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ARENAS

ANALYSIS OF AND RESPONSES
TO EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

**SECOND
ANNUAL MEETING**

**ARENAS
FEATURED BY
NET4SOCIETY**

**MEET OUR
PARTNERS**

www.arenasproject.eu



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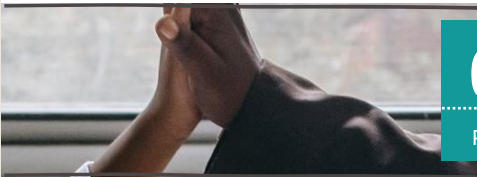
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ARENAS PUBLISHES STRATEGIC

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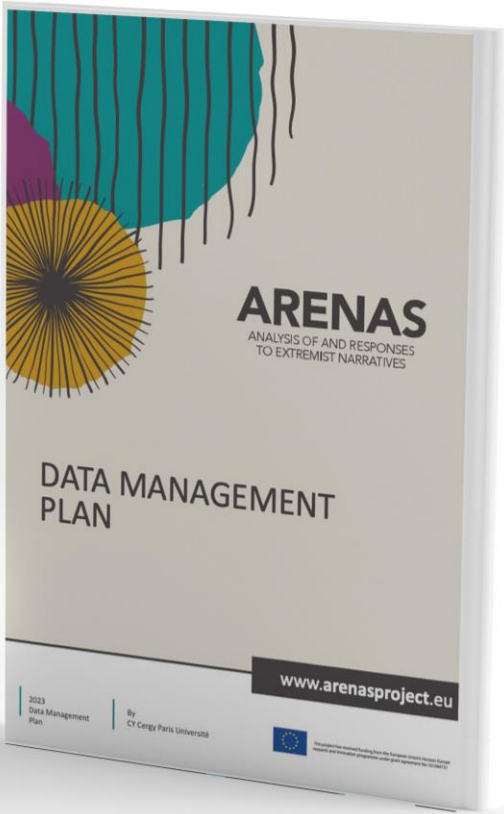
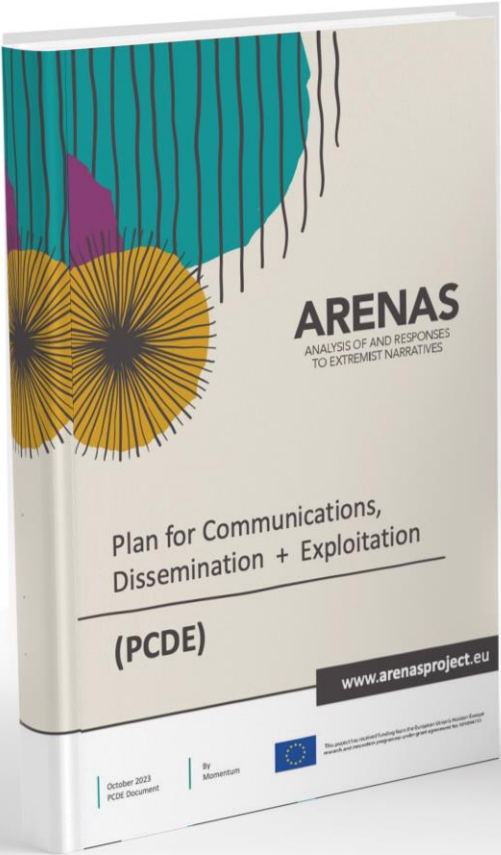


In Autumn 2023 ARENAS published two living documents critical to the strategic development of the project.

First, the ARENAS Data Management Plan (DMP) which was created in Work Package 1, led by Julien Longhi of CY Cergy Paris Université. The Data Management Plan is due to identify all data collected, processed and/or generated by the project, analyse their main generators and users, and define how data is handled and stored during and after the project.

The second document published was the Plan for Communications, Dissemination and Exploitation (PCDE) which was produced by Work Package 7 Leaders Momentum. It sets out our ambition to craft and implement a robust and sustained planned dissemination campaign through the 48 months of the project.

[Read More](#)





UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA HOSTS ARENAS SEMINAR – INSIDE EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

The Centre of Studies on Democracies and Dictatorships (CEDID) of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) organised a **seminar on 24 November 2023** linked with the research of the Work Package 3 that studied the **historical roots and circulations of extremist narratives**. Moderated by Steven Forti (UAB), leader of the ARENAS WP3, the seminar, entitled *Inside Extremist Narratives*, featured presentations by consortium members representing four partners within the ARENAS project.

[Read More](#)



INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO NARRATIVES IN EXTREMIST DISCOURSES IN DÜSSELDORF

Participants included members of this Work Package: the researchers from Düsseldorf, Julien Longhi from the CY Cergy Paris Université and Darja Fišer and Kristina Pahor de Maiti of the Inštitut za Novejšo Zgodovino. Furthermore, some PhD students presented their doctoral dissertations which also deal with the topic of extremism: Andreas Blombach, Phillip Heinrich, Fabian Schäfer and Tamara Fuchs from the Friedrich Alexander University in Erlangen-Nürnberg, Mara Nogai from the University of Düsseldorf and Karolina Küsters from the University Bonn.

