

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest MIRROR Newsletter!

ABOUT MIRROR

MIRROR is a research project funded by the European Union which aims to understand how people perceive Europe as a destination for migration. It focuses on the development of an integrated platform and tools for media impact and perception analysis, as well as policy recommendations and actionable insights.



RESEARCH NEWS AND PROGRESS

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the drawbacks attached, the project is progressing steadily according to plan and success is on its way!

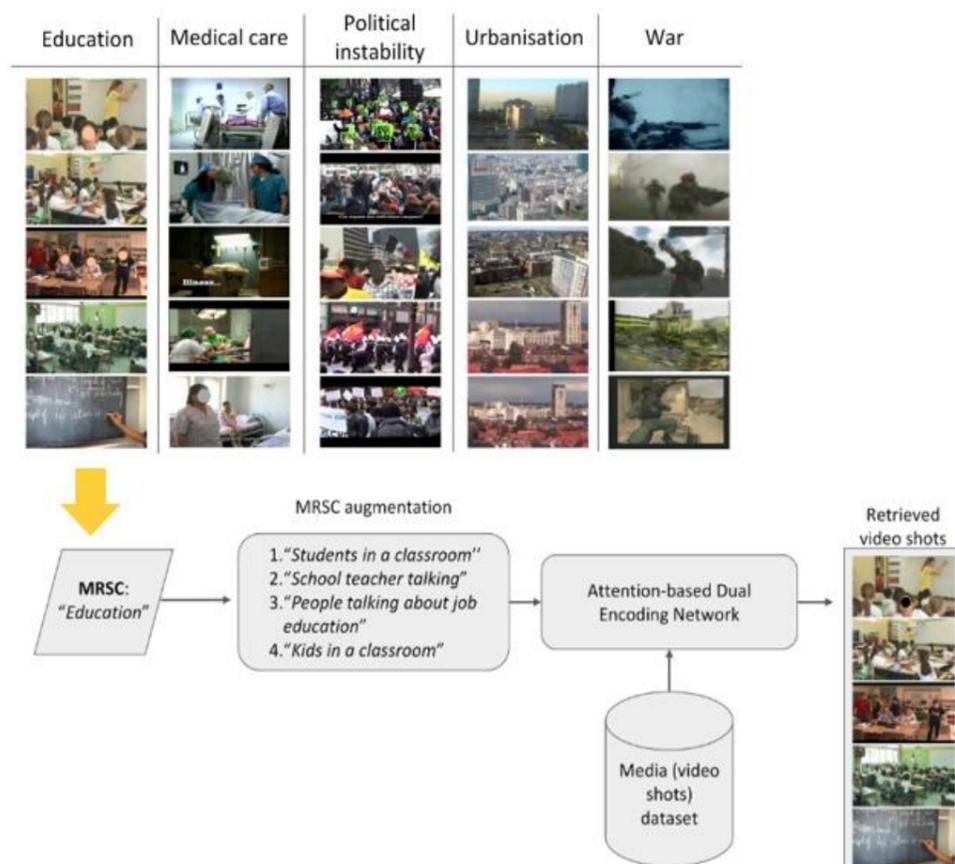
Since our last newsletter, the project has achieved many important milestones and results: MIRROR made significant progress towards its goal of an integrated platform for a thorough study of the perception of Europe. Tools supported by the MIRROR platform will allow contrasting the perception and reality in Europe and create awareness for the impact of resulting misconceptions.

Also, the consortium has successfully virtually conducted early validation activities and workshops, demonstrating the first version of the MIRROR platform's capabilities to high-level representatives from the fields of national and European policy-making, border security, civil society and to humanitarian aid organizations.

At the Core: Migration Related Semantic Concepts

Migration is an important topic for our economy and society. Several factors, including perceptions about routes and target countries, may affect migration decisions. In this regard, information provided through various media play a key role in forming (and manipulating) perceptions.

