EU Project developed the Police Training of the Future

The Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation project SHOTPROS is developing an innovative Virtual Reality (VR) solution for European police training for two years. The third year of the project aims to further develop features and the training curriculum beyond state of the art. Also, the project will demonstrate the innovative training system and its potential to stakeholders across Europe.

Better Decision Making and Acting Performance enhanced by VR-Training

European street patrol police officers are increasingly confronted with new challenges that require to properly evaluate the situation and to decide and act correctly under stress. Therefore, the SHOTPROS project is developing a decision making and acting based training framework and VR training solution to support first responders´ action control in threatening situations. The VR enhanced police training contributes to the improvement of the competences and capabilities of European law enforcement agencies to prevent and mitigate the impact of criminal acts, whilst protecting fundamental European rights of its citizens.

Police Training of the Future – High Realism, Excellent Training Experience

Since the project start in 2019, the consortium has made significant progress towards its ambition to develop innovative law enforcement training. More than 800 police officer with different levels of work experience have tried the VR solution and evaluated it to enable further improvement. The technical partners adapted the system in an agile, end user centred process – with big success! Latest studies have shown, that 96% of the police officers who tried the system recommend using VR training in the future. "It´s a great solution to train anywhere, anytime, anything", a German police trainer highlights after using the SHOTPROS VR solution.

Particularly training of complex operational situations can be conducted in VR very efficient compared to real-life training – about 87% of police officers reported, that they can acquire skills in VR that better prepare them for real incidents. The secure environment allows for more repetitions and detailed debriefing with the trainer, which leads to better learning outcomes and a more intense learning

experience. Those potentials, together with the possibility to train in different scenarios with variations of the stress level (by adding stress cues) are the main reasons for the positive feedback from police officers.

Technological Innovation driven by End User´s Needs

The VR training solution was shaped by the feedback from the law enforcement professionals in the project. The project team has developed a tangible belt with police gear that can be used in the VR to enable realistic training. Also, the training area was increased to 70 x 100 metres to allow for training of large scenarios like amok shootings or incidents on public spaces. Studies have shown that about 76% of the police officers have a good orientation in the virtual environment. Another major innovation is the integrated real-time stress measurement that provides additional information for the police trainer about the stress level of the trainees. Together with the trainer dashboard and after action review the role of police trainers has changed since they have more options to interact during and after the training. Markus Murtinger, project coordinator of SHOTPROS points out: "We have developed a training framework, enhanced by Virtual Reality, to change the training methods in law enforcement agencies to improve decision making processes and minimize use of force, collateral damages and escalations."

Implementing innovative training solutions also contributes to the digitalisation strategies of European law enforcement agencies. To make this possible, however, all stakeholders must be convinced from the benefits and added value. Therefore, the SHOTPROS project is currently planning a road show across Europe to demonstrate the VR-enhanced police training in Q1-Q2 2022. The VR system will be in Austria, Romania, Germany (Berlin & NRW), the Netherlands and Belgium. Stakeholders such as police officers, training experts, policy-makers in the field of police training and journalists will be invited to experience they system and learn more about the project results.

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