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ARENAS

ANALYSIS OF AND RESPONSES
TO EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

**ARENAS FEATURED
IN MEDIA ACROSS
EUROPE**

**YEAR 2 MEETING
IN LATVIA**

**FIFTH HEPP
CONFERENCE
IN FINLAND**

www.arenasproject.eu



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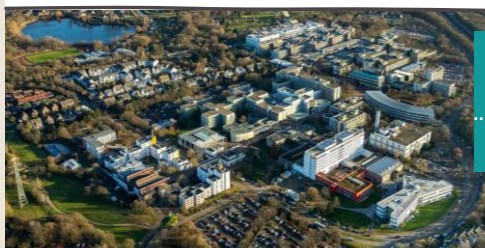
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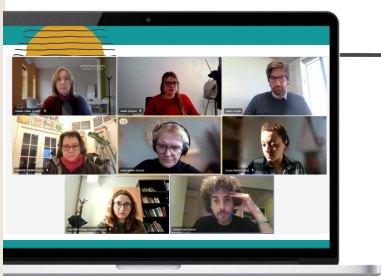
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THE ARENAS PROJECT IS AT THE HALFWAY STAGE!

After the meeting in Latvia, the consortium members are more motivated than ever. M18 reporting has been validated, all the deliverables of this first part have been accepted, and the scientific and dissemination work of the various Work Packages has begun.

But the consortium is also involved in the organisation of numerous scientific, public and dissemination events. The members of the consortium are meeting and collaborating, and we've reached the cruising speed of such a project. Everything is in order to achieve our ambitions.

UNIVERSITY OF GENOA

WELCOMES ITALIAN SCHOOL

STUDENTS TO ARENAS EVENT

On December 12th 2024, the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures of the University of Genoa (UNIGE) hosted “Giornata della Terza Missione” (“Third Mission Day”), a day-long event to introduce ARENAS to teachers and school students from across Italy.



This is one of four seminars organised during ARENAS to specifically communicate with school students, teachers and educators. The morning session consisted of an interactive in-person lesson with over 120 students from 4 different schools in the Liguria region. This session was led by ARENAS consortium member, Nora Gattiglia, a post-doc researcher from UNIGE.

The topics addressed in this session were:

- 01** ----- **Extremist hate speech: how to recognise it (focus on linguistic traits).**
- 02** ----- **Reparation discourses: institutional campaigns on gender violence.**
- 03** ----- **Counter-narratives: alternative campaigns on gender violence.**

In the afternoon, Stefano Vicari, Associate Professor in French Linguistics at UNIGE, led an online session with secondary school teachers from 7 different schools across Italy. This session was delivered in Italian but examined data from both Italy and France. The feedback from participants was very positive, with one teacher commenting, “I will continue this work with my students and share their work with ARENAS”.

