

Horizon Europe Coordinator Partnership Invitation

CYCLE-BREAKING

Crime prevention, detection, and deterrence through Cycle Breaking: La Réunion Pilot to Address and Deter Multi-Dimensional Family Violence

HORIZON-CL3-2025-01-FCT-02: Open topic on prevention, detection & deterrence of various forms of crime and terrorism through an enhanced understanding of the related societal issues

1. Executive Summary

Breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence represents Europe's most strategic crime prevention opportunity, with potential to protect 55 million children annually while preventing billions in economic losses. This groundbreaking project leverages La Réunion's unique postcolonial context and exceptional violence rates to develop innovative, culturally-informed solutions that will transform how European police authorities and civil society organizations prevent, detect, and deter family violence across diverse communities.

2. The European Challenge

Every third woman in the EU experiences **gender-based violence**, with 32% suffering physical or sexual violence by partners during their lifetime. Simultaneously, **55 million children** across the WHO European Region experience violence annually, creating a devastating cycle where today's victims become tomorrow's perpetrators. Current reactive approaches fail to address the societal roots of this transmission, leaving European communities trapped in predictable patterns of violence that law enforcement struggles to interrupt. Violence against women and children costs Europe €540 billion annually—more than 1% of GDP in every studied country. Beyond financial impact, this represents a fundamental failure of European societies to protect their most vulnerable citizens and break cycles that perpetuate across generations. This challenge directly addresses the HORIZON-CL3-2025-01-FCT-02 call's emphasis on understanding societal aspects of crime while developing evidence-based tools for prevention, detection, and deterrence. The project's focus on cultural and historical factors will provide European security practitioners with innovative methodologies to address crime before it occurs.

3. The Intergenerational Crime Transmission Problem

Recent longitudinal research (notably the ERC Interrupt_Violence) reveals specific patterns of intergenerational violence transmission that span multiple domains. Studies tracking young adults who experienced childhood violence show that 25% of young women experience both childhood abuse and intimate partner violence, while 39% who suffered childhood abuse later abuse their own children. Among men, 34% who experienced child abuse later perpetrate intimate partner violence, and 13% who experienced childhood violence abuse their own children. Research identifies **specific transmission pathways** including direct effects through early pregnancy, PTSD, anxiety, substance abuse, and death of caregivers, with indirect effects through gendered parenting attitudes, inequitable gender beliefs, and endorsement of corporal punishment. Critical risk factors include "gendered parenting attitudes and endorsement of corporal punishment [which] were central to intergenerational transmission of violence and also linked all types of violence experience and perpetration with other risk factors such as poor mental health".

Importantly, violence transmission is rooted in **"ongoing structural drivers of violence, including poverty, food insecurity, unemployment or underemployment, poor mental health, poor services (of justice, health, education, child protection) and poor understanding of child and adolescent development"**. This creates predictable pathways to criminal activity spanning domestic violence, child

abuse, sexual exploitation, and youth violence—all interconnected through complex transmission mechanisms that extend beyond individual families to encompass broader societal inequalities.

Current European approaches respond to violence after it occurs, missing critical intervention opportunities. Understanding these specific transmission mechanisms enables predictive, preventive strategies that address both individual trauma and structural drivers while protecting future victims and reducing long-term crime rates.

4. La Réunion as Strategic Pilot Site

(i) Exceptional Violence Rates: La Réunion ranks 3rd-4th among French departments for domestic violence, with 15% of women experiencing conjugal violence—three times the mainland French rate. Daily statistics reveal 7 domestic violence complaints and 21 police interventions, representing a concentrated laboratory for understanding violence dynamics.

(ii) Unique Social Laboratory: La Réunion's complex social fabric—marked by cultural diversity, economic inequality, migration histories, and entrenched social hierarchies—provides unparalleled insights into how multiple vulnerability factors intersect to perpetuate intergenerational violence. This multicultural context with persistent structural inequalities directly mirrors challenges faced across European societies dealing with intercultural tensions, poverty, migration integration, and social stratification.

