

# VORTEX **NEWSLETTER**

*Welcome to VORTEX Wrapped, the final edition of our newsletter! It is hard to believe that the past three years of our doctoral journey have flown by so quickly. In our previous newsletter, we reflected on our personal experiences and lessons learned throughout the project. In this final edition, we shift the focus to our collective output and achievements, looking back at everything we have accomplished together. From newsletters, blogposts, and social media content to conference participation, consortium meetings, and publications - this retrospective celebrates the many ways we shared our work and engaged with the wider community.*

*We hope that you enjoy this final edition and invite you to look back with us on the many highlights of the past three years.*

*Your editorial team*

*Anna, Laura and Lotta*

## **VORTEX Wrapped**

After three years, it can be easy to lose track of everything we have worked on. That is why we have put together this overview to look back on everything we have accomplished. From our newsletters, blog posts, and social media activities to the conferences all over the world that allowed us to strengthen our international network. And, most importantly, our consortium meetings, where we all came together, shared updates on the progress of our dissertations and received training.

# Newsletters



Since 2023, we've sent out **12 newsletters**, including this final edition, sharing every milestone, conference, publication, and project update along the way. From the very first issue to this final one, our newsletters have captured the VORTEX journey, keeping our community informed and connected every step of the way.

You can find all our newsletters here:  
<https://vortex.uni.mau.se/newsletters/>

# The VORTEX Blog Post Series

We were also highly active in sharing our insights through blog posts, with a total of **74 blogs** published throughout the project.

Our blog posts explore a wide range of topics, including online radicalisation, social networks, narratives, and the social processes and group dynamics behind extremist movements. They also cover specific country case studies, elections, current developments, and reflections on programmes, conferences, presentations, and discussions that shaped the VORTEX journey. In addition, the blog series features **four Policy Briefs and a White Paper** in which we, as a Doctoral Network, provide evidence-based recommendations to support stakeholders in designing appropriate responses to extremism and terrorism.

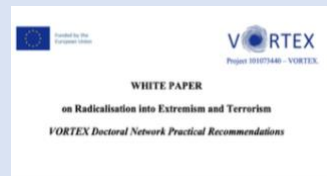
Take another look at all our blog posts here:  
<https://vortex.uni.mau.se/blog/>



Narratives  
Analysis  
Networks  
Radicalization  
Social Dynamics  
Intervention  
PCVE  
Radicalization Networks

*The following blog posts that have been published since the last VORTEX Newsletter:*

**WHITE PAPER on  
Radicalisation into  
Extremism and Terrorism:  
VORTEX Doctoral Network  
Recommendations**  
By VORTEX Doctoral Network



**Policy Brief: Institutional  
Continuity and  
Cooperation in P/CVE**  
By VORTEX Doctoral  
Network



**Policy Brief: Rethinking  
Monitoring and Threat  
Assessments for Counter-  
Terrorism Policy**  
By VORTEX Doctoral Network



**Policy Brief: Gender,  
Radicalisation and  
Prevention of Violent  
Extremism**  
By VORTEX Doctoral  
Network



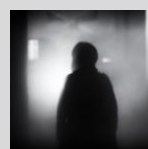
**Policy Brief: Towards  
Improved Knowledge  
Infrastructure in Preventing  
and Countering Violent  
Extremism (P/CVE)**  
By VORTEX Doctoral Network



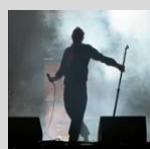
**AI and Conspiracy  
Theories: Old Storms, New  
Vessels**  
By Massimo Leone



