



Sofia, 27.07.2017

## **A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT WILL BE HELPING LONELY OLDER PEOPLE**

*An international consortium will develop an autonomous modular system for active ageing with 4m euro from the EU*

An integrated high-tech modular system will be helping lonely older people by tracking their health indicators as well as their nutrition, physical activity and socialisation habits. The system will evaluate the risks pertinent to the elderly's behaviour and their surrounding environment. The information will be gathered and analysed in an online platform specifically developed for this purpose. When doubts for a specific problem arises, older people's relatives and social service providers will be notified accordingly.

This is the expected result of an **innovative project** for the creation of a virtual assistant **supporting active ageing** (SAAM - Supporting Active Ageing through Multimodal coaching). The project is financed with almost 4 million euro by the EU Framework programme for research and innovation **Horizon 2020**. The end goal is to extend as much as possible the active and **independent life** of people over 60 years of age, living in their own homes as well as to support the work of those taking care of them (family, friends, and social carers).

The project starts on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 with a duration of 3 years. An international consortium consisting of **10 partners from five European countries** will work on its implementation. Among the partners, there are leading universities like the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom) and the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg (Austria), two Slovenian research organisations, namely the University Rehabilitation Institute and the technological Jožef Stefan Institute, established technological companies like the Bulgarian ScaleFocus and the German Interactive Wear AG. The Consortium includes also renowned non-governmental organisations with vast experience in working with the old people - the Bulgarian Red Cross, Caritas Bulgaria and the Austrian platform of the European Federation of Older Persons - EURAG Austria.

The project co-ordinator is the Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy, based in Sofia that since 2001 manages and implements multiple social projects under programmes, funded by the EU and other international donors.





The future **autonomous modular system** will be an entirely new innovative product not only for partner countries but also for Europe. It will offer an **integrated approach** for influencing and encouraging social contacts with the help of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Such an innovation is especially needed by European societies. According to EU data between 2010 and 2030 the number of people over the age of 80 will increase by 12.6m (57.1%). This demographic process will have serious consequences for the public health and social care systems. This is why Europe focuses on active ageing incentives. One of the paths to do this is to support the older people in their efforts to keep their good health and to lead an independent life through an adapted living and communal environment, which will allow them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

