

# Active and assisted living research and development programme: participation of the Union

2013/0233(COD) - 10/07/2013 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE:** to allow the participation of the Union in the Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Research and Development Programme jointly undertaken by several Member States.

**PROPOSED ACT:** Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:** the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

**BACKGROUND:** demographic ageing has been identified in the Europe 2020 strategy as both a challenge and an opportunity for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. The flagship initiatives “[A Digital Agenda for Europe](#)” and “[Innovation Union](#)” both address demographic ageing as a priority. In its communication entitled ‘[The demographic future of Europe — from challenge to opportunity](#)’, the Commission underlined that increased use of new technologies could help to control costs, improve well-being and promote the active participation in society of elderly people, as well as improving the competitiveness of Union economy.

[Decision No 742/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) on the Community's participation in a research and development programme undertaken by several Member States aimed at enhancing the quality of life of older people through the use of new information and communication technologies provides for a Community financial contribution to the Ambient Assisted Living Joint Research and Development Programme (AAL JP) matching that of the Member States but not exceeding EUR 150 000 000 for the duration of the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013).

An interim evaluation carried out in 2010 concluded that the AAL JP had achieved good progress towards its objectives and remarkable results. **The Commission considers therefore that it should be continued beyond the current funding period (2013) because of its clear added value**, in particular for SMEs, in creating the necessary critical mass in research and innovation at European level in the sector for “healthy ageing”. The new AAL JP would build upon the results of the previous AAL programme, provide for the greater involvement of users (a weakness identified in the evaluation), and include more flexibility in its implementation.

It should be noted that the AAL programme is a major component for supporting the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing with ICT-based innovation.

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT:** the impact assessment report took the following options into consideration:

- **Option 1 - ‘status quo’:** the continuation of the AAL JP for the years 2014 – 2020 along the same lines as the current AAL JP;
- **Option 2 - no AAL JP2:** no dedicated EU programme and cofinancing to bring together national research and innovation programmes in the field of ICT for ageing well at the EU level after 2013;
- **Option 3 - follow-up to AAL JP1:** this option would comprise an adapted scope and improved implementation. The scope of the AAL JP2 programme would be aligned to the full scope of the EIP AHA. The level of EC financing from Horizon 2020 would remain the same as under the FP7.

This option would also entail higher involvement of end-users, broadening the basis of funding to all actors, and improving the operational performance.

The AAL JP General Assembly concluded by vote that continuing the programme is of strategic importance and 15 out of 23 currently participating countries stated **their preferred scenario is the Option 3**.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 185 and the second paragraph of Article 188 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the proposal for a Decision seeks to provide the legal means for the European Union to participate in the **Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Research and Development Programme** jointly undertaken by Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, France, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The AAL programme has the following objectives:

- **accelerate the emergence of innovative ICT-based products and services** for active and healthy ageing at home, in the community, or at work, thus improving the quality of life, autonomy, participation in social life, skills or employability of older adults and increasing the efficiency of health and social care provision;
- **maintain a critical mass of trans-European applied research**, development and innovation for ICT based products and services for ageing well, in particular involving SMEs and users;
- **leverage private investments and improve conditions for industrial exploitation** by providing a coherent framework for developing European approaches and solutions including common minimum standards that meets varying national and regional social preferences and regulatory aspects, respecting the privacy and dignity of the older adults and, where applicable, supporting access to services in rural and peripheral areas or benefiting other groups of people, such as people with disabilities.

The proposal provides for **derogations from the Horizon 2020 programme's Rules for Participation and Dissemination** in order to create a favourable environment for the participation of SMEs.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: the maximum amount EU contribution shall be **EUR 175 million** from the Horizon 2020 DG Connect budget allocated to Societal Challenge 1, theme health, demographic change and wellbeing.