**Is “nihilistic violent  
extremism” actually  
violent extremism?**  
By Leena Malkki



**“Silent and Grey”:  
Loneliness, Lost Public,  
and the Turn to  
Radicalization**  
By Thorsten Bonacker



**Why Are People Drawn  
to Radical Groups?**  
By Kristian Steiner



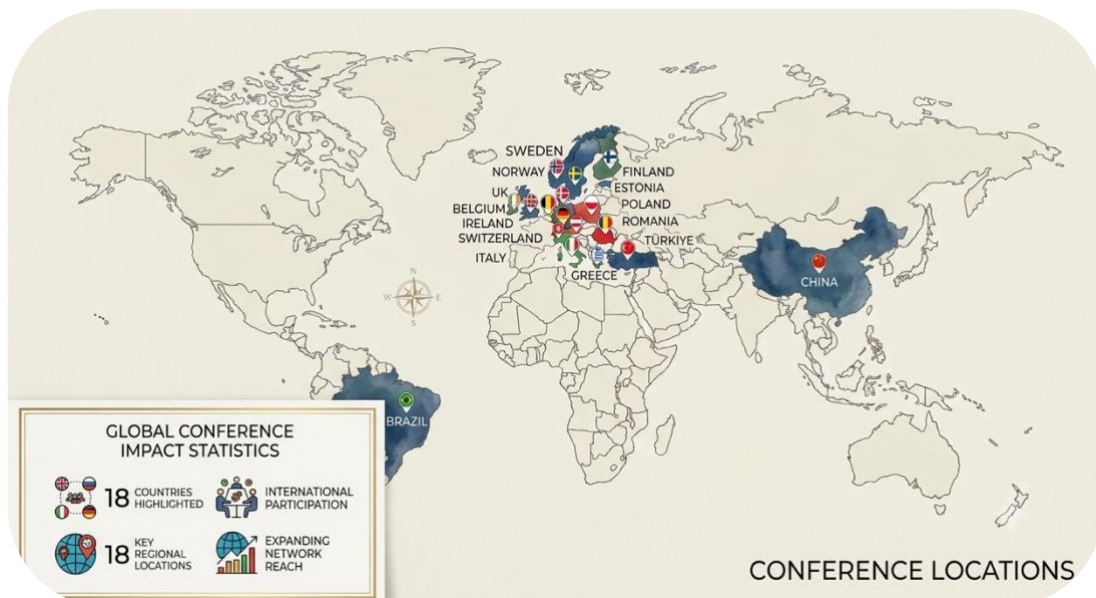
## Social Media Posts

📱 On social media, we have shared **over 50 posts** on both Bluesky, following our move from X (Twitter), and LinkedIn, keeping our community updated on VORTEX news.



Although this is our final newsletter, the news does not stop here. We will continue to share updates and news on our social media platforms. Follow us on [Bluesky](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and stay up to date so you don't miss anything!

## VORTEX at Conferences



🌐 From Türkiye and Brazil to Sweden, Norway, China, and many places in between, our VORTEX journey took us to **18 different countries** for conferences and events

around the world. Some journeys were made individually, while others became shared adventures with colleagues. Whether by plane or train, every trip added a new chapter to the VORTEX story. Beyond presentations, panels, and academic discussion, these journeys brought new connections, unexpected moments, shared experiences, and memories that will stay with us long after the project ends.

## *Consortium Meetings*

Over the past three years, we had the opportunity to come together during **four in-person consortium meetings** in four different countries. These meetings provided important moments for collaboration, exchange, and building connections within the VORTEX network. The journey started with the kick-off meeting at the University of Malmö, Sweden, in November 2023. Here, all doctoral candidates and supervisors met for the first time, introduced their research projects, discussed shared goals and responsibilities, and established working groups.



The second VORTEX consortium meeting brought everyone together in Frankfurt and Marburg, Germany. The meeting focuses on refining project plans, discussing research design and methodology, and exchanging ideas through lectures, workshops, and discussions.

In March 2025, the third consortium meeting took place in Turin, Italy. The focus was on research progress, key methodological questions, and sharing preliminary findings and feedback. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss data management and approaches for the next stages of the research.

The fourth and final consortium meeting was held in spring 2026 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, ahead of the final transfer conference in Brussels in September. Discussions focused on career development, academic freedom, career pathways, and ethical considerations in research. In addition to supervision and knowledge exchange, the development of a student and practitioner handbook was a key focus.

# *Transfer Conference in Brussels*



On 28 and 29 September 2026, the VORTEX doctoral network held its Transfer Conference in Brussels. Marking the conclusion of the project, the event offered space to reflect on the network's achievements and to discuss how its findings can inform policy and practice in preventing and countering violent extremism. Over two days, the programme combined keynote lectures by leading researchers with interactive roundtables in which VORTEX doctoral candidates

presented their work alongside senior academics.

The roundtables highlighted four themes: the methodological, legal and personal challenges of researching online extremist spaces; how prevention is produced across Europe and the harms and ambiguities it can generate; the usefulness and limits of securitisation theory for radicalisation research; and how gender, race, class and age shape radicalisation and counter-radicalisation.



# PhD Completions

*As you maybe already know from our social media post, some of our doctoral candidates have recently submitted their doctoral theses. This gives us a great opportunity to take a closer look at their research journeys.*



This is **Heidi**, she recently completed her dissertation entitled “*Computational Linguistics applied to the Study of Conspiracy Theories Circulating on Telegram*”.

Her dissertation introduces a new methodology of semiotic analysis assisted by Large Language Models. Using a qualitative approach supplied by philosophy of communication combined with a quantitative approach based on semi-automatic analysis of big data through Natural Language Processing, Heidi has studied the digital propagation of conspiracy theories on Telegram.

The objective of the refinement and application of computational linguistic tools was not to use machine learning to fully-automatically analyse text, but rather, to serve as a tool for the human analyst. So, this work approaches the use of AI solutions from a critical point of view, which is to say that computational processes are both methods and objects, being not merely applied but analyses in themselves.



department.

Heidi submitted her dissertation on June 29th and defended it on September 21, 2026, at the University of Turin, with a committee composed of VORTEX members: Prof. Massimo LEONE (University of Turin; Chair), Prof. Julian JUNK (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt), and Prof. Corinne Torrekens (Université libre de Bruxelles). In these pictures you can see Heidi rehearsing her thesis presentation at her



This is **Javid**. He recently submitted his dissertation titled *“Programmatic Analysis of Mainstream Right Radicalization (MRR) in the Netherlands and Romania: The Tale of a Typical and a Diverse Case”* at the Faculty of European Studies at Babeş-Bolyai University.

Javid successfully defended his work in September, too. Having completed the long and challenging process of dissertation writing, Javid shares his advice for those still working on their PhDs: “Since thesis writing forces you into a demanding and disciplined routine, use this time to create balance in your life. Finding a relaxing secondary activity can be a great way to counterbalance the challenges of writing”.

## Other News



Check out the new episode 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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