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International Conference

The Invisible Middle: Understanding Online Extremism in Middle Aged Adults in Europe

Agenda

Date: January 29, 2026 | 09:00-17:15

Venue: NH Brussels EU Berlaymont, Bd Charlemagne 11/19, Brussels

MORNING SESSION

09:00 – 09:20 | Arrival & Registration

- Welcome coffee and networking

09:20 – 09:30 | Opening Remarks

- Welcome from Inclusive Europe and introduction to the conference objectives

09:30 – 09:45 | Keynote Address

- The Origins of the SMIDGE Project – How the project came to life? | *Dr. Sara Wilford (De Montfort University)*

09:45 – 11:15 | Panel I: Presentation of SMIDGE Findings

Moderator: Sara Wilford, *De Montfort University*

- Beyond disinformation and online extremism: evidence and recommendations | *Prof. Dr. Giovanni Ziccardi (University of Milan)*
- HYPE Spaces: evolving dynamics, trends and mainstreaming of online extremism | *Dr. Line Nybro Petersen (University of Copenhagen)*



- Insights from surveys, interviews and focus groups | *Prof Kalypto Iordanou & Dr Vasiliki Christodoulou (UCLAN Cyprus)*
- Networks, Moral Framing, and Sentiment in Polarised Online Content | *Christian Gulas (FAS Research)*
- Scaling impact and future training | *Fabrizio Boldrini (Fondazione Villa Montesca)*

11:15 – 11:45 | Coffee Break

11:45 – 13:00 | Panel II: Media and Cultural Perspectives on Online Extremism

- Opening remarks by *Professor Jason Lee, De Montfort University*
- Documentary Screening (50 min)
- Discussion with filmmakers Sian Hamlett and Mitchell Harris

LUNCH BREAK | 13:00 – 13:45

AFTERNOON SESSION

13:45 – 15:00 | Panel III: Common Challenges and Best Practices from Related Projects

Moderator: *Ludmila Malaj, Inclusive Europe*

- Mitigating risk and assessing threats in a hybridized digital landscape | *Line Nybro Petersen (SMIDGE)*
- From everyday extremism to political attunement: Building democratic capacities for democratic resilience | *Sandra Obradovic, Joana Ricarte (OppAttune)*
- Preventing Extremism with Soft Skills: Insights from a Recent Experimental Intervention | *Louise Burté (ARENAS)*
- *Seyma Celem (ENCODE)*

15:00 – 15:30 | Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:00 | Panel IV: Policy Discussion – From Evidence to Action

Moderator: *Dan Ilazi, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies*

- Kai Zenner, *European Parliament*
- Becky Slack, *Agenda*
- Javier RUIPEREZ, *EU Knowledge Hub On Prevention of Radicalisation*
- Saman Nazari, *Alliance4Europe*
- Anna De Marchi, *DG CONNECT*
- Juliane von Reppert-Bismarck, *Lie Detectors*



17:00 – 17:15 | Closing & Next Steps

- Reflections from SMIDGE Partners

