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**NOTE**

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From: EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Nihilistic extremist violence: an emerging threat

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**Executive Summary**

**Nihilistic extremist violence refers to the commitment of acts of violence not driven by an ideological coherent goal, but by the apology of violence itself.** Nihilistic extremist violence is rapidly expanding across ecosystems online, mainly populated by minors and young adults that engage in overlapping online and offline violent activities, including murder and the (sexual) abuse of children. The underlying dynamics of the threat – amplified online, preying on vulnerable groups, and expressed through violence – place it in the broader context of violent extremist movements.

**The criminal and violent acts associated with nihilistic extremist violence are diverse and fragmented, making it hard to verify that they originate from the same ecosystem, and they are driven by the same misanthropic worldview.** At the centre of this universe is *The Com*, an informal, flexible, and decentralised online community that functions as an umbrella for the various groups and individuals engaging in different forms of violence while competing for notoriety.

**The idea of violence as the unifying element across the nihilistic spectrum is thoroughly detailed in several instruction manuals.** Borrowing directly from the tactics and the strategies of violent extremist and terrorist organisations (but adjusting them to a young audience), these manuals provide inspiration, guidance, and motivation for arson, beatings, stabbings, shootings, improvised explosives and bioweapons manufacture, along with operational security instructions – **imprinting in these nihilistic groups, who are driven by an agenda based on a belief in chaos, the methods of structured terrorist groups.**

The number of incidents related to nihilistic extremist violence in Member States (and internationally) is on the rise. It is important, therefore, to **raise awareness of a threat that challenges existing policy frameworks and requires an integrated approach.** Therefore, a set of recommendations is proposed, ranging from enforcing existing legal instruments regarding the online space to the investment that is needed as regards further research into the evolving drivers of terrorism and violent extremism.

## Introduction

Over the past two years, law enforcement and intelligence authorities have been confronted with a **rising new phenomenon: violent acts that overlap a myriad of criminal offences, including murder, child sexual abuse and animal torture – actions networked online and (often) perpetrated by very young individuals, mostly males.** Given their diversity and global dispersion<sup>1</sup>, it is difficult to grasp that they come about through the same underlying dynamics.

- **In September 2024, in Sweden, a 14-year-old was taken into custody on suspicion of attempted murder after a man in his 80s was stabbed** in Hässelby. The authorities discovered that the boy had also been responsible for the stabbing of a woman in early July. Both attacks were filmed and disseminated on a Telegram channel. The trial concluded in April 2025, but **since the boy was not 15 years old at the time of the crimes, he cannot be punished for them.** The social services took the boy into care<sup>2</sup>.
- **In January 2025, in Sweden, a 14-year-old was arrested for a knife attack on a 55-year-old woman** in Borås. **The boy broadcast the attack live on the online platform Discord.** "Go back to him and do it more" one viewer commented during the live broadcast. The 14-year-old told his parents that he felt forced to do what he did because there were people who threatened him<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In the United States, this threat is labelled nihilistic violent extremism: *‘individuals who engage in criminal conduct within the United States and abroad, in furtherance of political, social, or religious goals that derive primarily from a hatred of society at large and a desire to bring about its collapse by sowing indiscriminate chaos, destruction, and social instability’*. This new phenomenon has become the main priority in domestic counterterrorism in the US.

<sup>2</sup> SVT Nyheter, *Uppgifter: Misstänkt kopplas till internationell våldsrörelse*, 10th October 2025,

<sup>3</sup> SVT Nyheter, *14-åring greps för knivattack i Borås – radikaliserades av "No lives matter"*, 2nd April 2025, [14-åring greps för knivattack i Borås – radikaliserades av "No lives matter" | SVT Nyheter](#)

