

VIRTUAL ARCH – Visualize to Valorize

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For a better use of hidden archaeological heritage in Central Europe

Cultural heritage is at the heart of what it means to be European. This has been discovered by both governments and citizens as a means of improving economic performance, people's lives and living environments. Indeed archaeological heritage is also now widely appreciated as an essential part of Europe's underlying socio-economic, cultural and natural capital. This is a significant change in focus as the protection of archaeological findings and sites have traditionally been regarded as costs to society. Central Europe has a broad diversity of archaeological heritage, partly excellently developed and utilized. However, a broad share of heritage sites – even of international importance – is very often hardly visible and tangible for the public and faces increasing threats. In addition, inherent potentials for regional development lie idle and are waiting to become unveiled. But only archaeology, as prime owner of knowledge and information, may introduce those hidden pearls for economic use and implementation.

The [VIRTUAL ARCH project](#) will contribute to a sustainable use and protection of non-visible, little known, underground or submerged archaeological heritage by increasing the capacities of public actors in the field of heritage protection, presentation and valorization. This will be achieved by introducing innovative 3D documentation and visualization approaches and methods such as trend-setting ICT & Virtual/Augmented Reality (VR/AR) tools. Transnational cooperation will support the development of respective solutions by development of standard procedures, common tools and knowledge exchange. This will also leverage hidden heritage sites as stimulant for regional growth and employment in new industries.

The project is funded by Interreg Central Europe Programme, under the Priority 3 “Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in Central Europe”, specific objective “improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources”. The total budget of VIRTUAL ARCH is 2.1 mil. Eur, with an ERDF support of 1,7 M Eur. The project will run until June 2020.

The project consortium, coordinated by the Archaeological Heritage Office of Saxony (Germany), includes also the [3DOM unit](#) of FBK and the Superintendence of the Autonomous Province of Trento. The project will develop, test, validate and deploy its solution in 8 pilot areas, including the Medieval Mining remains on the Calisio mountain, around the municipality of [Civezzano, Trento, Italy](#).

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