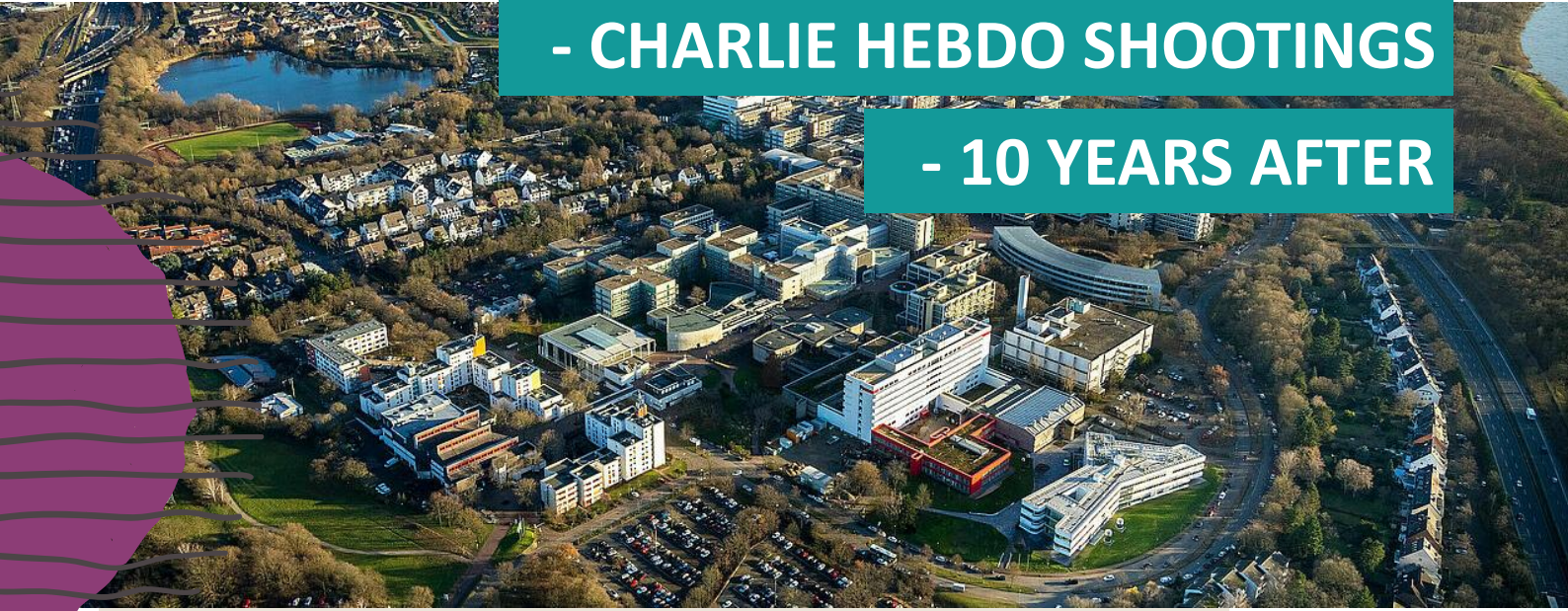
The teachers who attended were enthusiastic, and the students were very attentive and willing to share their opinions. Speaking after the event, Nora

Gattiglia commented, “Thanks to the dialogue with students, I was able to focus on some things that were important to their eyes, such as the way colours contribute to framing the communication. The age difference made me think of the hard way you gain experiential knowledge on gender discrimination and oppression, and how it is crucial for students to develop their own perspective on that, and their own tools of resistance. I believe that a part in this can be played by a critical and informed reflection of how language works and is made to work”.

UDUS HOSTS ARENAS EVENT

- CHARLIE HEBDO SHOOTINGS

- 10 YEARS AFTER



On Tuesday, January 7th, ARENAS Partner UDUS in Dusseldorf hosted an afternoon of talks to commemorate the Charlie Hebdo shootings that took place 10 years ago. The speakers presented three papers.



Rolf Kailuweit

Rolf Kailuweit, a professor at **Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf**, specialising in Romance Linguistics and a member of the ARENAS consortium. He holds a W3 Professorship in Romance Linguistics (Spanish and French) at the university's Institute for Romance Studies. His research interests include linguistics, media studies and the cultural aspects of Romance languages. His paper was titled "After the Charlie Hebdo shootings – demonstration on 11 January 2015."


Wanignon AIDJINOU, spoke on "Commemorating Charlie Hebdo in the media coverage of the January 2015 terrorist attacks in France: a question of care for the victims and the construction of tutelary figures of resilience?"

PhD student in the field of Information and Communication Sciences, he has worked on topics such as the media representation of collective tragedies, specifically focusing on the November 2015 terrorist attacks in France. Aidjinou has been

involved in academic projects at institutions including the Université Grenoble Alpes and the Université du Québec à Montréal

Finally, G r me Truc, a sociologist and a research fellow at the **French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)**, (which is also a Partner organisation of the ARENAS project), addressed "Solidarity too? A look back at the French working-class neighbourhoods put to the test by the attacks of January 2015." G r me is associated with the Institute of Social Sciences of Politics (ISP) and the Centre for Research on Social Links (CERLIS). His work primarily focuses on the social reactions to terrorist attacks and the processes of memorialization in Western societies.

The well-attended event was conducted in French, and attendees were invited to join via an online link that was widely shared on ARENAS and Partner channels.



ARENAS PRESENTED AT THE HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY COLLOQUIUM

*As part of the 2024/2025 winter Colloquium, the RTG **Ambivalent Enmity** at Heidelberg University invited members of the ARENAS consortium to speak at one of the sessions.*



Ana Yara Postigo Fuentes
Heinrich Heine
University Düsseldorf



Dimitra Niaouri
Cergy Paris Université

Ambivalent Enmity is a postgraduate research and training program at Heidelberg University and the Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies. It aims to reveal the ambivalences of enmity and develop adequate tools to analyse their construction, representation, enactment, and experience. Ambivalent Enmity starts from the hypothesis that enmity must be understood as a processual, relational, and deeply ambivalent category. Existing research in fields such as peace and conflict studies, international law, sociology, and anthropology often conceives of enmity as a conflict between self-contained actors.

