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D5.5
Establishment of the Future AALIANCENetwork Model

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	**X**
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Service)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Service)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Service)	

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Main Changes
1.0	30-04-2014	Michael Obach (TECNALIA)	First version written
2.0	04-07-2014	Michael Obach (TECNALIA)	Added chapter about the survey among network members; executive summary updated accordingly; removed chapter on the long-term future of the network based on a Virtual Breeding Environment with a Premium membership in its core

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Executive summary

This document is an annex to the public deliverable D5.5 "Formal establishment of the future AALIANCEETP network model".

The AALIANCE2 project has successfully consolidated and extended the existing network that was built during the European project AALIANCE. However, the AALIANCE network has not the formal status of a European Technology Platform (ETP).

The current network has more than 600 people representingEuropean stakeholders of Ambient Assisted Living (AAL): SMEs and large companiesfrom industry and service providers, research organisations, user associations and policy makers. International associated members exist from Japan and the U.S.A.

The value proposition is based on the subscription of a newsletter about projects, products and events related to AAL, the possibility to participate in workshops and seminars for invited members, to get in contact with potential European, American or Japanese project partners and clients in AAL and to access certain results from the work of the AALIANCE2 project on the website.

Membership is free without a formal membership agreement.

The AALIANCE network uses the website (www.aaliance2.eu). For members of the network it is possible to access a restricted area of the website with additional information, e.g. to a huge repository of standards.

The AALIANCE Network will continue to exist thanks to some voluntary members of the AALIANCE2 consortium in the forthcoming years, at least till the end of 2015, if no other business model and structure is implemented earlier.

The network will offer their members periodic bulletins about AAL, maintain the website www.aaliance2.eu, keep the Wiki repository of AAL-relevant standards open, and disseminate the knowledge gained during AALIANCE2, e.g. in national and international conferences and workshops.

Meanwhile, possibilities for collaboration with other networks and project consortia related to AAL will be further explored.

After internal discussions within the project consortium and conversations with external experts, the network model that was originally designed for a sustainable long-term future and relied on a fee-based Premium membership as the core of the net, as described in chapter 3 of D5.3., will not be promoted any longer by the current AALIANCE network.

The network members were invited to participate in a survey on some important questions regarding the future of the AALIANCE network just after the end of the AALIANCE2 project.

The participation in the survey was rather low. Only 42 people filled in the short questionnaire.

The survey revealed that most of the participants would not accept any membership fees. Alternative financing opportunities should be explored in order to avoid that the network relies entirely on voluntary work and contributions.

Regarding the value propositions, most people appreciated to be in contact with researchers, industry members, policy makers, and end-users. Therefore, the AALIANCE network should provide many opportunities to meet in person—e.g. during side events in the AAL Fora and ICT conferences—and to be in contact remotely through social networking possibilities of today. In order to provide information on the latest developments in AAL, which had also a high valuation, the network might establish some sort of observatory.

1 Introduction

This document is an annex to the public deliverable D5.5 "Formal establishment of the future AALIANCEETP network model".

The AALIANCE2 project could successfully consolidate and extend the existing network that was built during the European project AALIANCE. The current network is described in more detail in chapter2.

However, the AALIANCE network has not the formal status of a European Technology Platform (ETP). ETPs are by definition "industry-led stakeholder fora charged with defining research priorities in a broad range of technological areas." Even though project partners SSSA and TECNALIA, among others, could successfully participate and promote other ETPs like ManuFuture and EUROP (now euRoboticsAISBL), there are several reasons why the initially proposed idea to create an ETP on AAL had to be modified.

Firstly, the critical mass of industrial stakeholders that were sufficiently motivated to lead an ETP about AAL could not been identified.

Secondly, the (emerging) AAL market is very broad and overlaps with the markets of other, already existing, ETPs.

Thirdly, during the execution of the AALIANCE2 project, new collaborative environments emerged, which are promoted by the European Commission, like the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP).