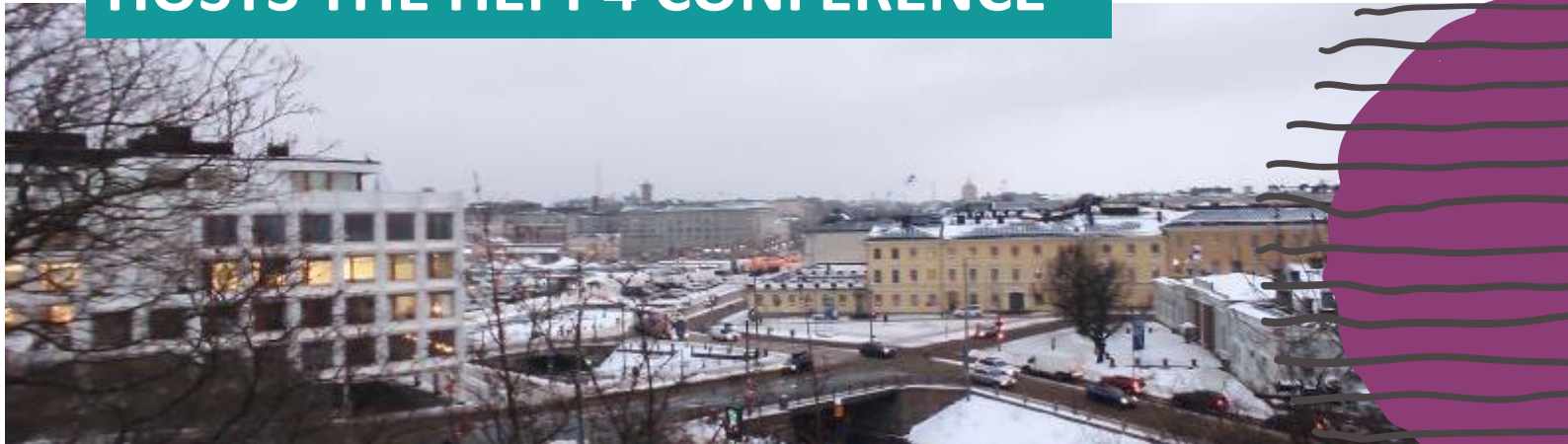
Some researchers from Departments of German Studies at other universities also presented their research work on extremism and narratives: Friedemann Vogel and Fabian Deus from the University Siegen, Noah Bubenhofer from the University Zürich and Sebastian Zollner from the University Greifswald.

The research focuses on corpus linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse linguistic and computer linguistic analysis, the corpora are composed of different languages so that it is possible to compare the situation of extremist discourses and narratives inside Europe, or rather with other parts of the world (e.g. Japan).

The workshop was also open to any other interested students, who were able to gain ideas and inspiration for their final theses from the presentations.

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

HOSTS THE HEPP4 CONFERENCE



By **Simo Määttä**, University of Helsinki

The Fourth Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism, and Polarised Politics (HEPP4) was held on 11-13 December 2023, at the University of Helsinki.



Simo Määttä

The Conference assembled a wide range of international researchers at all career stages, to examine populism, polarisation, and emotions, particularly from a discursive and cultural approach. It included contributions from a wide range of fields. There were 170 presenters and more than 200 participants from various parts of Europe, as well as attendees from Brazil, Australia, Argentina, India, South Africa, Nigeria, and the United States.

The **keynote speakers** were prominent scholars on discursive approaches to populism and nationalism; Benjamin DeCleen, Hande Eslen-Ziya and Mercedes Barros, who, throughout her visit to Helsinki, also gave a Christina seminar talk and doctoral course at the UH *Dirty Words: Feminism, populism and hegemony*.

Members of the ARENAS project consortium participated in a panel discussion on “**The circulation of narratives, doxae, and implicit meanings in populist discourse**”. The panel discussed how narratives, doxas, and implicit meanings, which are

important linguistic and discursive elements of populist discourse, are circulated across times, spaces, and media. The panel started with an overview of theorisations of circulation in post-structuralist continental thought through the prism of performativity (Simo Määttä, University of Helsinki). Subsequently, Samuel Vernet (Aix-Marseille Université) analysed the circulation of doxa in the most listened-to radio news program in France reporting the invasion of the US Capitol by pro-Trump protesters on January 7, 2021.

Julien Longhi (CY Cergy Paris Université) discussed the ethos, authority, and legitimacy of the “scientific leader” in the circulation of conspiratorial discourse about COVID-19. Mattia Retta (University of Helsinki) analysed the circulation of hate speech through implicit meanings in the tweets of Italian extreme-right politicians.

Read more about the conference and learn about the presentations by the members of the ARENAS consortium [here](#).



