



## Panel

# JEWISH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES

### **Chairpersons:**

Elias Messinas (Holon Institute of Technology) - Israel

Soultana Zorpidou (Independent) - Greece

### **Description and Motivation:**

Jews have lived in Europe for almost two thousand years. Jewish Communities in Italy and Greece date back to antiquity. Their path throughout history has been challenging. Depending to the political situation or freedoms bequeathed, their growth and prosperity has often been disrupted. They have suffered from discrimination, expropriations, looting, execution, and pogroms, up to the Holocaust where Nazis and antisemitism in many European cities, led to the almost total annihilation of Jewish life throughout Europe. Synagogues and Jewish institutions and libraries were destroyed and cemeteries desecrated. Vibrant communities nearly disappeared and many feel the effects of the Holocaust until today. Small communities find it difficult to remain active and many, after centuries of existence, shrink to the point of disappearance in our days.

This panel invites practitioners to share good practices in programs and solutions in several countries, climates and scales, where Jewish heritage is preserved and disseminated to the public through the successful use of technology.

The participating experts (at least 3) will share their presentations and will discuss with the panelists and the audience projects in Greece, Turkey, Syria and Lithuania, where the use of technology and historic research revealed lost Jewish heritage in Vilnius, restored successfully synagogues in Izmir, created a virtual reality reconstruction of a synagogue in Aleppo, and preserved the architecture of the Aragonia synagogue in Kastoria, Greece. Expected participants: Chairs: Dr. Elias Messinas (Israel and Greece) and Soultana Zorpidou (Greece). Will participate in the panel: Jon Seligman (Israel), Nesim Bencoya (Turkey), and expected participation by the team of the Israel Museum of Jerusalem (Israel) and the International Survey of Jewish Monuments (USA).

**Target Audience:**

We aim to address architects, restoration experts, researchers and professionals from a wide range of different fields related to the restoration of cultural heritage buildings in general, and Jewish heritage buildings in particular. The panel group will explore different angles: from historic restoration and representation, to architectural and engineering, and the use of technology to bring back to light, visible and invisible Jewish heritage. The goal is not only to present good practices, but to share expertise and methodologies, which can be valuable to the restoration, not only of Jewish heritage in other locations, but cultural heritage in general. Further, a lively discussion among the panelists, will also enable the audience to passively learn from the experts, but also to pose their own questions to be discussed by the panelists.

**Keywords:**

Jewish heritage; restoration; architecture; virtual reality; radar scan;