INTRODUCTION

By 2060, one in three Europeans will be over 65. Keeping people healthy and active longer and empowering them to take an active role in managing their health will have a positive effect on quality of life, productivity, economic competitiveness and inclusiveness, while reducing pressures on national budgets.

In April 2018, the European Commission adopted a Communication on enabling the Digital Transformation of Health and Care in the Digital Single Market. Among its objectives, it aims to ensure that the two powerful current trends for the EU, digitalisation and ageing, are brought together in a positive way for the benefit of society.

Older people are valuable and respected contributors to communities, societies and economies, who bring economic opportunities to the EU.

The term Silver Economy was coined to describe the economy linked to the population over 50 and its size is estimated at €3.7 trillion. It continues to grow and is expected to contribute over €5.7 trillion to Europe’s economy by 2025. In fact, the European Silver Economy is the third largest economy in the world behind China and the USA.

The ageing population can be divided into 3 groups: active, fragile and dependant, each with their own specific pattern of needs. The EU demographics will change, as it is estimated that the traditional working-age population will decrease by more than 30% in the coming 50 years.
For a sustainable Silver Economy, therefore, it is important firstly to support active and healthy ageing among the over 50’s, to keep them in the workforce for as long as possible. Secondly it is essential that key services, such as health and care, keep pace with their needs.

The Silver Economy will derive from digital tools and services aimed at tackling functional impairments and accessibility requirements, such as those related to reduced vision, health, dexterity, mobility and cognitive performance. It will be essential to reach high levels of digital literacy for the elderly population, and to consider how digital tools and solutions can be made fully accessible to this group.

New digital technologies maybe one important sources of solution to support these needs, while at the same time, offering opportunities to innovators that can successful respond to the challenges of the silver economy. Moreover, it is hoped that these technologies will bring about the next generation of disease prevention techniques, as well as treatments that can ensure a healthy, active and productive population over the age of 50.

This short booklet aims to outline some of the ways in which the European Commission is supporting the EU to develop a sustainable Silver Economy, particularly in the context of the digital transformation of health and care.
The Silver Economy

Europe is ageing. By 2060 one in three Europeans will be over 65.

Today, the ratio of working people to the ‘inactive’ others is shifting from 4 to 1 today to 2 to 1 by 2060.

Costs for care are rising sharply. If we don’t change our systems for health and social care, we will not have the money and the people to guarantee a good and healthy life for all.

If we reinvent our systems for health and social care, innovative new ICT-products and services can help us deliver better and cheaper care for all.

Electronic Health Record

General Practitioner monitors online progress

Social Services activate regular visits of carer and social worker

Europe has what it takes to benefit from these new opportunities

A solid R&I base in European industry

A host of SMEs & start-ups are now developing

New ICT products such as care robotics

Health mobile applications that assist with tracking

Big pharma companies are developing integrated therapeutic solutions

The Silver economy offers new highly skilled tech jobs

but also the opportunity for low qualified population to reskill

@SilverEcoEU, ec.europa.eu/silver-economy, bit.ly/SilverEcoEU
This initiative was launched in 2011 by the EC to foster innovation and digital transformation in the field of active and healthy ageing. The partnership brings together all the relevant actors at EU, national and regional levels - such as innovators, SMEs, policy makers, decision takers, social and health professionals - across different policy areas to handle a specific societal challenge and involve all the innovation chain levels.
The EIP on AHA has its foundations on two main pillars: Action Groups and Reference Sites. The Blueprint, Innovation to Market (I2M) and MAFEIP are the three crosscutting horizontal initiatives that feed the EIP on AHA:

- **The Blueprint** aims to innovate health and care in Europe and is the follow-up of the EIP on AHA Scaling Up Strategy. It reflects the policy vision of the EIP on AHA partners. It is the channel for the EIP on AHA partners for giving and receiving policy inputs.

- **I2M** targets the scale-up of digital health and care solutions in a cross-border context.

- **MAFEIP** is the Monitoring and Assessment Framework initially developed in response to the EIP on AHA specific monitoring needs. It is to be used as an impact assessment tool to support evidence-based decision-making process for all institutions and users in the health and care sector.

Calls for Commitments, Reference sites, Twinning are published on regular basis here: [https://europa.eu/!cX68JH](https://europa.eu/!cX68JH)

**The Active and Assisted Living Programme – AAL**

The [AAL Programme](https://aall.eu/) is a funding programme that aims to create better quality of life for older people and to strengthen industrial opportunities in the field of healthy ageing technology and innovation.

This is done by funding projects that work towards creating market-ready digital products and
services for older people and creating the right ecosystem to foster the growing market for healthy ageing products. Each project consists of SMEs, research bodies and end-user organisations. Since 2008, over 220 projects have been funded. The AAL projects address a number of issues, including management of chronic conditions, social inclusion, access to online services, mobility, management of daily activities, and support from informal carers.

**Covenant on Demographic Change**

The Covenant on Demographic Change gathers European public authorities, at local, regional and national level, and other relevant stakeholders, committed to develop environments that support active and healthy ageing, enhance independent living and well-being of older persons, and create a society for all ages.

**Studies and Initiatives on Ageing:**

- **Scale AHA Study:** Work together to scale up digital innovation [https://europa.eu/!HB89xt](https://europa.eu/!HB89xt)

- **Study on the Large-scale sustainable deployment of digitally-enabled innovation for health and care delivery to the ageing population** [https://europa.eu/!dh39Kq](https://europa.eu/!dh39Kq)

- **Study on the Top 25 influential ICT for Active and Healthy Ageing projects** [https://europa.eu/!Yb84nM](https://europa.eu/!Yb84nM)

- **Certification for Ageing in currently in place through the Homes4Life Project** [http://www.homes4life.eu/](http://www.homes4life.eu/)
Silver Economy Study: How to stimulate the economy by hundreds of millions of Euros per year [https://europa.eu/]Pn64qq

Research Actions under Horizon 2020

The Commission has supported many Research and Innovation (R&I) projects linked to the Silver Economy under the Framework Programme 7, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funding instrument and the Horizon2020 programme: Societal Challenge 1 - Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing.

These R&I actions are in different areas, such as: Better connected through integrated care; Fall Prevention; Frailty, Early Detection and Intervention; Innovating Elderly Care; Knowledge Sharing and Standardisation related to Ageing Well and Robotics for Ageing Well. Calls for Proposals for 2019 and 2020 are ongoing.
The European Commission sees a great potential and opportunities in supporting a strong and sustainable Silver Economy in the European Union. In the context of the future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, social challenges, such as Ageing and Digital Health will be addressed through a variety of partnerships and financial instruments.

The future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe, includes Health under Pillar II and will within the intervention area of “Health throughout the Life Course” focus on Independent and active life for the elderly and/or disabled people. A future co-funded European partnership area is also proposed: “Large-scale innovation and transformation of health systems in a digital and ageing society”.

The new Digital Europe Programme (DEP) will support the digital transformation of health and care. The focus of the programme will be the development and deployment of new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, High-Performance Computing, and Cybersecurity for the benefit of society. It will also aim to widen the deployment and uptake of digital technologies in areas of public interest, and by businesses in the private sector, focusing on high impact actions in selected areas of public interest such as health. Digital Innovation Hubs throughout the European Union will be encouraged to focus on health and care and test these new technologies and create a sustainable economy for digital health and care technologies.
Structural Funds, such as the ERDF and ESF+, will allocate funding for the adoption of successful digital health solutions and the fostering of Digital Skills. Other funding opportunities, such as InvestEU Programme with the European Investment Bank (EIB), will also support the digitisation of health and ageing.