



PRESS RELEASE

iSAR+ conclusions
**“Social networks are crucial
in crisis scenarios management”,
says European study**

iSAR+ will provide instructions for an efficient use of social media in crisis situations. The European research project reached an important milestone with a simulation of a crisis scenario in the Paris Montparnasse train station.

Social networks and mobile technology provide important information for the authorities in case of crisis situations and catastrophes, helping them to act more efficiently and to reduce bad effects of such events. This is one of the conclusions of the European research project iSAR+ (*Online and Mobile Communications for Crisis Response and Search and Rescue*), funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and lead by the Portuguese technological group TEKEVER.

The project reached an important milestone in September 2014 with a simulation of a crisis scenario at the Paris Montparnasse train station. During the showcase, authorities were receiving information provided by volunteers, mainly via Twitter, on what they saw or experienced (smoke on the station, abandoned luggage, crowd in panic) and thus built a good picture of how the crisis situation developed. Authorities also sent alerts to citizens through their smartphones. Smooth information processing was enabled by a dedicated platform developed within iSAR+.

“The information gathered on social networks and evaluated by our system were crucial for a faster and more efficient reaction of the authorities. For example, people provide us geo-referenced information and some details like the number of injured people or problems to access the accident site”, said João Belfo, iSAR+ project coordinator. During the final showcase, which will take place in Kuopio (Finland) in February 2015, final solutions developed by the iSAR+ consortium will be further validated.

The iSAR+ project main aim is to develop guidelines for citizens and Public Protection and Disaster Relief (PPDR) agents for an effective and efficient use of social media and mobile technology in crisis situations. The iSAR+ platform integrates Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and functionalities that offer additional communication channels between PPDR agents and citizens and enhances high-quality situational awareness for PPDR and citizens, during and after a crisis situation.

iSAR+ (<http://isar.i112.eu>) is a two and a half year European research project, started in January 2013, with an overall budget of around five million euros and with 16 participating institutions from nine European countries.

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