- **In February 2025, in Italy a 15-year-old was arrested in Bolzano and charged with terrorist offences**, including the manufacture of explosive devices, illegal carrying of weapons, and possession and dissemination of child pornography. **The minor had planned to carry out a murder in his town to gain status in the online community**. He kept images and videos of assaults, murders and school shootings, child pornography content, as well as terrorist propaganda, such as videos made by the Islamic State, attacks, beheadings and explosive manufacture instructions in his smartphone<sup>4</sup>.
- **In May 2025, in Finland, a 16-year-old stabbed three female colleagues in a school in Helsinki**. The suspect sent a pre-written "manifesto" to a news outlet and at the same time the police were alerted. He reportedly shared his message in WhatsApp groups, **recorded the attack on Snapchat**, and asked on social media for someone to save and return the video after his release. **In the “manifesto”, he explicitly stated that his motive was to do something “significant” and “exciting.”**<sup>5</sup> Neither the manifesto, nor additional reporting, described a **political rationale for his attack**<sup>6</sup>.
- **In June 2025, in Germany, a 20-year-old from Hamburg was accused of pressuring a 13-year-old American to hang himself while online**. The boy died. German officials said the Hamburg man was a leading figure in 764 network. The 20-year-old faces 123 charges covering offences allegedly committed between 2021 and 2023, including murder, attempted murder, sexual abuse of children and rape. Authorities claimed that **the acts demonstrated an unimaginable level of brutality and inhumanity**<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Polizia di Stato, *Bolzano: minorenne arrestato per terrorismo*, 12th February 2025, [Bolzano: minorenne arrestato per terrorismo | Polizia di Stato](#)

<sup>5</sup> Just Security, *Setting the record straight on nihilistic violence*, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025, [Setting the Record Straight on Nihilistic Violence](#)

<sup>6</sup> Reuters, *Three pupils injured in Finnish school attack*, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, [Three pupils injured in Finnish school attack, police say | Reuters](#)

<sup>7</sup> The Washington Post, *18<sup>th</sup> June 2025, Man in Germany accused of murder*, [Man in Germany accused of murder, child abuse tied to predatory online group - The Washington Post](#)

- **In April, June and September 2025, in Olsztyn, Poland, four 19-year-olds were arrested for planning terrorist attacks, including an attack on a school** inspired by mass-shooters. The suspects had been collecting information on firearms handling, shooting postures, and combat operations in open areas and indoors. They attended shooting ranges and conducted military-tactical training. **Weapons and explosives were found during searches and the young men have been charged with preparing terrorist attacks and participating in training aimed at carrying out acts of terrorism**<sup>8</sup>.

Owing to the increase in the number of violent incidents, also identified and investigated in Member States, **Europol issued an intelligence notification in February 2025** titled “The rise of online communities dedicated to extremely violent child abuse”<sup>9</sup>, raising awareness of this emerging threat, which was **subsequently included both in the Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment**<sup>10</sup> **and in the EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Report**<sup>11</sup> **published this year**. INTCEN has also issued a report on this matter. In addition, the EU Internet Forum Senior Officials Meeting on 23 June 2025 addressed the rise of violent extremist online communities. EU Internet Forum members, including online service providers and Member States, discussed challenges and potential joint actions to address this emerging threat.

In the media, cases are usually labelled as right-wing extremism and/or associated with an online group named “764”. However, the threat is substantially more complex, with multiple **online groups coexisting and intersecting along a wide spectrum of criminal and violent actions with one single purpose: to affirm their existence and their identity through violence**. Because the **fundamental and cohesive driver of these groups is misanthropy, it is labelled *nihilistic extremist violence***.

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<sup>8</sup> Portal Polskiego Radia, *Explosives found in Olsztyn apartment in terror probe*, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025, [Explosives found in Olsztyn apartment in terror probe](#)

<sup>9</sup> Europol, *The rise of online cult communities dedicated to extremely violent child abuse*, February 2025,

[IN\\_The\\_rise\\_of\\_online\\_cult\\_communities\\_dedicated\\_to\\_extremely\\_violent\\_child\\_abuse.pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> Europol, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend report 2025*, p. 33, [EU\\_TE-SAT\\_2025.pdf](#)

<sup>11</sup> Europol, *The changing DNA of serious and organised crime*, May 2025, p. 40, [EU-SOCTA-2025.pdf](#)

Countering youth radicalisation remains a political priority for the EU, with the JHA Council, held in December 2024, recognising that it “remains a key concern, in which the online space plays an important role, particularly among minors, allowing the rapid spread of terrorist content”<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, this policy paper on nihilistic extremist violence aims at raising awareness of the threat, encompassing its diverse nature (I), while addressing the main challenges regarding detection, mitigation, and prevention (II) and offering recommendations to counter it (III).

