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Virtual Worlds Summit Arrives in Brussels

*OPENVERSE Summit 2026 will bring together EU policymakers, researchers, industry & innovators to shape the future of open, human-centric Virtual Worlds in Europe.
Registrations are now open*

BRUSSELS, 16th June 2026 : Europe wants to have an ecosystem of Virtual Worlds over which it has genuine control. **On 10 September, the OPENVERSE Summit, organised in Brussels**, will bring together researchers, policymakers and industry representatives to define how the continent can establish a sovereign alternative to the closed platforms - most of which are non-European, that are impacting its industry, public services and culture - and turn Europe's ambitions into a concrete plan for who owns the immersive infrastructure of the next decade. Organised by the **OPENVERSE consortium partners**, under the guidance of the European Commission, the **Summit** will take place at the **ALBERT venue in Brussels**, at the heart of EU decision-making.

Europe at a Crossroads in Virtual Worlds

Virtual Worlds (VW) are persistent, immersive environments, based on technologies including 3D and extended reality (XR), which make it possible to blend physical and digital worlds in real-time, for a variety of purposes such as designing, making simulations, collaborating, learning, socialising, carrying out transactions or providing entertainment.

The global virtual worlds market is estimated to grow from around €27 billion in 2022 to over €800 billion by 2030 and is set to transform the business and employment sectors in the EU. As such, VW are rapidly becoming the foundational infrastructure for Europe's digital transformation, reshaping industry, research, culture, education, public services, and climate resilience. Yet global virtual world ecosystems are increasingly dominated by closed, proprietary platforms controlled by a handful of non-European actors.

With the adoption of the Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA) in March 2026, strengthening EU industrial competitiveness, capacity, and decarbonisation, Virtual Worlds now have a clear mandate to contribute to Europe's strategic ambitions.

The OPENVERSE Summit 2026 is Europe's moment to rally around a shared, sovereign vision grounded in openness, interoperability, human-centric design, trust, and strategic autonomy.

“The OPENVERSE Summit is more than a conference. It is a moment for Europe to shape its voice on open, ethical and sovereign Virtual Worlds. Everyone who cares about this future is not only invited, but needed, because it cannot be built without you.”

Francesco Mureddu, OPENVERSE Coordinator

What to Expect

The one-day Summit delivers seven thematic sessions with concrete outcomes for Europe's Virtual Worlds ecosystem:

- ▶ **Future Scenarios 2030–2040:** Expert-led exploration of possible future scenarios for sovereign, open Virtual Worlds, drawing on OPENVERSE foresight scenarios and European initiatives.
- ▶ **Standardisation:** Latest findings on the Virtual Worlds standardisation landscape, including results from the ViWisso study and OPENVERSE Landscape & Gap Analysis.
- ▶ **Co-Creation Toolkit:** Have you heard of the Virtual World platforms: ENGAGE, Arthur, Resonite, Fortnite, Spatial, Rec Room, VRChat, and Sansar? The OPENVERSE project launched a series of participatory co-creation workshops, which led to the development of a toolkit based on lessons learnt from real-world innovation workshops.
- ▶ **OPENVERSE Assets & Legacy:** Official presentation of the OPENVERSE tools developed by the OPENVERSE project over the course of its three-year cycle, including the Technological Framework, Virtual Worlds Observatory, the Roadmap and Collective Intelligence Wiki.
- ▶ **SMEs as Innovation Drivers:** How small and medium-sized enterprises can shape open, sovereign Virtual World ecosystems but how? This session will be focused on panel discussions and audience exchange.
- ▶ **Sustainable Innovation:** Cross-sector lightning talks on how businesses can remain sustainable while growing in the Virtual Worlds ecosystem.
- ▶ **Ethical Virtual Worlds:** Exploring how ethical foresight, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration can build inclusive, trustworthy immersive environments.

Who Should Attend

The Summit is designed for a broad cross-sector audience: Horizon Europe project researchers and consortia; VR/AR/MR developers and technology providers; EU and national policymakers; standards bodies including ETSI, CEN/CENELEC, W3C, IEEE, and the Metaverse Standards Forum; civil society and cultural actors; creative industries; educators; and investors active in immersive technologies.

Anticipated Outcomes

Attendees and the wider European community can expect: a converged European narrative on Virtual Worlds aligned across the Commission, research, and industry; identification of shared challenges across sectors; concrete co-creation outputs from participatory workshops; showcased Horizon Europe innovation; and an OPENVERSE Summit Report containing policy recommendations and technical priorities for Europe's Virtual Worlds future.

Register Now

Registrations for the OPENVERSE Summit 2026 are now open. Places are limited. Attendees are strongly encouraged to register early.

Register at:

<https://open-verse.eu/event/openverse-summit-open-and-co-created-virtual-worlds-for-europe/>

Date: Thursday 10th September 2026

Time: 09:00 – 18:00 CEST (Registration from 09:00)

Venue: ALBERT, Mont des Arts 28, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

Organised by: OPENVERSE Coordination and Support Action (CSA)

Programme: 7 thematic sessions + networking lunch, coffee breaks & exhibition

About OPENVERSE

OPENVERSE is a Coordination and Support Action (CSA), funded under Horizon Europe programme and has received funding from SERI, dedicated to fostering open, interoperable, and human-centric Virtual Worlds in Europe. OPENVERSE connects Horizon Europe research projects, industry,

policymakers, and civil society to develop shared assets, roadmaps, and recommendations that advance Europe's leadership in Virtual Worlds, Extended Reality (XR) and Web 4.0.

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