



12TH EHEALTH NETWORK 28 NOVEMBER 2017, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
COVER NOTE BY EHEALTH NETWORK SECRETARIAT

Agenda point 3: eHealth interoperability and standardisation

Issue at stake

This agenda point covers three topics on interoperability and standardisation. The policy paper is presented for adoption as well as the recommendations that derive from the informative report on European semantic interoperability in eHealth.

The third topic is meant to initiate a broader discussion on how the eHealth Network could play a role of stimulating and supporting healthcare providers to upgrade their digital infrastructure enabling them for cross-border exchange of health data.

Summary

Policy paper proposing actions to promote the use of common standards or technical specifications in eHealth within the EU

The policy paper provides an overview of policy recommendations produced by EU projects related to Cross-Border Services. Based on these existing recommendations a set of recommendations for the eHealth Network are suggested to ensure future actions and initiatives to advance cross-border healthcare. The recommendations were subjected to four selection criteria before being considered in the policy paper. The recommendations are based on existing projects

Report on European semantic interoperability in eHealth

The report is meant to provide an analysis of the state-of-play on EU semantic interoperability. Based on existing projects and initiatives that deal with semantic interoperability, five recommendations are formulated to achieve a common strategic approach to semantic interoperability in Member States.

Digital infrastructures of healthcare providers

This topic is to initiate a discussion with the eHealth Network on its role in stimulating healthcare providers to upgrade their digital infrastructures. Despite the fact that eHealth/digital health has gained strategic importance for Member States and the European Union and much efforts are focussed in allowing health data to be exchanged within a Member State and across borders, the IT-infrastructures (hardware + software) of many healthcare providers are not yet ready to comply to these efforts. These information systems are to support healthcare providers to provide better and more efficient services. Overall these information systems are working well at local level within the physical borders of the healthcare providers. However, in the current time where health information is expected to be also exchanged outside the healthcare provider (especially for outpatient treatment), the information systems show limitations and therefore hindering the flow of information during the process of continuity of care.

With the current efforts of Member States to build the national and cross-border

exchange of health data (ePrescriptions and Patient Summaries), it is essential that healthcare providers also take up their responsibility to make their information systems ready. Healthcare providers should upgrade the information system infrastructure to allow health data to travel from their location to another Member State. However, upgrading infrastructure to enforce the most up-to-date information system is a costly exercise for healthcare providers. It is therefore needed to investigate the possibility to support (financially) healthcare providers through existing funding instruments.

Furthermore, a joint discussion between the European Commission, Solution Providers, Member States, users, and also standards development organisations is needed in order to understand and map out public health systems' needs. By putting this topic on the agenda of the 12th eHealth Network meeting initiates this discussion.

Format of procedure in the eHN

The Member State co-chair introduces the agenda point and invites the eHealth Network to share their view on the recommendations in the policy paper and will be asked to decide on its adoption.

Furthermore, the eHealth Network Members are invited to an informed discussion on the report on European semantic interoperability in eHealth, after which they are asked to decide on the adoption of the five recommendations mentioned in the report.

Lastly, the Member State co-chair opens the third topic and initiates a discussion on the digital infrastructures of healthcare providers.