## I. Framing the threat

### 1.1 Nihilistic extremist violence

**Nihilistic extremist violence refers to the perpetration of gruesome acts of violence for the sake of violence itself**<sup>13</sup>. It is the expression of a misanthropic act that seeks to fulfil an inward-facing emotional need and/or garner notoriety or acceptance in nihilistic communities<sup>14</sup>. It is expanding rapidly across online ecosystems, sustained by a community of different nihilistic violent groups.

These groups coexist under the wide and loose umbrella of ***The Com***, an online interconnected community dedicated to three specific crime areas: **cybercrime, online violence, and offline violence**. Because these groups are dynamic and intersected organisms, they embed the overlap of multiple threats that converge under *The Com*.

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<sup>12</sup> [Council conclusions on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States](#), December 2024.

<sup>13</sup> It is still not unanimously conceptualised – nihilistic violent extremism, nihilistic terrorism, nihilistic accelerationism, post-ideological extremism, stochastic violence, hybrid lone-actor extremism, ideology-free extremism – are attempts to define the threat.

<sup>14</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, *Terror without ideology? The rise of nihilistic violence – An ISD Investigation*, May 2025, [Terror without ideology? The rise of nihilistic violence](#)

The nihilistic extremist violence performed by these individuals encompasses a few fundamental characteristics:

- **It is not driven by ideology.** The apology and use of violence is not political or religious and **does not intend to bring about social change.** It is rooted in a profoundly **misanthropic worldview**, aligned with the **goal of subverting and corrupting social norms and spreading chaos by maximising violence, disgust and horror.** *Gore, i. e.*, the graphic and bloody depiction of images of carnage, dismemberment, or extreme physical injury<sup>15</sup>, is the central unifying element of individuals that share the same fascination for violence.

In their glorification of violence, these networks **pick up elements from different extremist milieus to create their own identity** – tactics copied from Islamic State terror manuals, nazi-borrowed aesthetics, accelerationist-driven narratives, occult and satanic dark symbology, and even some incel-driven misogyny<sup>16</sup>. **This fusion of random elements from violent extremism and terrorism is also imprinted by the personal grievances and frustrations of each individual**<sup>17</sup>, meaning that some ideological features can be more prominent in certain groups or individuals – but they are not the primary motivation for violent action.

Although the choice of preferred targets for nihilistic extremist violence could be understood as ideologically driven, **the victims are mostly selected based on their shock value:** attacks against ethnic, sexual and religious minorities, or specific demographic and socioeconomic groups (senior citizens and youth, homeless people) heighten the emotional impact of the attack, while maximising public attention and media coverage.

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<sup>15</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, *Gore and violent extremism: How extremist groups exploit 'gore' sites to view and share terrorist material*, June 2023, [Gore and violent extremism: How extremist groups exploit 'gore' sites to view and share terrorist material - ISD](#)

<sup>16</sup> Marc-André Argentino, *Knives Among Shadows (Part III)*, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025, [Knives Among the Shadows: The Grim Manifestos of No Lives Matter Manifestos \(Part III\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Although elements of different extremist ideologies can be found, ideology is never a primary driver for violence. The term *salad bar ideology*, sometimes misused in this context, is also not adequate for the same reason.

- **It is a live digital ecosystem.** Regardless of the focus of the violence, **a multitude of groups coexist and intersect online. This is a permanently shifting landscape, not only adjusting naturally to law enforcement disruptions, but also spontaneously fusing or multiplying.**

Popular and mainstream online platforms are used to hook victims but then move to more obscure and encrypted ones. Discord, Telegram, Snapchat, X, Kik, Instagram, Roblox, Minecraft are all used as a means of contact, communication and public display of the violence committed. Gaming platforms play an important role: **the gamification of violence itself helps to support the belief system of the groups and provides tangible goals to its members** (for example, scoring points according to the level of violence exerted offline).

- **It is meant to manifest itself offline** (although there is no physical interaction and none is usually sought). Some individuals seek to influence, control and coerce victims to harm themselves or others, acting on their violent streak exclusively behind a computer screen. Others seek to exert their nihilistic views in the offline world to gain media-driven notoriety. In doing so, they are supported by several manuals widely disseminated across this community that provide the motivation, the justification and the tactics for violent action.

