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## **ELDERLY PEOPLE NEEDS FOR HOME ASSISTANCE SURVEY**

The future virtual assistant for senior citizens will consist of separate modules and software applications that will be fully tailored to the needs of its users. That is why the international partner consortium that develops SAAM will explore the needs of potential users for assistance at home.

The study started in early February this year in three countries - Bulgaria, Austria and Slovenia. In Bulgaria it will be supported by the Bulgarian Red Cross and Caritas Bulgaria. Austria's leading organization is the European Federation of Older People, and in Slovenia - the University Institute for Rehabilitation.

More than 500 participants will be interviewed in the first part of the survey. They will fill out a questionnaire that collects information about their physical and social activity and the role of modern technology in their everyday lives. Elderly people will be asked how much they use a phone, smartphone, tablet, computer, internet, email, mobile communication applications such as Viber, Skype, WhatsApp, whether they have a profile in a social network. They will be informed in advance about the project and research objectives, as well as the way their data will be processed. Participation will be entirely voluntary by a written declaration of informed consent.

In the next stage of the study, in-depth interviews with at least 24 potential users of the virtual assistant will be conducted. The task of these individual conversations is to expand and detail the information received through the questionnaire.

Meetings with nearly 100 representatives of the social circle of potential users of the system will also be held in parallel with the interviews. Relatives of elderly people, social workers and social service providers will be able to share their ideas and requirements for the future virtual assistant. This is extremely important for the project, as one of its tasks is to make the work of these people and institutions easier.

The study also includes meetings with experts in various fields - legislation, social security, telecommunications, etc.

The survey results are expected to be aggregated by the end of March 2018. They will provide a clear picture of the potential users' profiles, their needs and expectations.

