

THE ROLE OF MASCULINITY IN EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPEAN POLICYMAKERS

Authors

Helena Schwertheim and Madeline Elmitt



Funded by
the European Union



This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Disclaimer:

This paper is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

To be cited as:

Schwertheim, H., et al. 2026. The Role of Masculinity in Extremist Movements: Recommendations for European Policymakers. EMMELO Horizon project. Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.21622732

Doi:

10.5281/zenodo.21622732

Authors:

Helena Schwertheim and Madeline Elmitt



This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Project acronym:

EMMELO

Project title:

European Men, Masculinity and Extremist Leadership Online

Grant agreement No: 101177204

Project funded by the European Commission

within the Horizon Europe Programme

Start date of project: 1 May 2025

Duration: 36 months

Deliverable No. D2.2

**The Role of Masculinity in Extremist Movements: Policy
Recommendations for European Policymakers**



This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Due date of deliverable	30/06/2026
Submission date	27/07/2026
File Name	D2.2 EMMELO_Policy Recommendations
Organisation Responsible of Deliverable	ISD
Author name(s)	Helena Schwertheim, Madeline Elmitt
Revision number	01
Status	Final
Dissemination Level	Pu

Revision History			
Version	Date	Modified by	Comments

Disclaimer

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Copyright

This document may not be copied, reproduced, or modified in whole or in part for any purpose without written permission from the EMMELO Consortium. In addition, an acknowledgement of the authors of the document and all applicable portions of the copyright notice must be clearly referenced.

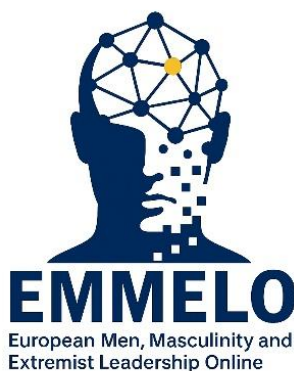


This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Deliverable D2.2

The Role of Masculinity in Extremist Movements: Policy Recommendations for European Policymakers



27/07/2026



This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Glossary	7
Radicalisation and misogyny	8
Platform Regulation and Enforcement.....	13
Research and Data Access.....	16
Transnational and European Coordination	18
Victim and Civil Society Support.....	19



INTRODUCTION

The European Men, Masculinity and Extremist Leadership Online (EMMELO) [project](#) examines the role of masculinity in online extremist movements across the European Union, exploring how gendered narratives, anti-gender mobilisation and misogyny shape processes of radicalisation, recruitment and mobilisation. By investigating these dynamics across six diverse national contexts, the project seeks to deepen understanding of the evolving relationship between gender and extremism, while contributing evidence-based, gender-sensitive approaches to policy and practice that strengthen democracy and uphold the fundamental rights and values of the EU.

The six EMMELO country [profiles](#) provide a comparative evidence base on these dynamics in France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovakia and Sweden. While each profile reflects the distinct political and sociohistorical context of the country concerned, together they reveal important commonalities. Across all six countries, anti-gender narratives, misogyny and gendered constructions of masculinity are shown to operate within increasingly interconnected online ecosystems, where ideas, narratives, actors and modes of mobilisation circulate across national borders while adapting to local contexts. The findings therefore highlight both the importance of context-specific responses and the need to understand these phenomena as part of a broader European landscape.

Building on this comparative evidence, this document presents a set of policy recommendations designed to strengthen European policy coherence in responding to these shared challenges. The country profiles demonstrate that while the manifestations of online and offline extremist mobilisation differ across Member States, many of the underlying drivers, narratives and digital infrastructures are transnational in nature. As a result, fragmented responses risk leaving gaps that can be exploited across jurisdictions. Critically, many of the regulatory and institutional tools available to address these challenges are themselves European in scope: the Digital Services Act, the Terrorist Content Online Regulation, the EU Directive on Combating Violence Against Women, and mechanisms including the EU Internet Forum and the Radicalisation Awareness Network. These provide a shared architecture for coordinated action that remains significantly underutilised in relation to the gendered dimensions of extremism.



This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



These recommendations therefore identify shared priorities for action that support greater coordination across policy areas; including prevention, education, online governance, research and regulation, while recognising that implementation must remain responsive to national and local contexts. In doing so, they aim to support policymakers, practitioners, researchers, civil society organisations, educators and digital stakeholders in developing more effective, evidence-based and gender-sensitive responses to online extremist mobilisation across the EU.