The combined manuals (that will be detailed below) are an extensive framework of misanthropy and a call for violence, directly borrowed from well-known terrorist organizations. Operational security tactics are extensively described, as well as strategies for deception. But fundamentally, these manuals provide detailed “how-to” instructions that are immediately actionable and which range from arson, beatings and stabbings to mass casualty murder<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Alec Magnus Stålberg Dortkardesler, *No Future, Only Violence: Unpacking the Propaganda of No Lives Matter (NLM) and 764*, 2025, <https://su.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1979977/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

- **It is performative:** These groups understand and employ **violence as a form of entertainment for themselves and the community**. Violence seeks the destruction of others, but its performative dimension is a construct for identity. Clout, *i.e.*, status and notoriety gained *inter pares* by performing acts that translate in an increase of *views* and *likes*, is the social ladder among these groups. Therefore, live streaming violent actions is a common practice. This also resonates with a social media savvy generation (everything must be filmed; if you don't see it, it didn't happen).

Although there is no centralised leadership in these groups, hierarchy is determined by the immoral, criminal and violent actions perpetrated and documented<sup>19</sup>. **The more sadistic, the more brutal, the more horrific the violence, the higher the status and influence in the community.**

- **It is a universe mainly populated by minors.** Nihilistic extremist violence is quintessentially a realm of minors and young adults. **An online, gamified, clout-searching culture in which each member wants to leave an impact in the world expressed through violence.** Group dynamics thus play a fundamental role: participants compete for notoriety and encourage each other to act – with everyone contributing to the normalisation of violence. The fact that this phenomenon is driven by a young generation, with very young victims, all 'digital natives', exposes the challenges for law enforcement in countering it.

## 1.2 Most prominent groups

As mentioned, *The Com (The Community, The Community Network)* is the umbrella to **designate all the groups that are active in crimes and violence, both online and offline.**

Although it has existed for over a decade, it has expanded in size and with a spectrum of criminal and violent activities over the past few years. It is under the umbrella of *The Com* that the most prominent nihilistic extremist violent groups have surfaced more recently:

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<sup>19</sup> Membership of some groups requires proof of a violent crime.

- **True Crime Community (TCC)** is a well-established forum for enthusiasts of true crime to engage in sharing and discussions. In the fringes of this community, a fandom of aspiring mass killers aims at mimicking their *heroes* – labelled as *saints* – as a means for notoriety. Research has demonstrated at least 16 school shootings or disrupted attacks in the US related to TCC since 2024<sup>20</sup>.
- **CVLT** (read *cult*) was founded in 2019 by a 23-year-old. It was especially dedicated to child sexual abuse, both online and offline. CVLT is considered a predecessor of 764.
- **Maniac Murder Cult (Russian acronym MKY)**<sup>21</sup> was first formed in Ukraine around 2018 and later spread into Russia. It was founded by Georgian national Mikhail Chkhikvishvili, who was arrested and charged by the US authorities with conspiracy to solicit hate crimes and acts of mass violence. He was planning to distribute poisoned candy to Jewish children in New York on New Year’s Eve. The group was focused on mass casualty violence and their instruction manuals were disseminated across the whole nihilistic universe. **The MKY is a proscribed terrorist group in the UK.**
- **764** has risen to notoriety through a high number of violent crimes associated with its members. It was founded in 2021 by 15-year-old Bradley Cadenhead, an American high school dropout who was also a member of CVLT. The name of the group refers to his postal code. 764 is still the most notorious brand, frequently mentioned in the media because of their activities related to child sexual abuse and sextortion. Convicted in 2023, Cadenhead is currently serving an 80-year sentence for child pornography. Despite the arrest of Cadenhead and other members, 764 has fragmented in different subgroups that continue pursuing the same activities.

