

VORTEX NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the fourth and final newsletter edition of 2025! Our doctoral candidates have been incredibly busy as the year winds down, and we have plenty of exciting news and insights to share with you.

This edition features a selection of new blog posts that have been published since our previous newsletter. Moreover, we are launching a new section that gives a peek into our DC's workspaces - after all, this is where we spend most of our time right now, eagerly writing up our empirical chapters.

As always - enjoy reading!

*Your editorial team
Anna, Laura and Lotta*

VORTEX News

VORTEX Virtual Training Event (October 6-8, 2025)

From October 6 to 8, 2025, the VORTEX Virtual Training Event, organised by the University of Oslo, successfully took place. The VORTEX network attended keynotes and engaged in discussions focusing on the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the impact of our research on policy and practice. Kristian Steiner provided detailed guidance on how to decide for the right publication outlet, what pitfalls to avoid, and how to strategise academic publishing. Furthermore, Tore Bjørge talked about how to disseminate research findings effectively to policymakers and practitioners. The network also hosted external guest Eviane Leidig, who shared her experience in disseminating her research in various ways, including online. The event concluded with dedicated supervision team meetings with the doctoral candidates.

The VORTEX Blog Series

VORTEX has its own blog series where our doctoral candidates regularly publish short pieces related to their work. Check it out at: <https://vortex.uni-mau.se/blog/>. The following blog posts have been published since the last VORTEX newsletter:

Between Diffuse Motives and Mental - Debates Following Recent Attacks in Germany

by Isabelle
Stephanblome & Laura
Stritzke



Against Depolarisation

by Rohan Kit Bains
Stevenson

Punching the World- Developmental Psychological Perspectives on Trajectories of Radicalization

by Laura Stritzke

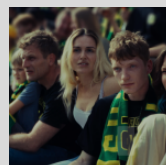


Deepfakes, Truth, and Radicalization: Lessons from a Workshop

by Violette Mens

Presentation at the European Academy of Religion (EuARe2025) Eighth Annual Conference

by Heidi C. Piva

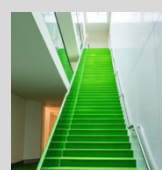
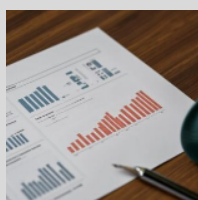


From Stadium Rage to the Quest for Meaning: What “The Hooligan” Reveals About Radicalization

by Violette Mens

Harnessing the Potential of Evaluation: Structural Possibilities for Evaluation within Organisations in the Field of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

by Lotta Rahlf



Securing What Has Been Built and Not Wasting Opportunities for Professionalisation in German P/CVE, Civic Education, and Democracy Promotion

by Lotta Rahlf

Workspaces from VORTEX doctoral candidates

For many doctoral researchers, the writing phase is one of the most challenging yet rewarding parts of the doctoral journey. It is the stage where ideas are refined, arguments take shape, and research findings are woven into a coherent narrative. It is also a time that requires focus, persistence, and often a good deal of creativity.

In previous newsletter editions, we have informed you about some research stays of our doctoral candidates. Now we would like to give you an insight into the phase of the writing process that is currently central: We ask our doctoral candidates to send us pictures of their workspaces to get an insight into our everyday work environments, along with a brief introduction on their daily work routines.



“PRIF recently moved to the South of Frankfurt, leaving behind the building where we held our VORTEX consortium meeting last February. The new premises are well-designed and offer numerous social spaces. This is great for exchanging ideas over coffee or for holding the “Shut-up-and-Write” sessions that PRIF doctoral researchers sometimes utilise for focused work. On a personal note, Laura and Lotta now share a VORTEX office together. Our individual office spaces remain as usual: we maintain that coffee, tea, and a little bit of chaos are absolute must-haves for productive work!

Laura and Lotta at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)



News from VORTEX doctoral candidates



Laura Stritzke

In September, Laura held a presentation at the 7th Nordic Conference on Violent Extremism at Aarhus University in Denmark, where she talked about *Practitioner Perspectives Across Institutional Contexts on Navigating Support and Control in Extremism Prevention*. Furthermore, Laura took part in the EU Knowledge Hub Policy & Practice Joint Event on Minors in October. This opportunity offered not only valuable insights into ongoing efforts across Europe, but also a great chance to connect with experts, practitioners, and policymakers working on the prevention of radicalisation among young people. Throughout the keynotes, panels, and breakout groups, she gained a deeper understanding of the diverse approaches and challenges in different countries—especially when it comes to prevention work in schools and building resilience among minors.



Rohan Kit Baines Stevenson

In October, Rohan completed the Europaeum Scholars Programme, which brings together doctoral researchers from leading European Universities for advanced training in policy, leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration. As part of the programme, a policy proposal had to be designed in a small group. The programme culminated in a policy conference in Brussels, where his group presented the policy proposal for which they have been working on for the past 15 months to European policymakers. The proposal is entitled 'The European Model: Guaranteeing the Human Rights of Sex Workers in the EU'.



