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Author: Lionel Sola [1], published in DAE blog [2] on 10/10/2012
European Health and care services are mostly in the hands of regional authorities. They are decisive for the success of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA). Is your Region involved already?
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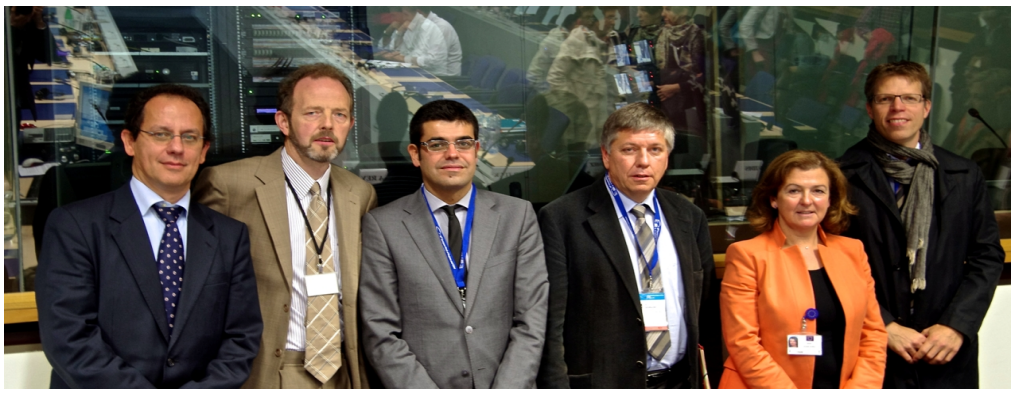
--- Posted by Maria Iglesia Gomez, DG SANCO, Head of Unit "Innovation for Health and Consumers"and Ilias Iakovidis, DG CONNECT, Acting Head of Unit "Digital Social Platforms"

European Health and care services are mostly in the hands of regional authorities. They are decisive for the success of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing [3] (EIP on AHA).

During the Open Days 2012 - European Week of Regions and Cities [4] we organised a workshop to see how they can leverage structural and regional funds to make health care more efficient and effective, to enable their citizens to live longer and more independently, and at the same time reinforce their economy and open new markets. You will find the presentations here [5].

Galicia (Spain), Flanders (Belgium) and Drenthe (Netherlands) showcased examples that reflect the spirit of the Partnership: creating innovative solutions for health care that can be scaled up across barrier boundaries between regions. So they become available and affordable for all in the EU.



Picture - *from left to right:* ***Ilias Iakovidis****, European Commission's DG CONNECT, Digital Social Platform unit;* ***John Walsh****, European Commission's DG REGIO, Thematic Coordination & Innovation unit;* ***Manuel Varela Rey****, Director General for Innovation and Public Health Management, Ministry of Health (Xunta de Galicia);* ***Jo Vandeurzen****, Minister for Welfare, Health and Family Affairs, Flanders; Government;* ***Maria Iglesia Gomez****, European Commission's DG SANCO, Innovation for Health and Consumers unit;* ***Ard Van der Tuuk****, Member of the board of the provincial council, Province of Drenthe, the Netherlands*

Mr. Jo Vandeurzen, Flemish minister for Welfare and Health, presented Flanders' Care [6], a project

responding to the challenges of an ageing region. By investing in innovative care, including home care and prevention, Flanders Care aims to improve the quality of care through innovation and responsible entrepreneurship, while generating maximum social and economic added value. Flanders is also one of the drivers behind the CORAL [7] network where 20 regions collaborate to implement Active and Healthy Ageing and Ambient Assisted Living solutions and services. These are exactly the kind of initiatives we want to inspire with the EIP on Active and Healthy Ageing.

Mr. Manuel Varela Rey, from Galicia explained how they tackle the challenge of a rapidly ageing population with innovation. The projects H2050 and InnovaSaúde [8] involve private enterprises in developing open innovation solutions for the future Galician Health System. Thus they contribute also to the EIP goal of improving the sustainability and efficiency of social and health care systems.

Mr. Ard Van der Tuuk, representative of the Province of Drenthe really hit the mark when he said that the elderly bring great value to the society and deserve a good quality of life and a high standard of services (see his presentation here [9]). He advocates a new mind-set: "Ageing doesn't start at 50, it is a continuous process during the whole life cycle". He is right and the point is: you have to see ageing not as something that happens to you, but as something you do. Age actively, stay independent and you will have more healthy and happy life years. The EIP on AHA aims to create systems for social and health care which help you do that.

Mr. Van der Tuuk also shared the example of HANNN [10], the Healthy Ageing Network from the Northern Netherlands region. More than a hundred stakeholders work together in fundamental research on active and healthy ageing. The resulting innovations bring new businesses to the region, resulting in increased investments and economic activity. They work for their own region, but cooperate at a European level, for example as a recognized stakeholder in international ventures such as the SCANBALT network (from Nordic-Baltic Region's) and the iAge project [11], which focuses on regional development in areas affected by an ageing population.

As we have seen, regions can team up to achieve the triple win pursued by the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing: better care for people, more sustainable care systems and economic growth and jobs.

And, not surprisingly, regions will have a prominent role at the first Conference of Partners [12] on November 6, where the stakeholders' coalitions that replied to the Invitation for Commitments [13] will finally unveil their action plans.

What are you doing in this domain? Is your region involved already? Share your projects, strategies and ideas in the comments section below and register your organisation to the Marketplace [14] if you haven't done so yet!

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Tags:

Healthy & Active Ageing [15]

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Links
[1] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/users/solasli
[2] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/blog_home
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/active-healthy-ageing
[4] http://www.opendays.europa.eu/
[5] http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2012/presentations_frame.cfm
[6] http://flanders-care.be/en/
[7] http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=3701312
[8] http://www.sergas.es/MostrarContidos_N2_T01.aspx?IdPaxina=60796
[9] http://prezi.com/mhivfbvih9m-/healthy-ageing/
[10] http://www.hannn.eu/
[11] http://www.iageproject.eu/
[12] http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=partners-conference
[13] http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=commitment
[14] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/eipaha/
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