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<sup>20</sup> Institute for Strategic Studies, *Memetic violence: How the True Crime Community generates its own killers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025, [Memetic violence: How the True Crime Community generates its own killers - ISD](#)

<sup>21</sup> Marc-André Argentino, Barrett Gay, Matt Bastin, “*Nihilism and Terror: How M.K.Y. Is Redefining Terrorism, Recruitment, and Mass Violence*”, CTC Sentinel, September 2024, Volume 17, Issue 8, [Nihilism and Terror: How M.K.Y. Is Redefining Terrorism, Recruitment, and Mass Violence - Combating Terrorism Center at West Point](#)

- **No Lives Matter (NLM)**, a splinter group of 764, has become one of the largest and most relevant actors in this universe. Devoted to violence offline, this group is more sophisticated in preparedness and tactics, penning detailed manuals and instruction guides for violent action. Membership requires proof of blood, crimes or violence. This group is one of the best examples of nihilistic extremist violence, given its pure misanthropy, the sophistication of the tactics employed and the more consolidated message.

The groups under The Com have showcased a unique capability of reinventing themselves, multiplying and committing criminal and violent activities, also because its members can easily move across the wide spectrum of groups. The ones mentioned above constitute only a small fraction of the online ecosystem dedicated to nihilistic extremist violence.

**The fluidity of these groups and their specific demographics raise further questions regarding the mid-term potential infiltration by third parties with a hidden ideological or political agenda.** An online ecosystem that worships and encourages violence – and commits violent acts offline – can be manipulated as a proxy instrument for ideologically motivated third actors (such as terrorist and violent extremist organisations) and/or exploited by entities seeking plausible deniability for violent acts (such as hostile States). **Nihilistic extremist violence can thus be re-engineered and directed, producing new and unpredictable threats.**

### 1.3 Compilation, dissemination and employment of terrorist tactics

**The groups and individuals under *The Com* that are encouraging and engaging in offline extremist violence are inspired by manuals that are widely disseminated<sup>22</sup>. These provide detailed instructions for offline violence, serving as a tool that allows for immediate and specific action<sup>23</sup>.** Different manuals will focus on diverse operational and/or tactical aspects. But, overall, they cover a range subjects that provide a comprehensive education in direct nihilistic extremist violence, from arson to biowarfare.

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<sup>22</sup> There are also specific manuals on cybercrime and online violence. Marc-André Argentino, *A Blade in the Dark*, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025, [A Blade in the Dark: The Com Network's Nihilistic Playbooks \(Part V\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> Alec Magnus Stålberg Dortkardesler, *Ibid.* Manuals disseminated by MKY include “Maniac”, “Cold Weapon”, “Manhunt”, “Haters Handbook”. From No Lives Matter, NLM Manhunt Guide, NLM Terror Guide, NLM Kill Guide and NLM x 764 Classified.

**Effective and readily actionable tactics borrowed directly from notorious violent extremist and terrorist organisations are included in the various manuals.** Elements from Islamic State’s Rumiayah, The Anarchist’s Cookbook or even the IRA’s Green Book<sup>24</sup> are remixed and adjusted to a youth imagery for better understanding and impact. Detailed instructions for **beatings, stabbings (with a selection of bladed weapons and more effective bodily places to strike<sup>25</sup>), HGV (truck) attacks, (mass) shootings, along with instructions to build improvised explosive devices** are made simple and available. **Digital, biological and infrastructural sabotage are also described as possible tactics to employ<sup>26</sup>.**

**Effective operational security strategies are included,** such as advice on stalking victims, choosing the best moment to strike and concealing their actions afterwards is thoroughly provided, as well as suggestions regarding suitable clothing, the employment of strong scents to confuse tracking dogs and even the timing of attacks<sup>27</sup>.

**The performative dimension of violence is a continuous theme:** attacks must be recorded and disseminated not only to maximise impact, shock and entertainment, but also to radicalise and recruit sympathisers, inspire imitation and shape the narratives of nihilistic extremist groups, transforming violence into a symbolic unifying element that supports collective identity and mobilises further violent action.

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<sup>24</sup> Marc-André Argentino, *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Marc-André Argentino, *Knives Among Shadows (Part I)*, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024, [Knives Among the Shadows: The First Manifestos of the Maniacs Murder Cult Under Yegor Krasnov \(Part I\)](#)

<sup>26</sup> Disruption of critical infrastructure that impacts the whole of society meets their misanthropic world views: the energy sector is highlighted, and even nuclear sabotage is discussed. One of the manuals hints at manufacturing poisons and contaminating food and water supplies.