2 The AALIANCENetwork in the near future

2.1 Facts about the network

In order to describe the main characteristics of the AALIANCE network, this section summarizes chapter 1 of D5.3.

The AALIANCE Network was initially created during the European project AALIANCE(2008-2010). Then, during the execution of this present continuation project, AALIANCE2 (2011-2014), this network has been further consolidated and extended.

Currently (April 2014), the network has more than 600 people[1] who are representatives from major stakeholders of Ambient Assisted Living (AAL), in particular small, medium and large enterprises that offer industrial products and provide services, research organisations, user associations and policy makers (see Figure 1) from all over Europe, as well some international associated members, e.g. from Japan and the U.S.A.

Figure 1: AAL stakeholder groups represented in the AALIANCE network (D5.3).

The network is built around a core that consists of the consortium of the AALIANCE2 project and around this core, a group of AALIANCE network members.

Even though the network does not have a formal steering committee, it is controlled by the project consortium and its steering committee.

The value proposition is based on the subscription of a newsletter about projects, products and events related to AAL, the possibility to participate in workshops and seminars for invited members, to get in contact with potential European, American or Japanese project partners and clients in AAL and to access certain results from the work of the AALIANCE2 project on the website under the domain aaliance2.eu, e.g. the AAL technology roadmap from 2010; an online repository (Wiki) on standards related to AAL, the latest version of the report on AAL markets in Northern America and Asia; furthermore, network members have the opportunity to contribute to the results of the project.

Membership is free, i.e. members of the AALIANCE network are not paying any fees or service provisions. The work of the members of the consortium of the AALIANCE2 project is

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[1]This public deliverable does not contain any list of network members in order to protect personal data.

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paid mainly by the European Commission as the Coordinated Action in ICT within the Seventh Framework Programme.

Furthermore, there is no formal membership agreement, but an expression of interest in becoming a member of the network that was signed by many members.

Even though most consortium members are committed to continue their workafter the amended end of the project at the end of May 2014, it cannot be guaranteed that the servicesrequired to maintain such a network in the future in the same quality and quantity as during the execution of the projects AALIANCE and AALIANCE2. Furthermore, there is currently no investor or sponsor known to the consortium who would finance the future work of a person that could continue working in maintaining the network working.

TheAALIANCE network uses amodern designed website,http://aaliance2.eu/, which has a frequently updated news section, a calendar of AAL-related events, information about the AALIANCE2 project and its consortium members, a section with public deliverables, a repository of past newsletter editions, a page about the AALIANCE network and links to websites of selected AAL projects and some organisations related to AAL.

For members of the network it is possible to access a restricted area of the website with additional information, e.g. to a huge repository of standards.

Compared to other networks and associations within the field of AAL, the AALIANCE network has some strengths. It brings potentially more than 600 people from all kind of stakeholder organisations together, it is based on a successful European project that has collected expertise in the field of AAL during its execution, and a close collaboration with the European Commission. The network might have the opportunities to obtain public funding for their work in the future as Coordinated Actions or Thematic Networks and investments from companies and other AAL stakeholders that are interested in a collaboration on an emerging market that responds to the needs of the societal challenge of the demographic change. However, the network has some weak points, e.g. limited financial resources after the end of the project if funding cannot be guaranteed, limited human resources to execute the tasks of maintaining the network alive. Finally, there is a threat that consist in the considerable amount of other networks that partially compete with the AALIANCE network.

2.2 Actionsplanned for 2014 and 2015

The AALIANCE Network will continue to exist in the forthcoming yearsafter the end of the AALIANCE2 project in May 2014, until another business model and structure is implemented, and at least till the end of 2015.

This will be made possible thanks to the commitment of some members of the current AALIANCE2 consortium in the project and the network beyond the duration of the AALIANCE2 project. In particular, a subset of the project members will offer the following value proposition:

- Create periodic bulletins with information about AAL, which includes news from other collaborating projects and networks (ENGAGED, AALOA, AgeingWell, etc.), and share themwith the 600+ members of theAALIANCE network.
- Maintain the websitewww.aaliance2.eu open with a possibility to subscribe to the network.
- Keep the Wiki repository of AAL-relevant standards open. A service for network members consists in being informed in the newsletter about changes in these standards in the Wiki.