The programme's studies complement this understanding by combining expertise in regional studies with approaches from the social

sciences as well as history, linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, psychology, and the history of art. Ana Yara Postigo Fuentes from Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf and Dimitra Niaouri from Cergy Paris Université addressed the Colloquium, informing them about the objectives of the ARENAS project, the progress to date and in particular their own research.

Ana Yara is the Leader of ARENAS Work Package 2. She and her team recently published one of the first key pieces of research for ARENAS, **Identifying and Characterising Extremist Narratives – a Literature Review**, which is available to download from our website. Dimitra is a Ph.D. candidate whose primary objective is to use Machine Learning to effectively delineate extremist narratives

ARENAS WORK PACKAGE

LEADERS' MONTHLY ONLINE MEETINGS

The seven Work Package Leaders meet regularly to discuss progress on the project, address any challenges and plan next steps.

They are also joined by the ARENAS Project Manager at these meetings.

During the Spring meetings, the consortium discussed the project review by the European Commission and the very positive response received for work to date. They also set out plans to address some minor issues identified in the feedback and the updating of some project documents.

Later meetings focused on the planning and preparations for the third in-person meeting of the entire ARENAS consortium, in Riga, Latvia in May. During the monthly meetings, Partners finalised plans for each of the sessions at the in-person meeting, decided on topics and session leaders, as well as addressing some logistical matters to ensure the smooth running of the three-day meeting.



The seven Work Package Leaders meeting

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

RECENT MEDIA INTERVIEWS WITH

MEMBERS OF THE ARENAS CONSORTIUM

Today disinformation and misinformation proliferate across social media platforms and some media outlets. In a world where it can be difficult to know what is true, the role of experts has never been more crucial.



Experts, with their deep knowledge and rigorous training, serve as beacons of truth, guiding the public through the fog of false and extremist narratives. Their insights and evidence-based perspectives help to counteract misleading narratives, ensuring that accurate and reliable information is presented

In recent months, media outlets across Europe, and beyond, have reached out to members of the ARENAS consortium for the expert opinion on the unprecedented events we have seen unfold. Once again, this reflects the breadth and depth of expertise within the ARENAS consortium and how that expertise is respected. Below is a small selection of the contributions made by consortium members.

Julien Longhi is Professor of Discourse Analysis and Digital Humanities at Cergy Paris Université. Julien specialises in political discourse analysis and digital humanities applied to social networks. He is the overall coordinator of the ARENAS project and leader of WP1, which is responsible for coordination and project management. He has recently contributed to [Franceinfo](#) and [LaCroix](#) on the impact of word choice on narratives, and the connotations certain expressions can have on discourse.

Steven Forti is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of Modern and Contemporary History at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Steven is the leader of Work Package 3 in the ARENAS project which examines the circulation of extremist narratives.

As a historian focusing on fascism, nationalism and the extreme right in twentieth and twenty-first centuries, he leads the work on Task 3.2, examining the historical roots of extremist narratives in European contexts. He is a frequent contributor to media in Spain, France, Italy and South America. Recently he participated in a television interview on France 24 on the de-democratisation we are currently witnessing for the first time in a century, and an interview with ATP (France) published in Spain by RFI following the recent show of force in Madrid, by Europe's biggest far-right bloc. Steven was also interviewed by Radio Nacional de España, regarding recent political events in Germany and the activities of far-right parties in other European countries and Bulgarian National Television on what role the tech billionaires are likely to play in the new American presidency. His opinion is also valued outside of the EU where he has recently been interviewed by the Swiss newspaper, Le Temps, on the links between the far-right in Europe and Trumpist America. A further interview with El Comercio newspaper in Peru, considered how the US has turned away from Europe.

