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ERN hospital managers committed to strengthen collaboration to support the implementation of the ERNs

For the next year, the ERN Hospital managers will continue to cooperate, coordinate their actions and exchange best practices in four main areas: communication, e-training and e-learning actions; data management; human potential and transversal support services. This is the main conclusion of the 3rd meeting of the ERN Hospital Managers which took place in Hôpital Saint Louis (Assistance Publique – Hôpitaux de Paris) in Paris on 16th and 17th May 2019, where 54 hospital attended.

The meeting was organized by the European Commission - DG SANTE and hosted by Eve Parier, CEO of the hospital group that includes Hôpital Saint Louis in Paris. The European Observatory on Health System and Policies contributed with their expertise and by facilitating the different sessions of the meeting.

One the first day, two plenary sessions were dedicated to 'The tertiary care hospital of the future' and 'Adjusting hospital financing to new roles and low prevalence conditions'. Participants took part, then, in 4 workshops sessions on sharing best practices to support the ERNs on: communication, e-training and e-learning actions; data management; human potential and transversal support services. On the second day, the Hospital managers' were addressed by Martin Hirsch, Director General of Assistance Publique – Hôpitaux de Paris, and had an opportunity to have an intensive dialogue with different stakeholders, including some ERN Coordinators and Member States' representatives, Eurordis (patients' association) and Orphanet representatives. The participation of the hospitals to the ERNs is often seen as an opportunity to "shift from the idea to devote small resources to rare diseases to the concept where rare diseases is a driving force to do research at a larger scale", as stated by Martin Hirsch. The ERNs are seen by hospital managers as an opportunity to leverage innovation, not only in the field of rare diseases, but also in the way hospitals are managed and interconnected across Europe through networking.

Among the main aspects discussed in the interaction with other ERN key players: the support of the hospital managers to the daily involvement of the health professionals in the ERNs (allocated working time and/or substitution by other staff to dedicate time to the ERNs, additional funds or administrative support); the request of a clear strategy to decide whether a hospital becomes a new member of a ERN or an Affiliated Partner and how to manage the increasing size of the ERNs through this enlargement of the network; contribution of the hospital managers to define the role of the ERNs in the national health systems and elaborate patients' pathways; call to the hospital managers to support networking at national level and avoid competition across hospitals.



Hospital managers agreed on some top priorities to address in the coming months: data management (including patients' registries), virtual consultations through the CPMS, clinical practical guidelines, education and training, clinical research.

The participants decided on some organisational aspects to better structure their collaboration, including the use of a dedicated space in the IT platform dedicated to the ERN community - the ECP (European Collaborative Platform) to share good practices and involve the broader community of the ERN hospital managers; the organisation of a face to face meeting once a year; the setting up of working groups reflecting the four priority topics identified for discussions during the event in the areas of data sharing, communication, transversal support and human resources support.

The commitment and support of the ERNs hospital managers involved in the European Reference Networks is essential for the success of the networks, as well as their close collaboration with the other key players of the ERN community to establish the conditions of success of the networks: ERN Coordinators, Member States, patients' representatives. The meeting organized in Paris is the third meeting organized for the hospital managers since the creation of the ERNs in 2017¹. The ERN hospital managers' community includes the CEOs or Directors of the more than 300 hospitals where a member of the 24 ERNs is located. Currently 25 UE Member States plus Norway are participating in the ERNs system.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/health/ern_en