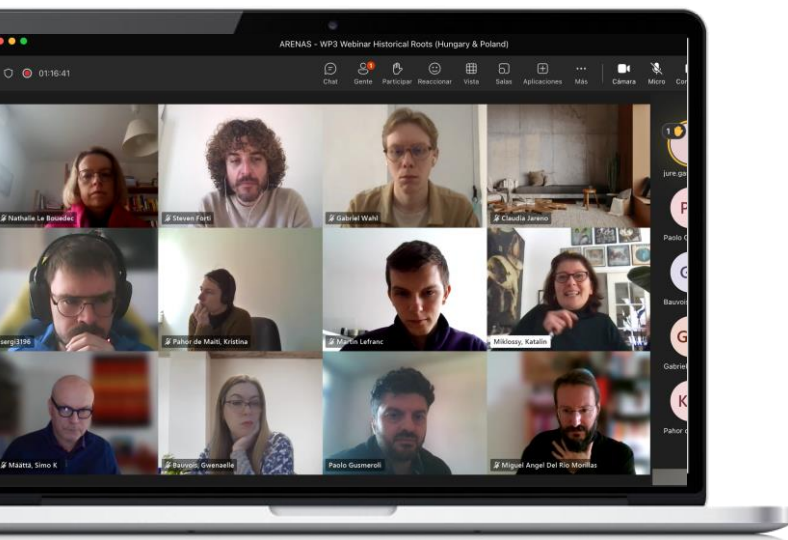
WEBINAR CYCLE ON HISTORICAL ROOT OF EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

By **Steven Forti**,
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



Steven Forti

*Within the framework of the **ARENAS project, Work Package 3 (WP3)**, coordinated by Steven Forti from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), deals with the study of the historical roots of extremist narratives and their circulation in the political and media spheres.*



The research and activities of WP3 are carried out throughout the four years of the ARENAS project and involve teams from the UAB, CY Cergy Paris Université, the University of Helsinki and the Institute of Contemporary History of Ljubljana.

What are the main extremist narratives existing in the countries studied? When did they originate? How have they been reused over time? Currently, what is new and what remains? Can we find common patterns at the European level? Could we talk about transnational circulation? These are some of the questions to which answers will be offered.

[Read More](#)



MEMBER OF THE ARENAS CONSORTIUM ATTEND DRAINE SEMINAR IN PISA

*The International Research Group **DRAINE** (Hate and Social Disruption: Discourse and Performativity) recently hosted a seminar in Pisa, Italy. This recent seminar, the sixth organised by DRAINE, took place in January and was attended by about 30 participants from universities and countries across Europe. Attendees included 8 members of the ARENAS project consortium.*



The focus of the seminar was on the relationship between hatred, discursive corporealities and subversive practices of the body. To further build on the work of the fifth seminar, which was held in Brussels in 2023 the seminar considered reparative discourses, between discursive corporeality and institutional speech-making.

The topics explored were as follows

TOPIC 01
Making bodies visible and audible

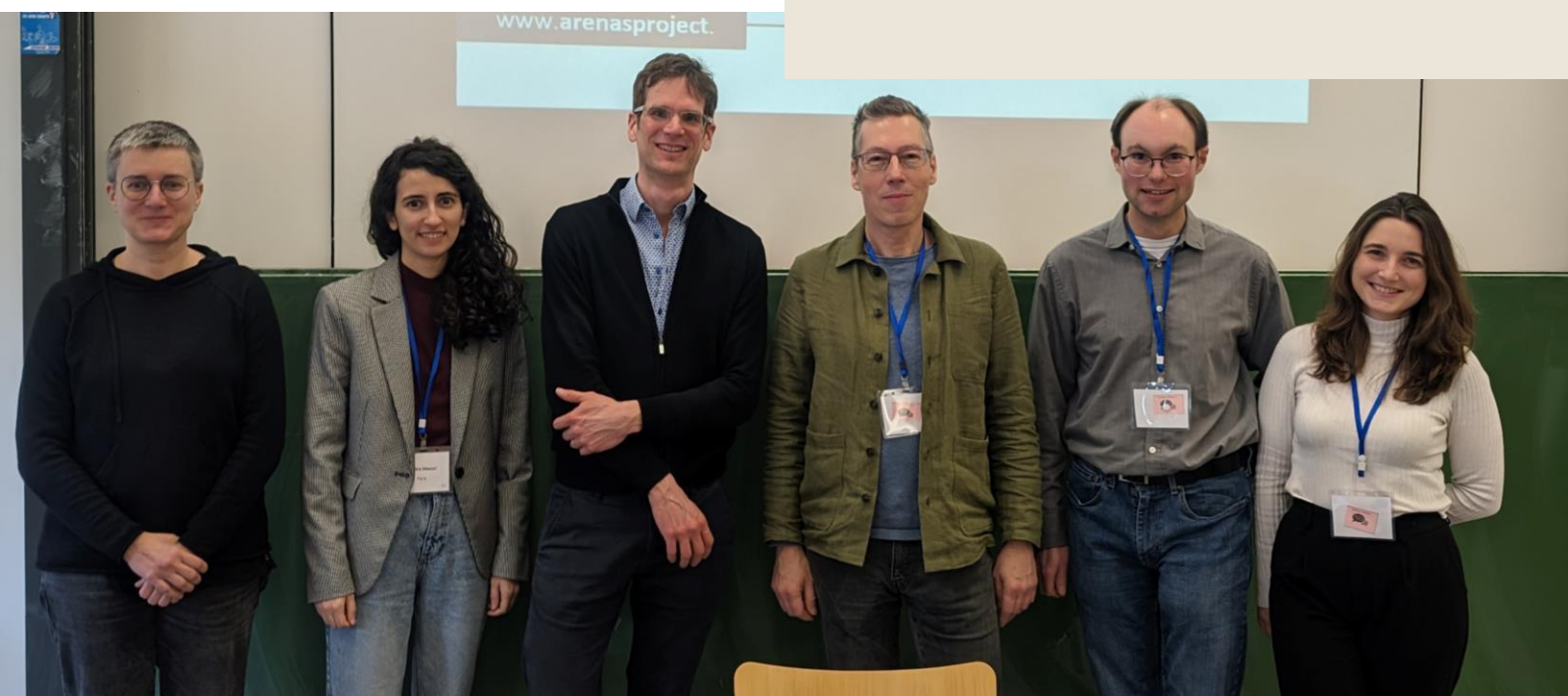
TOPIC 02
Institutional reparative discourse

