

Indicators Assessment – Non-Unitary States

Germany

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This Indicators Assessment report offers a country assessment of 4 composite indicators: (1) state-religious institutions relations, (2) status of religious minority groups, (3) religious radicalisation level, and (4) radicalisation prevention measures. It is part of a series covering 23 countries (listed below) on four continents. This assessment report was produced by GREASE, an EU-funded research project investigating religious diversity, secularism and religiously inspired radicalisation.

Countries covered in this series:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

<https://www.grease.eu.eu>



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The EU-Funded GREASE project looks to Asia for insights on governing religious diversity and preventing radicalisation.

Involving researchers from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, GREASE is investigating how religious diversity is governed in over 20 countries. Our work focuses on comparing norms, laws and practices that may (or may not) prove useful in preventing religious radicalisation. Our research also sheds light on how different societies cope with the challenge of integrating religious minorities and migrants. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how religious diversity can be governed successfully, with an emphasis on countering radicalisation trends.

While exploring religious governance models in other parts of the world, GREASE also attempts to unravel the European paradox of religious radicalisation despite growing secularisation. We consider the claim that migrant integration in Europe has failed because second generation youth have become marginalised and radicalised, with some turning to jihadist terrorism networks. The researchers aim to deliver innovative academic thinking on secularisation and radicalisation while offering insights for governance of religious diversity.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anna Triandafyllidou from The European University Institute (EUI) in Italy. Other consortium members include Professor Tariq Modood from The University of Bristol (UK); Dr. H. A. Hellyer from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (UK); Dr. Mila Mancheva from The Centre for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria); Dr. Egdunas Raciunas from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania); Mr. Terry Martin from the research communications agency SPIA (Germany); Professor Mehdi Lahlou from Mohammed V University of Rabat (Morocco); Professor Haldun Gulalp of The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Turkey); Professor Pradana Boy of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Indonesia); Professor Zawawi Ibrahim of The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (Malaysia); Professor Gurpreet Mahajan of Jawaharlal Nehru University (India); and Professor Michele Grossman of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). GREASE is scheduled for completion in 2022.

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GREASE - Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

Country Assessment Report

Name of Country Assessed: Germany

I. Composite Indicator 1: State-Religious Institutions Relations

Overall Assessment:

Article 140 of the German [Basic Law](#) establishes a formal **separation** between church and state, but at the same time the constitution secures **cooperation** between the two institutions in areas such as education and social welfare based on being granted public corporation status (PCS), which ensures their legal autonomy to regulate and administer their affairs within the scope of the Basic Law. Religious associations who do not have public corporation status are registered under private law and while they enjoy freedom of religion as protected in the Basic Law, they do not accrue the same benefits as those with PCS. The granting of this status is devolved to each Land, which means some variation in this process and in which religious groups PCS, but religions are recognised in this way in each unit.

Although PCS does not include a **formal political role**, representatives from religious organisations may be consulted by politicians on certain issues. They (especially the dominant Protestant and Catholic churches) play a strong role in welfare.

Although **confessional parties** are not banned as such, major parties are no longer confessional, and faith as party affiliation predictor is no longer as strong and relevant as previously.

Arbitration rulings of **religious 'courts'** are accepted to the extent to which they fit into the general framework of private law and do not contravene the fundamental rights of the Basic Law. **Family law** is part of civil law and religious marriages and divorces are not themselves recognised, although there are not formal regulations against such marriages and divorces.

One of the particular features of PCS is the arrangement for the **collection of taxes**. This arrangement, established in the Basic Law, means the government levies tax directly from the income of members on the behalf of the churches, which is then used for the religious, education and social welfare work that the churches provide, although not all groups take up this provision.

Article 4 [Freedom of faith and conscience] in the German Basic Law guarantees **freedom of conscience and of practice**: (1) Freedom of faith and of conscience and freedom to profess a religious or philosophical creed shall be inviolable. (2) The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed.

Art. 138 (WC) states: 2) "Property rights and other rights of religious societies or associations in their institutions, foundations and other assets intended for purposes of **worship, education or charity** shall be guaranteed." When it comes to education, article 7 of the Basic Law provides that **religious instruction** is provided as part of the core curriculum in state schools for recognized communities, allowing for confessional education in the subject of religion.

Article 7 of the basic law also provides for the right to operate **private schools**, with the approval of the relevant Land, and numbers vary between Länder. Most of these schools

are Catholic or Protestant but such schools have been approved for Jews, Hindus and Muslims more recently.

