

Press Release

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EU-PROJECT SHOTPROS: VR TRAINING FOR THE POLICE CONVINCES

The VR training system co-developed by the AIT Center for Technology Experience is inspiring police professionals across Europe.

The development of a training system and an innovative VR solution for police training in Europe is the focus of the Horizon 2020 project SHOTPROS. Launched in 2019, the research project is co-managed by the Center for Technology Experience at AIT. Field tests with police officers showed almost complete approval for the new VR training system. A roadshow will be launched in February 2022 to showcase the potential and benefits of the innovative training system to police organizations and user groups across Europe.

VR training as a response to changing risk scenarios

Terrorist attacks like the one in Vienna in 2020, escalating demonstrations or operations in the environment of organized crime - changing threat and risk scenarios have greatly changed the demands on European police professionals in recent years. Police officers are increasingly involved in threatening and critical scenarios. Every day, stressful situations arise where lightning-fast reactions are essential for survival. The ability to make the right decisions in a matter of seconds is a key factor in the successful outcome of a situation. This is exactly where the SHOTPROS project comes in. The goal is to develop an innovative training program as well as a VR solution to better train challenging scenarios in the future and thus increase the performance of European security authorities.

Successful tests with 800 police professionals

"Since the start of the project in 2019, the international research consortium has made great progress in developing an innovative training system for European police officers," says project coordinator Markus Murtinger. More than 800 police officers from all over Europe with different professional experiences have already tried and evaluated the new VR solution to enable further improvements. The technical project partner RE-liON is constantly adapting the system in an agile, user-oriented process - a method that has been very well received by the trainees. "Our latest studies have shown that 96 percent of the police officers who have tried out the system would recommend the solution for future trainings," Murtinger is pleased to report. The feedback from trainers is also very good: "It's a great way to be able to train many different scenarios regardless of location and time," emphasizes a Berlin police trainer from the project consortium.

Police experts and trainers convinced of the benefits

In particular, SHOTPROS can be used to train complex operational situations very efficiently compared to real training. The vast majority of trainees (97 percent) were completely convinced: "The new VR-based training system makes it easier to acquire skills and is therefore much better equipped to deal with real incidents. The safe environment allows more repetitions and detailed

debriefing with the trainers. This leads to better learning outcomes and a more immersive learning experience.

Rapid innovation through agile, user-centric customization

The VR training solution was shaped by continuous feedback from police departments on the project. To enable realistic training, the SHOTPROS project developed a specific tactical police equipment belt to be used in the VR training setting. In addition, the training area was increased to 70 x 100 meters to allow training of large scenarios such as amok runs or incidents in public places. "Our studies show that around three quarters of police officers can orient themselves very well in the virtual environment," emphasizes Helmut Schrom-Feiertag, project manager at the AIT Center for Technology Experience. The newly integrated real-time stress measurement, which provides trainers with additional information about the trainee's stress level, was positively received. The project also showed that the role of trainers is changing: The trainer dashboard and after-action review gives them the opportunity for improved interaction with trainees during and after training and provides trainers with concrete data on training performance.

Roadshow starts in February 2022

The implementation of an innovative VR training solution contributes to the digitalization strategies and specifications of European police authorities. The aim is to convince all decision-makers of the benefits and added value of the new system. Therefore, a Europe-wide roadshow will be launched in February 2022 to demonstrate the VR-based police training initially in the partner countries Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Romania and to offer test opportunities.

A team of 13 European project partners has been working together on the SHOTPROS European research project since 2019. It is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 program (grant agreement no. 833672). <https://shotpros.eu>

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