science (e.g. data science). At the same time, big data algorithms have been signaled as a potential leverage that can lead to digital dictatorship if insufficiently understood, poorly handled and unethically regulated. Companies in every industry focused on ways to structure, process and analyze the growing volume and diversity of data so as to streamline decisions and gain a competitive edge. State institutions, regular citizens, social and political science practitioners on the other hand, are not yet properly equipped to properly mitigate the economic, social and political impact of the information technology revolution that awaits us in the decades to come. Therefore, in the process of understanding and mitigating risks and opportunities of Big Data, complex workloads, new skills and competences have to be acquired.

Following these emerging needs, the **objective of the project** is to enhance human capital and knowledge base by tackling directly skills and competences required and providing an understanding of the

processes guiding big data analytics. This objective will be met by **building and delivering a course**, consisting of four modules, capitalizing on big data methodologies: introductory module, data collection module, data processing module and data analysis module.

The course will not be designed as a technologically focused course, but rather knowledge, awareness and understanding focused course. The course avoids an algorithm-centered approach. It focuses on how options are understood and choices and tradeoffs are designed. Thus, it enhances, through learning by doing, key-competences and skills required in collecting, understanding, correlating and processing big data, helping them streamline problem-solving processes in a data-driven ecosystem.

The project addresses **two professional categories:** *governance and social scientists* and *national security practitioners*, whose complementary work is of paramount importance in insuring the sustainable development of democracy. Both categories carry out great responsibility at social level. Ill-informed decisional processes in national security and policy-making, based on incomplete, inaccurate or incorrectly correlated data generate negative impact, affecting society at large. Although practitioners targeted by the project work with large amounts of data, their background is mostly in social science or security studies, lacking a very specific technical training. Such (future) professionals need to better understand what and how big data can be capitalized so as to ethically and lawfully improve the overall efficiency of their organization.

Participating organisations are: "Mihai Viteazul" National Information Academy (ANIMV) – Romania; University of Malta (UoM) – Malta; Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) – Norway; National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) – Romania. THESEUS Project is part of the Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme in Romania, being funded by the EEA Grants – Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

Empowering a Pan-European Network to Counter Hybrid Threats (EU-HYBNET)
H2020 - Grant agreement no: 883054

EU-HYBNET is a 60 month project (2020-2025), financed through the Horizon 2020, which will start in May 2020. The project is being developed and implemented by a consortium of 25 partners, coordinated by LAUREA University of Applied Sciences from Finland. The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats and the Joint Research Centre are leading partners of the EU-HYBNET project.

EU-HYBNET will bring together practitioners and stakeholders to identify and define their most urgent requirements for countering hybrid threats, by undertaking an in-depth analysis of gaps and needs and prioritizing those that are crucial to address through effective research and innovation initiatives, including arranging training and exercise events to test the most promising innovations (technical and social) which will lead to the creation of a roadmap for success and solid recommendations for uptake, industrialization and standardization across the European Union.

The project aims to build an empowered, sustainable network, which will:

- define common requirements that can fill knowledge gaps, deal with performance needs, and enhance capabilities of innovation endeavors;
- monitor significant developments in research and innovation;

- deliver recommendations for uptake and industrialization of the most promising innovations that address the needs of practitioners, and determine associated priorities for standardization;
- establish conditions for enhanced interaction among its members;
- persistently strive to increase its membership and continually build network capacity through knowledge exchange.

EU-HYBNET will address four core themes to ensure coherence in the project's results: 1) Future Trends of Hybrid Threats, 2) Cyber and Future Technologies, 3) Resilient Civilians, Local Level and National Administration, and 4) Information and Strategic Communication.

Romania represents the consortium through "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy (MVNIA). MVNIA will incorporate the project's research findings and information into its MA & PhD research programs. As students come from diverse areas (security practitioners, legal, media, private business), the impact of exploitation of the information will reach a wide audience, and the EU-HYBNET training documents will also be employed to enhance capabilities of experts and practitioners in the fight against hybrid threats.

EU-HYBNET is a Pan-European network of security practitioners, stakeholders, academia, industry players, and SME actors across EU, collaborating with each other to counter hybrid threats.

CALL FOR PAPER ROMANIAN INTELLIGENCE STUDIES REVIEW

"Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy, via its National Institute for Intelligence Studies, publishes the *Romanian Intelligence Studies Review* (RISR), a high quality peer reviewed and indexed research journal**, edited in English and Romanian twice a year.**

The aim of the journal is to create a framework for debate and to provide a platform accessible to researchers, academicians, professional, practitioners and PhD students to share knowledge in the form of high quality empirical and theoretical original research papers, case studies, conceptual framework, analytical and simulation models, literature reviews and book review within security and intelligence studies and convergent scientific areas.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:
- Intelligence in the 21st century
- Intelligence Analysis
- Cyber Intelligence
- Open Source Intelligence (OSINT)
- History and memory in Intelligence
- Security paradigms in the 21st century
- International security environment
- Security strategies and policies
- Security Culture and public diplomacy

Review Process: RISR shall not accept or publish manuscripts without prior peer review. Material which has been previously copyrighted, published, or accepted for publication will not be considered for publication in the journal. There shall be a review process of manuscripts by one or more independent referees who are conversant in the pertinent subject area. Articles will be selected based on their relevance to the journal's theme, originality and scientific correctness, as well as observance of the publication's norms. The editor evaluates the recommendation and notifies the author of the manuscript status.

The review process takes maximum three weeks, the acceptance or rejects notification being transmitted via email within 5 weeks from the date of manuscript submission.

Date of Publishing: RISR is inviting papers for No. 25 and 26 and which is scheduled to be published on June and December, 2021.

Submission deadlines: February 1st and July 1st

Author Guidelines: Author(s) should follow the latest edition of APA style in referencing. Please visit www.apastyle.org to learn more about APA style, and http://www.animv.ro for author guidelines. For more details please access the official website: **rrsi.ro**

Contact: Authors interested in publishing their paper in RISR are kindly invited to submit their **proposals electronically in .doc/.docx format at our e-mail address rrsi@sri.ro, with the subject title: RRSI article proposal.**