One of the many challenges tackled is the multifaceted nature of migration and how related aspects are expressed in **videos**. With the vast amounts of media and channels, automated analysis is required to detect migration-related content. In MIRROR, we developed a novel method, which combines a theoretical understanding of migration concepts with an advanced analysis that captures the different ways these semantic concepts appear in videos and images. This is especially hard because migration-related concepts are often abstract definitions (e.g., 'ethnic identity').



So, it is very challenging and time-consuming to find and annotate video samples with these notions. In a collaboration between Dr. Mezaris' team (Centre for Research and Technology Hellas) and Dr. Elejalde's team (L3S Research Center Leibniz University Hannover), we aimed at associating abstract migration concepts with visual content without using any visual training samples. The new approach transforms visual and textual content into a common space, in which a straightforward comparison is feasible. Such a system can be employed by users to enrich their analysis of migration contexts and situations with appropriate video coverage.

At the Core: Legal Compliance and Social Acceptance of MIRROR Solutions

Throughout the whole project, special attention is paid to sound ethical practices and respect for the rule of law. Legal expert Prof. Mifsud-Bonnici (University of Groningen) and her team ensures that the MIRROR platform, its technologies and tools comply with ethical principles, fundamental rights in particular rights to privacy, data protection and expression.

Human Rights Checklist

The deployment of automated technologies for the domain of migration together with assessing perceptions and misperceptions that persons migrating to Europe might have, can also create severe implications for human rights. Experts from the Faculty of Law at the University of Groningen have carried out extensive analyses about this topic and have developed a *human rights implications checklist*. The checklist, unique in its kind, is directed towards the members of the consortium that are engaged in building these technologies. It serves to build awareness and to facilitate the discussion on the responsibilities of the MIRROR consortium towards addressing human rights ramifications of the technologies that are developed in the project. Therefore, the checklist ensures that human rights are duly considered at all design phases and not only once the platform is used. University of Groningen will also develop a second human rights implications checklist to be used during the piloting of the MIRROR platform.

Social Acceptance

MIRROR is built on a strong respect for the rule of law, fundamental rights in particular rights to privacy, data protection and expression. Furthermore, keeping in mind that the tools developed in this project are planned for later use in real life scenarios by authorities, government institutions and humanitarian organizations, partner K&I has developed a scheme of factors that influence the societal acceptance of the technological results of MIRROR. For this, researchers have identified 12 different factors clustered into groups which are part of the *Social Acceptance Model*. Furthermore, the list of factors potentially influencing social acceptance will be refined together with representatives of the MIRROR stakeholder group by means of qualitative online interviews.

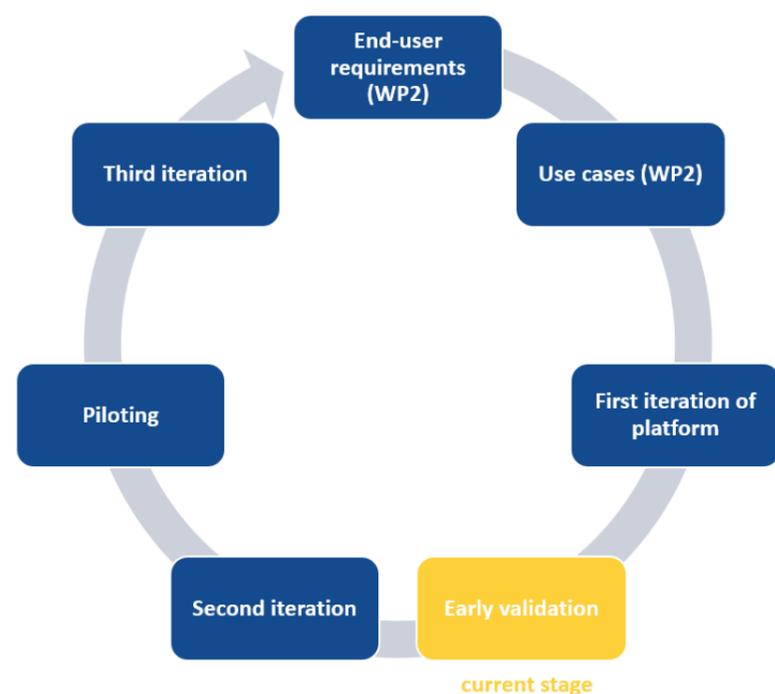
First Round of Early Validation Activities Successfully Completed!

