eHealth Network / Workplan 2023

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1) The 'why' - eHealth network purpose and goals

The eHealth Network is the main eHealth governance body within the European Union (EU) and associated countries. Created by Article 14 of the Directive (2011/24/EU) on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare which defines its role, the eHealth network has the mission to "*foster cooperation between Member States to ensure EU-wide interoperability of electronic health systems and wider use of eHealth*". Member States' representatives gather at a high level, on a voluntary basis, to define a common vision and strategy for eHealth across Europe. This effective network has a proven track-record, including interoperability guidelines for use cases in cross-border healthcare, building MyHealth@EU, preparing for and shaping the European Health Data Space.

The eHealth Network became visible to many actors during the Covid-19 pandemic, mainly through its successful creation and implementation of the EU Digital Covid Certificate (DCC) with a technical, legal and operational framework in a 14-week timeframe, and making it the most important international standard used in more than 76 countries. The eHealth Network also introduced the EFGS, the Federated Gateway Service that enabled the interoperability of national contact tracing apps.

The eHealth Network is co-chaired by the European Commission (DG Health - Maya Matthews) and an elected Member States' representative for a 2-year mandate (currently France, Raphaël Beaufret for the period of Nov 2022-Nov 2024). C1 unit-Digital Health of DG SANTE is operating its Secretariat.

Since the proposal for the European Health Data Space (EHDS) regulation was published on May 3, 2022, the eHealth network entered into a new phase, more than 10 years after its creation. The regulation is envisioning a new governance for Digital Health in Europe, with new ways and means for action. eHealth Network representatives are supporting the negotiation process in the Council as experts and the eHealth Network needs to use the transition period to prepare for and shape the future governance of eHealth in Europe in order to continue the fruitful collaboration between the MS and the Commission under a joint leadership.

2) The 'what' - eHealth network objectives 2023

The eHealth Network main objectives are described in article 14 of the Cross-border healthcare directive. Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (europa.eu). Priorities

for the eHealth Network include the expansion and successful implementation of MyHealth@EU, the development of digital health in Member States and, due to the current context, the transition to EHDS governance.

To achieve this, the eHealth network is setting 5 key priorities for 2023, with clear deliverables, planning and responsibilities for existing subgroups and volunteering Member States, along with the European Commission.

5 key priorities eHealth Network 2023

1- Identify the needs for European funding for eHealth infrastructure for primary and secondary use of health data
2- Achieve further technical common choices and formalize our process
3- Implement European ethical principles for digital health
4- Assess digital health deployment progress and best practices in EU Member States
5- Cooperate more effectively, in preparation for the future EHDS board

1- Identify the needs for European funding for eHealth infrastructure for primary and secondary use of health data

- To produce an eHN joint paper outlining identified funding needs to support the digital agenda for health in Europe, which would include:
    - estimating funding needs for Member States by 2030 to fully engage in the EHDS.
    - identifying needs for European central services to be provided by the European Commission to support EHDS implementation.
    - describing current funding mechanisms and budgets, vertical (health) and horizontal (digital) and their strengths and shortcomings, with enhancements (per use funding, integrating maturity to help Member States who have more efforts to do, etc.).

This paper could then be used to advocate towards the relevant entities (HaDEA, EU4Health steering committee, but also towards other Commission bodies caring for digital health implementationetc.).

Expected achievements in 2023: Joint paper led by Member States outlining needs for supporting the digital agenda for health in Europe.

Responsibility: eHN – 2 leading countries to be identified.

2- Achieve further technical common choices and formalize our process

- Build on top of the success stories EU DCC and EFGS, starting with taking a joint decision about the future of EU DCC infrastructure

- Choose and adopt the common standard for health documents sharing across MyHealth@EU, between CDA and FHIR, while investigating conversion techniques and tools.
- Produce detailed guidelines on laboratory results (updated guidelines), medical images and hospital discharge reports, as well as advance the Change Proposals to introduce these new services in MyHealth@EU operations.
- In order to continue the fruitful collaboration between the MS and the Commission under a joint leadership, and on this basis, formalize a document endorsed by eHN to propose a new process for decision on technical choices for digital health at EU level (insights gathering, scenarios, Member States and stakeholders' consultation, decision, etc.).