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- Disseminate the knowledge gained during AALIANCE2, e.g. by means of participationas experts in national and international conferences and workshops on behalf of the AALIANCE2 network.

One main objective of the project partners that will maintain the network alive, even if the proposed model for the network that is described in chapter 3 of D5.3, is to submit by 2015 or 2016 one or more proposals for Coordinated Actions to upcoming calls in the H2020 framework programme that aim at evolving the AAL Roadmap and the Strategic Research Agenda in the near future.

Meanwhile, the possibilities for collaboration with other networks and project consortia related to AAL will be further explored. First meetings were already held with AgeingWell to discuss the options to create a Joint Venture of both networks.

In early July 2014, after the official end of the AALIANCE2 project, the members of the AALIANCEnetwork were invited by e-mail to take part in a survey to obtain more information on the interest in the network, its value proposition and possible membership fees.

The survey and its result are described in chapter 3 "Survey on the future network" and the annex.

AAL stakeholders and other interested people that are potential newmembers of the AALIANCE network will find a page on our website www.aaliance2.euthrough which they can express their interest in becoming a member.

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3 Survey on the future network

3.1 Motivation

The aims to conduct this survey among the AALIANCE network at the end of the AALIANCE2 project were:

- To check how many people and institutions that were considered to be part of the network would reply and confirm their interest in being a member of the network.
- To have feedback on the motivations to be a member of such a network and the most valued activities and features.
- To learn how much the surveyed people would accept to pay as an annual membership fee being an individual member of what these people thought their organisation or company might accept as an annual fee, if the membership was on an institutional basis instead of an individual basis.

3.2 Material and methods

A request to participate in the online survey was sent out through *MailChimp* (www.mailchimp.com) to 685 contacts in the database on 30 June 2014.The e-mail that was sent through MailChimp, see section 4.1 in the annex of this document.

The survey was designed and analysed with *Survey Monkey* (www.surveymonkey.com).

The content of the survey was rather short on purpose. The reason was to make the survey just long enough to provide the expected, relevant results, but not longer than strictly necessary in order to avoid that even less people would participate, that participants would abandon the questionnaireor feel bothered by it.

The survey was in principle anonymous, even though the participants could optionally provide their affiliation (i.e. organisation or company) and their e-mail.

Survey Monkey provided some descriptive statistics on the results, which are shown in the next section.

3.3 Results and discussion

The questionnaire of the survey was filled in by 42 people, which is about 6% of the 685 addresses that the e-mail with the invitation to participate in the survey was sent to.

Even though it could not be expected to reachall members of the network and to motivate a very high percentage of them to take part in the survey, the participation was very limited, being comparable to the click-through responses of e-mail marketing campaigns, e.g. in the UK, France or Germany (compare http://www.smartinsights.com/email-marketing/email-communications-strategy/statistics-sources-for-email-marketing/).

There are some hypotheses that might explain the low participation in the survey:

- People had only few days to reply; however, since the number of questions was so small and the questions could be answered very easily and quickly, it can be assumed that the vast majority of participants would reply within the first two days.
- In several countries the holiday season has started; therefore, we received several out-of-office replies.

- The motivation of most people to dedicate time to participate in online surveys might be very low in general.
- Some e-mail directions of organisations were generic, e.g. of the form info@*companyname*.com, so that it is possible that nobody in that institution felt directly addressed.

