

OPEN STANDARDS BASED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT POLICY FOR LARGE MARKET UPTAKE AND NEW ENTRANTS BARRIER LOWERING

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ABSTRACT

Recent surveys on Active Aging (EC, 2012) have shown that the use of information technologies is still a major obstacle for older people and people with special needs. At the same time, the lack of common standardised and interoperable interfaces for the AAL products and technologies, make available solutions hard to personalize to the real needs of the users and the access for new entrants harder. Consequently, the AAL products' prices are kept high and provide no adaptation capabilities to the heterogeneous needs of this sector.

The experience of the authors with an open and standardised pluggable user interface platform (ISO/IEC, 2008) in several international projects (Alexandersson, 2011), has shown that open standards are the best approach to fulfill user interaction needs and facilitate the access to new market entrants, specially SMEs.

In the USA, the Section 508 law (ABS, 2012) establishes the rules and guidelines that the accessibility product have to comply for public procurement. Similarly, in the European Union, the mandate 376 (EC, 2005) was sent to EU standardisation bodies to develop a framework to assist public bodies in the accessible products public procurement.

Based on the authors experience and on the current international regulatory situation, the development and enforcement of an "Open

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Standards based European Public Procurement Policy for the Massive Uptake of Active Aging Products and Services” is proposed in these lines, in order to facilitate the entrance of new players in the AAL market and foster the growth of an strong European ecosystem of mainstream AAL solutions.

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