

2020
ANNUAL REPORT

AAL ASSOCIATION
ACTIVITIES, FINANCE,
COMMUNICATION

AAL ASSOCIATION

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION BY AAL DIRECTOR | 4 |
| AAL PROGRAMME OPERATIONS | 6 |
| ANNUAL CALLS | 6 |
| CALL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS. | 6 |
| CALL 2019 | 6 |
| CALL 2020 | 7 |
| CALL 2021 | 8 |
| PROGRAMME SUPPORT ACTIONS. | 8 |
| AAL2BUSINESS. | 8 |
| 2020 EDITION OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT | 9 |
| CHALLENGE PRIZE | 9 |
| AAL GUIDELINES ON ETHICS DATA PRIVACY AND SECURIT. | 10 |
| COMMUNICATION, NETWORKING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS | 11 |
| THE AAL WEBSITE. | 11 |
| AAL SERVICES MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES | 11 |
| THE LEGACY OF AAL | 12 |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | 12 |
| NEWSLETTERS | 13 |
| MAJOR EVENTS IN 2020. | 13 |
| CALL 2020 INFO DAY. | 13 |
| 1 ST EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING | 13 |
| PUBLIC AFFAIRS | 14 |
| FINANCE ACTIVITIES | 16 |
| THE BREAKDOWN OF THE 2020 PROGRAMME EXPENSES. | 16 |
| THE AAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS 2014-2020 | 17 |
| THE EC COUNTERPART EVOLUTION 2014-2020 | 18 |
| OUTLOOK FOR 2021. | 19 |



INTRODUCTION BY AAL DIRECTOR

The year 2020 will most likely stay in our memories for a very long time and for the least as the start into a new decade. It turned out to be a year of standstill on a global scale, a year, in which public health as well as healthy ageing received a whole new meaning! And twelve months later we are still in the worst pandemic since the 'Spanish flu' of 1918 in Europe.

It will probably take years to understand, what 2020 really meant to our societies and to what extent the experience of the global pandemic led to lasting changes. The effect on an ageing European continent was harsh with a tough wake-up call for our society and institutions.

The importance of health prevention, the need for shifting care more towards the home and community front, the role technology can play in keeping people connected and safe at home are only a few elements of AAL's narrative being put forward in 2020.

There has never been a timelier opportunity to promote the AAL Programme's role in contributing to systems change. That momentum was brought into the current development of the new Horizon Europe partnership on health & care systems transformation with the majority of AAL members aiming to participate. Twelve years of collaboration between public funding agencies, business, research and users provide an enormous learning experience to accelerate necessary innovation and change for Europe's welfare systems in the 2020.

While the AAL Association has been working hard to bring its programme assets into the new partnership in Horizon Europe and possibly also into Digital Europe, the AAL Programme continued relentlessly into its final year of full operations. Let me just cite a few highlights of 2020, for which you will find more detailed information in this report:

The Call 2020 was implemented with some delays despite the lock-down attracting a record number of applications in AAL2. At the same time an additional and final AAL Call in 2021 has been launched in December 2020.

A third edition of the Smart Ageing Prize focused on senior entrepreneurship and highlighted various ways of starting businesses in the third age.

The AAL Programme's impact learning framework unleashed valuable knowledge about progress

being made to get AAL solutions to the market with 1 in 8 finished AAL projects reaching that goal.

The first edition of the European Week of Active and Healthy Ageing was launched in November 2020 replacing the AAL Forum 2020, in which around 1000 people from across Europe, Canada, Taiwan, Australia and other countries participated online. Through this event our community came closer to high level political personalities who enriched our perspectives and the positioning of the Programme itself.

And finally, AAL developed ethical guidelines for its projects while launching a support action on health & care eco-systems to better understand and use these local systems as a key vector for deploying and upscaling innovation.

KLAUS NIEDERLÄNDER

AAL PROGRAMME OPERATIONS

ANNUAL CALLS

Mid- and end-term project reviews are part of the core activities undertaken by the AAL Programme Operations to guarantee proper monitoring of the actions funded by the Programme. A physical review, with the help of two external experts, is carried out at mid-term and a remote review - at the end of the project. In both types of reviews, the reviewers, the representatives from the consortium, the involved National Contact Persons (NCPs) and a Central Management Unit (CMU) representative are invited to take part in the discussions.