Media, including **religious media** both print and online, enjoy substantial freedoms within the bounds of general laws and religious media is autonomous. Moreover, one benefit of PC status is representation on supervisory boards of public television and radio stations. An array of religious media outlets in print and online represent different faiths throughout the country.

1. State autonomy from religion	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law defines the state as secular	High	2020
(1b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/independence from religion.	Medium	2020
(1b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/ independence from religion	Medium	2020
2. Participation of religious institutions and religious groups in political decision-making and policy-making.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids formal participation of religious institutions and religious groups in formal political decision-making.	Medium	2020
(2b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Medium	2020
(2b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Medium	2020
3. Religiously-based political parties in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids participation of religiously-based political parties in political life.	Medium	2020
(3b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	Insufficient Information	2020
(3b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	Insufficient Information	2020
4. State non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including regulation of religious courts, councils, religious family laws, etc.).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020
(4b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020

(4b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020
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5. State non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including personnel and funds).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020
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(5b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020
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(5b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020
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6. State recognition of freedom of religion.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation allows freedom of religion.	High	2020
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(6b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.	High	2020
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(6b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.	High	2020
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7. Freedom for religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2020
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(7b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2020
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(7b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.	Medium	2020
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8. Autonomy of religious media	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
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(8a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation recognises and allows religious media.	High	2020
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(8b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.	High	2020
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(8b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.	High	2020
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II. Composite Indicator 2: Status of Religious Minority Groups

Overall Assessment:

Article 137 (WC) as enshrined in the Basic Law in Article 140(5) states that "Religious societies shall remain insofar as they have enjoyed that status in the past.

Other religious societies shall be granted the same rights (under **corporations under public law**) upon application, if their constitution and the number of their members give assurance of their permanency." The granting of this status is devolved to each Land and numbers greatly vary between Länder.

There are no restrictions on **voting, right to run for office or to be elected** for religious minorities. Minorities are generally under-represented in German politics.

There are no specific restrictions on **access to public space** that apply to religious groups, only those that govern these spaces more generally.

Article 138 (1) states "Rights of religious societies to public subsidies on the basis of a law, contract or special grant shall be redeemed by legislation of the Länder". In some areas there are **state supported funds** for non-recognised religious organisations, such as private schools also, for instance. Public funds are available for social and community work.

Article 4(2) of the Basic Law states: "The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed", thereby providing for **accommodation** of practice as part of freedom of religion. Article 141 further states: "To the extent that a need exists for religious services and pastoral work in the army, in hospitals, in prisons or in other public institutions, religious societies shall be permitted to provide them, but without compulsion of any kind." On the whole, allowing for regional variation, religious minorities have been reasonably successful in gaining rights and accommodations from the courts, although there is variation between Länder. These freedoms have been tested in this period by debates over some Muslim practices and dress. Full face veils were **banned** for civil servants, judges and soldiers in 2017. A ban on the hijab exists for people holding official public offices such as at court or entering the police, for instance, but there is no blanket ban. There are no general bans on ritual slaughter, prayer or circumcision.

There are no blanket restrictions on **religious buildings** and Art 138(2) states "Property rights and other rights of religious societies or associations in their institutions, foundations and other assets intended for purposes of worship, education or charity shall be guaranteed." There have been a variety of religious buildings in major urban centres throughout the country from before the period and increasing during it. In recent years mosques in particular have attracted controversy and often been, although there is a good deal of variance not only between but also within regions and cities.

1. Legal status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation recognises religious minority groups.	High	2020

(1b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.	High	2020
(1b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.	Medium	2020
2. Religious minority group participation in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to participate in the political life of the state.	High	2020
(2b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.	High	2020
(2b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.	Medium	2020
3. Special social security status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to special social security benefits.	Insufficient Information	2020
(3b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.	Insufficient Information	2020
(3b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.	Insufficient Information	2020
4. Access of religious minority groups to public spaces.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public spaces.	High	2020
(4b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.	High	2020
(4b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.	High	2020
5. Access to public funds for initiatives/activities of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	High	2020
(5b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Medium	2020
(5b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Low	2020

6. Public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	High	2020
(6b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	High	2020
(6b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	Low	2020
7. Ownership of houses of worship.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to own their houses of worship.	High	2020
(7b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Medium	2020
(7b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Low	2020

III. Composite Indicator 3: Radicalisation Levels

Overall assessment:

Germany has a high **level of freedom**, which has been stable the last few years. **Adherence to the rule of law** is also high ranks 6/24 in the region.