3.3.1 Distribution of stakeholders that took part in the survey

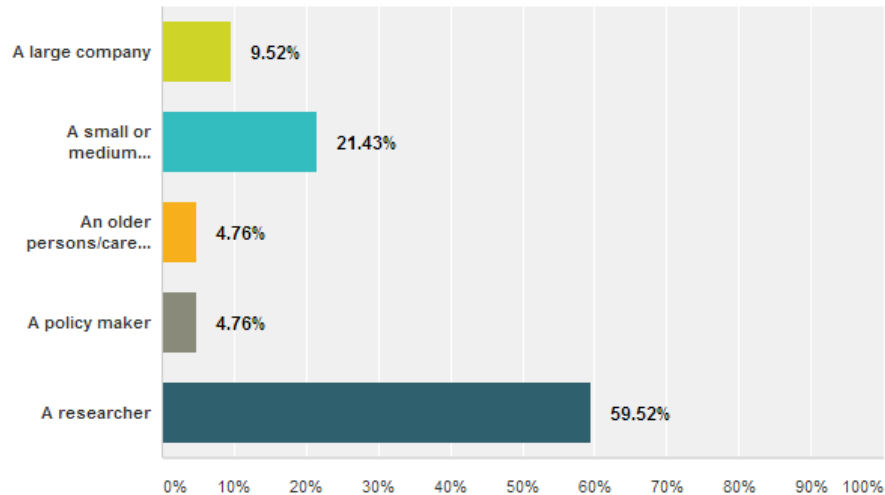The distribution of participants in the survey concerning their stakeholder group is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Distribution of the types of stakeholders that took part in the survey as answer to the question "Which type of stakeholder are you?"

More than half of the participants in the survey(about 59%) were researchers. This is almost the same percentage as the group of "AAL technology developers, researchers and consultants"—a subset of the so-called tertiary stakeholders—in the whole list of 685 members, which was 57%.

Only two participants classified themselves as policy maker (about 4,8%).

3.3.2 Interest in being a member of the AALIANCE Network

Only one participant in the survey (less than 3%) stated that he or she was not interested in being part of the AALIANCE Network. The person was working in a small or medium enterprise and provided the comment that AAL was not in their core business.
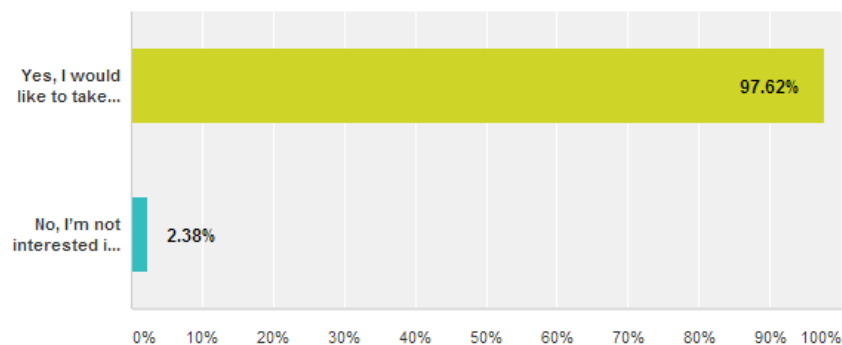

Figure 3: Percentage of participants in the survey who stated that they would like to be member of the network versus those who said they were not interested.

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More 97% of the participants of the survey were interested in being a member of the network.

It might be too optimistic to use this percentage as an estimation of the amount of people and institutions that were asked to participate in the survey, because it is more likely that those who are not interested in participating in the AALIANCE network ignored the e-mail in which they were asked to join in the survey.