A periodic overview of the performance of the AAL funded projects, both at mid-term and final stage, highlighting the problematic and particularly promising ones is provided. In 2020 a total of 17 mid-term and additional reviews took place, and 14 final reviews were carried out.

CALL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

At the beginning of 2020 a new [Partner Search Platform](#) was developed and made available to the community of project proposers. Thanks to this new tool, researchers, product developers and companies can now publish their project idea and look for collaborations either through an AAL proposal or bilateral cooperation.

A further support to the project applicants and participants in 2020, concentrated on the analysis of all [public deliverables](#) produced by AAL funded projects. The analysis of the deliverables was carried out for five main categories, namely, end users, testing phase, technology, commercialization, and privacy & ethics.

Finally, by the end of 2020, the AAL Programme kicked off and completed a new activity aimed at collecting and sharing some best practices on how funded projects help to overcome the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 crisis. The community of AAL beneficiaries received the document as part of the set of materials accompanying the 2021 Call text.

CALL 2019

All the 20 Call 2019 selected projects successfully finished their negotiations by June and, after the 2019 Coordinators' day that took place in April, they kicked off their activities by the middle of the year. All projects were invited to participate in the Lean Start-Up Academy, an AAL2Business service offered to projects in their early stage. Project participants had the chance of receiving targeted coaching by a pool of external experts for their commercialisation strategy and for finetuning their business model.

Some Small Collaborative Projects terminated their activity within the course of the year, presenting some promising outcomes in the field of digital rehabilitation through applications, as well on hydration improvement through the use of ICT sensors. In this Call, Taiwanese organisations participated for the first time since its Ministry of Science and Technology joined the AAL Association in 2019.

CALL 2020

The Info Day took place in Vienna on 30th January to present the main features of the Call 2020 focused on “Healthy ageing with the support of digital solutions”. Organized for the first time in a location other than Brussels with the support of our Austrian member, the Austria Research Promotion Agency, the event was attended by a record number of 140 participants. A new format was also adopted for the event, which proposed some Call text-related presentations panel debates along with networking sessions.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the AAL constituency decided to postpone the Call deadline from May to August, in order to allow especially secondary end users (formal carers organisations, in particular) to participate. The Call received 111 proposals (a record in AAL2), out of which 84 Collaborative Projects and 27 Small Collaborative Projects.

The following table and charts provide more details of the received proposals:

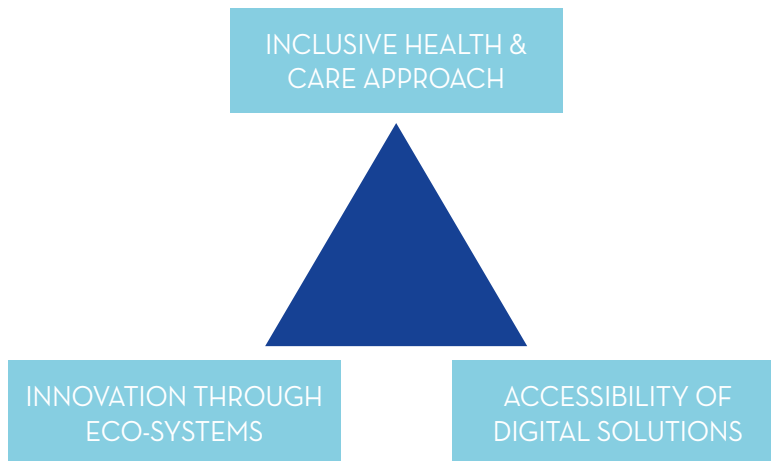
| CALL AAL- 2020 ALL SUBMITTED PROPOSALS | CALL FIGURES |
|---|--------------|
| Total budget | 164 Mio € |
| Total requested funding | 107 Mio € |
| Average quota requested funding vs. total project costs | 65 % |
| Total person-months efforts | 19778 |
| Total number of partners | 555 |
| Average partners per proposal | 5 |
| Average total budget per proposal | 1.48 Mio € |
| Average funding request per proposal | 0.96 Mio € |

At the end of the evaluation, 24 projects were selected either for clarification and negotiation or for reconfiguration (16 Collaborative Projects and 8 Small Collaborative Projects). The focus of the selected projects included examples, such as facial paralysis rehabilitation at home through aroma light therapy as well as online platforms for allowing fast and cost-effective caregivers hiring. By the time of writing this report, all projects have been invited for clarification and negotiation and they are expected to start between March and June 2021.