The level of religion-related government restrictions rose and dropped within the moderate band in the context of attention focussed on Muslims and fears of Islamist extremism. In the first half of the 2000s other groups, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, were also heavily restricted.

State legitimacy, protection of human rights and uneven economic development have all improved during the period. A notable exception is security apparatus since 2016, largely owing to the securitization of Muslims. **Group grievances** have been moderate throughout and slightly dropped. Wealth disparity has got slightly wider in the period, although this has slowed since the financial crisis.

Figures for **distrust in the national parliament and government** have improved during the period, with the NP more trusted than the NG. The percentage of those dissatisfied with how **democracy** functions has also lowered.

The **financial situation** of the household has improved following recovery from the economic crisis of 2008 as has satisfaction with the national economy. The national economy has also become less of a priority for people, with unemployment consistently rated as more of a concern and in the last five years immigration, cost of living, and security have also become greater priorities.

Around half think **discrimination** is widespread. 32% **oppose diversity**, a figure high for the region. Figures for discomfort working with or having a family member in a relationship someone of a religious minority are also high, and highest in each if the person in question is Muslim. While only 4% of the general population have experienced discrimination, the figure is much higher for those of Sub-Saharan African or Turkish origin, 33% and 18% respectively. Perceptions of religious minorities have improved in recent years, and most are thought to be enriching, but a negative perception of Muslims has remained stable in the 2010s with around half seeing Muslims as a threat.

Terrorism has been seen as a **serious threat** by a majority and sympathy for terrorists is extremely low. Germany has not experienced attacks on the same level as those experienced by other European countries. Violent Islamist attacks became more prominent in the mid-2010s, mainly individuals with loose affiliations, but have declined significantly. Right wing extremism has risen in the 2010s, however.

Incidents of **hate crimes** have risen with 307 recorded by police anti-Semitic attacks, 241 anti-Muslim, 45 anti-Christian and 13 anti-other religions or beliefs recorded in 2018. Experience of harassment is also higher for those wearing traditional or religious clothing.

1. Structural factors/environment	Score/Level/Percentage	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Level of Freedom	Level: Free Freedom score: 94	2020
(1b) Level of adherence to rule of law	Overall rank: 6/126 Overall score: 0.84	2020
(1c) Level of religious-related government restrictions	Score: 3.2 Level: Moderate	2017
(1d) Level of state legitimacy	Score: 0.7 Level: High	2019
(1e) Level of protection of human rights	Score: 0.8 Level: High	2019
(1f) Level of group grievances	Score: 4.6 Level: Moderate	2019
(1g) Uneven economic development	Score: 2.4 Level: Low	2019
(1h) Wealth disparity (top 10% possessing above average percentage of the total income share)	Percentage: 35%	2016

2. Perception-based indicators (social grievances)	Percentage (%)	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Distrust in national institutions	Parliament: 37% Government: 42% Other: NA	2018
(2b) Political discontent	Dissatisfaction with country direction: 47%	2018
	Dissatisfaction with overall situation: 23%	2018
	Dissatisfaction with democracy/government performance: 25% Other: NA	2019
(2c) Economic discontent	Dissatisfaction own financial situation: 15%	2018
	Dissatisfaction national economy: 10%	2018
	Economic situation is the most serious problem: 3% Other: NA	2018
(2d) Discrimination	Discrimination is widespread: 48%	2015
	Opposing diversity: 32%	2018
	Discomfort with minorities: 8%-57%	2015
	Experienced discrimination: 4% Other: NA	2015
(2e) Views on violent extremism	VE is a serious problem/threat: 66%-70%	2016

Endorsement of VE actions/ actors: 2% Other: NA	2014
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3. Incidence-based indicators (religious violence and conflict)	Score/Level/Number	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) State-based armed conflict	Yes/No: Yes	2019
(3b) Level of social hostilities involving religion	Level: Very High Score: 7	2017
(3c) Incidence and impact of terrorism	Score: 4.3 Number of Incidents: 2	2019 2018
(3d) Violent extremist incidents	Number: 8113	2018
(3e) Significant violent extremist actors/networks	Level: Low	2020

IV. Composite Indicator 4: Radicalisation Prevention Measures

Overall assessment:

Germany counters terrorism with a variety of **legislation** available in [criminal law](#), which has been strengthened and expanded during the period, and has also included packages of counter-terrorism measures across policy and institutional domains.

Germany as a federal republic did not have a formal **national strategy** that each Land must follow uniformly until the mid-2010s, although features of one were introduced prior. Instead it provides support and a framework which is observed and within which Länder design their own strategies.