TOPIC 03
Hate as Resistance and Empowerment

[Read More](#)

ARENAS FEATURED AT 46TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GERMAN SOCIETY FOR LINGUISTICS (DGFS)

*The most recent Annual Meeting of the **German Society for Linguistics (DGfs)** took place at Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB) between 28 February and 01 March 2024. ARENAS consortium members from HHU Düsseldorf and CY Cergy Paris Université participated in the conference.*



A total of 14 **workshops** and **4 plenary talks** investigated language from a variety of perspectives. The theme of the conference – **Language and Attitude** – focused on one of the most crucial functions of language. Language is one of the most important, probably even the most important means to express attitudes, personal attitudes such as desires, needs, or preferences and public attitudes such as political beliefs.


One of the 14 Workshops, “The language of extremist narratives: cross-disciplinary approaches”, was organised by Ana Yara Postigo Fuentes, Stefan Hartmann, Rolf Kailuweit, Alexander Ziem from HHU Düsseldorf, who are members of the ARENAS consortium.



Empowering Young People Against Hate

Speech – Reflecting Classification Published

Amidst the prevalence of hate speech in today's interconnected society, the need to equip young individuals with tools to combat it is more pressing than ever.



For this reason, ARENAS partnered with the international network **Schools Beyond Regions and Borders (SBRB)** to present the seminar series titled “Empowering Young People Against Hate Speech.”

Launched in February 2021, the SBRB project aims to foster an understanding of civic and citizenship competence among secondary school students, encouraging them to actively engage as leaders within their communities. Beyond this central goal, SBRB endeavours to cultivate a strong sense of

belonging to the European community among its participants, fostering unity and inclusivity for future generations.

Through a comprehensive approach integrating education, engagement, and empowerment, SBRB equips young individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to navigate and positively impact the complex socio-political landscape of today and tomorrow.

ARENAS Involvement in Seminar Series

The seminar series was held from October 2023 to January 2024 and featured ARENAS members addressing various aspects of hate speech and other forms of extreme narratives, including their historical evolution, identification in online discourse, ethical considerations, and strategies for mediation and remediation. The series began with Steven Forti from the Autonomous University of

Barcelona, providing a historical perspective on extremist narratives. Subsequent lectures by Julien Longhi (CY Cergy Paris Université), Katalin Miklóssy (University of Helsinki), and Béatrice Fracchiolla (University of Lorraine) explored the spread of extremist narratives online, ethics in democracy, and methods for mediating hate speech, respectively.

To learn about reactions to the seminar series and future plans click [here](#).

ARENAS IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN ELECTIONS, DISINFORMATION AND EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

Increased polarisation triggered by social protest movements, the COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine has challenged European democracies and fostered extremist narratives, with strong and numerous consequences for citizens, politics, and the democratic exercise.



