

***Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region joins
the Active and Assisted Living programme***

The Italian Region, Friuli Venezia Giulia, joined the AAL Association on the 8th of November 2017 and it will now be eligible to participate as a full member to the AAL Programme. The recently signed agreement provides proof of the relevance of the AAL programme to regional/local administrations next to the national level. This regional membership strengthens the objective to be closer to the real needs and wishes of European citizens, particularly the older adults.

The Friuli Venezia Giulia companies, end-user and research organizations will be eligible to participate in the AAL Call 2018 **“Smart Solutions for Ageing well”**.

The aim of this call is to support innovative, transnational and multi-disciplinary collaborative projects. The AAL Call 2018 has the following key features that differ from previous AAL calls:

- AAL Call 2018 is open to collaborative projects developing ICT-based solutions targeting any application area(s) within the AAL domain, with a focus on clearly targeted markets.
- AAL Call 2018 allows for more flexibility regarding the scope, size and duration of the proposed projects (including small collaborative projects – please see below).

“Collaborative projects” (carried out by consortia composed of at least 3 organisations from 3 different countries including an end user organisation and a business partner) will continue be funded through this call.

The AAL Programme funds applied research for developing ICT-based (Information & Communication Technologies) innovation in order to enhance the quality of life of older people. Together with the other 18 national and regional funding agencies, the Friuli Venezia Giulia will become now a partner in a fast-moving market environment for age friendly technologies.

“We are delighted to bring on board this forward-thinking Italian Region. With its 1.2 Million inhabitants and its privileged geographical location at the crossroads between Italy, Slovenia and Austria, the Friuli, Venezia, Giulia region

provides a great opportunity for the AAL programme for developing more regional partnerships between member countries – said Mr Rafael de Andres Medina – president of the AAL Association.

The membership of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region in the AAL Association resounds with the strategic orientation of the regional policies for research and innovation sector and for the healthcare and welfare sector too, responding to some specific features of the territory.

In fact, the area is characterized by a very peculiar regional demographic context, with the presence of one of the elder population in Europe. This fact represents an effective social challenge, which demands an innovative strategic approach considering it a chance for the socio-economic development of the territory. In this perspective, the regional context could constitute an effective laboratory for technologies' development and experimentation in this sector.

According to this strategic approach, in 2014 the Region, one of first in Italy, adopted a specific law (RL no. 22/2014) dedicated to Active Ageing, in order to strengthen integrated interventions to enhance the active presence and social inclusion of elderly people, involving strategies and actions across the board, with a significant involvement of the stakeholders to put in place coordinated interventions.

Besides, Friuli Venezia Giulia is renowned for being a hub for science and technology, with an impressive network of at about 50 public and private research centres. In particular Trieste will be the European Capital of science in 2020. AAL represents a strategic trajectories of development both for the research sector and the economic system of the region, identified also in the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy, in particular in the area of specialisation dedicated to "Smart Health". From the economic point of view, the subject is strictly connected to the regional BioHighTech sector, represented by more than 150 companies operating in the field of healthcare.

The Region is already member of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. In fact, in 2015 the European Commission appointed Friuli Venezia Giulia as reference site for Active Ageing.

For the Regional Councillor for Research Loredana Panariti, *"The involvement of the Region in the AALA represents a great opportunity for our territory to develop contacts, networks and new projects in the European context in a very*

promising sector both at a social and economic level. We hope and believe that our scientific and innovation system together with our enterprises will take on this new challenge for the best to create new positive impact”.

General Information on the AAL Programme

The Ambient Assisted Living Association (AALA) was founded in September 2007 to manage the AAL Programme with a decision by the European Parliament and the EU Council co-fund it with 150 Million € from PF7 during 2008-2013. The programme went in its second phase from 2014-2020 under the name Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Programme with 175 Million € of EU co-funding from Horizon 2020.

It currently consists of 19 AAL Partner States, also including Israel and Canada from outside Europe.

The AAL Programme leverages additional public and private investment. Among AAL project partners are SMEs, larger enterprises, end-user organisations, universities and research and technology development (RTD) organisations.

AAL solutions are a combination of ICT based products and/or services that are bundled to deliver real solutions for enhancing the quality of life of older people.

For more info about the programme: www.aal-europe.eu

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