CALL 2021

For the preparation of Call 2021, the Association adopted a new approach in involving external experts in the preparation of the Call content. Continuous iterations with the NCPs, the Central Management Unit and the experts took place in the preparation of the Call text, which was approved by the General Assembly in December 2020. The experts selected for the preparation of the text were appointed on the basis of their experience in the three main focus areas of Call 2021, namely the support to an inclusive health & care approach, the stimulation and upscaling of innovation in active & healthy ageing through health & care eco-systems and the accessibility of digital solutions.

AAL CALL 2021 RATIONALE - the key focus triangle



The Call was officially launched on 15th December 2020, with a committed budget (EC plus participating countries) of 21.408.900 €. Following the Call, the [Partner Search Platform](#) is being extensively used to identify suitable partners for a project proposal to be submitted.

PROGRAMME SUPPORT ACTIONS

AAL₂BUSINESS

The AAL Programme continued to support its funded beneficiaries through AAL₂Business, in order to find their ways to market, strengthen the demand side and connect with the supply-side by improving the skills of the AAL participants.

During the course of 2020, the second and third editions of the [Lean Start-Up Academy](#) were delivered online and re-designed to take into consideration the Coronavirus emergency. A novelty introduced in

the third edition was the introduction and use of an AAL typical case study. Moreover, two editions of the GoToMarket Launchpad were implemented. The participants in these services have been supported through coaching sessions in defining a pitching deck and a crowdfunding campaign.

Parallel to the two main services, a set of targeted webinars were organised in 2020. These touched upon topics such as basics on intellectual property rights, how to craft a compelling unique value proposition and sessions on early-stage investors.

The market guidance service was kicked off in 2020, aimed at creating a network of guidance at the national level to inform AAL participants about the commercialization, market uptake, and investment chances available at regional and national level.

Overall, AAL2B is being more and more acknowledged as a useful service in the community of beneficiaries, but also for the AAL community at large due to the open webinars and the AAL2B website. These provide useful information and tools to actors interested in digital solutions for active and healthy ageing.

2020 EDITION OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In 2020, the second edition of the AAL Programme Impact assessment took place, focusing both on the funded projects as well as on the main support actions offered. Further to the results of an online survey, evidence was complemented with data from a series of interviews with representatives of AAL projects that had launched a solution into the market. Interviews with General Assembly members of the AAL Association and national representatives of the AAL Programme were also conducted to better understand the impact of AAL support activities across Europe.

Besides confirming AAL projects' support to participation in social life, a more active lifestyle, or the reduction of costs in health and care, the 2020 assessment highlighted AAL-funded projects' direct and indirect economic impact. One in eight AAL-funded projects (12%) launched a solution or component in at least one market of 13 different countries across Europe.

CHALLENGE PRIZE

The third edition of the AAL Programme's Smart Ageing Prize ran from October 2019 until November 2020. This edition sought solutions that support, empower and inspire older adults to engage in entrepreneurship, for example through the creation of intergenerational teams and skills-sharing or digital solutions to help bring to life the entrepreneurial ideas and energy of the 60+ age group. The prize closed with a winner awards event during the European Week of Active and Healthy Ageing 2020 on 3rd November. As a result of Covid-19, all the activities such as the judging panels, the academy event and the award ceremony were moved online. The winners were [DIASPO](#), [Grand Nanny](#) and [PARLANGI](#).

Diaspo, the winner of the main prize, is an initiative with the vision to unite generations by rekindling their appreciation and connection to cultural heritage through food with a website that offers a wide array of cooking classes from different cultures. The second place was awarded to Grand Nanny, which is a new type of childcare service that connects communities and encourage older adults to participate in taking care of children. The winner of the third place, PARLANGI, connects people from different generations, cultures and nationalities who want to learn a language by offering opportunities to work with mentors.



DIASPO

Smart Ageing
PRIZE

AAL GUIDELINES ON ETHICS DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Data privacy, security and ethical concerns about sensitive end user/care patient related information are of vital importance for AAL funded solutions. Data security is of particular concern to end user organisations like hospitals, care homes or professional carers providing care services to older adults, as they want to make use of digital/data-based care solutions.