Expected achievements in 2023:

- Agreed standard for health documents sharing (CDA and/or FHIR).
- Adopted guidelines for lab results (updated guidelines), hospital discharge reports, images and medical image reports.
- Adopted document on decision process, aligned with new interoperability act, preparing for and shaping the new EHDS governance. This could include a proposal for a dashboard to follow on progress of up-take of semantic and technical interoperability assets in Member States

Responsibility: Technical IOP subgroup in collaboration with Semantic IOP subgroup

3- Implement European ethical principles for digital health

- Complete the ethical principles initial implementation phase by launching an EU wide consultation of citizens and by communicating the first assessment of all EU Member States on European ethical principles.
- Closely collaborate with and contribute to the capacity building initiative. Ensure the launch of initiatives and incentivize Member States to participate.
- Draft a white paper on the involvement of end users in the work of the eHN and the eHMSEG to be adopted by the eHealth Network.

Expected achievements in 2023:

- Outcomes from the consultation of citizens.
- Capacity building plan for European ethical principles, and strong MS involvement and accomplishment rate, these being defined.
- Draft a white paper on the involvement of end users.

Responsibility: Task force on European ethical principles- leading country (currently France)

4- Assess digital health deployment progress and best practices in EU Member States

Comparing the progress of eHealth deployment and related national and regional strategies amongst EU Member States can be a very effective tool to obtain a state-of-the-art overview of digital health in the EU. Moreover, it will provide insights to support each Member State at national level to move forward. It can exert positive influence on countries that lag behind in terms of digital health deployment to progress further, while learning from lessons learned of other more advanced Member States, and collectively benefiting from the sharing of national experiences and best practices.

- Progress in the capacity building initiative.
- Investigate the opportunity to create a public observatory (or dashboard) for Digital Health in Europe, initially describing pages about each country (link to relevant websites, etc.) and progressively extending to include information and data about the national e-health infrastructure, along with digital health maturity (example: European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/). OECD and/or WHO could be partners in this process.
- Establish concrete goals for assessments, in line and to complete what DESI already measures. This could for instance also support providing guidance to ensure access for patients to their (translated) health records across borders (digital decade target).

Expected achievements in 2023:

- Capacity building: first set of indicators and questionnaires administered to EU Member States, building on already available information from previous surveys. First evaluation of results.
- Paper on observatory to be adopted during eHN meeting (June or November) including a proposed action plan.

Responsibility: C1 and leading country to be identified

5- Cooperate more effectively, in preparation for the future EHDS board

- Preparing for the future EHDS board, plan regular review and feedback sessions to continuously evaluate progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Map the current eHN subgroups, then, design, validate and publish together a simplified organization with purpose, expected outcome and organization, with a trajectory to EHDS Board. This will include examining and discussing the possibility of creating a dedicated structure within the eHN dealing with the topics about secondary use of data, to enhance information sharing to all member states on top of presentations held in plenary, in strong collaboration with EHDS2 pilot, participants in the direct grants and joint actions on the topic.
- Investigate options to financially compensate expertise and time spent in eHN groups.
- Strive towards an increased collaboration between Member States and the EC by examining and discussing the opportunity for launching a messaging service (eg:

element, mattermost, etc.) open to all eHealth key contributors, with dedicated subgroups and moderation.
- Provide a planning of digital meetings, with calendar, documents, agenda and connection link published on Confluence webpage (or on a group on the messaging tool), along with a digital directory of all professionals working in the eHealth network and limit ad-hoc meetings. Important documents like agendas or minutes should be sent to the Member States in a timely manner by the Commission/group leaders in order to enable the respective participants to adequately prepare the meetings.

Expected achievements in 2023:

- Paper on subgroups (including other bodies in the eHN environment) organization validated by eHN ;
- Paper on financial retribution of experts;
- Messaging tool launch and use ;
- Long term planning of meetings and set up of a digital directory of all eHealth network contributors.

Responsibility: European Commission - C1 unit and leading country to be identified

On top of those five key priorities, the subgroups workplans for 2023 are listed below.