This project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement no. 101177204. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



GLOSSARY

Anti-feminism: Opposition to feminism and gender equality, including beliefs that gender equality has already been achieved or that efforts to advance gender equality inherently favours women.

Anti-gender movement: The anti-gender movement is a transnational coalition of actors—spanning radical right-wing political parties, religious institutions, civil society organisations, academics, funders and media figures—united by opposition to gender equality and diversity. Despite internal variation, these groups share a common agenda: the preservation or restoration of a social order built around traditional gender roles, the heterosexual family unit, and a binary conception of sex and gender.

Misogyny: The hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women and girls that serves to uphold structural gender inequality. It is used to justify gender-based harms, including violence against those who deviate from traditional gender norms. Misogyny is present in extremism across the ideological spectrum but can also be an extremist ideology in its own right.



RADICALISATION AND MISOGYNY

The following recommendations outline how European stakeholders can strengthen coordinated responses to the intersection of radicalisation and misogyny. While these challenges manifest differently across Member States, their underlying drivers and digital ecosystems are often transnational, requiring coherent action at the European level.

To policymakers:

- **Recognise the multifaceted role of anti-gender movements, narratives and ideologies in violent extremism: Policymakers should recognise that misogyny manifests in multiple, often overlapping, forms: (1) as a form of extremism; (2) as underpinning other forms of extremism; (3) as a risk for radicalisation; and (4) as a warning sign of radicalisation.**

These forms should be recognised as cross-cutting features within assessments and prevention programmes, as well as interventions targeting other ideological movements. As a risk factor, misogyny should be incorporated into violence prevention, safeguarding and risk assessment frameworks to support earlier identification of individuals at risk of engaging in violence. As a Warning Sign, evidence of gender-based violence, domestic abuse or other forms of misogynistic behaviour should be recognised as potential indicators of broader violent trajectories and should inform multidisciplinary threat assessment and case management. Recognising these four forms provides policymakers with a more nuanced framework for understanding the relationship between misogyny and violence and enables more proportionate, coordinated and effective responses across policy areas such as public health, violence against women and girls, and counter-extremism.

- **Recognise and respond to anti-gender narratives as drivers of extremist mobilisation: Policymakers should incorporate anti-gender narratives into threat assessments, prevention strategies and responses to violent extremism.** These narratives should not be viewed solely as expressions of social or cultural conservatism, but as strategic tools increasingly used by extremist actors to mobilise support, legitimise hostility towards out-groups, and build broad ideological coalitions.



Particular attention should be paid to how these narratives are deployed by far-right, nationalist, xenophobic, antisemitic, violent Islamist and Islamophobic actors through claims of protecting women, children, traditional values and national identity. These narratives frequently intersect with broader conspiratorial and grievance-based worldviews, allowing extremist movements to repackage exclusionary or violent ideologies in ways that appear more socially acceptable and politically legitimate. Policymakers should therefore ensure that anti-gender narratives are systematically incorporated into horizon scanning, early warning systems, threat assessments and prevention programming, while recognising their role as a cross-cutting mechanism that facilitates recruitment, radicalisation and mobilisation across ideological movements.

- **Adopt shared frameworks to identify and respond to hybrid harms: Governments, regulators and practitioners should adopt common taxonomies and definitions for identifying and responding to overlapping harms at the intersection of misogyny, technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), anti-LGBTQIA+ hostility and violent extremism.** Shared frameworks should support more consistent detection, risk assessment and responses across jurisdictions and sectors. Emerging resources, such as the [a recent toolkit Addressing the Intersection of Misogyny, Targeted Hate and Violent Extremism](#), demonstrate how practical harms taxonomies can help policymakers, regulators, law enforcement, prevention practitioners and technology platforms identify these intersections and respond more consistently across sectors.
- **Adopt a whole-of-government approach to addressing intersecting harms: Governments should recognise that hybrid harms, including the intersection of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), misogyny, targeted hate and violent extremism, do not fall neatly within a single policy or institutional remit.** Fragmented approaches risk overlooking the cumulative nature of these harms, creating gaps in prevention, protection and enforcement.

Governments should therefore establish coordinated, cross-departmental approaches for information sharing, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and cooperation between relevant ministries and agencies. This should include adopting shared definitions and



taxonomies to ensure that misogyny is consistently recognised as a standalone form of gender-based harm, a driver of targeted hate, and, where appropriate, a form of violent male-supremacist extremism. A whole-of-government approach should also support coordinated policymaking, identifying legislative and regulatory gaps, strengthening early intervention and safeguarding pathways, and ensuring responses that are proportionate, rights-respecting and consistent across the spectrum of hybrid harms.