For these reasons, a new support action was launched, aiming at investigating the possibility to set up a non-medical certification system on ethics, privacy and data protection for AAL solutions. For this, a team of experts was set up to develop some guidelines on ethics, data privacy and security which was published and made available to the AAL community in July. The guidelines and their use and adoption are being tested with selected AAL funded projects. Furthermore, a feasibility study looking into the potential interest within the health & care market about more formally recognizing ethical excellence for data privacy and security, will be carried out over the course of 2021.

COMMUNICATION, NETWORKING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In 2020 the AAL's communication and public affairs got enriched by a number of new activities. Some were already planned, while others were the result of the necessity to adapt innovative approaches in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

THE AAL WEBSITE

The AAL website, cornerstone of the external communication of the AAL Programme, was refreshed and partially redesigned, in order to accompany the work plan and the growing need to present the achievements and impact of the various AAL projects. That is why, new sections to present the impact of the Programme and the concrete implementations of projects's outcome were created and disseminated widely.

AAL SERVICES MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES

In a newly created special section of the AAL website, we are highlighting some of the available AAL solutions, which support older people concretely during the Covid-19 pandemic.



These services can be divided into two groups with innovations that help to stay better connected with family and carers, while feeling more safe and secure at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, and innovations that help preventing social isolation. A part of this campaign consisted in providing the AAL community with key data about these AAL businesses through gathering relevant market information and organising a series of special podcast interviews.

See the section here: www.aal-europe.eu/supporting-older-people-during-the-pandemic-and-beyond/

THE LEGACY OF AAL

Since 2008, AAL has been helping older people to live better lives, while creating real economic opportunities and improving social care systems across Europe. In a new section of the website, we now present the main achievements of the Programme. Over the last 10 years the AAL Programme has focused on three main objectives, in order to contribute towards addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities of an ageing population. Out of 200 projects funded by the AAL 1 and 2 Programme between 2008 and 2016, 31 projects have already introduced solutions into the market. This corresponds to a ratio of roughly 1 in 8 AAL projects reaching market maturity.

See the section here: www.aal-europe.eu/our-achievements/

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels were heavily involved in programme outreach in 2020 to promote the ongoing AAL events, latest publications, and support promotion of projects. The follower count steadily grew in all AAL Programme's social accounts with a particularly high increase on LinkedIn Professional and Instagram platforms. Campaigns, such as the project promotion to mitigate the consequences of Covid-19 and a new set of guest-bloggers were particularly interesting for the AAL audiences. Thus, social media helped to draw more attention and ensure more outreach to inform about the AAL's latest news and encourage potential attendees to the online events.



NEWSLETTERS

The AAL newsletter audience has steadily grown in 2020 also due to social media awareness-raising and newly embedded sign-up forms on the AAL homepage. The latter made it easier to sign-up for any potential subscriber. A new design has also been created in line with the refreshed AAL brand identity.

Next to the already established General Programme newsletter, the Policy newsletter focuses on the latest developments with regards to political decision-making. Furthermore, a new format was launched to inform the project participants about the main news, activities and opportunities relevant to their consortium, which has been particularly helpful in increasing the awareness of the ongoing AAL2Business courses and self-education opportunities. This bi-monthly issue is sent out to current and previous project participants, including project coordinators.

MAJOR EVENTS IN 2020

CALL 2020 INFO DAY

On January 30th the AAL Programme organised its annual Info Day to bring together our community to officially launch and present the AAL's annual funding Call 2020. The event also provided an opportunity to allow potential applicants to pitch their own ideas in their search for consortium partners, as well as creating the space for match-making meetings.

For the first time the European Info Day took place in Vienna, Austria, attracting more than 140 participants, the highest number ever. The participants' backgrounds ranged from business representatives to research actors, including universities and research organisations, as well as end user organisations providing numerous opportunities for project cooperation.

The day in Vienna started with a welcome from Kerstin Zimmermann from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and AAL Board's Vice-president Gerda Geyer. Afterwards, the AAL Call 2020 was introduced and a panel composed of two long-term AAL call evaluation experts, Mrs. Astrid Stuckelberger and Mr. Alberto Bonetti, discussed the experiences from the previous calls. The opportunities of the European Framework Programme, Horizon Europe, were presented by Birgit Morlion of DG Connect.