3.3.3 Most valued activities of the AALIANCE Network

One of the most important questions in this survey was about the expectations regarding the value propositions. The test persons were asked to mark the three activities of the network that they considered to be most useful for them.
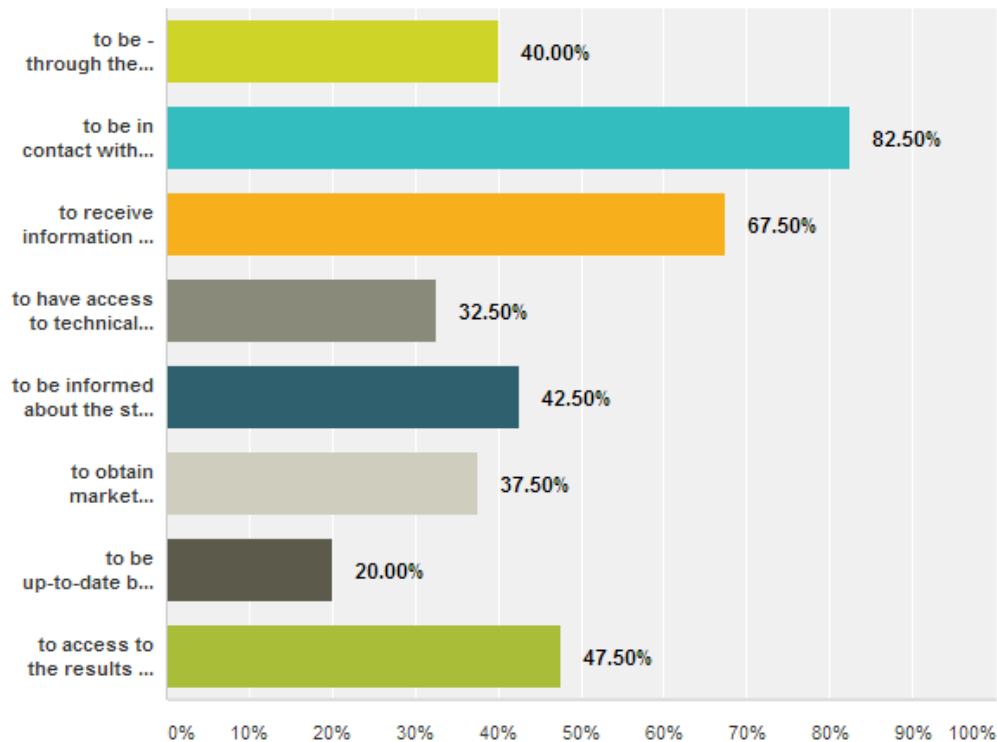
Figure 4: Distribution of marked activities of the AALIANCE network that the participants considered to be most useful for them; each participant should not mark more than three options. The complete options are presented in section 4.2.

This question should only be answered by those participants in the survey that replied that they would be interested in being a member of the AALIANCE network. Therefore, two persons (see last subsection) skipped this question, while 40 people provided an answer.

The corresponding question and the options are presented in section 4.2 in the annex, see question 3. The results are shown in Figure 4.

The most frequentlyselected option was to be in contact with researchers, industry members, policy makers, and end-users. Almost 82% of the participants in the survey marked this activity to be one of the three most useful in the list.

The second most voted option was to receive information on the latest developments in AAL.

A group of values of the network that has a similar magnitude consisted of these options:

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- to be - through the network - in contact with the European Commission and National AAL Contact Points,
- to have access to technical news,
- to be informed about the state of the art in standards,
- to obtain market information,
- to access to the results of the project mentioned above, and the possibility of contributing your expertise and opinion in future editions.

The last option in this group, i.e. having access to the results AALIANCE2 project and have the possibility to contribute to future editions, was considered to be one of the three most useful features of the network by more than 47% of the participants.

The option that was less often selected was to be up-to-date by a calendar of events. This however does not mean that it was not important, but only that the other options would probably be more appreciated.

Three participantssuggestedalso some additional activities forthe AALIANCE network:to gather needs of the end users; to find partners for new projects; to summarise results in gerontechnology field.

