



## PRESS RELEASE



### *Strengthening approaches for the prevention of youth radicalisation in prison and probation settings*

14 March 2022 - “**All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for their human rights**” (Recommendation Rec(2006)2 on the European Prison Rules). “Any specific programme targeted on a certain group of prisoners, such as those considered as 'radicalised', must respect the same human rights criteria and international obligations as apply to any other prisoners” (Article 45 of the EU Parliament resolution (2015/2062(INI)).

Inhumane prison conditions, overcrowding and ill-treatment are factors that may contribute to the increase of radicalisation in the European prison system. In this context, young adult prisoners aged 18-29 are considered vulnerable and at risk of radicalisation as they are still in the process of developing their identity. At the same time, though, the time spent in detention is a capital phase in a detainee's life and what is done with this time can help the individual change both mindset and behaviour. Prisons can be “engines for positive change”, offering a “second chance” to criminals (Jones, 2004; Horgan, 2010).

#### SERENY: mission and goals

Against this background, the project SERENY, co-funded by the European Union's Justice Programme, aims to strengthen intervention programs to prevent **youth radicalization in prison and probation settings** at European level, based on reliable data and a human rights-centered approach, in line with international, EU and CoE laws and regulations. Notably, SERENY aims to:

- **foster the adoption of evidence-based youth radicalization prevention programs and practices** in detention settings, respectful of international, EU and CoE human rights laws and standards;
- **provide concerned operators with knowledge and insights** from primary data and qualitative studies allowing to measure the impact on individuals' evolution towards and away from radicalization;
- **enhance synergies** among academia and practitioners, human rights NGOs, penitentiary administrators and key actors.

#### What we do

- **Data collection related to youth radicalization prevention policies and practices** in 8 Countries (Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Spain)
- **Qualitative and quantitative data analysis of individual and psychological dimension of youth radicalisation processes** and related prevention programs in prison and probation settings in 5 Countries (Albania, Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Spain)
- **Awareness-raising and dissemination activities** aimed at providing policy-makers, prisons managers and prison front-line staff with first-hand information and guidance about radicalisation prevention programs targeted to young adults inmates **based on a human rights centered approach**

#### Which benefits will SERENY produce?

- Prison and probation administrators and staff, front-line operators, and policy-makers will have access to comparable data related to radicalization prevention programs, finding guidance to the implementation of practices respectful of young inmates' human rights, according to international and EU standards.
- Prison and probation administrators and staff, and front-line operators will achieve greater understanding of the individual dimension of radicalization processes to timely detect early signals of radicalization and act on them, to promote positive behaviors of vulnerable youth in prison settings.
- Increased multi-disciplinary sharing of ideas, perspectives, experiences and good practices, contributing to an open social innovation dialogue across Europe addressing the multifaceted aspects of the radicalization phenomenon.

#### **About us**

The 2-year SERENY project, launched in October 2021, will be implemented by a Consortium of interdisciplinary Partners from 4 EU Member States (Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Spain) and Albania: University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” (project Coordinator), University of Palermo, Universitat de Barcelona - Observatory of the Penal System and Human Rights (OSPDH-UB), Universitat Fur Weiterbildung Krams, Mirovni Institut, Prodos Consulting, Avokati i Popullit.

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