Read more about the event here: www.aal-europe.eu/thank-you-for-attending-aal-info-day-2020/

1ST EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING

The 1st edition of the [European Week of Active and Healthy Ageing](#) (EWAHA) took place, between 2nd and 6th November, 2020 in an online format.

The Week was attended by around 1000 people from across Europe, Canada, Taiwan, Australia and other countries. The week provided for stimulating debates and exchanges with politicians, local and national administrators, practitioners, geriatrics and psychologists. Different perspectives across a wide array of topics related to ageing were addressed with a particular link to the ongoing effects of Covid-19.

The event was organized by the [AAL Programme](#) together with the [EIPAonAHA](#) and the JPI [MYBL](#). The week took inspiration from the [WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing](#) to shed light on four main priorities: the sustainability of health and care in an ageing Europe; the intergenerational policies; the promotion of a socio-economic case for an ageing society; and the role of technology for the improvement of the conditions of the older people and their carers.

Read more about the event here: [EWAHA Executive summary](#)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Given the exceptional circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the public affairs-related activities overlapped with the events bringing together the political and policy interest of AAL. The AAL achievement section of the website supported the AAL advocacy work.

The European Week of Active and Healthy Ageing was the main tool for leveraging on public affairs. It provided a great platform for politicians and policy-makers, and fostered interesting discussions on demographic change. Notably, EWAHA opening the guest speakers Mrs. Dubravka Šuica, Vice President of the European Commission, and Mrs. Claudia Mahler, the Independent Expert for the United Nations on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons provided a fruitful conversation centered around the reflections on the learnings from the current Covid-19 crisis, the thoughts on how future strategies and activities both from the UN and EU can pave the way for positive change.

Many cross-cutting areas were put at the forefront as key to create positive change, namely intergenerational solidarity, silver economy and the notion that human rights are for everybody, including older adults, and finally, ensure that they are the agents of change themselves.

The main political panel of the European Week of Active and Healthy Ageing took place on 3rd November by two Members of the European Parliament to debate about the long-term visions for an ageing Europe and the possible responses to this profound societal shift.

Both Mrs. Sirpa Pietikainen and Mr. Brando Benifei brought in the different experiences of their Finnish and Italian constituencies while also sharing a common positive view on the opportunities that longevity offers. The key points presented from both politicians were the need to move to community care systems and ensure the functioning support role of health and care networks, which will provide greater resilience in future pandemics.

The Online Week was closed with an insightful session with the former Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho. In his interview Mr. Aho highlighted the major systematic changes needed in active and healthy ageing and the silver economy including the move from standardised to personalised products and services, a greater focus on ecosystems and the need to actively involve the private sector and people.

‘Silver is the next green’ stated Mr Aho when talking about the common aspects between the green and the silver economy. Both challenges need to be addressed immediately and both could present a huge risk for Europe if we fail to change existing systems. However, just as Europe is doing with the green economy, Europe can turn the risk of demographic change into an opportunity.

