



PRESS RELEASE

iHERITAGE: ICT Mediterranean platform for UNESCO cultural heritage

Visualising the archaeological finds exhibited in museums in the original context; recreating the architectural and urban environment of art venues; reconstructing the historical and archaeological context of sites with restored finds; participating in the reconstruction of excavations; living scenes of life and costumes of the past; activating a space-time elevator allowing us to observe the changes of cultural sites over time.

These actions are just an example of the innovative solutions carried out by “**iHERITAGE ICT Mediterranean platform for UNESCO cultural heritage**”. **AR/VR/MR will be applied to UNESCO sites of six Mediterranean countries partner of the project: Italy, Egypt, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon, and Portugal.**

The project **starts from Palermo**, Sicily, at a time when the world of culture and tourism is experiencing a profound crisis due to the health emergency, and it is **ideated by Lucio Tambuzzo**, “**Network of Castles and Medieval Towns**” Association, led by the **Department of Tourism of Sicilian Region**. It will be presented on December 9th – 10th in the online kick off meeting and a press conference will take place on Wednesday December 9th at 11.00 (CET Time), attended by the **President of Sicilian Region, Nello Musumeci, the Assessor of Tourism, Manlio Messina, the Assessor of Cultural Heritage, Alberto Samonà, the Assessor of Productive Activities, Mimmo Turano and Khaled ElSaadany, Joint Technical Secretariat ENI CBC MED Programme.**

From the creation of the first **Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Mediterranean basin**, to **AR/VR audio-video guides** - that will give access to 3D reconstructions, accessible cross media on PC, smartphone, tablet and AR glasses. From the **ARcheo Cinema** – that will let the user “live” the famous scenes of the movies shot inside the archaeological site of Petra in AR, including the famous “Indiana Jones” – to the **SPACE-TIME ELEVATOR** - an installation that leads you in a virtual lift moving through space and time. Over **70 innovative products** will be co-created, prototyped, tested and commercialised within the Living Labs, which will be presented during the kick off meeting.

*“iHERITAGE will show us the Mediterranean UNESCO heritage - **Lucio Tambuzzo** said, project creator - as we have never seen it. Dozens of new AR / VR / MR technological solutions will open the way for an unprecedented and democratic relationship with oral traditions, cultural heritage and archaeology, revealing forms, contexts and contents that would otherwise be invisible and reserved only for insiders. The project will also support the creative industry and innovative start-ups in six Mediterranean countries, thanks to fundings intended to create new augmented and virtual contents in our leading sectors: culture and tourism. The set of innovative technologies and a cultural heritage of global significance are the basis of a*



new generation of experiences that gives strength to our great global digital challenge, where the past predict a promising future".

The **UNESCO sites** of the aforementioned countries that will benefit from the products and results generated by the project are:

- selected Sicilian UNESCO sites that will be identified by the Department of Tourism of the Sicilian Region, in collaboration with the Department of Cultural Heritage and the University of Palermo
- selected Spanish UNESCO sites that will be identified by the FPA El Legado Andalusi
- Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur (Egypt)
- Petra (Jordan)
- Byblos (Lebanon)

*“The enhancement of our archaeological heritage and monuments from a tourist point of view - **said the Regional Assessor of Tourism Manlio Messina, whose Department is Lead Beneficiary of the project** - is certainly one of the objectives that we have set from the very beginning of Musumeci government. The Sicilian Region is a treasure chest known all over the world and envied by the world. The application of new technologies, linked to virtual reality, to the sites that are part of the UNESCO network creates opportunities in step with the times to improve and strengthen their valorisation. This - continues Messina - is the task that we must carry on so that Sicily, which already is among the first tourist destinations in the world, can grow in terms of arrivals”. “iHERITAGE project involves us as lead partner and also connects partners of the Euro-Mediterranean basin such as Egypt, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon and Portugal, which boast a heritage of the highest level, like Sicily – the Assessor said. We will be able to observe the places of history as they were in the past, we will be able to dwell on every smallest detail by making a visit from our home through our smartphones or tablets. All these actions - Messina continues - can only improve both access to the sites and the experience of their discovery. But iHeritage will also increase the entrepreneurial skills of young people, public administration employees and researchers through training courses, improve self-employment opportunities through support to spin-offs, as well as offer an important boost to employment in the sector of creative industry”.*

iHERITAGE ICT Mediterranean platform for UNESCO cultural heritage is a strategic project co-financed by the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme of the European Union for € 3.469.510,80. The total budget of the project is € 3.874.287,06. The project will last 30 months (starting from the date of signature of the contract with the Managing Authority: September 15th, 2020). **iHERITAGE** involves 10 partners from 6 Mediterranean countries: Italy, Egypt, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon, Portugal and has been recognized among the most strategically important projects of all 198 proposals presented throughout the Mediterranean basin.



*The 2014-2020 ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) initiative funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The Programme objective is to foster fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social and territorial development, which may advance cross-border integration and valorise participating countries' territories and values. The following 13 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia. The Managing Authority (MA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). **Khaled ElSaadany**, Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) | ENI CBC MED Programme.*

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