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[Politics and society have a shared responsibility to combat youth radicalisation](#)

Despite a number of high-quality EU and Member State initiatives and measures, not enough is being done to successfully prevent young people from succumbing to the lure of violent extremism, the EESC says

In the fight against the radicalisation of their young citizens, Member States and EU institutions need to involve civil society organisations more effectively as partners who can make an essential contribution to social and values-based resilience against extremist ideas, **the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** said at its plenary session in December.

Instead of focusing on short-term, punitive security policies driven by “crisis” events, such as the recent terrorist or violent attacks in Europe, many of which were committed by young radicalised EU nationals, the EU’s policies should invest more in prompt but also long-term and coordinated prevention efforts, the EESC stated in its opinion on *Cooperation with civil society to prevent the radicalisation of young people*, adopted at the plenary.

“Violent extremism motivated by radical ideologies has many faces, and many of them are young”, the rapporteur for the opinion, **Christian Moos**, said, adding that young people are especially vulnerable to extremist propaganda of any kind, as they do not have a strong sense of identity and often feel excluded by society.

“Radical ideologies often claim to provide guidance, direction and support in daily life and compensate for feelings of inferiority stemming from a variety of reasons. But radicalisation is a brainwashing process which sends people into a tunnel out of which they emerge with black and white answers to all questions of life, in addition to an enemy that needs to be fought,” **Mr Moos** told the plenary.

“This is where civil society can play a major role by providing alternatives and, more generally, contributing to sustainable social resilience against radicalisation, based on our common rights and values, as set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights”, **Mr Moos** maintained.

The prevention work in this field requires a multi-agency approach involving policy-makers and national institutions such as police and prisons or social workers, but also schools, the media, businesses and civil society organisations representing, amongst others, families, the social partners and youth workers, according to the EESC.

Mr Moos commended the valuable work of the European Commission in this area. Its [Radicalisation Awareness Network \(RAN\)](#), set up in 2015, gathers frontline or grassroots practitioners in the field of countering extremism and terrorism and promotes the exchange of best practice and on-the-ground experience. The practitioners include the police and prison authorities, but also teachers, local authorities, civil society representatives and healthcare professionals.

Among other similar measures instigated by the Commission and praised by the EESC is the establishment of a High Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation that will advise on further development of EU policies in this area and on more structured future cooperation between various stakeholders and between Member States.

Nevertheless, the EESC said it viewed these initiatives and steps to implement them “as still being insufficient”. It has repeated its call for closer involvement and stronger institutional support of civil society and local authorities, a call already made in its previous [opinion](#) on the countering of terrorism.

In order to build resilience against radicalisation, the EESC places special emphasis on the importance of inclusive formal and non-formal education, which is indispensable for active participation in a diverse society and for teaching critical thinking and media literacy.

Fighting xenophobic and populist tendencies through increasing intercultural awareness but at the same time conveying a firm understanding of EU values is also seen as helpful. In this connection, however, core subjects such as civic education are neglected in many countries, the EESC warned.

Youth organisations, such as sports clubs or the scouts, were singled out as providing valuable alternative opportunities for developing a healthy sense of personal identity. The EESC also stressed the role of trade unions and religious communities in the prevention of radicalisation, as well as of support services and networks that can help schools and families in detecting the signs.

Combating youth unemployment and poverty should also be high on the agenda and the EESC said that Member States did not “invest nearly enough” in providing excellent opportunities for young people. Active partnerships with businesses, involving social media, and building strong communication skills on the part of various civil society organisations, could foster the creation of effective counter-narratives to extremist propaganda in media outlets.

Prevention of radicalisation in prisons and the integration of former prisoners into the labour market and society are also seen as important steps

in the right direction.

[Update on MiFID II registers from 3 January 2018](#)

ESMA is currently working on a new release of those registers for Q1 2018. Therefore, until the new register release is fully available as an IT functionality on our website, ESMA will provide an interim solution which involves it publishing, on a fortnightly basis, the latest registers information in an [excel format](#) which will be available for download. The list of affected registers is as follows:

- Regulated markets
- Multilateral Trading Facilities
- NEW Organised trading facilities
- Systematic Internalisers
- NEW Approved Publication Arrangements
- NEW Consolidated Tape Providers
- NEW Approved Reporting Mechanisms
- Suspension and Restorations (SARIS)*
- Central counterparties will become obsolete and removed from publication
- Shares admitted to trading on EU regulated markets will be replaced by FIRDS publication: Transparency 3 January 2018

ESMA will continue to monitor the data submitted to the registers and may make the files available, outside of the fortnightly schedule, should the requirement arise. ESMA encourages market participants to review the data provided and contact their National Competent Authority in case of any data discrepancy.