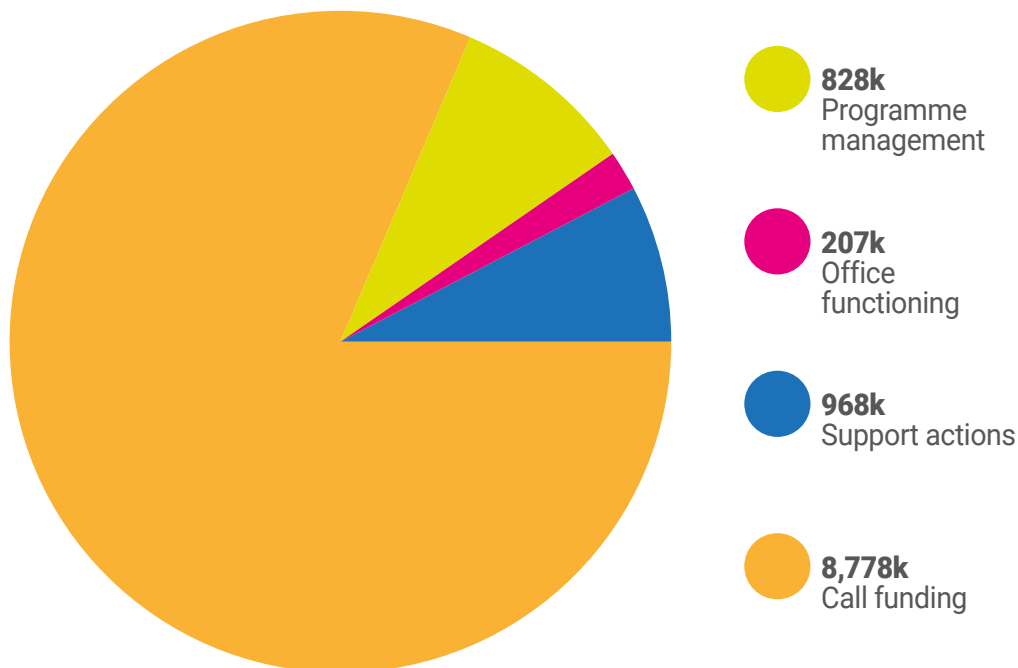
FINANCE ACTIVITIES

The following section will provide a short overview of the AAL programme finances in terms of 2020 spending and the evolution of the membership call commitments in AAL2.

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE 2020 PROGRAMME EXPENSES

The table below provides a breakdown of the different expense types incurred during the year 2020.

2020 AAL Programme Overview



The largest part of the AAL financing is directed towards the annual Call funding of the European Commission's contribution representing a little more than 8,7 million Euros in payments to the AAL members. This amount includes all transfers executed in 2020 for Call 2009 up until the Call 2019. The considerable reduction compared to last year's 18 million Euros can be explained by the final closing of the AAL.1 Programme in 2019.

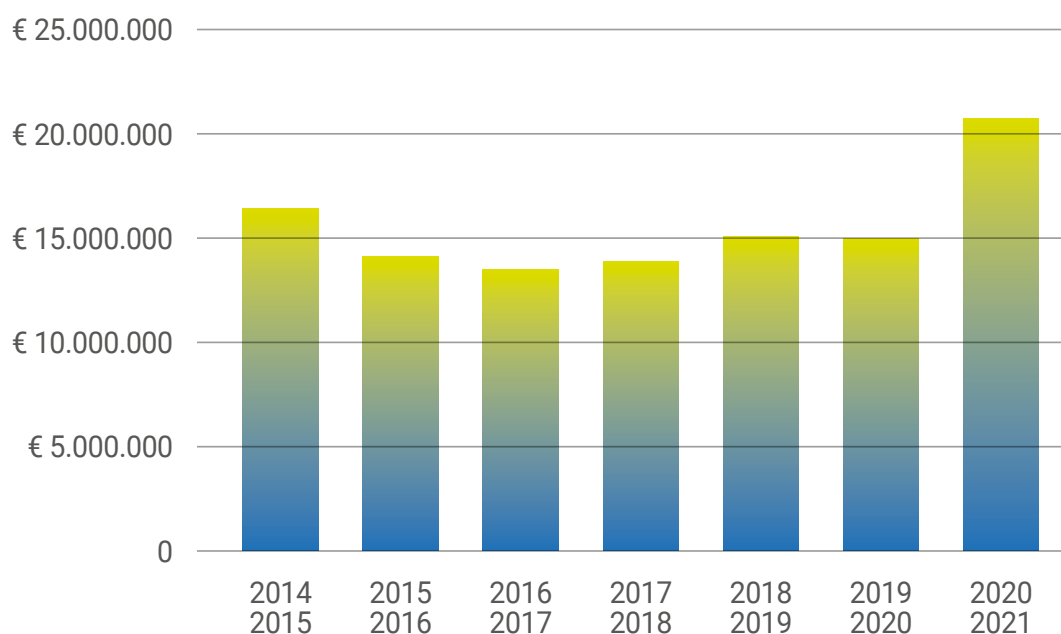
The second largest part of the expenses were used for the provision of project support activities, such as the AAL Market Observatory, the AAL Challenge Prize, the AAL2Business activities and the 2019 AAL Forum. Approximately 968k Euros were spent in 2020 on these activities.

The Programme management expenses amounted to approximately 828k Euros including personnel of the AAL Association, AAL governance as well as the yearly organization & implementation of the Calls. Finally, the functioning of the central office expenses amounted to 207k Euros, which includes the rental costs, the IT infrastructure, depreciations as well as the daily office running costs.

THE AAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS 2014-2020

The table below shows the evolution of the AAL member commitments to the Calls in AAL2.