Katalin Miklóssy is a Finnish political scientist specialising in Eastern European studies. She has developed a distinguished academic career focusing on political history and the dynamics of authoritarian regimes, particularly in East-Central and Southeastern Europe. Katalin Miklóssy serves as the Leader of Work Package 6 (WP6) in the ARENAS project. As Leader of Work Package 6, Katalin co-

ordinates research on Ethics, Norms and Politically Sensitive Science. The target areas under consideration by Katalin for ARENAS are Finland and Hungary. Additionally, she contributes to other aspects of the ARENAS project, including tasks within Work Package 3, which investigates the circulation of extremist narratives across various domains. Her expertise in political and legal history, particularly concerning the rule of law and its connections to nationalist and conservative narratives, informs her contributions to the project. Through her leadership in WP6 and collaboration across other work packages, Miklóssy plays a pivotal role in advancing the project's objectives to understand and counteract extremist narratives in Europe.

Katalin interviewed Aliisa Ristmeri on the Finnish programme *Steak* about the exceptional situation in Romania regarding presidential elections. There is a link to listen back, and also an outline of the interview here. Katalin was also interviewed by Verkkouutiset in Finland on the events that included Russian hackers breaking into the IT systems of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence and gaining access to sensitive information about both Hungary and other NATO member states, and whether or not Hungary is still a reliable NATO country, which you can read here. In a further interview with Verkkouutiset, Katalin addressed the Tik Tok campaign that was orchestrated by Russia to influence the recent Romanian elections.

By turning to experts, and learning from them, we can navigate the complexities of today's information landscape with greater confidence and clarity, fostering a more informed and discerning society. The expertise and opinions of the experts working on ARENAS are respected across the world. Their work underpins the quality and the integrity of the ARENAS project and the results we are publishing.



ARENAS PRESENTED AT THE FIFTH HEPP CONFERENCE IN FINLAND

Since 2019, the HEPP conferences have provided a space to explore themes related to populist mobilisation, polarisation, and the dynamics of emotional engagement in various political and mediated contexts.

The theme of the fifth conference was “Emotions, Populism and Polarised Politics, Media, and Culture”, and Gwenaëlle Bauvois, a member of the ARENAS consortium from the University of Helsinki. Exploring Identitarian Feminism at the Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism, and Polarisation



Gwenaëlle Bauvois

Exploring Identitarian Feminism at the Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism, and Polarisation

From **March 5–7, 2025**, the **5th Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism, and Polarisation (HEPP5)** brought together researchers from around the world to discuss key issues in contemporary politics and media. Among them was **Gwenaëlle Bauvois**, a researcher from the **ARENAS project**, who presented her latest work on **Identitarian Feminism and Femonationalism**.

Gwenaëlle’s presentation focused on **Collectif Némésis**, a French identitarian feminist group that uses traditional feminist activism—such as **protests, posters, and artistic actions**—but with a **nationalist and anti-immigration agenda**. This phenomenon

highlights the growing **appropriation of feminist rhetoric** by far-right movements to advance exclusionary politics.

The study stems from a **2024 report** on the historical roots of extremist narratives in Europe, published as part of the **ARENAS project**. In this report, Gwenaëlle Bauvois (University of Helsinki) and **Claudia Jareño Gila (University of Cergy Paris)** explored the connections between **gender and extremist narratives**. This led them to investigate further how groups like Némésis reshape feminism to serve identitarian goals.

Feminism or Nationalism? Understanding Femonationalism

Using the concept of **femonationalism**, the study examines how Némésis **blends feminist rhetoric with far-right ideologies**, often linking immigration to gender-based violence.

The study analyses how Némésis communicates its message through platforms like X, alternative media, and mainstream right-wing outlets. It also explores how mainstream media coverage contributes to

amplifying extremist gender narratives and examines the evolution of feminist activism, particularly its appropriation by identitarian and far-right movements.

This work sheds light on **emerging forms of activism** and the **strategic use of media** in far-right gendered discourse.

Want to know more?
Check out the **Helsinki
Conference on
Emotions, Populism,
and Polarisation** [here](#).





ARENAS PARTNERS GATHER IN LATVIA FOR YEAR 2 CONSORTIUM MEETING

From May 13 to 15, 2025, the members of the ARENAS project consortium gathered in Jurmala, Latvia, for their annual meeting.

Organised to perfection by partner Creative Ideas, the meeting provided an opportunity to review the project's mid-term progress (2 years out of 4) and to work on new topics linked to current social, political and scientific issues, such as cybersecurity and civic engagement.

