

C. WEHRMANN. *Demographic change and AAL (Ambient Assisted Living) in the European research area*. *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):100; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.045.00 **Purpose** The ageing of societies is one of the most determining megatrends all over the world and has an exceptional impact on Europe: Rising life expectancy on the one hand and falling birth rates on the other have led to a clear shift in the population's age structure. The perspective of each Member State and consequently that of the European Union as a political, economic and social entity will be affected by this transition. The changing population's age structure will affect healthcare and long-term care organisation, social and welfare systems, the way European Citizens work and learn in the decades ahead and it will shape the infrastructures, cities and transport systems of the future. It will also provide for an accumulated wealth of experiences and social skills gained over lifetimes. In order to address the challenges of this societal change and to make the best use of its potential (in terms of economic opportunities and social innovations), it is necessary to link politics, economy, societal needs and research. The overall aim is to adapt social systems and infrastructures to the changed population as well as to secure the well-being of older people. Enhanced coordination and collaboration between researchers in Europe is most essential to address demographic change in this way. **Method** This is the reason why the European Commission and the EU member states have started several initiatives recently to address the need for closer collaboration of researchers from Europe in order to provide (technological and policy) solutions for the upcoming demographic societal challenge. The paper focuses on 3 major initiatives that are closely linked with each other and address Independent Living and Ageing Well, as well as Ambient Assisted Living in Europe: (i) The AAL Joint Programme, established in 2008, a joint programme of Member States and the European Commission<sup>1</sup>; (ii) The Joint Programming Initiative 'More Years, Better Lives – The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change', a Member States-driven activity, established in 2011, to enhance collaboration and coordination of national research programmes related to Demographic change<sup>2</sup>; and (iii) The Pilot Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing – driven by the European Commission together with relevant stakeholders from the public and private sector to boost innovation in the health and independent living sector, to be launched in 2012<sup>3</sup>. **Results & Discussion** The basic frameworks, the specific aims and foci and the inter-connections between these different initiatives are described. In principle they all seek to contribute to a positive vision of ageing in Europe. However, they are distinguished in their specific focus on technology development (i), research(ii) or innovation (iii) for the ageing society.

### References

1. <http://www.aal-europe.eu/>; retrieved September 13, 2011
2. [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/jpi/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/jpi/index_en.htm); retrieved September 13, 2011
3. [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/ahaip/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/ahaip/index_en.htm); retrieved September 13, 2011

**Keywords:** housing & daily living, demographic change, Ambient Assisted Living, AAL

**Affiliation:** VDI/VDE-IT, Berlin, Germany; E: christian.wehrmann@vdivde-it.de

**Full paper:** No