



JULY 2022

IT IS TIME TO SAY GOODBYE, FOR NOW

SINCE DECEMBER 2019, THIS PROJECT CONSORTIUM HAS GIVEN THEIR ALL TO DEVELOP THE FIRST TRAINING TOOL EXISTENT FOR THE FISHING SECTOR THAT CAN HELP THE CREW IN LEARNING THE PROCEDURES OF HOW TO REACT IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, APART FROM GUIDELINES AND HANDBOOKS. THIS PROJECT IS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS CLOSING THIS GAP, BUT BE SURE TO KEEP AN EYE ON US AS THE PROJECT PARTNERS ARE KEEN ON CONTINUING IN THIS LINE OF WORK.



IN DECEMBER 2019, SIX VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDER EXPERTS, AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FISHING INDUSTRY, STARTED AN ERASMUS+ PROJECT CALLED 'VIRTUAL REALITY FOR MARITIME EMERGENCIES', UNDER THE ACRONYM 'VR-ME'. FOR 30 MONTHS THE PROJECT PARTNERS WILL WORK ON DEVELOPING A TRAINING PROGRAMME AND VIRTUAL REALITY SIMULATION FOR MARITIME EMERGENCIES ON BOARD A FISHING VESSEL.

THE NECESSITY TO IMPROVE SAFETY AT SEA

Safety at sea in the fisheries sector rarely attracts media headlines! But when it does, this is more often because of accidents and fatalities, than because of its reliability and efficiency. The fact remains that far too many fishermen still sustain serious work-related injuries or death even within the European Union of today. The EU and its Member States are still lagging behind when it comes to the implementation and ratification of internationally agreed legislative instruments on safety at sea in fishing, especially if compared with similar instruments for shipping.



Safety at sea is everyone's responsibility. A high rate of accidents only casts a shadow over fisheries and prevents young fishers from entering the sector. This is why with the VR-ME project the partners have the ultimate goal to prepare fishermen to better face maritime emergency situations on board, decrease the accidents and fatalities rate, get towards a harmonization of emergency on board procedures, and increase computer literacy of fishing professionals and the digitalization in the sector.

THE VR-ME TRAINING COURSE TESTING

Pilot testing of the virtual reality simulator took place in France, Spain, and the Netherlands. In the same countries and in Greece, information days will be set up to receive external evaluation on which the simulations can be complemented and improved.

For instance, SQLearn did so in June at the Posidonia Exhibition 2022 in Greece. The fishing sector attendees were very pleased with the



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demonstration and reported to having been amazed by the VR development and it's response to the reality. It proved to be a valuable event for the project partners as positive comments were received and everyone stressed the importance of the VR-ME scenarios and the user-friendliness of the application. The attendees were handed out promotional materials (brochures and promotional gifts) concerning the project.

Simultaneously, in the Netherlands, the choice was made to carry out the tests and the information day with people who are relatively new to the sector. The application received also here a very positive response. The participants were particularly enthusiastic about the virtual environment that contributed to the feeling of training in a realistic environment. The attendees also indicated that this way of learning made them enthusiastic and stimulated them to train more emergency procedure components in this way. To sum up, the simulator training made participants feel better prepared to the basic safety training, the application of necessary emergency procedures and potential emergency situations aboard.

THE VR-ME TRAINING COURSE DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE

After all the developing, testing, and feedback rounds it was time to present the VR-ME training simulator to the larger public. In July, the project consortium held a dissemination conference in Brussels in the European Parliament, which was co-hosted by Mr Gabriel Mato, member of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries.

The objectives and project results were presented and attendees were given a demonstrative session of the 3D environment training tool as well as ample time to try out the Oculus simulator tool themselves.

It is safe to say that the outcome of the project is excellent and it is now up to you to carefully examine the VR-ME training tool and for it to be picked up by the competent authorities.

We invite you to download the software via our website. This is where you will also find the installation guidelines and the simulator handbook.

CONTACT

Website: www.vr-me.eu

LinkedIn: @VRME_EU

Twitter: @VRME_EU

We thank you for your interest and we would love to hear from your experiences with teaching and/or training with the virtual reality simulator for maritime emergencies.

Project Consortium:

Institut Maritime de Prévention (IMP), the project coordinator, [website](#)

SGS TECNOS, a renowned training company specially focused on work safety, [website](#)

SQLearn, the software developer, [website](#)

ARVI, the fishing vessel owners' co-operative of the port of Vigo, [website](#)

Europêche, the main representative of the fishing industry in Europe, [website](#)

PFA, the pelagic freezer-trawler association, [website](#)



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