



thyssenkrupp's study on accessible living shows Germans are far too slow in addressing the issue of elderly housing

- At the Smart City Expo in Barcelona, the company addressed the real impact of the Internet of Things (IoT) on the mobility model of cities
- Challenges faced by this technology include security, trust and privacy

The results of a new study by thyssenkrupp on housing for the elderly (Wohnen im Alter 2016) were clear: Germans are far too slow to consider the issue of how they want to live in their old age. One in three people aged over 40 is putting off thinking about it; in 2014 it was only one in eight. However, our society is growing dramatically older, so it is high time to tackle the issue of housing for the elderly. According to thyssenkrupp's survey, barely 23 percent of Germans aged between 40 and 49 have thought about this issue for themselves, in other words less than one in four. Even for those directly affected, who are aged 60 and over, only 59 percent have thought about it. "Broader awareness and initiatives are urgently needed here, because everyone should be able to decide for themselves how and where they want to live in retirement: whether accessibility is possible within their own four walls, in multi-generational houses, or in assisted living facilities, for example," says Markus Liesen, Managing Director of thyssenkrupp Encasa.

The age pyramid of our society is changing. This fact was emphasized by figures from the 13th coordinated population forecast by the German Federal Statistical Office: these show that the ratio of people of retirement age of 65 and over compared to those of working age between 20 and 64 is rising, from 34 percent in 2013 to 58 percent in 2035, and is projected to reach 69 percent in 2060. That means for every 100 people of working age, there will be 69 people aged over 65 who want and have to live somewhere in retirement. In the latest study by thyssenkrupp, 37 percent say "preferably within my current four walls." However, these homes first need to be adapted for accessibility and that is where things often come unstuck. According to "Wohnen im Alter 2016," above all else Germans want their entrance and sanitation areas to be accessible, and this makes the stairlift one of the most suitable and desired solutions.

The German government recognized the problem of elderly housing a long time ago. On January 1, 2017, the next step of the Care Support Act (Pflegestärkungsgesetz, PSG)

comes into force, replacing the previous three steps of care with five degrees of care. But very few people realize that the PSG will also assist with accessibility conversions within their own four walls - in fact, thyssenkrupp's study showed 54 percent of Germans are unaware of this fact. So the study also calls for greater awareness since the majority of people who would benefit from this change are letting government subsidies slip through their fingers.

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Under certain conditions, a grant may also be requested from care insurers. This grant amounts up to EUR 4,000 per person, while married couples that need care can even receive up to EUR 8,000. Certain conditions must be met at the time of application in order to qualify for a degree of care. In addition, the German Reconstruction Loan Bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, KfW) promotes the elimination of obstacles in private homes and greater safety for occupants. "The costs of a stairlift roughly amount to the costs of staying in a retirement home for three months. Therefore, investment in accessibility within one's own four walls is well worthwhile," summarizes Markus Liesen.

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