(iii) Institutional Readiness & Territorial Ecosystem: La Réunion offers an exceptional **laboratory** supported by a comprehensive **territorial ecosystem** of complementary actors working on family violence prevention. This ecosystem includes strategic-level observatories (ORVIFF for data analysis, Local Victim Support Committee for coordination), operational networks (68 specialized officers, 24/7 crisis intervention systems, specialized perpetrator centers), research partnerships through the Groupe Recherche Action Violences intrafamiliales (GRA VIF) federating professionals from Université de La Réunion, CNRS/Pacte, and local practitioners, and diverse institutional actors across justice, health, and social services. Within this collaborative framework, the **Département's Public Innovation Lab [VA]Lab provides dedicated infrastructure for social innovation**, offering institutional support, methodological expertise, and evidence-based action-research capabilities to enhance existing territorial initiatives. Combined with **measurable baseline indicators** (11,208 victims in 2022, 6,192 child protection alerts in 2023, 2,400 children under state protection), this ecosystem creates ideal conditions for systematic intervention testing, real-time evaluation, and European transferability assessment through coordinated multi-actor collaboration.

5. Potential for Research & Innovation and European Applications

La Réunion as a Living Laboratory: The territory's integrated prevention-detection-deterrence system provides measurable baseline conditions and established intervention infrastructure, enabling systematic evaluation of innovation impacts. Current measurable indicators include violence transmission patterns (42% of protection alerts concern under-6 children, 70% of current cases show family violence histories), response system effectiveness (daily averages: 7 domestic violence complaints, 21 police interventions), and existing technological solutions (AinoAid chatbot, GPS monitoring bracelets, real-time shelter availability platforms) ready for enhancement and evaluation.

The pilot could generate three distinct but interconnected levels of outcomes that systematically feed European research and practices. For instance :

Knowledge Generated	Direct Applications	Scaling Potential
Theoretical Frameworks • Intersectional vulnerability transmission models	Training Protocols • Culturally-adapted police training for multicultural contexts	EU Training Network • Standardized multicultural domestic violence curricula

• Cultural hierarchy dynamics in violence patterns • Behavioral pattern analysis across diverse contexts	• Social worker education for diverse family structures • Behavioral intervention techniques for practitioners	• Cross-border knowledge exchange programs • Behavioral assessment competency frameworks
Intervention Methodologies • Multi-generational healing approaches • Cultural protective factor identification	Policy Guidelines • EU domestic violence directive amendments / Member state policy recommendations • Poverty reduction-violence prevention protocols	Legislative Framework • Standardized risk assessment procedures
Technology Solutions • AI-powered risk prediction for diverse populations	Digital Platforms • Risk assessment tools for diverse communities • Multilingual intervention apps	European Technology Hub • Cross-cultural adaptation algorithms / linguistic approach
Evidence Base • Social aspects-violence correlation metrics	Pilot Implementations • Multi-ethnic urban community programs • Intercultural mediation services	Continental Rollout • 100+ European cities implementation • International development applications notably towards small islands developing states and postcolonial societies

6. Pathways to impacts

Examples of Measurable Research Outcomes & Deliverables

- Validated theoretical frameworks for intergenerational violence transmission with baseline/outcome metrics
- AI-powered risk assessment tools tested
- Culturally-adapted training curricula for security/social practitioners with effectiveness indicators
- Evidence-based policy recommendations with cost-effectiveness analysis
- Proven intervention protocols for breaking violence cycles with measurable impact targets
- Replicable governance frameworks for multi-institutional coordination

"Territorial Laboratory" Methodology for European Transfer

La Réunion's insularity creates a delimited study environment where the entire prevention-detection-intervention continuum can be systematically observed and measured. The territory's comprehensive data infrastructure and multi-actor coordination provide optimal conditions for testing interventions before European scaling, while established baseline measurements enable systematic impact evaluation and development of adaptation protocols for diverse European contexts.

7. Partnership Contact

Interested coordinators should reach out to discuss partnership opportunities, consortium building, and proposal development:

• Département de La Réunion - Innovation Infrastructure

Virginie ELSSASS | Head of the Public Innovation Lab [VA]Lab

+262 692 97 43 89 | virginie.elssass@cg974.fr

Institutional support, undergoing behavioral research program

• Ruizia - Strategic Research & European Networks

Dr. Evelyne Tarnus | Research Co-Director | Innovation & Collaboration

+262 692 19 94 14 | Evelyne.tarnus@cellule-europe.re

SSH research expertise on marginalized territories, European consortium building, and Research impact strategies