Violette Mens

Since the previous newsletter, Violette has had the chance to conduct a workshop with her two colleagues Camilla Winde-Gissel and Heidi

Campana-Piva at the STS-CH conference in Zurich from the 10th to the 12th of September 2025. There, she explored the challenges of radicalization in light of AI and more specifically political deep-fakes with a varied and interesting crowd. She later got to attend the Nordic Conference on Violent Extremism in Aarhus from the 25th to the 26th of September. There, she met with her colleagues Camilla Winde-Gissel, Laura Strizke and Lotta Rahlf and presented a joint article draft on trust in the PCVE sphere. Finally, Violette attended the Aleksanteri Conference in Helsinki from the 22nd to the 24th of October, to present her PHD work. More linked to her PHD work, Violette hopes her first article will soon be sent out to be published and has finished her data retrieval and interview phase. She is now coding and analyzing and hopes to start writing her thesis by the end of March 2026

Lotta Rahlf



Lotta has presented her work entitled 'The institutionalisation of evaluation and quality management in preventing and countering violent extremism - comparative perspectives' at the 7th Nordic Conference on violent extremism at Aarhus University. She also gave a presentation with the title 'Institutionalisierung von Evaluation und Qualitätsmanagement in der Extremismusprävention', at the Annual Conference on the German Evaluation Society at Saarland University Saarbrücken in Germany. Furthermore, as a mentee in the EU Knowledge Hub Mentoring Programme Lotta joined a training in Brussels from 9.-10.10 which was designed to bring the diverse cohort of mentees to a common level of knowledge about P/CVE and facilitate exchange among them. The Mentorship Programme runs for two years and includes personal support for mentees from experienced P/CVE practitioners or scholars. Read more about the EU Knowledge Hub Activities here: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation/about-eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation_en



Javid Ibad

Javid presented a paper at ECPR General Conference 2025 in Thessaloniki and additionally co-chaired a panel titled 'From Radicalization to Resilience: New Insights into Mainstream Responses to Illiberalism and Far-Right Mobilization.' Furthermore, he presented a paper at the 38th annual conference of the Italian Political Science Society (SISP) 2025 Conference at the University of Naples in Italy. Since the last Newsletter Javid participated in the ECPR Summer School of the Standing Group on Political Parties at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany as well as in the Guild Young Researchers Network Inaugural Workshop at Babeş-Bolyai University.

Research Output

The Europaeum, a network of leading European Universities, has published a policy paper which developed as part of the Europaeum Scholar Programme, in which VORTEX doctoral candidate Rohan Kit Baines Stevenson contributed as an author: *The European Model, Guaranteeing the human rights of sex workers in the EU, Policy Paper*. 2025, Brussels. <https://europaeum.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Policy-paper-decrim.pdf>

Rahlf, Lotta and Svetla Koynova. 'Weniger Skepsis, mehr Selbstbestimmung: strukturierte Feedbackprozesse und Management Responses bei externen Evaluationen der Extremismusprävention, politischen Bildung und Demokratieförderung' PrEval. 2025, https://preval.hsfk.de/fileadmin/PrEval/Rahlf_Koynova_2025..pdf

VORTEX at Conferences

- 'Knowledge in Urgency: Translating Radicalization Research into Policy and Practice', Aleksanteri Conference in Helsinki, Finland, October 24, 2025 (Violette Mens)
- 'The institutionalisation of evaluation and quality management in preventing and countering violent extremism - comparative perspectives' 7th Nordic Conference

on violent extremism, Aarhus University, Denmark, September 25-26, 2025 (Lotta Rahlf)

- 'Navigating Support and Control in Extremism Prevention: Practitioner Perspectives Across Institutional Contexts' perspectives' 7th Nordic Conference on violent extremism, Aarhus University, Denmark, September 25-26, 2025 (Laura Stritzke)
- 'Without Trust, Nothing Works: Re-Centering Trust in PCVE Efforts', 7th Nordic Conference on violent extremism, Aarhus University, Denmark, September 25-26, 2025 (Violette Mens - joined paper by Violette Mens, Laura Stritzke, Camilla Winde Gissel and Lotta Rahlf)
- 'Institutionalisierung von Evaluation und Qualitätsmanagement in der Extremismusprävention', Jahrestagung der deutschen Gesellschaft für Evaluation, Saarland University Saarbrücken, Germany, September 17-19, 2025 (Lotta Rahlf)
- 13th Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies A new world order - a new Middle East? Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oslo, Norway, September 25-27, 2025 (Orwa Ajjoub)
- 'Critiquing radicalization: A socio-technical perspective on political events', Workshop at STS-CH conference in Zurich, Switzerland, September 10-12, 2025 (Violette Mens, Camilla Winde-Gissel, Heidi-Campana-Piva)
- 38th annual conference of the Italian Political Science Society (SISP) 2025, University of Naples, Italy, September 4-5, 2025 (Javid Ibad)
- ECPR General Conference, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, August, 26-29, 2025 (Javid Ibad)
- Co-chaired a panel titled 'From Radicalization to Resilience: New Insights into Mainstream Responses to Illiberalism and Far-Right Mobilization', ECPR General Conference, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, August, 26-29, 2025 (Javid Ibad)

Other News



Lotta talked on the German TV show ZDF Mittagsmagazin, discussing political violence against politicians and the reasons behind its rise.





Orwa talked to the international news agency [Reuters](#) about foreign jihadi fighters in Syria.

Orwa Ajjoub recorded two podcast episodes called: The View From Here, [One](#) and [two](#) with Jasmine El-Gamal where they discuss the ever growing challenges facing Syrians since the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024 and the beginning of Ahmed Al-Sharaa's presidency, and what the international community should be doing to support Syrians



Check out new episodes of the [Europe Elects podcast](#) with Javid Ibad as co-host.
Link: <https://europeelects.eu/podcast/>

Stay updated on our social media channels!



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