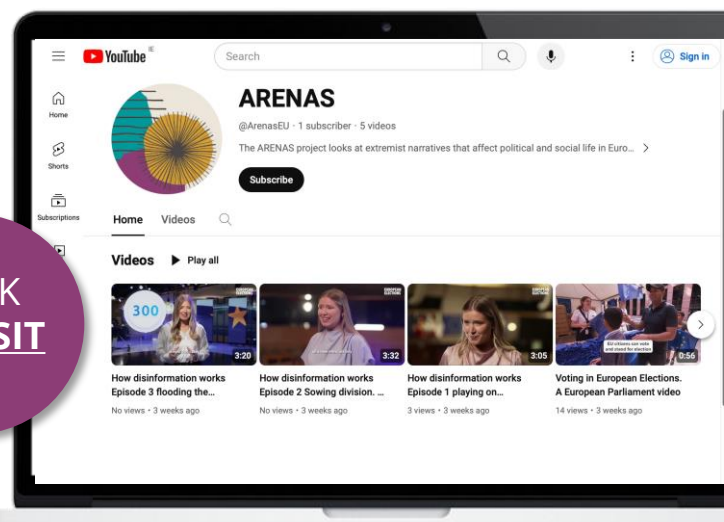
European citizens are facing the “post-truth” world, characterised by conspiracy theories, overwhelming disinformation, fake news and more and more extremist narratives. As Europeans prepare to vote in the European Parliament elections in June it is crucial that we carefully interrogate extremist narratives.

This is the work we are carrying out as part of the ARENAS project. The full project title is “Analysis of and Responses to Extremist Narratives”. The ARENAS consortium focuses on extremist narratives as crucial nexuses, because “the battle of stories, not the debate on issues” can determine how citizens react to political events (Cornog 2014). Extremist narratives constitute counter-narratives in the sense that they challenge mainstream worldviews and mainstream interpretations of periods of social change and major events. Extensive work has been carried out by the ARENAS consortium on creating [definitions of extremist narratives](#).

Actively questioning and challenging extremist narratives helps safeguard democracy, maintain trust, and promote informed decision-making during European elections. [Visit our website](#) where we outline the importance of analysing and interrogating extremist narratives.

The European Parliament’s communications team has created a series of short videos which help you understand how they do this and how you can avoid falling into their trap. We invite you to [watch the videos](#) and to share with your own networks.

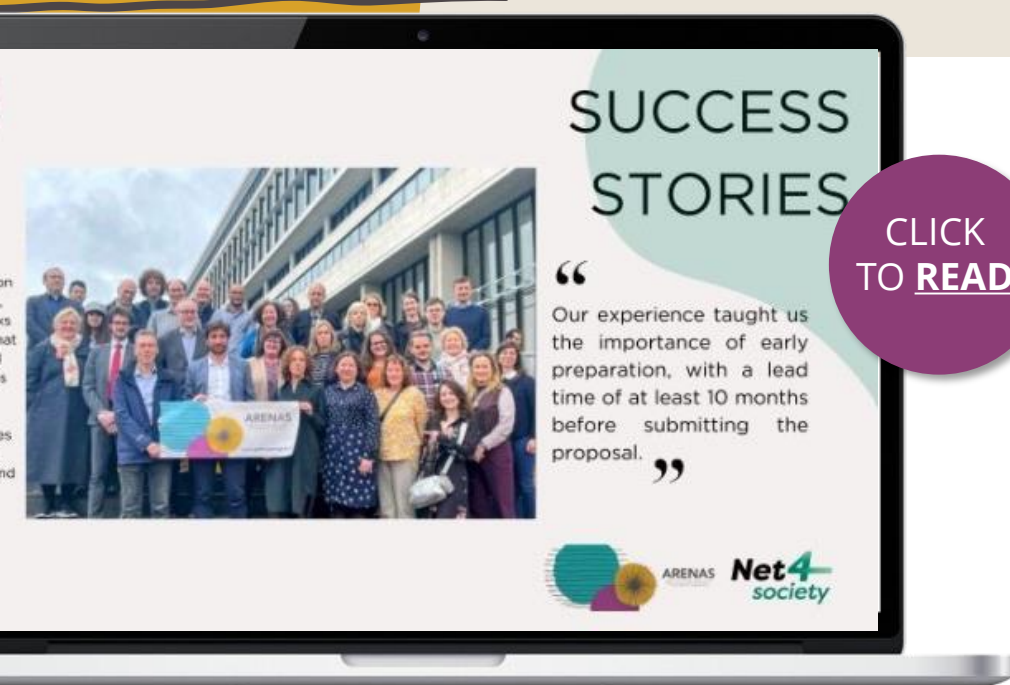
CLICK TO VISIT



ARENAS FEATURED BY NET4SOCIETY ON HORIZON EUROPE SUCCESS STORIES

*Although still in its first year, ARENAS has recently been included in the **Net4Society** feature on Horizon Europe Success Stories.*

This is a wonderful acknowledgement and endorsement of the work carried out by the consortium to date.



Net4Society is the transnational network for Cluster 2 "Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society" (CL2) National Contact Points (NCPs) in Horizon Europe. Established in 2008, Net4Society is a network of National Contact Points for Socio-Economic Sciences and the Humanities (SSH). Its mission is to actively support networking within the SSH research community and provide assistance throughout the Horizon Europe consultation process. Net4Society includes National Contact Points from over 55 European and international countries. A key focus of Net4Society is promoting the seamless integration of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) across Horizon Europe.

The organisation is currently running a Success Stories series, highlighting projects of note it has identified in Horizon Europe's Cluster 2. The cluster aims to strengthen democratic values, including the rule of law and fundamental rights, protecting our cultural heritage, and promoting socio-economic transformations that contribute to inclusion and growth.