As part of MIRROR's commitment to practitioner-driven research, a round of early validation activities has been organized with different stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that the MIRROR prototype and underlying technologies match end-users needs and expectations.

The highlight of this process was the MIRROR policy maker workshop "Contemporary Challenges in Migration – An Interactive Discussion on the MIRROR Platform" organized on 26th November 2020, which gathered over 40 participants coming from academia, civil society, international organizations, EU and governmental agencies.

The workshop was an exciting opportunity for MIRROR partners, who used this opportunity to introduce stakeholders to the first prototype of the MIRROR platform, its underlying technologies as well as a number of preliminary research findings.

The event was a success as the majority of participants provided positive and constructive feedback to MIRROR partners and expressed a strong interest to be kept aware of further developments in the project.



Workshop at the Swedish Police Authority

On January 18th, the Polismyndigheten Swedish Police Authority organised an on-line workshop about Migration Related Semantic Concepts ("MRSC"). The participants in the workshop were an extended group of analysts and experts from different national and regional units (among them the Regional Border Police operational units), which represent the target group of potential users for the up-coming pilots and testing organizations of the Mirror platform. The aim was to familiarize the participants with the different semantic concepts used within Mirror, the ontology behind and to obtain a deeper understanding of possible MRSC searches. The workshop was followed up with a contribution of Swedish vocabulary within the given topology of MRSCs considered important for the future project and platform.



PUBLICATIONS AND VIDEOS

Publications and Articles

- Explain and Predict, and then Predict Again (2021) Zijian Zhang, Koustav Rudra, Avishek Anand. Presented at the WSDM 2021
- VERGE in VBS (2021) Andreadis, Stelios, Moutzidou, Anastasia, Gkountakos, Konstantinos, Pantelidis, Nick, Apostolidis, Konstantinos, Galanopoulos, Damianos, Kompatsiaris, Ioannis. Presented at the 27th International Conference on Multimedia Modeling (MMM2021), Prague, Czech Republic.
- EUDETECTOR - Leveraging Language Model to Identify EU-Related News (2021): Koustav Rudra, Danny Tran, Miroslav Shaltev
- Analyzing European Migrant-related Twitter Deliberations (2021): Aparup Khatua, Wolfgang Nejdl
- Qualitative Interviews with Irregular Migrants in Times of COVID-19: Recourse to Remote Interview Techniques as a Possible Methodological Adjustment (2021): Maria Gruber, Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Fabienne Lind & Hajo G. Boomgaarden
- Binaire – Sicherheit, Datenschutz, Ethik (03/2020)
- Migration-Related Semantic Concepts for the Retrieval of Relevant Video Content (2020): Erick Elejalde, Damianos Galanopoulos, Claudia Niederee, Vasileios Mezaris
- Automated Text Analysis for Intelligence Purposes: A Psychological Operations Case Study (2020): Stefan Varga, Joel Brynielsson, Andreas Horndahl, Magnus Rosell.

Videos and Blogs

- MIRROR PROJECT VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inqcN4ggAnc>
- MIRROR INTRODUCES FREMDE WERDEN FREUNDE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPB6GfZiJDk>
- SNEAK PEEK AT THE MIRROR INTERFACE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAtG3DqvDgk>
- BLOG: SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP ORGANIZED BY THE MIRROR CONSORTIUM: <https://h2020mirror.eu/?p=1455>

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Migration-Related Risks caused by Misconceptions of Opportunities and Requirement.



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