3.3.4 Accepted fees for individual membership

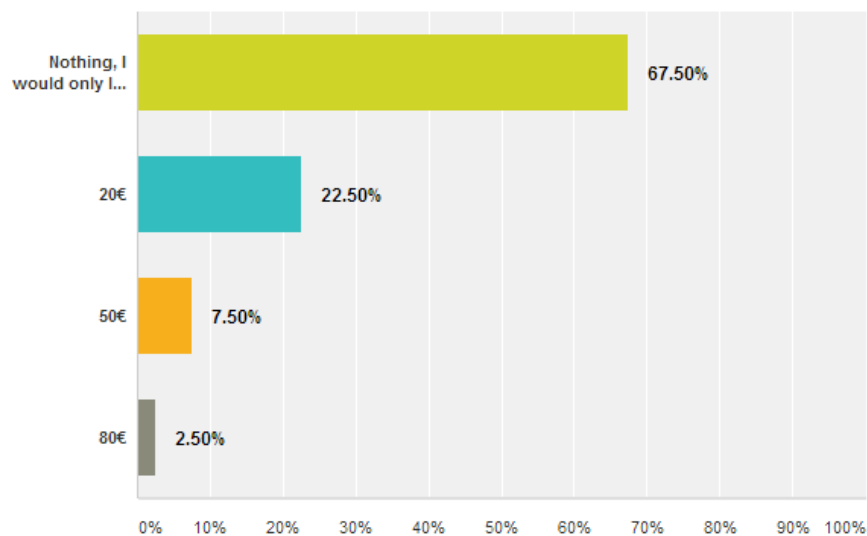There were two questions in the survey that aimed to find out acceptable annual membership fees.

Figure 5: Percentages of answers to the question about the maximum annual membership fee participants in the survey would be willing to pay for an individual membership.

The first question in this regard was: "If you are personally an individual member of the network, what would be the maximum annual membership fee you would be willing to pay?"

More than two third, i.e. the vast majority, of the participants would prefer a free membership, if it was on an individual basis (which is a network of people and not a network of institutions).

Less than a quarter of the people who answered this question would accept 20 €.

Thenthree participants would accept an annual membership fee of 50 € and only one would pay 80 € per year.

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3.3.5 Accepted fees for institutional membership

The same question was posed concerning an institutional membership, in which the university, research centre, enterprise, ministry, end-user organisation etc. would be member of the AALIANCE network. The results are shown in Figure 6.
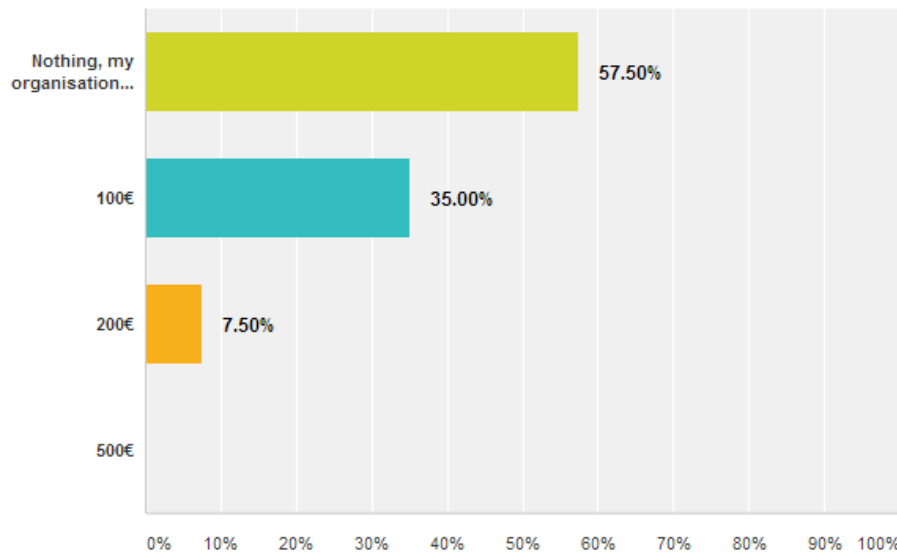

Figure 6: Percentages of answers to the question about the maximum annual membership fee participants in the survey think the institutions in which they are working would accept to pay for an institutional membership.

More than half of the participants believed that the institutions they were working with, would not accept any fees for being member in the AALIANCE network.

More than one third of them thought that 100 € was an acceptable annual membership fee. Only three participants guessed that their institution would pay 200 €.

Nobody expressed his or her belief that 500 € was acceptable.

