



## Three European Project Gather to discuss the use of Augmented Reality for First Responders

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Can Augmented Reality enhance the capabilities of first responders? This was the question addressed in an online workshop held on 20 April 2021 and featuring the participation of RESPOND-A, FASTER and INGENIOUS, 3 EU projects funded under the Horizon 2020 research programme aimed at developing new technologies for first responders. The 2-hour generated great interest, attracting around 140 participants from more than 40 countries from Europe and worldwide.

*“The technology development is impressive although devices using AR are not yet ready to be used in the field. The travel between innovation to adoption is always critical. Having opportunities to share knowledge and discuss the possible use cases and the usability of these new applications with researchers, industry and practitioners is paramount. The workshop's success, organized by Respond A, clearly demonstrates the huge interest for this New Technology for First Responders”* Marie-Christine BONNAMOUR (PSCE), communication manager of RESPOND-A and organiser of the workshop.

From operating through walls, inspect harsh areas and improve general operational management, Augmented Reality Technologies have the potential to improve and facilitate the management of crises by first responders. Through handheld devices or headmounted displays AR may allow to minimize required user output, enable the visualization of spatial information, capture image/video and get a multi-perspective view of the crisis situation.

During the workshop the three projects shared their experience in designing and/or integrating Augmented Reality technologies within their respective development. This was a very valuable event in terms of knowledge sharing although the projects are at different stages of their progress. The success of the workshop illustrated the widespread interest in the topic of innovative technologies for first responders, and in Augmented Reality in particular. It also paved the way for fruitful future cooperation between these 3 involved projects and other related initiatives.

The presentations and recording of the workshop are available at <https://respond-a-project.eu/>

### **About RESPOND-A**

RESPOND-A project aims at developing holistic and easy-to-use solutions for First Responders by bringing together the complementary strengths of its Investigators in 5G wireless communications, Augmented and Virtual Reality, autonomous robot and unmanned aerial vehicle coordination, intelligent wearable sensors and smart monitoring, geovisual analytics and immersive geospatial data analysis, passive and active localisation and tracking, and



interactive multi-view 360o video streaming. The synergy of such cutting-edge technological advancements is likely to provide high-end and continuous flows of data, voice and video information to First Responders and their Command & Control Centres for predicting and assessing the various incidents readily and reliably, and saving lives more efficiently and effectively, while maximising the safeguarding of themselves, before, during and after disasters. To this end, RESPOND-A envisions at exercising First Responders for getting familiar with the project technological outcomes, and demonstrating their real-world performance and effectiveness in the classified training facilities of our Responder Partners under hydrometeorological, geophysical and technological disaster scenarios.

<https://respond-a-project.eu/>

### **About INGENIOUS**

The [INGENIOUS](#) project is developing a **Next Generation Integrated Toolkit (NGIT)** for Collaborative Response which ensures high level of Protection and Augmented Operational Capacity to respond to the disaster scene. Among the components integrated in the uniform, boots and helmet of the First Responder, the NGIT also includes wearables, communication and localisation components, sensors, add-ons delivering augmented reality functions, an advanced K9 vest, smart devices in the air and on the ground, such as self-exploring drones, multi-fusion and expert reasoning modules, web and mobile applications, etc. The project has been active for almost two years, making real progress on the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prototypes of the different tools. Currently, the project continues with the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of LITs (Laboratory Integration and Testing sessions) and the 1<sup>st</sup> round of SSTs (Small Scale Field Tests) where all the components are being tested, integrated and validated with the support of the end users. One more round of LITs and SSTs and 2 Large Scale Field Validation demonstrators/exercises (FSXs) will be conducted by the end of the project's lifetime.

To learn more about INGENIOUS and ongoing activities visit the project's website: <https://ingenious-first-responders.eu/>.

### **About FASTER**

FASTER project main objective is to develop new technologies to help and protect first responders during their operation and to improve their capabilities in terms of situational awareness and communication. The set of tools including ergonomic wearable devices, sensors, autonomous air and ground vehicles, artificial intelligence capacity, augmented reality interfaces, K-9 support technologies, resilient communications and a common operational picture for mission planning and monitoring, have been tested in three pilot sites: Madrid (ES), Moncalieri (IT) and Kajaani (FI). The project is now approaching the last year of its lifecycle during which technical teams are fine tuning the tools taking into account the comments and suggestions made by first responders.



[www.faster-project.eu](http://www.faster-project.eu)