In addition to the presentations made by each of the seven work package leaders, which brilliantly illustrated the recent deliverables accepted by the European Commission, working sessions on the notion of circulation, concepts of extremism, or linguistic approaches to extremist narratives, made it possible to outline the contours of future research to be carried out. Also of note was the presence of Signe Grūbe, the parliamentary secretary of the Ministry of Culture, who opened the meeting and explained Latvia's contribution to promoting dialogue, inclusion, and social cohesion.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for the consortium to get together and renew the ties that now bind its members, around convivial moments (like the morning run, extended by morning swim for some of us) and cultural visits.

We look forward to the next general meeting in Helsinki in one year, and of course to presenting our project work at many other events in between!

MEET OUR PARTNER

CREATIVE IDEAS

***Creative Ideas** is a non-governmental organisation from Riga, Latvia, and provides informal youth and adult education. It specialises in education, culture, society integration, rural development, and EU priorities. Creative Ideas organises training, workshops, exhibitions, and competitions and also prepares teaching materials and carries out research.*



Since its foundation, Creative Ideas has involved at least 1000 unique persons in various activities, introduced Latvians to other countries and cultures; and helped to integrate more than 600 migrants in Latvia. Creative Ideas has implemented more than 30 projects, of which more than half have been implemented in international partnerships. Visit our [website](#) to meet the Creative Ideas team and learn more about their work.



Creative
Ideas
SOCIETY

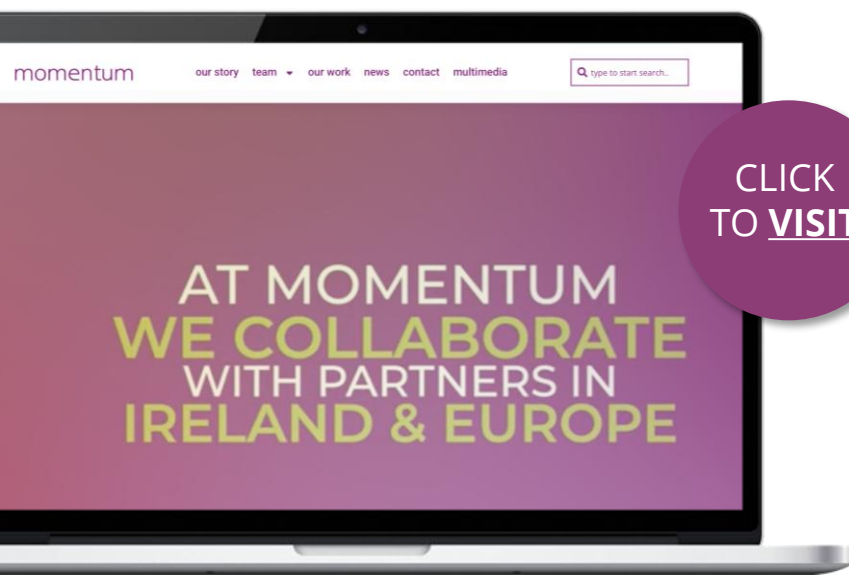
MEET OUR PARTNER

MOMENTUM



*For over 20 years, **Momentum** has been educating and innovating in Ireland and throughout Europe. We work with over 50 leading HEI and VET partners on a range of projects. As a practitioner, we work at the interface of research, inclusion and diversity innovation and education seeking to build best practice in promoting diversity, equality and inclusion*

We are proud to provide high impact dissemination services to several European projects. This recognises the calibre of our work. Underpinning this work, we seek to create a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Momentum is responsible for the overall Communication and Dissemination of the ARENAs project, and also the development of an online didactic platform which will be a library of learning specifically targeted at young people and educational professionals. You can learn more about our work and [meet the team here](#).



momentum
[educate + innovate]



MEET OUR PARTNER - WATER ON MARS

Wateronmars (WOM Srl) and Metatron Analytics: Advanced Contributions to Data Intelligence, Artificial Intelligence, and Information Security. Founded in 2016 in Parma, **Wateronmars (WOM)** evolved from a start-up to a high-tech SME, focusing on data intelligence, AI, cyber intelligence, and OSINT. WOM serves public institutions, banking, insurance, industrial enterprises, and national security agencies.



Metatron Analytics is WOM's platform for monitoring, predictive analysis, and managing information flows. It integrates into various environments, using neural networks and adaptive AI to analyze data and detect disinformation. WOM's leadership includes experts in social sciences, technology, law, and information security. CEO Alex Orłowski and Chairperson Jenny Paita lead the organization.