Speaking to ARENAS Project co-ordinator Julien Longhi, Net4Society learned about the objectives, challenges and lessons learned to date, as well as the projects impact. You can read the full article [here](#).



ARENAS CONSORTIUM GATHERS IN DUSSELDORF FOR SECOND ANNUAL MEETING

By Julien Longhi, Professor of Discourse Analysis and Digital Humanities at CY Cergy Paris Université

From 14 to 16 May, members of the ARENAS project gathered in Dusseldorf for their 2nd annual meeting.

One year after the kick-off meeting in Cergy, and having carried out a great deal of research and action over the last few months, this meeting was an opportunity to evaluate all the work carried out, to discuss certain advances on current and sensitive subjects, and to work together on the next deadlines, or on inspiring aspects to increase the consortium's creativity.

As at every ARENAS event, the alchemy was perfect, and the combination of different energies enabled everyone to make further progress in their involvement in the project. It should be noted that several new people, recruited since the start of the project, had joined the initial members, creating an intergenerational dynamic conducive to exchanges. The alternation of somewhat structured moments (such as the general meeting and the open seminar) and working or ideation sessions provided a context that was favourable to the synthesis and structuring of ideas and methods, and also to the development of new ideas and their implementation with very concrete targets, such as young people, journalists or politicians.



Julien Longhi

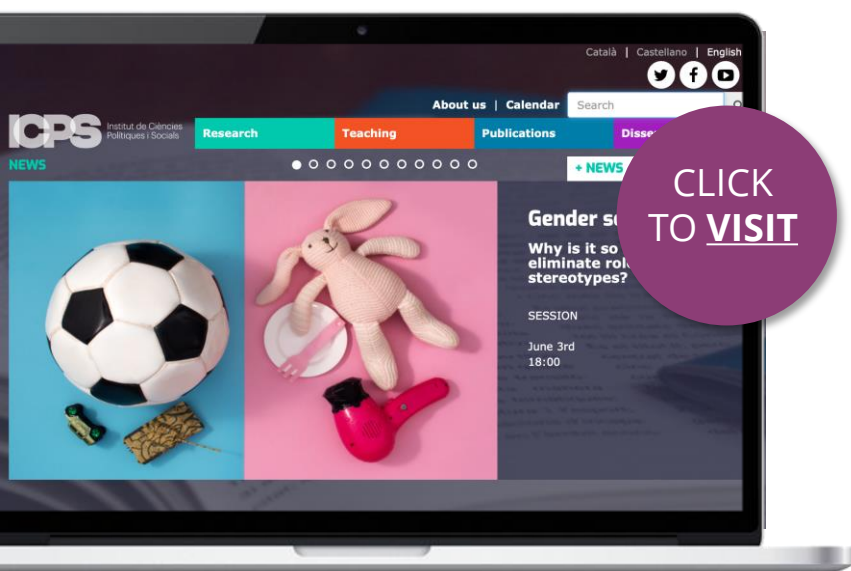
And of course, this annual meeting is also an opportunity to strengthen ties and create relationships that are beneficial in the long term, to continue this work in harmony: morning runs or gastronomic discoveries of German specialities, convivial moments over a coffee or a giant pizza, all these friendly and enthusiastic memories accompanied the members of the consortium to their 8 other respective countries!

Research presented at the meeting will be shared over the coming months on our website. We invite you to follow our social media channels and subscribe to our ezine, to keep up to date with the latest news from ARENAS.