- **Invest in prevention through a coordinated public health approach: EU institutions and Member States should adopt a coordinated public health approach to preventing misogyny, anti-gender narratives and gender-based violence, recognising the links between poor health outcomes, online harms and gender-based violence.** This requires coordination across public health, education, mental health, youth services, digital regulation and law enforcement, treating misogyny and online extremism as social and public health issues rather than solely individual or clinical problems.

Action should span the full prevention continuum: primordial prevention (building resilience before risk factors emerge), primary prevention (preventing harmful attitudes and behaviours from developing), secondary prevention (identifying and supporting individuals at risk of harmful online engagement), and tertiary prevention (supporting rehabilitation and reducing repeat harmful behaviour). Measures should include youth resilience and mentorship programmes, digital literacy and healthy relationship education, pre-bunking initiatives for young people and caregivers, counter-narrative campaigns linked to mental health and support services, and rehabilitation programmes that address harmful online behaviours. Prevention efforts should extend across schools, youth services, online environments, gaming spaces and sports communities.

- **Provide sustained funding for civil society organisations working at the intersection of misogyny, targeted hate and violent extremism. European policymakers should provide long-term, flexible funding to civil society organisations that are at the forefront of monitoring, researching and responding to the evolving intersection of TFGBV, misogyny, anti-gender movements, targeted hate and violent extremism.** These organisations frequently identify emerging threats



before they are reflected in policy, develop innovative methodologies and interventions, support victims-survivors, and generate the evidence base that informs government and industry responses. Yet their work is often constrained by short-term, project-based funding that limits sustained monitoring, institutional knowledge and long-term impact. Investment should therefore support not only research and threat monitoring, but also prevention programmes, practitioner training, policy engagement, victim support, evaluation, and the development of practical tools that can be adopted across sectors. Strengthening civil society capacity is essential to ensuring that responses remain evidence-based, adaptive and responsive to rapidly evolving online harms.

To law enforcement, prevention practitioners and educators:

- **Build capacity to identify gendered pathways into violent extremism: Law enforcement agencies, prevention practitioners, educators, safeguarding professionals and frontline services should receive specialised training to recognise misogyny, anti-LGBTQIA+ hostility, anti-gender narratives, anti-feminism and TFGBV as relevant to radicalisation, threat assessment and intervention processes.** Training should strengthen understanding of how these harms can operate as risk factors, warning signs, drivers of targeted hate and, in some cases, forms of violent extremism in their own right. Practitioners should be equipped to distinguish between harmful, hateful, criminal and extremist behaviours; recognise behavioural indicators of escalating risk, including engagement with misogynistic online communities, violent rhetoric and ideological framing; and understand how these pathways may intersect with other forms of violent extremism.

Capacity building should also strengthen practitioners' ability to assess context, identify appropriate intervention thresholds and refer cases to the most appropriate safeguarding, victim support, cybercrime, hate crime or counter-extremism mechanisms. Developing a shared understanding across sectors will improve early identification, enable more proportionate interventions, strengthen multidisciplinary cooperation, and support more effective prevention across the continuum of intersecting harms.



- **Invest in programmes that promote diverse and healthy constructions of masculinities and gender. Prevention efforts should move beyond solely countering misogynistic or manosphere narratives and instead invest in programmes and education curricula that expand the range of ways in which masculinity and gender are understood and expressed.** Rather than reinforcing narrow or prescriptive ideals of what it means to ‘be a man’, interventions should encourage more diverse, healthy and inclusive understandings of identity, relationships, emotional wellbeing and help-seeking. [Evidence](#) increasingly demonstrates that many young men experience significant pressure to conform to restrictive masculine norms, while digital spaces often amplify content that presents rigid or adversarial conceptions of gender.

Prevention initiatives should therefore equip young people with the skills to critically engage with online content, reflect on competing narratives about gender and identity, and build resilience to harmful messaging without portraying masculinity itself as a problem. These programmes should be embedded within the environments where young people spend their time—including schools, universities, sports clubs, gaming communities, youth services and online platforms—and should be developed in partnership with trusted community organisations, educators, mental health professionals, researchers and content creators.

While men and boys should play a central role in shaping conversations about masculinity, these discussions should not be limited to them alone. Women, LGBTQIA+ communities, parents, teachers, coaches, youth workers and wider civil society all have important perspectives to contribute in fostering healthier and more pluralistic understandings of gender. By broadening the conversation beyond narrow stereotypes and engaging diverse voices, policymakers can support prevention approaches that strengthen wellbeing, reduce vulnerability to harmful online ecosystems, and promote healthier relationships across society.

