



15TH EHEALTH NETWORK 11-12 JUNE 2019, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

COVER NOTE BY EHEALTH NETWORK SECRETARIAT

Topic 2.4. D8.2.2. Common Semantic Strategy for health in the European Union - eHAction

Issue at stake

The Commission has acknowledged the need for digital health interoperability for more than a decade. Besides this necessity, some projects aimed to develop the interoperability of electronic health record systems within the EU. This triggered initiatives such as epSOS and CALLIOPE, as well as later the first Joint Action: the eHealth Governance Initiative (eHGI). These were the first steps to define and drive a way forward to achieve the best scenario for the EU digital health integration.

In the eHealth Network meeting in May 2018, it was discussed the need for a common semantic approach, and in the November 2018 meeting it was endorsed the work of the Working Group on Common Semantic Strategy, which was created in the eHAction joint action, to come up with a solid proposal for a five-year strategy. In June 2019 meeting, members will discuss on a draft strategy and will approve in November 2019 meeting.

The strategy aims to set a foundation for the development of a Common Semantic Strategy for the health in the EU, whilst addressing some of the needs to be sorted out, and possible steps to achieve a solid basis within 5 years. Noting that the work cannot stop there for a solid semantic strategy and planning for continuity needs to be included in further considerations. Semantic experts indicated that the semantic strategy is a matter for at least 10 years and, once established, needs ongoing maintenance and evaluation.

Summary

According to the Commission's recommendation on the European Electronic Health Record exchange format (EHRxF) published on 6 February 2019, the following healthcare domains have been identified as a baseline for standardisation: Patient Summary, ePrescription, Laboratory Requests and Results, Medical Imaging and Reports and Hospital Discharge reports.

To achieve a Common Semantic Strategy, consideration should be given to all semantic requirements that are relevant to healthcare in the EU, focussing initially on cross-border digital health requirements and including all other digital health related subjects as necessary, to support national-level approaches when and as needed. In order to implement the Strategy, the document suggest the creation of a Common Semantic Strategic Committee, in the framework of the eHealth Network.

The Common Semantic Strategy document intends to present to the eHealth Network the work developed by the Common Semantic Strategy working group, in the form of an elaborated draft proposal, regarding the healthcare domains, to achieve semantic interoperability at the EU level in the coming years. It is the result of the active participation of the representatives from 24 Member States and countries in eight teleconferences and two workshops held in Lisbon (1-2 October 2018 and 18-19 March 2019).

In order to move forward the Common Semantic Strategy, all Member States and countries that do not have yet a representative on the Common Semantic Strategy, are invited to join the working group. The future objective is creating a Semantic sub-group for EU interoperability. On 2-3 September 2019, the 3rd Common Semantic Strategy Workshop will be held in Brussels, all Member States and countries are invited to participate on this event. The work of this group will be open to consultation from 15 June to 15 August 2019, all Member States and countries are invited to participate on this process.

Format of procedure in the eHealth Network meeting

The topic is introduced and the floor is opened to the eHealth Network for comments and questions.

Document is for the endorsement as a draft strategy, to be finalised by November 2019.

Suggestion on the creation of eHealth Network Semantic sub-group to follow-up the work, finish the deliverable into a final version of the Common Semantic Strategy, to be adopted in November 2019 meeting, after the workshop in September 2019.