

SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP IN POLAND ON PATIENTS' RIGHTS IN CROSS-BORDER HEALTHCARE AND ERNs

Date: 9 October 2024, Warsaw (in hybrid form)

In the context of enhancing the implementation of [Directive 2011/24/EU](#) on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (CBHC), the European Commission is organising ten national workshops, with the assistance of the [National Contact Points](#) established in all EU Countries.

These workshops, whose location has been identified following a call for expression of interest addressed to the members of the cross-border healthcare Expert Group, will be followed by a final EU-level event to be held in Brussels or Luxembourg in Spring 2025.

The objective of this action is twofold: to improve the information available at national level on the provisions included in the Directive, and to raise awareness in patients on their rights regarding the possibilities available to seek healthcare abroad, including for patients affected by a rare disease.

The national workshop organised by the Polish National Health Fund (Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia) is the sixth one organised so far in collaboration with the European Commission, after those that took place in Malta, Rome, Dublin, Athens and Estonia/Latvia.

The audience included different stakeholder groups, such as healthcare professionals, regional healthcare providers, and patients' organisations; about 60 participants attended on site while about 250 followed the event online.

The workshop's agenda focused on implementing the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive (CBHC), which, alongside the ERNs, breaks barriers, enables millions of patients each year to benefit from healthcare abroad, and is gradually shaping the creation of a truly European Health Union.

The workshop was opened by the Deputy Director of the Polish National Health Fund, who emphasized that the event took place in a year of great significance, as Poland celebrated the 10th anniversary of enhancing of the Polish legislation implementing the directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.

Sandra Gallina, the European Commission's Director General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) sent a welcome video message, in which she underscored that the CBHC Directive and the ERNs are milestones on the journey towards borderless healthcare.

As regards cross-border healthcare, the presentations concerned the implementation of the healthcare Directive in Poland, healthcare and patients' rights: the possibilities of treatment abroad in the light of two different legal documents and a planned treatment abroad from the Polish perspective.

The second session concerned transborder healthcare: from theory to practice, followed by four presentations concerned how to get the cost reimbursement after a treatment abroad, the intermediaries of healthcare services, transborder prescription and e-prescription, its role, challenges and opportunities.

The third session concerned the European Reference Networks and rare diseases and included four presentations. They concerned the EC work in this area, the past and the future of the European Reference Networks in Poland, Poland's participation in ERN EpiCare on the example of the Memorial: Polish Children's Institute in Warsaw, and the participation of this hospital in ERN TransplantChild.

The workshop was the occasion to discuss the need of further discussion about including innovative treatments (such as gene therapy) in the Polish basket of benefits, and the crucial need for keeping specialized healthcare in the country up to date with the latest medical developments.

About the ERNs, the workshop stressed the need to finalize the Polish Strategy on Rare Diseases and discussed about the participation and distribution of partners in the ERNs in Poland.