- **Improve the identification of hybrid harms in risk assessment and safeguarding processes: practitioners across safeguarding, violence prevention, education, law enforcement and counter-extremism should incorporate indicators relating to misogyny, TFGVB, targeted hate, anti-gender mobilisation and anti-LGBTQIA+ hostility into**



existing risk assessment, referral and safeguarding frameworks.

Risk assessments should move beyond considering these harms in isolation and instead assess how they interact, escalate and reinforce one another across the continuum of violence. This includes recognising patterns such as engagement with misogynistic online communities, coordinated harassment, dehumanising or entitlement-based rhetoric, ideological framing of violence, hostility towards women and LGBTQIA+ communities, and the convergence of multiple forms of identity-based hatred. Assessment frameworks should support practitioners in distinguishing between harmful, hateful, criminal and extremist behaviours, identifying when behaviours cross intervention thresholds and determining the most appropriate safeguarding, prevention or enforcement response. Strengthening the identification of hybrid harms within existing safeguarding processes will support earlier intervention, improve multidisciplinary referrals and ensure that individuals are directed towards the most appropriate support or risk management pathway before harm escalates.

PLATFORM REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The following recommendations outline opportunities to strengthen platform accountability, regulatory enforcement and transparency in addressing the role of digital services in enabling misogyny, targeted hate and violent extremism.

To national governments, the European Commission and Digital Services Coordinators:

- **Enforce existing DSA obligations more rigorously, recognising masculinist extremist content as a systemic risk: The DSA already requires very large online platforms (VLOPs) to assess and mitigate systemic risks, including risks to gender equality and the protection of vulnerable groups (Article 34 and 35).** Evidence across all six country case studies documents the real-world impact of platforms' failure to adequately address this content: misogynistic, masculinist and far-right extremist material is reaching young men at scale, functioning as a gateway to radicalisation, and contributing to documented rises in gender-based and politically motivated violence. The European Commission, Digital Services Coordinators, researchers and platforms should recognise the anti-gender-to-extremism pathway as falling squarely within the systemic risk framework the DSA already provides—



and platforms should be expected to reflect this in their risk assessments and mitigation measures accordingly.

- **Enforce algorithmic transparency obligations: The DSA already requires VLOPs to provide transparency on recommender systems (Article 27) and facilitate researchers' access to data (Article 40), but enforcement has been slow and inconsistent.** Recommender systems do not merely amplify harmful content; they can function as radicalisation infrastructure in their own right—creating pathways from lifestyle and self-improvement content, through masculinist 'life coach' and 'alpha male' material, into manosphere communities and ultimately far-right and violent extremist ecosystems. This pathway is documented across all six case studies and is particularly acute on TikTok and Instagram, where young men are algorithmically shepherded toward progressively harder masculinist and extremist content without recognising the ideological trajectory they are being drawn into. Effective enforcement of Articles 27 and 40—including robust researcher access to recommender system data—is essential to understanding and disrupting these pathways, particularly given that young men are being targeted for radicalisation while women and LGBTQIA+ communities disproportionately experience the resulting harms.
- **Ensure robust enforcement of the DSA's illegal content provisions:** As misogynistic narratives increasingly intersect with violent extremism, some online content **may** meet the threshold of illegality under national or EU law, including incitement to violence, terrorist content or certain forms of hate speech. **The European Commission and Digital Services Coordinators should continue to prioritise enforcement of the DSA's illegal content provisions across all in-scope online platforms,** including effective notice-and-action mechanisms, timely removal of illegal content once platforms become aware of it, transparency obligations, and—for VLOPs— measures to mitigate systemic risks stemming from the amplification of such material.
- **Deepen existing coordination on the Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation, DSA and EU Directive on Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.** European policymakers and regulators should apply these complementary and intersecting legal frameworks in a more coordinated manner to address the full spectrum of harms that emerge at the intersection of misogyny, anti-gender narratives, targeted hate and violent extremism. Rather than treating these instruments as



operating in isolation, policymakers should recognise that each addresses distinct but overlapping dimensions of harm. The Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence provides a dedicated gender-specific legal framework for addressing TFGBV, including criminal offences and victim protection measures.

The DSA complements this by requiring online platforms to assess and mitigate systemic risks, including those associated with illegal content, gender-based harms and the amplification of harmful content through platform design and recommender systems.