<sup>27</sup> One of the instructional manuals appeals directly to covert infiltration in “enemy groups”, with Black Lives Matter and jihadi organisations provided as examples. The aim of this strategy is to amplify violence by covertly inciting and antagonising groups to act against each other. In this way, violence would cascade and multiply across society and bring about the chaos and destruction envisioned by nihilist extremist violence.

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### III. Recommendations

Most of the recommendations already proposed by the EU CTC regarding both the prevention of youth radicalisation<sup>28</sup> and the threat posed by Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism<sup>29</sup> constitute a solid base to address nihilistic extremist violence. However, considering its rapid evolution and increase in scale and impact, further urgent policies are required to mitigate and counter the threat.

1. **Encourage Member States to strictly enforce the existing legal tools to counter online violence, the production of violent and abusive content, as well as the dissemination of instruction manuals calling for violent action offline.** The Terrorist Content Online Regulation (TCO) and the Digital Services Act (DSA) provide a robust regulatory framework that empowers Member States to take strong action against non-compliant digital platforms. These legal instruments should be used intensively and proactively by Member States in the engagement with digital platforms and tech companies, in a comprehensive effort to protect the online space and its users.
2. Simultaneously, **publicly denounce the non-compliant digital applications and platforms that tolerate that ‘Gore’ content and live streaming of murders are shared for entertainment.** Give public prominence to transparency reports published in accordance with Article 8 of the Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation and consider publication of

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<sup>28</sup> EU CTC 13850/23.

<sup>29</sup> EU CTC paper on “*Trends and dynamics in international right-wing extremism and terrorism*” (11818/25)

statistics of notifications under the Digital Services Act (DSA) to provide information to the public regarding non-compliant platforms. This information should be easily available and widely disseminated to users, parents and educators so that clear, specific mitigation measures can be undertaken. Moreover, the failure to comply with the obligation to report (imminent) threat to life should also be publicly denounced by Member States, which should also ensure that the applicable legal penalties are enforced. Critically, tech companies must be made responsible for the algorithmic amplification that exposes minors to violent content, guaranteeing that their systems incorporate effective protections and invest in content moderation.

3. **Encourage coordinated efforts among law enforcement agencies within Member States, as well as cooperation between Member States to respond effectively to the multilayered and complex nature of the nihilistic threat.** An integrated approach to the threat at national level, engaging the different departments and agencies responsible for tackling the diverse dimensions of the threat, is vital to understanding its real dimension and to employing the most effective strategies to counter it. Cooperation between Member States can draw on Europol's expertise on this issue and on Europol's wide capabilities, which enable the swift exchange of information – critical for identifying and disrupting violent actors. Furthermore, discussions should be held at COSI and in other Council Preparatory Bodies<sup>30</sup> to increase overall knowledge regarding the threat; identify the main challenges; and share the best practices that can lead to further policy measures.

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<sup>30</sup> In TWP, LEWP, CATS, TELECOM, YOUTH and EDUC.

Since international cooperation is key to countering the threat, enhanced engagement with partners is essential DELETED

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4. **Raise awareness of nihilistic extremist violence at political level, namely at the Justice and Home Affairs Council, ensuring that Ministers are informed and take urgent action to counter it.** Political resolve across Member States, as well as EU and national policies to counter the threat, require coordination to guarantee that the national and EU-level responses are aligned and coherent. Moreover, raising the topic at a political level would ensure the targeting and effectiveness of coordinated policies across justice, home affairs, education, and digital policy. For example, the declaration of the last informal Council of Digital Ministers already sets a relevant framework for the protection of minors online and identifies specific policy areas for enhanced online security.<sup>31</sup>
  
  5. **Advocate for the mandatory inclusion of digital literacy in school curricula, providing children and minors with the understanding needed to identify and report harmful and dangerous situations online that may lead to the path of nihilistic extremist violence.** The EU Internet Forum is a relevant instrument to engage in discussions and explore concrete actions in this realm. Furthermore, the empowerment of minors as guardians of the online world - through the creation of mechanisms that facilitate their involvement in keeping themselves and the internet safe - is a relevant strategy used to protect this generation and safeguard future generations. A good example is the recent launch by Europol of the Help4U, a new digital platform to support young people facing online sexual abuse<sup>32</sup>. Other initiatives aimed at empowering minors could also be undertaken in collaboration with the Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC).