Total Commitments 2014-2020



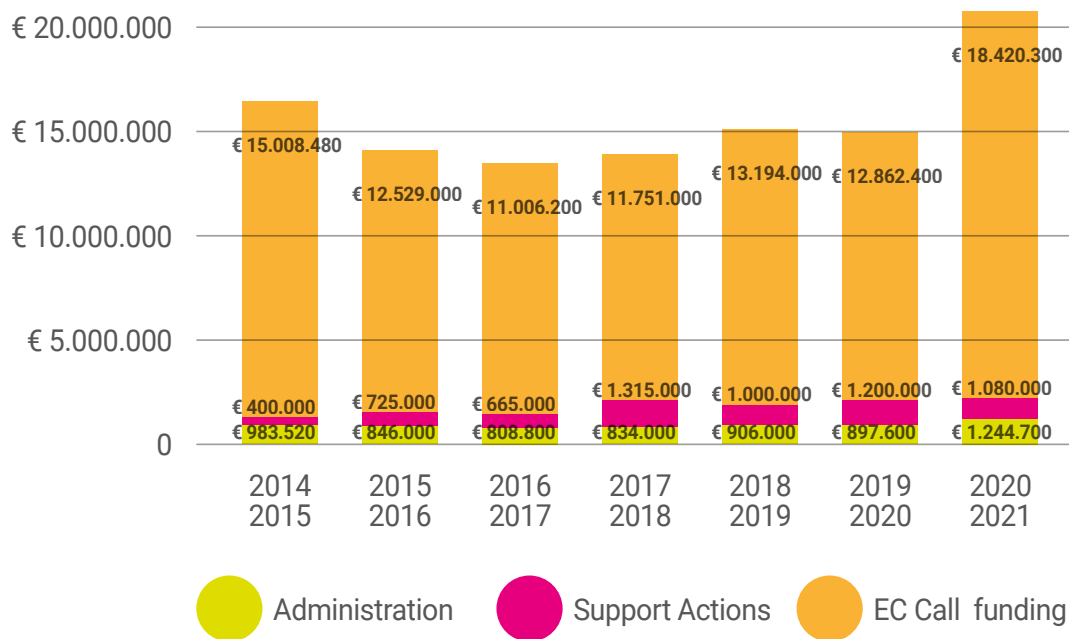
The above table provides the data on the evolution of the total actual commitments by our members. After a dip in 2016, the membership commitments started to increase and stabilise with commitment in 2019 of approximately 15 million Euros.

The official commitments for the year 2020 include both the Call 2020 for an amount of 13,060k Euros as well as an additional Call 2021 for an amount of 7,685k Euros. Both Calls were included in the same and last 'Transfer of Funds' agreement with the European Commission under the AAL Joint Programme.

THE EC COUNTERPART EVOLUTION 2014-2020

The table below provides a breakdown of the EC counterpart contribution.

Evolution AAL.2 Membership commitments & Breakdown in administration, support actions and call funding - Period 2014-2020



The increase in commitments for the 2020/2021 Transfer of Funds agreement can be explained by the fact that in the agreement 2 Calls will be organized.

OUTLOOK FOR 2021

With the new year having already started, the AAL Programme will officially move into its phasing-out period as of July 2021. While the AAL Programme will be still fully operational until around end of 2022 given a number of ongoing support actions plus the final Call 2021 still running, preparations are fully under way for this phasing-out period.

An agreement has been reached between the AAL Association and the European Commission to ensure the proper funding for the phasing-out of the AAL2 Programme, in order to manage and finish all ongoing projects. A multi-annual budget has been approved, which secures this phasing-out with a maximum timeline of end 2027 as per Delegation Agreement.

