Short description and transcription of statements of the video “ARCHES explained by the participants”.

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ARCHES is a participatory research project which tries to make museums accessible for people with different access needs.

Needs such as sight, needs such as hearing, and needs such as learning and memory.

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It is composed of museums, like the one we are in, and of universities and technology companies.

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ARCHES is a European project which aims to give people with special needs access to cultural heritage.

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We have 12 institutions from 4 different countries: the United Kingdom, Serbia, Austria and Spain.

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When we started coming here we didn’t know about other disabilities, what their needs are. But now we’ve been here for over 2 years, nearly 3 years. So, we started to understand.

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And here we have begun to realize that every person has different needs. We would need other projects in which we work together, but here is the first time I have recognized the different disabilities. It’s important!

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First of all, nobody knows what to expect when they come into this project.

The project leaders and curators have to accept who is coming, so it is a colorful bunch. And then it's about the art and everybody somehow finds their own language, their approach, their interests - that’s very enriching.

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I like the philosophy of the project. That the potential users of the accessibility tools are involved in their design. It is great to participate and to be involved in the tool development process from the very beginning.

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It's important to allow us, the disabled people, explain what we need because normal people cannot imagine that. We have done this work, and now we want pass the knowledge on to people like ourselves. We want to give other disabled people the help they need.

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Yes, we inform them about our needs.

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This is also a fairly important opportunity to learn first hand and continuously from people who are willing to give us their time and knowledge on accessibility issues.

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We are not actually making the decisions.

They are making the decisions for us and we are just transmitting their ideas.

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They tell us when something isn’t right.

Which is also good. I mean, that's what we wanted.

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I am the disabled person today, but tomorrow it could be you. And you will need what we are fighting for today.

You will need it and you will benefit from it.

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What they’re doing for ARCHES is absolutely fantastic. Because everybody needs to be able to go to other museums and not worry about being able to understand what’s going on there.

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Art is life, art is much more than what you see on TV.

You have to feel it.

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There is a lack of access generally throughout Europe, and actually throughout the world.

But we have some of the best museums here in Europe and we should be showcasing them for everyone.

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There are still a lot of areas where people with special needs are excluded, or that are difficult to access.

However, the museum and the art world of special interest for us.

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I recommend that all museums carry out such projects in order to improve accessibility to cultural heritage. And of course to disseminate the results.

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We want to pass on everything we have learned, so that others do not have to start from scratch. Rather, they will be able to build upon our solutions and insights.

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The nature of the app is certainly not limited to Austria alone, in terms of cultural institutions, but certainly to the whole of Europe.

It can be extended to all countries, all languages, this is what we hope for.

Because there is culture throughout Europe.

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We don’t actually delineate between people with sight loss and hearing loss as other projects have done.

What we do is bring everyone together in a participatory group and ask them what they want.

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We try to think beyond our own profile. In my case, as a visually impaired person, I try to imagine other needs, too.

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And that's why ARCHES is so wonderful. We mix the different people. We don't just work with blind people, not only with cognitively impaired.

We believe everyone has similar needs. And we work according to needs,

not according to disability categories.

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Of course, I work in a very special field and I know quite a lot about accessibility. Yet, every single participants brings a benefit to the group. I can highly recommend to be part of such a project because you can learn a lot.

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I have realized that I can help make things better, within this collaborative effort.

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What I like most about ARCHES? To work with other people for a common goal.

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I think ARCHES could lead the way in the way we think about access in museums.

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If we want museums to have a certain social relevance, to be actors of transformation and social change, we must continuously work with and listen to the public.

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We know we cannot achieve everything we would like to.

However, we understand that it is a seed that can generate new projects,

 new ways of thinking and working, to open the museum to new audiences.

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And also just to say - when the ARCHES project finishes - I hope that something comes out of it.

Friendship.

You know all the work that has been done.

It’s up to the museums now...

to open up

...to use the information that they’ve got. There’ll be no excuse now.

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I want to encourage others to follow the example of ARCHES, because it's a way for us to become autonomous, as a group.

It gives me autonomy and makes it easier for me to move on my own. I can read, if you give me an explanation that I can understand,

just like the rest of the world, like hearing persons. I feel just like the rest of the world.

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I am very happy to be in this project and I would be delighted to see other museums join projects of this kind. Because this is the way that inclusion becomes a reality.

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It is easier for me to take decisions now. I am more secure than before the project.