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<sup>31</sup> Council of the European Union, *The Jutland Declaration: shaping a safe online world for minors*, 10 October 2025, [The Jutland Declaration Shaping a Safe Online World for Minors.docx](#)

<sup>32</sup> [www.help4u-project.eu/](http://www.help4u-project.eu/)

6. **Create and disseminate the relevant preventive tools needed for the early detection of nihilistic extremist violence, using the EU Internet Forum and the expertise of the EU Knowledge Hub in preventing radicalisation.** Providing guidance for law enforcement and online service providers' content moderation teams on identifying indicators related to nihilistic extremist violence is key in this regard. The EU Internet Forum is developing related guidance for law enforcement and online service providers<sup>33</sup>. This is based on input received from its members.

In addition, educating parents in identifying indicators related to nihilistic extremist violence could be addressed through tailored national awareness campaigns. Families and, when willing, victims themselves should be involved in raising awareness about this phenomenon. Educators, social workers, psychologists/school advisers, first responders, local law enforcement and other local actors working closely with children require an awareness toolbox to recognise the early warning signs of the threat. Mental health professionals play a fundamental role in detecting and referring those drawn to sadistic violence or to self-harm.

In 2026, the EU Knowledge Hub on prevention of radicalisation will start developing a comprehensive toolbox on early identification and intervention measures in relation to the issue of the radicalisation of minors<sup>34</sup>. The aim is to support and raise awareness among families, educators, social and youth workers as well as other relevant stakeholders. The specific and challenging features of nihilistic extremist violence compel an effective whole-of-society approach to counter the threat in the present and build resilience for the future. In particular, minors themselves must be involved in creative prevention and detection efforts as part of law enforcement's multi-layered approach. It is therefore important to ensure that this approach is properly reflected in the EU Knowledge Hub's work plan for 2026.

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<sup>33</sup> European Commission, *Children and the Hybridised Threat of Online Radicalisation: Safeguarding in the Digital Age*, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f11a9d27-b6f1-4582-8080-c9af5ab13c51\\_en?filename=Conclusion%20Paper\\_TP3%20Rome.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f11a9d27-b6f1-4582-8080-c9af5ab13c51_en?filename=Conclusion%20Paper_TP3%20Rome.pdf), November 2025.

<sup>34</sup> European Commission, *Conclusion paper: responses to the hybridised threat landscape, thematic panel 3*, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d235f742-f806-4e6f-81f9-7b4f9e1c5b4\\_en?filename=Conclusion%20Paper\\_TP3%20First%20Meeting.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d235f742-f806-4e6f-81f9-7b4f9e1c5b4_en?filename=Conclusion%20Paper_TP3%20First%20Meeting.pdf), March 2025.

7. **Recognise the victims' extreme vulnerability and prioritise holistic strategies to ensure their protection and resilience, drawing on all the expertise of the EU Centre of expertise for victims of terrorism.** Unlike other violent threats, in the online dimension of nihilistic extremism, violence is not inflicted upon victims but carried out by them – against themselves. Often, victims become perpetrators. The (in)visible scars left by the contact with this universe require tailored (and long-term) mental health support and enhanced coordination also with families, educators, social services and law enforcement. Reintegration and the social inclusion of the victims further demands specific programmes to address their relationship with the online world.
8. **Encourage further research on nihilistic extremist violence.** The still very limited institutional and academic knowledge of nihilistic extremist violence constrains policymaking and law enforcement. Existing frameworks – oriented to ideologically-driven radicalisation – fail to address relevant dynamics in nihilistic extremist violence, for example, motivation for joining, recruitment of members/victims, behaviours in online and ecosystems, motivation for offline violence. The Commission could devote funding projects aimed specifically at a forward-looking understanding of nihilistic extremist violence to ensure that policy is aligned with the rapid pace of the threat. The EU Knowledge Hub research strand could support the efforts to fill in the existing research gaps regarding nihilist violence. In particular, the Knowledge Hub Research Committee could also be tasked with examining the relevance of this topic and assessing whether there is a real research gap requiring a more comprehensive and in-depth European analysis of the challenges and responses to be provided. Continued investment in the research community more generally is critical to understanding nihilistic extremist violence; but also, to detecting and understanding its future manifestations.
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