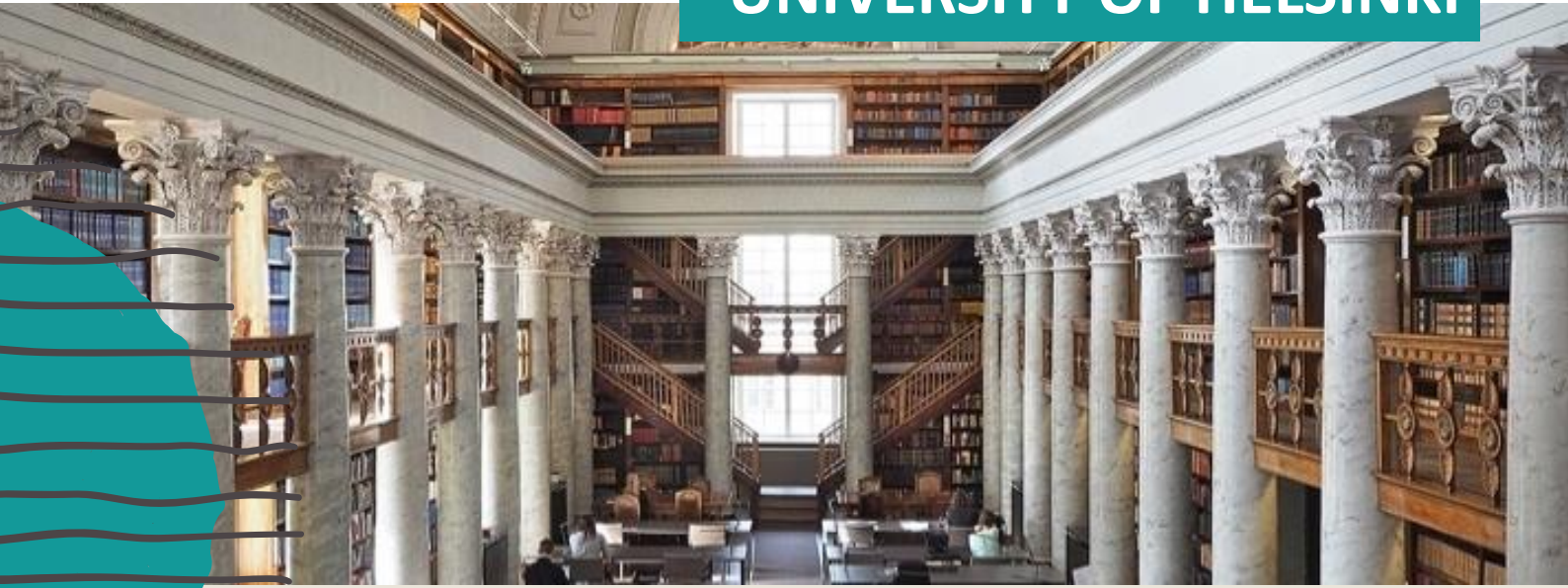
MEET OUR PARTNER INSTITUT DE CIÈNCIES POLÍTIQUES I SOCIALS

The Political and Social Science Institute of Barcelona (ICPS) was created on November 8th, 1988 by the Diputació de Barcelona and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), legally founded as a consortium. The ICPS is recognised as a research institute for UAB and the primary objectives are research and education in political and social science.



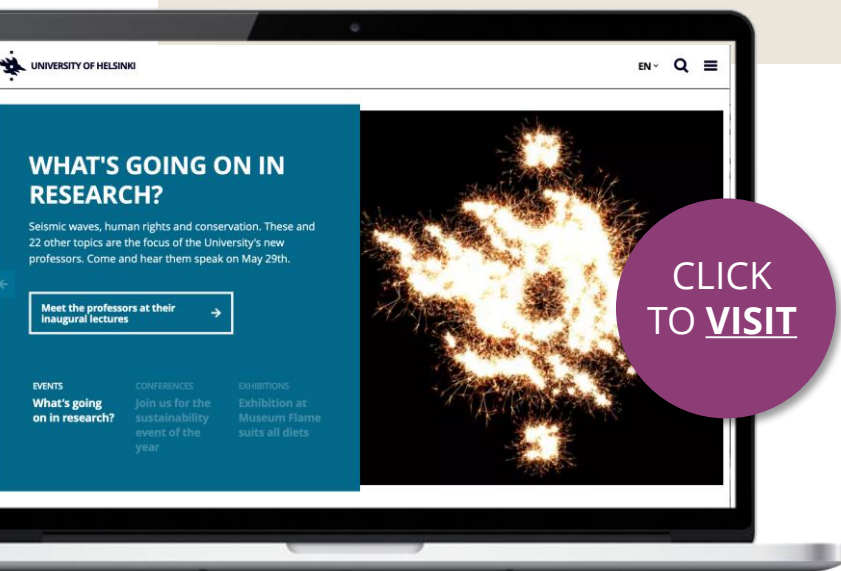
MEET OUR PARTNER

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



The **University of Helsinki** is Finland's largest and oldest academic institution and an innovative centre of science and thinking. Since 1640, it has contributed to the establishment of a fair and equal society that is considered one of the best in the world.

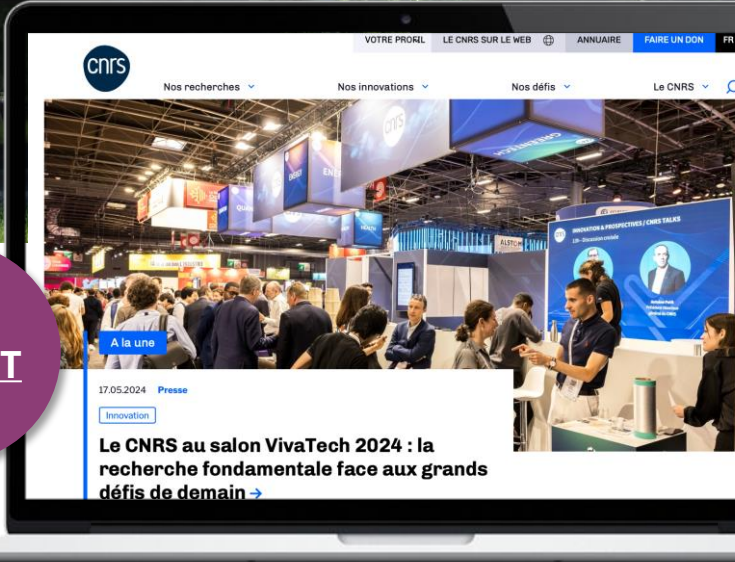
Over time, its academic community has grown into 40,000 people scattered into 11 faculties on four campuses. Today, its multidisciplinary academic community solves problems that affect us all. Searching for new knowledge and boundary-breaking research which can lead to solutions that have a real, global impact on the future.





