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First Meeting Launches European Furniture Design Project to Benefit the Elderly and People Living with Disability

Researchers and experts from a range of centres and universities from across Europe gathered in Yecla, Spain in November 2013 to launch a project seeking to secure skills for workers in the furniture manufacturing sector adapting to the needs of the 21st century. The VETAAL project is not only addressing this skills gap but also seeking to enhance the independence of a community that needs assistance in daily life.

The meeting was held at the headquarters of the Technological Center of Furniture and Wood in the Region of Murcia (CETEM) as a Kick-off Meeting for the Vocational Education and Training for Ambient Assisted Living (VETAAL) as a European project funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

The project is part of LLP's Leonardo da Vinci Development of Innovation Programme for the development of a learning path to be set for students, designers and manufacturers of furniture to be used by the elderly and people living with disability. As a great deal of attention is being paid to enhancing care for this user group, this is a new niche market for the furniture sector.

The meeting defined the objectives and the work plan to be developed by each partner. Within the partnership, VETAAL brings together 14 contributors from research centres and universities in Spain, Slovenia, Poland, Italy, Austria and the UK with the aim of developing a training plan for the design and manufacture of furniture with specific technical modification for this vital community of users, both now and in the future.

While more companies are working in this area, it seems that most organisations do not have qualified personnel to design and manufacture products according to the specific obligations and mechanical safety requirements for this type of furniture.

This initiative aims to bring professional qualifications to people working in the furniture industry and students who will soon be working in this sector. The qualification will meet the new skill requirements to meet the growing demand for an integrated living space for furniture users. The VETAAL Partners will also work to achieve a harmonisation of the curriculum for these professions at a European level.

Development of a training path for European Furniture Experts in Designing and Manufacturing of AAL Integrated Furniture for the Care and Support of Elderly and Disabled People./ VETAAL

VETAAL PARTNERS

- Technical Research Centre of Furniture and Wood of The Region of Murcia – CETEM
- Instituto de Fomento de la Región de Murcia – INFO
- Wood Processing and Furniture Association - CCIS
- Ogólnopolska Izba Gospodarcza Producentów Mebli (Polish Chamber of Commerce of Furniture Manufacturers) - OIGPM
- Vitale Tecnologie Comunicazione – VITECO
- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training – NIVET
- University of Vienna, Institute for Applied Psychology: Health, Development, Enhancement Clinical Psychology Group - UNIVIE
- Searchlighter
- Spanish Confederation of Woodworking Industries - CONFEMADERA HÁBITAT
- Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Faculty of Wood Technology - WTD
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