RITHMS

Research, Intelligence and Technology for
Heritage and Market Security

WHY RITHMS?

Misappropriation of cultural heritage represents both an economic issue and a cultural wound that cannot be repaired. The illicit trafficking of cultural goods is not a new kind of crime; nevertheless, recent decades have seen a worrying increase in its impact and reach, particularly in conflict and disaster zones.

What was once a phenomenon with mostly local roots has become a lucrative source of income for wider criminal networks, involving both white-collar and traditional criminals, who can now take advantage of online outlets and social media to expand their market. In fact, the lack of regulations, the inconsistency of different national laws, and the uncertainty of object traceability have facilitated a concerning surge in illicit transactions.

In response to this issue, RITHMS Project was conceived to develop a digital platform capable of supporting the investigations of Law Enforcement Agencies in the fight against the illicit trade of cultural property.

WHAT'S RITHMS?

RITHMS is an EU-funded project that aims to build and validate a prototype intelligence IT resource for investigating illicit trafficking in cultural goods. The RITHMS platform is designed to be an innovative, interoperable, and multifunctional system capable of identifying, evaluating, and analysing the relations between criminal and non-criminal actors. By highlighting the networks involved in the illicit trade of cultural property and their potential evolution, the platform will enhance the reach and accuracy of the information available to Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

At its core, the RITHMS platform is based on Social Network Analysis (SNA), which is a method of mapping and analysing social connections between entities, by *network* and *graph* theory. SNA methodology will help understand how actors (both individuals and groups) are connected and how cultural objects flow through these connections.

Thanks to a combination of research, technological development, and training programs providing LEAs with the knowledge and skills required to operate the platform, the RITHMS project aims to define a global strategy to effectively counter the cultural and financial challenges posed by the trafficking of looted and stolen cultural goods. By doing so, the project intends to ensure a tangible positive impact on European citizens and society.

OBJECTIVES

Understand the criminal phenomenon of cultural heritage trafficking

Promote cross-sectoral research bringing together all relevant fields (art market, criminology, legal studies, forensic science, etc.) to broaden the understanding of the criminal phenomenon against cultural property and grasp its connections with other kinds of organised crime.

Provide Law Enforcement Agencies with new technological tools

RITHMS will provide an operational, technological tool to enhance the investigative capabilities of Law Enforcement Agencies: a digital platform based on SNA methodology, developed and validated according to the users' needs and requirements.

Operationalise the collected knowledge and the developed technologies

Trigger all the necessary steps to make RITHMS SNA Platform effective, ensure its implementation, longevity, and exploitation after the Project's end, and foster the validity of RITHMS intelligence results as evidence in court.

Promote cooperation to tackle illicit trafficking in cultural goods

Foster collaboration between the different actors involved in countering this type of crime. Given its organised and mobile nature, addressing the phenomenon from different angles and complementary fronts is necessary to tackle it efficiently. RITHMS will increase cross-national cooperation and activate synergies bringing together diverse expertise and research domains.

OBJECTIVES

CONSORTIUM

19 PARTNERS from 11 COUNTRIES:

Bosnia Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Finland
Germany
Italy
Moldova
Romania
Spain
Switzerland
The Netherlands

CONSORTIUM

ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI TECNOLOGIA	FONDAZIONE ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI TECNOLOGIA Italy (Coordinator)
	ART CRIME PROJECT Italy (Affiliated Entity)
StAG INFORMATION GOVERNANCE	STAG S.r.l. Italy
VTT	TEKNOLOGIAN TUTKIMUSKESKUS VTT OY Finland
ESI European Software Institute Center Eastern Europe	FONDATSIYA EVROPREYSKI SOFTUEREN INSTITUT Bulgaria
RiniGARD Smart technology	RINIGARD DOO ZA USLUGE Croatia
HOUSTON ANALYTICS	HOUSTON ANALYTICS OY Finland
Beia CONSULT INTERNATIONAL	BEIA CONSULT INTERNATIONAL SRL Romania
SatCen	EUROPEAN UNION SATELLITE CENTRE Spain
UNIVERSIDADE DA CORUÑA	UNIVERSIDADE DA CORUNA Spain