Where misogynistic or anti-gender content promotes, glorifies or supports terrorist violence or organisations, the TCO Regulation provides an additional mechanism for the rapid removal of terrorist content.

Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive legal toolkit capable of addressing harms across the continuum—from online abuse and TFGBV, to systemic platform risks, to terrorist propaganda and incitement to violence. Policymakers and regulators should therefore adopt shared taxonomy-based approaches that enable DSCs and national regulators, the Commission and platforms themselves to identify the nature of the harm, understand where multiple legal frameworks may apply simultaneously, and ensure that the most appropriate legal and regulatory tools are used in a consistent, proportionate and rights-respecting manner.

- **Improve the accuracy and proportionality of automated moderation for gender-based and LGBTQIA+ content:** Platforms should continue to invest in automated detection systems while recognising their limitations when moderating nuanced content relating to TFGBV, misogyny and LGBTQIA+ communities. Automated systems should therefore be complemented by appropriately resourced human review, specialist expertise and robust quality assurance processes, particularly where moderation decisions may affect legitimate public interest discussions, survivor testimony, education or community support. Research demonstrates that moderation systems can simultaneously over-enforce against legitimate content while under-enforcing harmful material. For example, [ISD's research](#) on the moderation of sexual violence content on TikTok found that discussions



by survivors, educators and advocates were frequently removed or suppressed, while harmful and abusive content often remained available. Platforms should therefore regularly evaluate the performance of automated moderation systems, minimise both over- and under-enforcement, draw on trusted external expertise—including, where appropriate, Trusted Flaggers under Article 22 of the DSA—and ensure that their systemic risk mitigation measures under Article 35 effectively protect the communities they are intended to serve.

- **Strengthen the implementation of the ‘Trusted Flagger’ status under Article 22 of the DSA**, by encouraging the appointment of specialised organisations, led by practitioners with grassroots experience of anti-gender online hate.

RESEARCH AND DATA ACCESS

Addressing the intersection of misogyny, targeted hate and violent extremism requires stronger evidence bases, improved data access and sustained research capacity. While significant progress has been made in understanding these harms, gaps in data availability, methodological consistency and cross-sector knowledge continue to limit effective responses.

To national governments, the European Commission and Digital Services Coordinators:

- **Continue to proactively ensure DSA researcher data access in practice:** The DSA's Article 40 grants researchers the right to access public data (40.12) and vetted researchers access non-public platform data from VLOPs to investigate systemic risks (40.4), which would include data relating to radicalisation pathways and the amplification of extremist content. However, this provision has been poorly implemented by several key VLOPs, who have been slow to grant access and have imposed restrictive conditions.¹ DSCs and the European Commission could establish clearer timelines and conditions for data access and holding platforms accountable for non-compliance.

¹ See for example: <https://independenttechresearch.org/citr-report-2025/>; <https://www.techpolicy.press/what-the-x-fine-reveals-about-data-access-under-article-40-of-the-digital-services-act/> and <https://dsa-observatory.eu/2026/03/12/if-at-first-you-dont-succeed-reflections-on-a-rejected-art-40-dsa-data-access-request/>



- **Fund comparative, transnational research into the anti-gender-to-extremism nexus:** All six country case studies confirm that misogynistic content functions as a gateway to broader far-right radicalisation, but the mechanisms, pathways and points of intervention vary by national context. Research should be comparative, interdisciplinary and cross-national, examining how manosphere ideologies interact with and reinforce far-right mobilisation, how online and offline dynamics operate across different national prevention contexts, and how algorithmic amplification drives the anti-gender-to-extremism pathway. Priority research questions include the role of specific platform architectures in accelerating pathways from anti-gender narratives to extremism; the effectiveness of positive masculinity interventions at scale; the specific vulnerability of neurodivergent and socially isolated young men to online-only radicalisation trajectories. Research should also examine where content on the anti-gender-to-extremism spectrum content crosses the TCO threshold, to provide clearer evidence-based guidance for practitioners, platforms and competent authorities on where DSA mitigation obligations end and TCO removal obligations begin

To researchers and civil society organisations:

- **Use Article 40 data access to investigate masculinist content and far-right extremism:** Gender-based violence is already listed as a potential systemic risk under Article 34, providing a legal basis for researchers to seek data access on the manosphere-to-extremism pathway exists. **Researchers and civil society organisations should be encouraged to actively submit Article 40 requests framing manosphere amplification as a systemic risk to gender equality, building a body of formal demands that establishes precedent.**



TRANSNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN COORDINATION

Addressing the intersection of misogyny, targeted hate and violent extremism requires coordinated action across European institutions and Member States. Strengthening cooperation, information sharing and alignment between national and European-level responses is essential to addressing transnational drivers and evolving digital threats.