A comprehensive [national strategy document](#) was published in 2016. It said, "With this paper, the Federal Government is providing a comprehensive overview of current measures and programmes and, for the first time, is adopting a harmonised strategy for the national optimisation of the prevention of extremism and promotion of democracy." This document gave an overview of strategies and measures in place throughout the country and brought together a national strategy. It was comprehensive in its scope and based on joint action by the federal government, the states and the municipalities, as well as civil society. The strategy is also comprehensive in its approach to extremism, covering left, right, Islamist, anti-Semitism, anti-Roma, homophobic and so on, forms of hate.

Germany has a **range of agencies** and organisations that are involved as part of its counter-terrorism measures. In 2004 a Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre (Gemeinsames Terrorismusabwehrzentrum, GTAZ) was established to improve the **communication and cooperation** between 40 different agencies involved in German national security with regard to international Islamist terrorism. In 2009, within GTAZ a working group was established to bring together local and federal agencies.

The 2016 strategy placed a heavy emphasis on **human rights** and democracy.

Germany has received recognition for its strong decentralised, community-based social work and family support strategy, with many schemes run by social workers and people with experience of working with young people, and a balanced approach towards social portfolios and more multi-agency engagement. There is though variation between Länder in terms of the

relations between security agencies and civil society actors and the emphasis of approach adopted. A core part of the strategy was engagement with **civil society** actors in a variety of ways. **Dialogue with churches and religious communities** dates back many years and the German Islam Conference (GIC) was instituted in the 2000s, although not without controversy.

The issue of **foreign fighters** has been important, and made more so with returnees, and legislative and institutional measures have been taken. Terrorist **finance** has also been a focus in these areas.

The strategy placed a strong emphasis on education, democracy and **youth work**, including **countering narratives** and inter-religious dialogue.

Support for victims and **de-radicalisation programmes** have also been a strong feature, developing from earlier programmes and involving/being run by NGOs with government funding. Two prominent examples are EXIT-Germany (founded in 2000 and adapted to Islamist extremism in 2008) and Hayat (established in 2011).

The Federal Agency for Civic Education and a wide range of subsidised institutions offer an extensive range of **training measures** (e.g. for teachers, youth workers and social workers), especially in human rights, racism, and group-related hate, and integration.

The 2016 strategy document itself represents a piece of **research** and in the document further research and research strategies are outlined, including into understanding the phenomenon of extremism.

The Federal Government supports deradicalisation in the **prison** system, which comes within the sphere of competence of the Federal Länder.

1. Comprehensive strategic approach	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legislative foundation for adoption of PVE action plan	Yes	2020
(1b) Existence of PVE strategy and a national action plan	Yes	2020
(1c) Presence of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms of strategy / action plan implementation	Yes	2020
(1d) Presence of dedicated body tasked with PVE strategy development and coordination	Yes	2020
(1e) Compliance of strategy and action plan with human rights standards and the principles of rule of law	Yes	2020
(1f) Participation of a wide range of government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	Yes	2020
(1g) Participation of non-government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	High	2020
(1h) Reference to FTFs and related measures in PVE strategy/action plan	Yes	2020
(1i) Reference to terrorism financing and related measures in PVE strategy and action plan	Yes	2020
(1j) Reference to communication counter- or alternative narrative campaigns in PVE strategy/action plan	Yes	2020

2. Comprehensiveness of measures - areas of action, actors and projects	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Development and implementation of programmes for support of victims of terrorism and violent extremism	Yes	2020
(2b) Training for frontline practitioners	Yes	2020
(2c) Initiatives to improve the preparedness of security forces, law enforcement and justice institutions to deal with radicalisation.	Yes	2020
(2d) Development and implementation of P/CVE-specific education initiatives for youth	Yes	2020
(2e) Development and implementation of P/CVE education initiatives and projects for women	Yes	2020
(2f) Platforms for intra and interfaith dialogue between the state and religious leaders	Yes	2020
(2g) Networks for civil society, religious leaders, youth and women's organisations for dialogue, cooperation and best practices.	Yes	2020
(2h) Grassroots initiatives by civil society actors focussed on prevention	Very High Level	2020
(2i) Counter- and alternative- narrative campaigns	Yes	2020
(2j) Multi-agency cooperation and/or referral mechanisms at local level identifying and supporting at-risk persons	Yes	2020
(2k) State-commissioned research on religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism	Yes	2020
(2l) programs and measures to prevent radicalisation into violent extremism in prison and probation settings	Yes	2020

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