3.4 Conclusions

Even though nearly all people (98%) that participated in the survey confirmed their interest in a membership in the AALIANCE network, the total participation in the survey was rather low. There are only 41 people that clearly stated their decision to be a member. Even though the motivation to participate in surveys of this type might be low in general and no incentive could be provided (e.g. there was no lottery or direct payment), the survey was conducted in the holiday season and there were only few days given to participate, it may be concluded that the interest in the network could be lower than expected.

Regarding the value propositions, it is remarkable that most people appreciated to be in contact with researchers, industry members, policy makers, and end-users. Therefore, the AALIANCE network should provide many opportunities to meet in person—e.g. during side events in the AAL Fora and ICT conferences—and to be in contact remotely through social networking possibilities of today. In order to provide information on the latest developments in AAL, which had also a high valuation, the network might establish some sort of observatory.

Another remarkable and important result was that only a minority of network members who expressed their opinion in this survey would accept any membership fees, which is valid for individual memberships as well as for institutional memberships. So, the AALIANCE Network

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has to seek alternative ways of financing in order to avoid relying entirely on voluntary work, which might be unsustainable in the long term. Sponsoring or crowdfunding might be options, as long as the network remains independent and neutral.

4 Annex

4.1 E-Mail sent through *MailChimp*

           <u>View this email in your browser</u>

Dear all,
You were identified as a stakeholder in AAL (Ambient Assisted Living) by the consortium of the European Coordinated Support Action AALIANCE2.
Therefore we've been in contact with you from time to time in conferences, workshops and through e-mail. We've been sending you in the last three years periodically information (e.g. newsletters) concerning AAL, which, we hope, you found interesting and useful.
The AALIANCE2 project was successfully concluded in May 2014. All public results can be accessed through www.aaliance2.eu.
We want the AALIANCE network to evolve and become a real added value for our more than 600 network members.
There are some important results that are likely of your interest, being the most outstanding:
  - Roadmap of AAL
  - Repository of standards related to AAL
  - Market studies
  - A network of AAL stakeholders
The members of the network have many **benefits** related to AAL:
  - be - through the network - in contact with the European Commission and National AAL Contact Points,
  - be in contact with researchers, industry members, policy makers, end-users,
  - receive information on the latest developments in AAL,
  - have access to technical news,
  - be informed about the state of the art in standards,
  - obtain market information,
  - be up to date by a calendar of events,
  - access to the **results** of the project mentioned above, and the possibility to involve your expertise and opinion in future editions.
In order to involve all opinions of members and potential members, we would kindly like to ask you to participate in our survey on the future of the AALIANCE network following this link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HJTQGRG