*[SARIS file](#) will be made available once a week in a pdf format.

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Statement by Commissioner Vestager on the International Skating Union

infringing EU competition rules by imposing restrictive penalties on athletes

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The Commission has decided that the eligibility rules of the International Skating Union – the ISU – are illegal under EU competition law.

The ISU is the world governing body for ice skating – both speed skating and figure skating. Its members are national ice skating associations. Together, the ISU and its members organise international ice skating competitions – big events, like the Winter Olympics, the European Championships and the World Championships.

The ISU's eligibility rules set out who can compete in those events. In our decision, we found that through the application of those rules the ISU can prevent independent organisers from setting up other international speed skating competitions – and dissuade skaters from taking part in those competitions.

Our investigation

Our case started with a complaint from two Dutch professional speed skaters, Mark Tuitert and Niels Kerstholt. They have won gold medals at the Olympics and the World Championships. But they also wanted the chance to compete in other events.

That makes sense. A speed skater's professional career doesn't last all that long. So athletes like Mark Tuitert and Niels Kerstholt should have the chance to make the most of the years while they're at the top of their game. And besides, those new competitions can give fans another chance to see them in action.

But the ISU's rules allow it to penalise skaters when they take part in competitions that the ISU hasn't authorised. Skaters can be suspended for several years, or even banned for life from all major international competitions, including the Olympics and the European and World Championships.

That's a risk that a professional athlete can't afford to take. So in effect, those rules prevent skaters from taking part in competitions that aren't authorised by the ISU and its members.

That can be costly for athletes, who lose the chance to compete – and an opportunity to better earn their living.

It can also mean those competitions never happen. Because organisers can't put together an event, if top athletes are put off by the threat of a ban.

And in fact, as a result of those rules, only the ISU and its members actually organise international speed skating competitions.

Consequences of the decision

Today's decision requires the ISU to put a stop to this infringement. It could do that by abolishing its eligibility rules.

Or it could amend them, so they're based on a clear list of legitimate sporting objectives, such as protecting athletes' health or preventing doping. The rules should not be about the ISU's own commercial interests. The eligibility of an athlete should not depend on whether he or she takes part in a competition that doesn't threaten those legitimate sporting objectives.

We've decided not to impose a fine on the ISU. We don't believe it's appropriate or necessary to do that for deterrence purposes.

But we'll still be watching closely, to make sure the ISU complies with our decision. And if it doesn't, we can fine it up to 5% of its daily worldwide turnover, for each day that it's in breach of our decision.

Implications for professional sport

Ice skating is just one of many sports in Europe that's organised through this pyramid structure, where a single federation organises competitions from local to international level.

We're not questioning that structure. And we're certainly not questioning the right of those federations to do their job of organising the sport. Of protecting the health and safety of athletes, and the integrity and proper conduct of sport.

But the penalties these federations impose should be necessary and proportionate to achieve those goals. They certainly shouldn't be used to unfairly favour the federation's own commercial interests, at the expense of athletes and other organisers.

Sport is a fun, healthy, exciting thing to do. But it's also a business, and a livelihood for professional athletes. Today's decision is about that side of sport. It's about making it clear to sporting federations that the business of sport also has to comply with competition rules.

Conclusion

This decision doesn't mean the Commission is trying to be the referee in every dispute about sport.

In fact, there are many disputes which have little or nothing at all to do with competition rules. Things like the penalties for doping or match-fixing, or deciding the precise scheduling of games. For these, sports organisations must live up to their responsibilities and find solutions and mechanisms for solving disputes that deliver the results that the public and the athletes deserve.

As for the enforcement of competition rules, national courts and competition authorities share this responsibility with us. And they're usually well placed to deal with competition disputes involving a sport federation.

To use a sporting analogy, each of us has our own position on the field. We're playing to the best of our ability in ours. And we leave it to others to do their part.

Thank you.