To the European Commission and national governments:

- **Strengthen European advocacy and research infrastructure:** Transnational content flows mean that national prevention strategies will remain limited without coordinated European responses. **The European Commission should integrate practitioner and researcher perspectives in a transdisciplinary perspective across member states, support cross-border research consortia, and establish practitioner mobility funding as a standing programme through mechanisms** including Horizon Europe, the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation, and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. Practitioner mobility funding should be established as a standing programme rather than an ad hoc measure. Practitioners working on gender-based violence and those working on violent extremism currently operate largely in parallel; bridging these two communities at the European level is a structural priority.
- **Embed the gendered dimensions of extremism in feminist foreign policy:** Online violence against women and gender minorities should not be siloed as a technology policy issue. **The gendered dimensions of extremism—including misogyny and anti-gender narratives as drivers of radicalisation, masculinist ideologies linking manosphere communities and violent far-right movements, and TFGBV as a tool of political intimidation—must be recognised as a foreign policy and security issue, not only an equality one.** France and Sweden provide models for how this can be institutionalised through feminist foreign policy frameworks.
- **Governments should enable and resource existing civil society capacity rather than seeking to replicate it:** Across all six country case studies, civil society organisations working at the intersection of gender equality, anti-gender mobilisation, and extremism demonstrate a



remarkable degree of organisational sophistication, methodological insight, and community trust that statutory bodies cannot replicate. **Public administration should not seek to build parallel structures but instead create the conditions for existing capacity to scale. This requires core and flexible funding rather than project-based commissioning, reducing bureaucratic burden, and ensuring meaningful inclusion of civil society voices in policy and regulatory processes.** This requires a reframing of the state's role—from programme-funder to infrastructure-enabler. Critically, this must preserve civil society's independence: facilitation that comes with co-option or political conditions risks undermining precisely the autonomy and community trust that makes civil society effective in this space.

VICTIM AND CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

Victims-survivors and civil society organisations play a critical role in shaping effective responses to misogyny, targeted hate and violent extremism. National governments should strengthen support pathways, funding and coordination mechanisms to ensure affected communities can access appropriate support and frontline organisations can sustain their work.

To national governments:

- **Resource victim support structures: Accessible, intersectionality-informed support networks for victims of online and offline gender-based, anti-feminist, transphobic, racist, and hate against all protected characteristics must be adequately funded, with services tailored specifically to marginalised groups who are disproportionately targeted.**
- **Strengthen protection and support for feminist and civil society organisations. Governments should recognise coordinated online and offline harassment targeting feminist organisations, women's rights groups, LGBTQIA+ organisations and other civil society actors as a threat to civic participation and democratic resilience.** Public authorities should ensure that organisations at heightened risk have access to appropriate reporting mechanisms, law enforcement support, digital security assistance and specialist victim support services. Governments should also invest in organisational resilience by funding digital safety training, incident response planning, staff wellbeing and



access to specialist organisations that provide support to victims of technology-facilitated gender-based violence and online abuse. Strengthening cooperation between civil society, platforms and law enforcement can improve the identification of coordinated harassment campaigns, facilitate timely interventions and help ensure that intimidation does not silence organisations engaged in public advocacy.

- **Support researcher and practitioner wellbeing:** Working on far-right extremism and gendered violence carries significant psychological and security risks. Evidence across the case studies documents a consistent pattern of harassment, online abuse and intimidation directed at practitioners and researchers in this space—with women and civil society organisations working on gender equality disproportionately targeted. **Funding schemes should include provision for mental health support, safety assessments and protective infrastructure as core programme costs, rather than additional costs.**
- **Civil society should treat online harms as political issues requiring political responses:** Across all six country case studies, the failures of platform governance that enable anti-gender and far-right extremist content to spread are not primarily technical failures—they are political ones, reflecting deliberate choices by platform owners, governments and regulators about whose safety and expression is prioritised. **Civil society organisations working on gender equality and extremism should organise and advocate accordingly—engaging in platform governance processes, DSA enforcement mechanisms and democratic accountability structures as political actors, not as technical advisors or content reporters.** The considerable organisational capacity civil society has built in countering anti-gender mobilisation is a political asset that should be deployed in these spaces.