



# NEWSLETTER

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# HEROES

**Novel Strategies to Fight Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Crimes and Protect their Victims**

The number of people, including children, falling victim to human trafficking and child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/CSE) around the world continues to grow, despite increased international attention and resources. In Europe, sexually exploited women and girls make up the majority of human trafficking victims. Moreover, assistance to victims is often limited by the lack of coordination among stakeholders. In this context, the EU-funded HEROES project will explore how to use the latest technological advances and new strategies to prevent and combat CSA/CSE and human trafficking, investe the crimes and better protect victims. It will develop an ambitious, interdisciplinary, international and victim-centred approach. Its aim is to establish a coordinated contribution with law enforcement agencies to address the specific needs of victims and provide protection.

4.99M €  
Budget

17  
Countries

24  
Partners

36  
Months



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101021801.

**MORE INFO**



# What is HEROES?

## HEROES project's strategies and solutions focus on three fundamental pillars to fight against THB and CSA/CSE crimes

- **Prevention:** HEROES will address prevention through a mixed approach of technology and social action. To this end, HEROES will develop free open source applications that will help reduce the risk of becoming victims of THB and increase the security with which children communicate through social networks.
- **Investigation:** The HEROES project will develop technological tools that cover the most important needs of LEAs: data gathering and analysis while embracing the very technical, ethical and legal challenges unique to fighting THB and CSA/CSE crimes.
- **Victim Assistance:** By focusing on prevention and developing technological tools for more effective investigations, HEROES project will positively impact victim assistance at four main levels: Reducing revictimisation, specialised training and support, promoting victim support strategies focused and to promote better procedures and outcomes in victims assistance.

### HEROES will develop relevant contributions addressing the challenges of the "SU- FCT01- 2018-2019-2020" call

The three pillars proposed to combat THB, and CSA/CSE will concentrate all efforts to provide solutions that integrate social, ethical, legal and scientific aspects. These efforts will be aimed at supporting the victims and their environment but will also relate to specific studies aimed at offenders and underlying problems. LEAs, Multi-Stakeholders and society will benefit from a set of methodological, strategic and technological tools that comply with the European Union guidelines, provide good practices for victim statement taking and support pattern recognition of THB and CSAM/CSEM crimes using artificial intelligence.



# What are the Project's Objectives?

## Prevention



- ▶ To provide a variety of preventive measures to reduce THB and CSA/CSE crimes.
- ▶ To reduce the demand of services that may be provided by victims in both legal and illegal sectors.
- ▶ To reduce the risk of (re-)offending by better understanding the behaviour of abusers and potential abusers.

## Investigation



- ▶ To analyse possible involvement of organised crime groups implicated in THB and CSA/CSE in other crimes.
- ▶ To develop new approaches to investigate trafficking of human beings and CSA/CSE crimes.
- ▶ To address new threats of child abuse and coercion and extortion of victims that have escalated in the last years.
- ▶ To provide Law Enforcement Agents with effective means to detect, investigate and bring down open and hidden peer-to-peer networks and websites

## Victim Assistance



- ▶ To provide a variety of preventive measures to reduce THB and CSA/CSE crimes.
- ▶ To reduce the demand of services that may be provided by victims in both legal and illegal sectors.
- ▶ To reduce the risk of (re-)offending by better understanding the behaviour of abusers and potential abusers.

## HEROES will apply Artificial intelligence techniques to implement the tools



Technological tools will be developed to cover the most important needs of the police such as automatic information gathering, data analysis, classification and detection of patterns that contain evidence of these crimes.

# What Happened in the Past Months?

## The H2020 HEROES project starts with an excellent online kick-off meeting

December 15-16th, 2021

In December 1st, a new H2020-FCT project called HEROES started to run. The kick-off meeting took place from December 15th to 16th in Microsoft Teams and was attended by all consortium members. During the KOM, several presentations were performed where objectives and activities were explained in detail and discussed how to execute and decided the next actions/steps for the development of the project in the coming months.



## HEROES Project is Online!

April 15th, 2022

The HEROES website is ready with more information to come. Please check it out at: <https://heroes-fct.eu>. You may also find us on Twitter and LinkedIn and find more news about our project.



✉ [heroes@ucm.es](mailto:heroes@ucm.es)  
 🐦 [@heroes\\_fct](https://twitter.com/heroes_fct)  
 🔗 <https://linkedin.com/in/heroes-fct>

## Exploring Synergies with Others Projects

February 1st, 2022

HEROES started discussions with several projects active in Trafficking in Human Beings and Child Abuse and Exploitation crimes-fighting.

## HEROES in the CC-DRIVER's LEA Cluster

March 15th, 2022

HEROES takes part in the CC-DRIVER's LEA Cluster, a group of 17 EU-funded projects of interest to the global law enforcement and policing community.

## HEROES Collaborations

April 1st, 2022

HEROES has established collaborations with three H2020 projects that share goals in developing and promoting LEAs' capabilities and the prevention and investigation of CSA/CSE. Read more about these projects on the HEROES website.



## First on-site consortium meeting

June 8-10th, 2022

The first face-to-face consortium meeting was held at the Faculty of Law of the Complutense University of Madrid, from June 8 to 10. This meeting was led by the UCM and brought together consortium members. The partners discussed issues related to advances in the development of the project and the next steps to carry out.





# UPCOMING EVENTS



Malaga, Spain, 21 - 24 September 2022.

**Organiser:** European Society of Criminology and Andalusian Interuniversity Institute of Criminology.

**Topic:** Challenges and opportunities in a virtually and physically connected Europe: The need for criminology.



## 22nd Annual Conference of the ESC



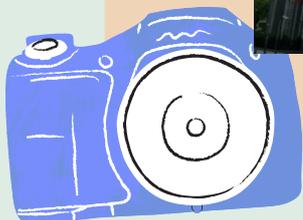
## Projects to Policy Seminar (PPS)



Brussels, Belgium, 30th June - 1st July 2022.

**Organiser:** DG HOME & REA C2.

**Topic:** improving interaction between research and policy.



# HEROES Consortium



The HEROES consortium consists of 24 partners located in 17 countries (11 of EU countries, 1 associated country, and 5 third countries). The consortium is made up of partners with diverse affiliations: 3 universities, 2 small and medium enterprises, 3 research and technology organisations, 6 law enforcement agencies, 1 international organisation, 8 NGOs, and 1 government organisation. The HEROES' consortium combines the expertise of psychologists, sociologists, lawyers, social workers, health workers, computer developers and experts in computer security and forensics, from all over the world with one goal: to fight against the crimes and help victims of human trafficking and child sexual abuse.

## Project Coordinator

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**Did you know that you can be among the first ones to receive these newsletters?**

**Sign-up for the Newsletter here:**

The sign-up form can be found from the project's official website: <https://heroes-fct.eu> towards the bottom of the page.



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Exploitation and Human Trafficking  
Crimes and Protect their Victims



# HEROES

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