WOM has received European recognition for innovation, including being a finalist in the IAF UK Tech Challenge and participating in the Horizon 2020 project. WOM is a reference point in civic intelligence, addressing disinformation, digital radicalization, and state-aligned propaganda.

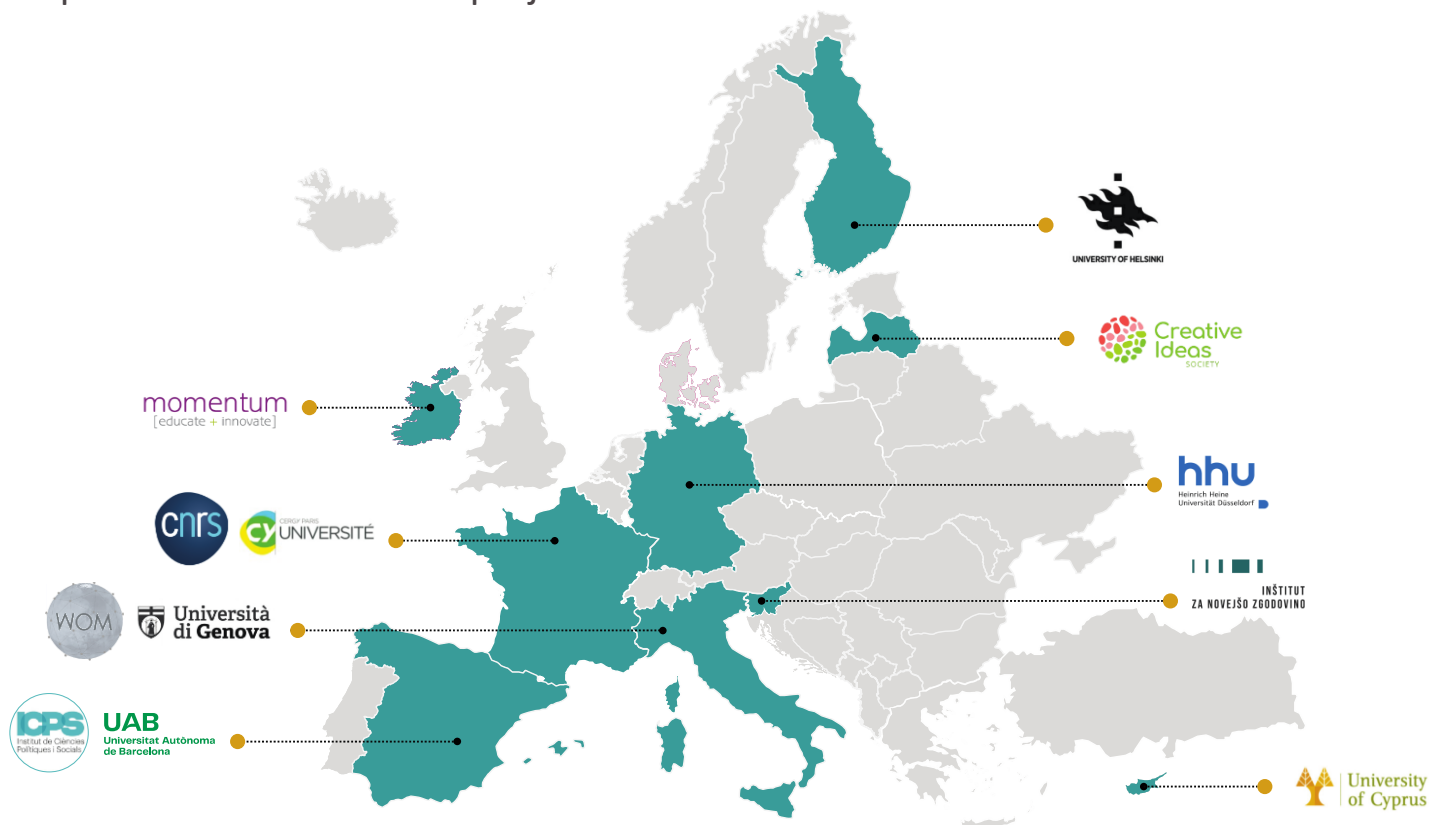


ARENAS

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



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