MEET OUR PARTNER - CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE (CNRS)

*The **French National Centre for Scientific Research** is among the world's leading research institutions. Its scientists explore the living world, matter, the Universe, and the functioning of human societies in order to meet the major challenges of today and tomorrow. Internationally recognised for the excellence of its scientific research, the CNRS is a reference in the world of research and development, as well as for the general public. Meet the team from CRNS [here](#).*



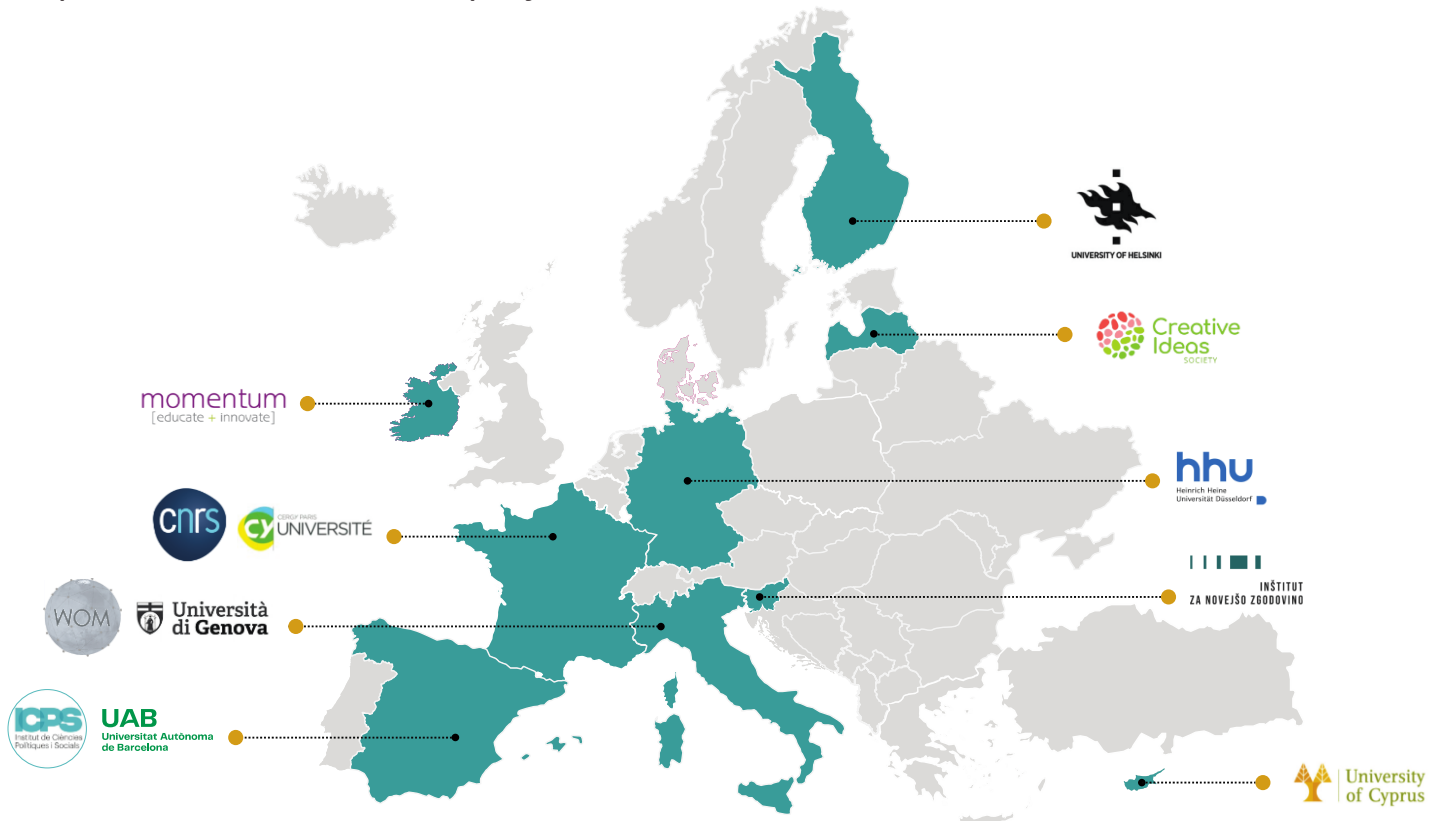
ARENAS

ANALYSIS OF AND RESPONSES
TO EXTREMIST NARRATIVES



OUR PARTNERS

Our partnership consists of 12 organisations from 9 countries, each bringing unique experience, expertise and skills to the project.



www.arenasproject.eu

Follow our journey



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101094731