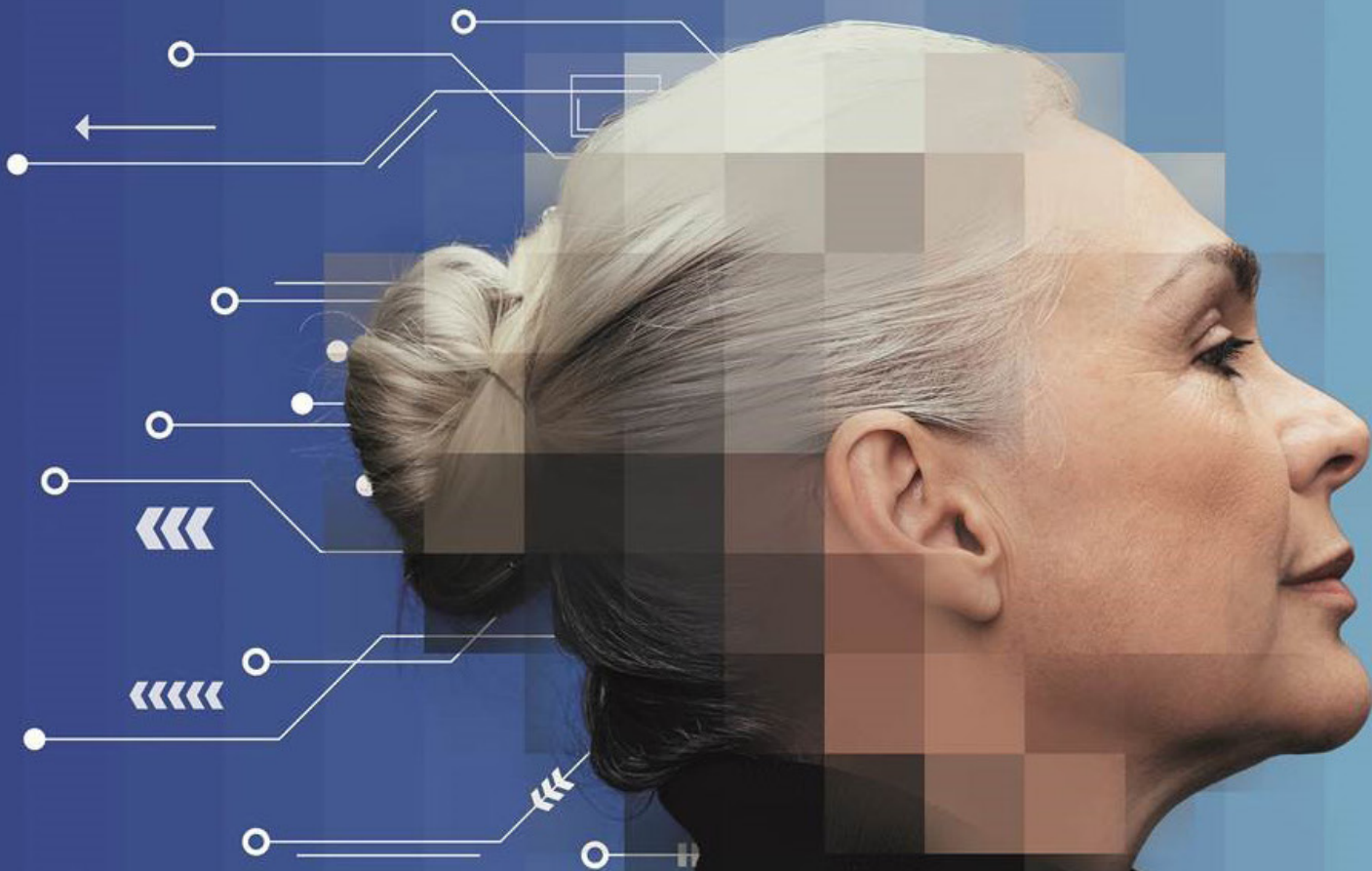
As part of the evaluation of Horizon 2020, the European Commission will carry out an external evaluation of the AAL Programme over 2021/22. This work will help to contribute towards the future integration of AAL Programme's achievements into Horizon Europe and Digital Europe.

AAL's actions in 2021 will focus on the one hand on further crystallizing out the learnings and developed assets of 13 years of AAL while contributing to the political narrative of a more resilient Europe in the 2020s. Integrating active & healthy ageing into the overall health & care systems transformation approach will be further pursued as well as making use of effective collaboration between public funding bodies at national and European level. Fostering technological, financial, social and organisational innovation will be put forward both in Horizon Europe and Digital Europe.

The 2nd edition of the European Week of Active and Healthy Ageing will take place fully online again from October 18-22, 2021 linked to the WHO's Decade of Healthy Ageing while including the post-pandemic challenges and opportunities for active & healthy ageing in Europe.

We look forward to collaborating with our members and AAL community in ensuring a smooth implementation of final AAL Programme activities as well as preparing the future partnerships.

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