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Empowering coaches and trainers in sports to prevent youth  
radicalization and violent extremism

# Preventing Youth Radicalization through Sports: the impact of Covid-19 pandemic

European Seminar

zoom  VIDEO CONFERENCE

March 31, 2021

11:00 – 13:30 CET

Register in advance for this seminar on

[www.safezoneproject.eu](http://www.safezoneproject.eu)



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Scarce participation in society, marginalization or self-marginalization, and isolation, are generally regarded as **potential risk factors for radicalization and extreme violence**. Sport is increasingly being regarded as a privileged observatory to address youth at risk of radicalization and violence, due to its being built on key-values such as teamwork, cooperation and fair-play as well as the educational relationship between sport coaches and trainees. Additionally, sport plays a relevant role in the life of many young people - both practically and symbolically - and sport coaches and educators are thus well placed to play a key role in detecting the risks of radicalization among youngsters. and make sports.

Built on these premises, the project **SAFE ZONE** ([www.safezoneproject.eu](http://www.safezoneproject.eu)) aims to contribute to the prevention of youth radicalization and violent extremism by **increasing the awareness and capacity of sport coaches and educators** to address radicalization and by adopting a **multi-agency approach** in order to consolidate preventive cooperation networks. By adopting such combined approach, the **SAFE ZONE** project intends to develop a **preventive action** aimed at young people in sports.

The Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent restrictive measures still in force in European countries, have exacerbated the isolation of citizens and adolescents and young people are paying the highest costs. While the youngsters' socialization opportunities have decreased drastically, the sport sector has also been stopped throughout Europe. The prevention strategies and tools aimed at preventing radicalization may thus need to be reconsidered in order to increase their effectiveness in the new post-pandemic scenery.

The **"Preventing Youth Radicalization through Sports: the impact of Covid-19 pandemic"** intends to enhance understanding of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on young people in the area of sport. By providing an exchange opportunity between radicalization experts, sport coaches, youth educators, pedagogists and sociologists, the seminar will also seek to **stimulate a transnational discussion** about the most appropriate tools and strategies for the prevention of radicalization in the medium and long-term.

This seminar is the second in a series of three transnational exchange opportunities with experts from the participating EU countries (Germany, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia) organized within Safe Zone. The seminar's aim is to provide a European opportunity for practice exchange and mutual learning while acknowledging the value of sports as an effective educational tool against youth radicalization. The seminar is also expected to contribute to the **creation of a network of European stakeholders** interested in, and working on, combating youth radicalization and extreme violence through sports.





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# Seminar Agenda

- 11:00 **Welcome and seminar presentation**
- 11:10 **A brief overview of the Safe Zone project, Alessia Mefalopulos, IPRS**
- 11:20 **Sports as a key tool for the prevention of youth radicalization and violent extremism, Pedro Folgado, Youth and Sport Attaché at Portuguese Permanent Representation to the European Union**
- 11:35 **The impact of Covid-19 on the teenagers' sport practice in numbers. The case of Rome, Enzo D'Arcangelo, Statistician, a former professor at the University of Rome "La Sapienza"**
- 11:50 **Q&A**
- 12:00 **COFFEE BREAK**
- 12:15 **Roundtable 1:**  
**The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the teenagers' sport practice**  
**Moderator: Mariana Barbosa, Catholic University of Porto**
- **Paulo Rocha** - Head of Sport for All Division IPDJ / PPUE21 Portuguese Mission Sports Working Group Expert
  - **Matej Luneznik** - Sport psychologist, Lecturer and mental trainer, Slovenia
  - **Matthias Marckhoff** - University hospital Muenster

**Q&A**





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12:45 **Roundtable 2:**

**Sports as a key tool for the prevention of youth radicalization and violent extremism**

**Moderator: Goran Gumze, Alma Mater Europae**

- **Zlatan Dežman** - Senior judge at the court of Maribor-Slovenia and associate professor of criminal law at the Faculty of Law, Maribor University, with over 50 years' experience in martial arts
- **Dennis Diedrich** - Consultant at RheinFlanke. Youth and prevention worker. Co Author of the handbook "Spiel dich frei". Prevention of radical perspectives amongst youth through sport
- **Beppe Basso and Renato Marino** - Managers of the School for sport coaches, Italian Sports Committee (CSI)

**Q&A**

13:15 **Concluding remarks**

13:30 **END OF SEMINAR**

 The seminar will be audio and video recorded.



The SAFE ZONE team represents a mix of research centers, universities and sports organizations in Italy, Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia.



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