It will take less than 10 minutes to participate in the survey and we would be very grateful if you could do that by the 3rd of July, 2014.
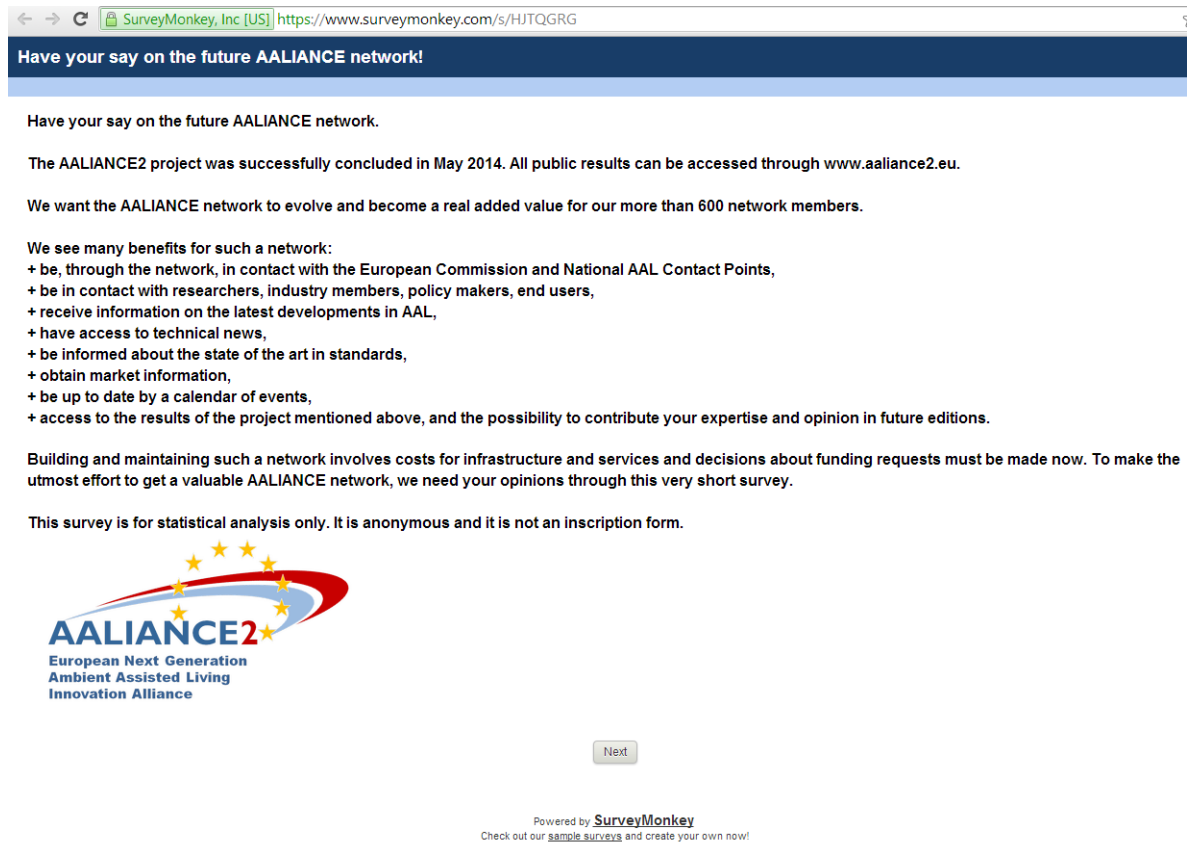
Thank you very much, kind regards,
The AALIANCE Network Team

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4.2 Questionnaire in *Survey Monkey*

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Have your say on the future AALIANCE network!

* 1. Which type of stakeholder are you?

○ A large company

○ A small or medium entreprise

○ An older persons/caregiver representative

○ A policy maker

○ A researcher

Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 2. Would you like to be member of the AALIANCE network?

○ Yes, I would like to take part in the AALIANCE network

○ No, I'm not interested in being a member of the AALIANCE network (please comment below)

If you have answered no, please specify why

[   ]

3. Please mark the three main activities for which the network could be useful to you:

☐ to be - through the network - in contact with the European Commission and National AAL Contact Points,

☐ to be in contact with researchers, industry members, policy makers, end-users,

☐ to receive information on the latest developments,

☐ to have access to technical news,

☐ to be informed about the state of the art in standards,

☐ to obtain market information,

☐ to be up-to-date by a calendar of events,

☐ to access to the results of the project mentioned above, and the possibility of contributing your expertise and opinion in future editions.

Do you suggest any other activity that you think the AALIANCE network shall develop? Please comment:

[   ]

4. If you are personally an individual member of the network, what would be the maximum annual membership fee you would be willing to pay?

○ Nothing, I would only like to be member of the network if it was free of charge

○ 20€

○ 50€

☑ 80€

Other (please specify)

[   ]

5. If your organisation takes part in the network, what would be the maximum annual membership fee it would be willing to pay?

○ Nothing, my organisation would only like to be member of the network if it was free of charge

○ 100€

○ 200€

○ 500€

Other (please specify)

[   ]

[Prev]   [Next]

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Have your say on the future AALIANCE network!

6. We would like to receive more information about you (this question is optional, information will be used only for the purpose of the survey and not used for other purposes)

Company/organisation:

Country:

Email Address:

Thank you for your time!

Prev   Done

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