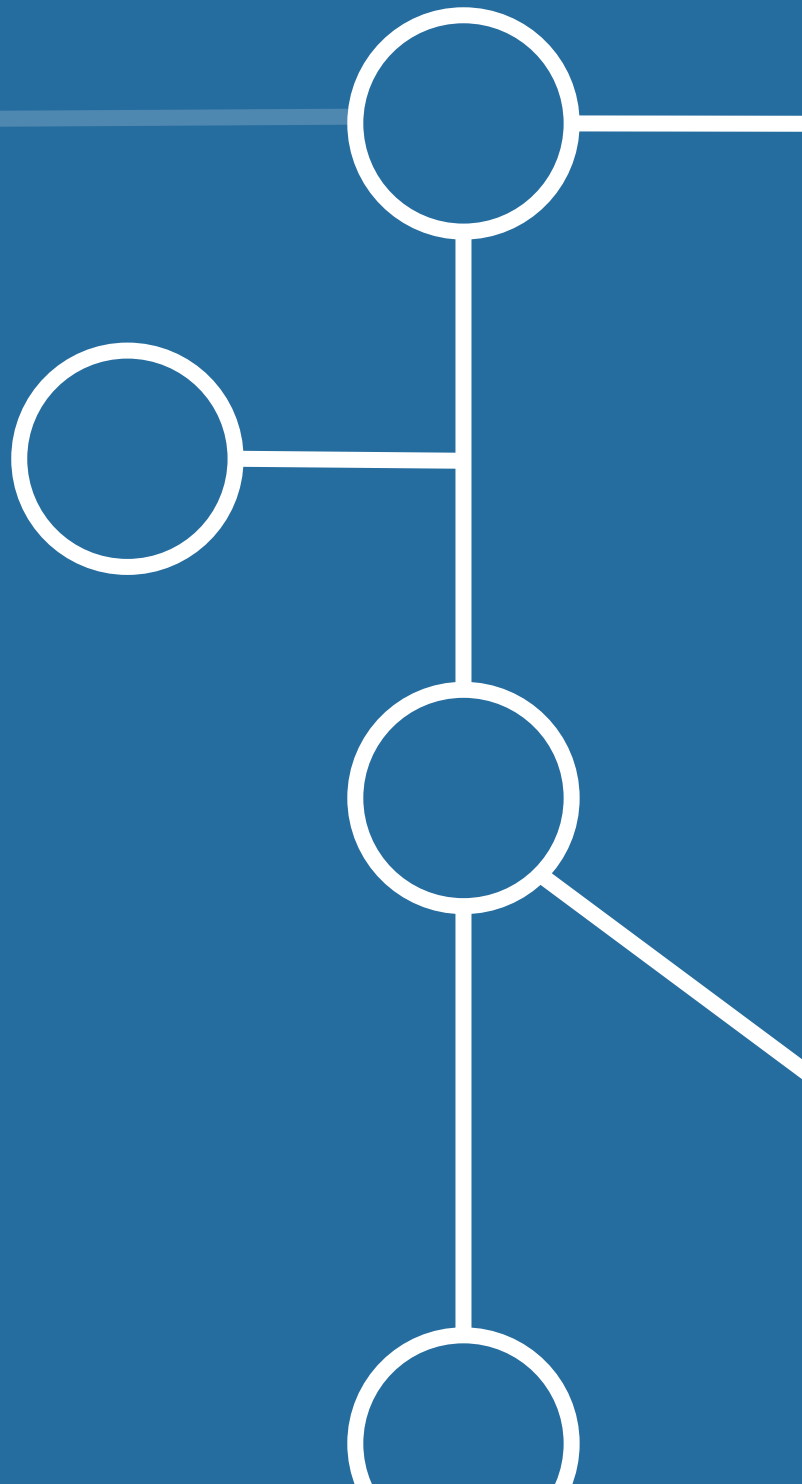|	
HOCHSCHULE FUR DEN OFFENTLICHEN DIENST IN BAYERN Germany	Hochschule für den öffentlichen Dienst in Bayern Fachbereich Polizei
EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOUNDATION Bulgaria	**Европейски институт**
MINISTERO DELLA DIFESA Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale Italy	
MINISTERIO DEL INTERIOR Policia Nacional Spain	**POLICIA NACIONAL**
THE NATIONAL POLICE OF THE NETHERLANDS The Netherlands	**POLITIE**
GLAVNA DIREKTSIA GRANICHNA POLITSIA Bulgaria	
INSPECTORATUL GENERAL AL POLITIEI Moldova	
GRANICNA POLICIJA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE Bosnia and Herzegovina	
CONCEPTIVITY SARL Switzerland (Associated Partner)	**CONCEPTIVITY** 360 SECURITY

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