

AAPELE: Ambient Assisted Living or what happens when science and industry talk ageing

A COST-funded Action of scientists and entrepreneurs in the field of ambient assisted living is coordinating European research on technologies meant to improve the lives of the elderly and disabled. In a recent initiative, the Action invited SMEs to showcase their latest technologies and products.

Europe's population is ageing fast: by 2060 there will be [twice as many people over 65](#) as there are now. One of the main future societal challenges will be ensuring Europeans age actively and healthily, also with the help of technology.

The main focus of the COST [Action IC1303 AAPELE](#) ("Architectures, Algorithms and Platforms for Enhanced Living Environments") is [ICT](#) research leading to software and hardware architectures for marketable devices such as smartphones or mobile devices carrying medical data that optimise living spaces, ensuring enhanced mobility, security and autonomy for the elderly. The real challenge will be meeting people's needs while ensuring the adoption of such new technologies.

AAPELE gathers researchers, entrepreneurs and industry representatives from 31 COST countries determined to set up a pan-European research and development community. The [Action's](#) goal reflects a clear need to coordinate national research efforts as well the need for an interdisciplinary approach to ambient assisted living.

The [Action](#) provides a platform to interconnect and create synergies between new and existing initiatives such as the [Centre of Excellence in Personalised Medicine](#) and clinical trials at [NIHR](#) (United Kingdom), [TICE](#) (Portugal), the [Austrian innovation platform AAL Austria](#), research at the [Regional Centre of Social Policy in Poznan](#) (Poland) and on the [AAL Joint Programme](#). Once connected, these projects can set the ground for further research collaborations

throughout Europe. Scientists involved in the [Action](#) are also specialists in cognitive sciences, robotics (human-machine interaction) and are also assessing the socio-psychological effects of such technologies.

One of AAPELE's recent initiatives was organising an Industry Day at Würzburg University (Germany) where industry and particularly SMEs to presented their products and share their research questions.

Prof. Nuno Garcia from [University of Beira Interior](#) (Portugal) leads the network and found organising such an event "challenging", since they had to focus on sourcing SMEs not only working in the field, but also directly benefitting from the knowledge shared within the [Action](#).

The network successfully attracted ten companies from seven European countries who introduced their innovative products: tablets assisting and monitoring the elderly, platforms connecting home appliances or devices monitoring a person's vital signs or physiotherapy efficiency and its effects in patients undergoing rehabilitation.

Looking at outputs, Prof. Garcia stated he expects such events to lead to "additional short-term scientific missions (industrial internships), new partnerships and joint proposals for European research and development funds."

The network will be organising their second Industry Day in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in 2015.