

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

2013/0233(COD) - 31/01/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Claude TURMES (Greens/EFA, LU) on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the participation of the Union in the Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Research and Development Programme jointly undertaken by several Member States.

The parliamentary committee recommended that the position adopted by the European Parliament at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Union's financial contribution: the maximum Union financial contribution to the AAL Programme covering administrative costs and operational costs shall be **EUR 166 250 000** (as opposed to EUR 175 000 000 in the Commission's proposal). The contribution shall be paid from appropriations in the general budget of the Union allocated to the relevant parts of the Specific Programme implementing the [Horizon 2020](#) Framework Programme.

Any entity from any other country associated with the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme may participate in the indirect actions of the AAL Programme at any time provided it provides for its own co-financing.

Programme objectives: the programme shall among other things:

- accelerate the emergence of relevant and affordable innovative integrated solutions, products and services, including ICT-based, **for people with disabilities and for active and healthy ageing**, at home, in the community, or at work, aiming at improving their quality of life, social well-being and inclusion;
- support development of solutions that **contribute to the independence and alleviation of a sense of social isolation of older people**, whereby the ICT component should not replace human contact, but is complementary to it;
- develop cost-effective and **energy efficient** solutions, which are compatible with varying social preferences, socio-economic factors (**including energy poverty, social inclusion**), gender aspects and ensure the protection and security of personal data. Members argued for the **mandatory implementation of the concept of Design for All** to ensure the development and deployment of products that are fully accessible for older people, people with disabilities and the broader population as a whole.
- ensure that all ICT-product and services to be supported shall include features that take account of **protection of privacy from the design stage**;
- protect older people from **high energy bills** and promote solutions improving energy efficiency, including from the perspective of the end-user.

The AAL programme shall otherwise: i) ensure the effective promotion of **gender equality**; ii) establish a favourable environment for the **participation of small and medium-sized enterprises**. At least one SME shall be part of each consortium receiving grants under the annual calls. The programme should aim at dedicating **20%** of its budget allocated for indirect actions to SMEs.

Conditions applicable to the Union's financial contribution: Members stressed the need to ensure there be a strong coherence between the activities of the private-public partnerships and the research priorities defined in the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme, such as open access, equality between men and women and non-discrimination, as well as ethical principles.

Rules of participation: the report proposes that the time to contract shall be published and **limited to five months**.

By 31st December 2015, the Participating States together with the Ambient Assisted Living Association (AALA) shall evaluate the existing financing rules and adopt **a single set of financing rules** to apply to grants signed as of 2016, aiming at reducing the fragmentation and complexities involved with the use of financing rules of different national programmes.

Furthermore, in accordance with the principles of transparency and non-discrimination, calls for proposals organised by AAL JP shall be **published on the web-based Horizon 2020 Participant Portal**.

Evaluation: the Commission shall organise an independent interim evaluation of the AAL Programme by 30 June 2017 and report to the European Parliament and to the Council by 31 December 2017. The result of the independent interim evaluation shall be taken into account in the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.

In order to respond to unforeseen situations or to new developments and needs the Commission may, following the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, review the programme budget within the annual budgetary procedure.