

## **MEMEX project to help the inclusion of endangered communities**

*MEMEX project is funded by the European Union and coordinated by IIT-Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia*

Genoa (Italy), February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – The MEMEX European project has set to work to develop artificial intelligence and augmented reality technologies able to help the social inclusion of people who risk of being marginalized, by promoting their stories. The project, which is embodied by a new app, is to be tested in Paris' most vulnerable residents of the 19<sup>th</sup> district, in Barcelona by migrant women, and in Lisbon by the communities originated from the first immigrations to Portugal. Coordinated by Alessio Del Bue from IIT-Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia in Genoa (Italy), the project has been funded by the European Union under the programme “Horizon 2020” with almost 4 million euros for 3 years and involves research institutes, NGOs and companies in Italy, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, France and Belgium.

Among the objectives of the European Union programme “Europe 2020” there was the reduction of people endangered from social exclusion; in 2017 there has been 24.4% of people, especially women and young people between 18 and 24 years old, in all Europe at risk of poverty and marginalization (Eurostat, 2019). In this social context, MEMEX project aims to develop new technologies that encourage the visibility of the most vulnerable social groups, by exploiting the pervasive presence of *smartphones*.

The new MEMEX technologies will make it possible to tell the stories of the most endangered communities, thanks to the possibility of building narrative paths with pictures, videos, maps on and around the cultural heritage of the different territories. By telling their stories, the communities not only will be able to have visibility with their stories shared to the public, but also to connect with the territory they live in, discovering historical and artistic insights.

*“In our project, we will have to harmoniously unify technological and scientific aspects with the social and cultural mediation ones. MEMEX technologies will be developed following the needs of those communities who want to tell their stories”,* says Alessio Del Bue, coordinator of the project and responsible for the PAVIS Lab at IIT-Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia.

The project involves the development of artificial intelligence and augmented reality technologies along different stages: the creation of a software to geo-locate people and

objects, the integration of tools to manage the stories structure, and the connection with the information on the territory artistic-cultural heritage. An analysis of the communities' social needs will complement the technological development from the beginning to the end of the project.

The MEMEX app will be tested by heterogeneous social groups with possible different communication needs: the migrant women living in Barcelona and with whom we will realise activities for the valorisation of the cultural heritage of the city; the communities originated by the immigration to Lisbon of the old Portuguese colonies inhabitants will be useful to collect memories, traditions and their contribute to the Portuguese culture; inhabitants and local actors of the Rosa Parks area in Paris, a neighbourhood concerned by strong social issues, will be mobilized to create digital storytelling about personal experiences, urban transformation, common heritage

The creation of MEMEX app has the power to positively impact on the European multicultural society, being an instrument to be used in schools and educational institutes as a digital support to learning; by government bodies to define social inclusion policies by following the guidelines emerged from the project; and by artists and digital communities to further develop the app as a way of expression.

The consortium is composed by: IIT-Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia (Italy), Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (Italy), EY (Italy), ECCOM (Italy), Mapillary (Sweden), Interactive Technologies Institute - Larsys (Portugal), Michael Culture Association (Belgium), Dédale (France), Interarts (Spain), Noho (Ireland), Mapa das Ideias (Portugal).

Useful links:

Eurostat Document: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/10155585/KS-04-19-559-EN-N.pdf/b8528d01-4f4f-9c1e-4cd4-86c2328559de>

Website: <https://memexproject.eu/>



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