**Helping Older People Navigate Public Transport – Launch of the ASSISTANT Project**

The highly innovative ASSISTANT project which will develop an ICT application to help older people to make unfamiliar trips on public transport was launched at its kick-off meeting in San Sebastian, Spain, on 7th and 8th June 2012.

This ground-breaking three year project will develop an application for the home PC and smartphone that will be designed to help older travellers plan their public transport journeys and then receive guidance during their journey. This guidance will help them to find the bus that they need, warn them when to get off the bus, when and where to change to another route, and will also provide assistance if something goes wrong.

The application will be designed to help users who are unfamiliar with the local public transport system either because they are visiting somewhere that they do not know well, or because they are beginning to use public transport again after losing the ability to drive.

It will also offer help with the difficult last mile of a journey from the point at which you get off public transport to your final destination.

The project manager for ASSISTANT, Dr Stefan Carmien of Tecnalia, Spain, commenting on the launch of the project said "this is a really exciting project which we intend will make a real difference to the lives of older people. We will develop applications that will help users to navigate their way around towns, to help them visit unfamiliar places and thereby increase their independence and their quality of life".

The project involves eight partners from five countries with an overall cost of €2.7 million. It is a project that is supported by the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme, which is funded by the European Commission and the National Contact Points for the AAL programme in each partner's country. The ASSISTANT application is expected to come to market by 2017.

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**Notes to Editors**

- ASSISTANT Project – The full title of the project is ***A****iding* ***S****u****S****tainable* ***I****ndependent* ***S****enior* ***TrA****vellers to* ***N****avigate in* ***T****owns* www.aal-assistant.eu

- Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Programme – The objective of the AAL Programme is to enhance the quality of life of older people in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) www.aal-europe.eu/
- National Contact Point for the UK – The UK's Technology Strategy Board. This is a government agency with the aim of accelerating economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation www.innovateuk.org
- Project Partners:-
    - University of Vienna (Austria)
    - Citruna Technologies (Finland)
    - Fara (Finland)
    - VTT (Finland)
    - E-Seniors (France)
    - Tecnalia (Spain)
    - Andago (Spain)
    - Transport and Travel Research Ltd (United Kingdom)
- Project Sub-contractor:-
    - IN2 (UK)
- The UK partner, Transport and Travel Research Ltd (TTR) is a transport consultancy that specialises in sustainable transport, passenger information systems and the transport needs of older and disabled persons
- The UK subcontractor IN2 Search Interfaces Development Ltd, is a specialist provider of state-of-the-art solutions and services for multimedia content management, building their products on top of a service oriented architecuture and having extensive know-how on embedding accessibility.