ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS DES HÔPITAUX
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SENIOR HOSPITAL PHYSICIANS
EUROPÄISCHE VEREINIGUNG DER LEITENDEN KRANKENHAUSÄRZTE
EUROPESE VERENIGING VAN STAFARTSEN
DEN EUROPÆISKE OVERLÆGEFORENING
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΝΟΣΟΚΟΜΕΙΑΚΩΝ ΙΑΤΡΩΝ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΩΝ
ASSOCIAZIONE EUROPEA DEI MEDICI OSPEDALIERI
DEN EUROPEISKE OVERLEGEFORENING
ASSOCIAÇAO EUROPEIA DOS MÉDICOS HOSPITALARES
ASOCIACIÓN EUROPEA DE MÉDICOS DE HOSPITALES
EUROPEISKA ÖVERLÄKARFÖRENINGEN
EVROPSKO ZDRŽENJE BOLNIŠNIČNIH ZDRAVINIKOV
EUROPSKA ASOCIACIA NEMOCNICNÝCH LEKAROV
EUROPSKA UDRUGA BOLNIČKIH LIJEČNIKA
ЕВРОПЕЙСКА АСОЦИАЦИЯ НА СТАРШИТЕ БОЛНИЧНИ ЛЕКАРИ
ASOCIATIA EUROPEANA A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE

Info-Document :	AEMH 12-078
Title:	**A digital future for Healthcare**
Author :	**European Commission, Press**
Purpose :	**Info-documents disseminated by the AEMH European Liaison Office do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the AEMH and its Board. Info-documents are meant to inform, to raise awareness, to alert, to launch a debate, to incite taking action,.....**
Distribution :	**AEMH Member Delegations**
Date :	**sent by e-mail 12 December 2012**

Putting patients in the driving seat: A digital future for healthcare

The European Commission has unveiled an Action Plan to address barriers to the full use of digital solutions in Europe's healthcare systems. The goal is to improve healthcare for the benefit of patients, give patients more control of their care and bring down costs. While patients and health professionals are enthusiastically using telehealth solutions and millions of Europeans have downloaded smartphone apps to keep track of their health and wellbeing, digital healthcare has yet to reap its great potential to improve healthcare and generate efficiency savings.

The Action Plan (full list of actions in MEMO/12/959) attempts to increase the pace of change and improvement in healthcare by:

- clarifying areas of legal uncertainty;
- improving interoperability between systems;
- increasing awareness and skills among patients and healthcare professionals;
- putting patients at the centre with initiatives related to personal health management and supporting research into personalised medicine;
- ensuring free legal advice for start-up eHealth businesses.

The Commission also commits to issue a mHealth (Mobile Health) Green Paper by 2014 addressing quality and transparency issues.

An accompanying Staff Working Paper gives a legal overview of how current EU legislation applies to cross border telemedicine (services such as teleradiology, teleconsultation or telemonitoring). Currently, telemedicine falls within the scope of several legal instruments. The paper clarifies the issues a healthcare practitioner faces in delivering cross-border telemedicine, for example:

- Do they need to be licensed/registered in the Member State of the patient?
- How should health data be processed? Will a given service be reimbursable?
- What is the liability regime applicable in case of legal action?
-

Neelie Kroes, Commission Vice President for the Digital Agenda, said *"Europe's healthcare systems aren't yet broken, but the cracks are beginning to show. It's time to give this 20th Century model a health check. The new European eHealth Action Plan sets out how we can bring digital benefits to healthcare, and lift the barriers to smarter, safer, patient-centred health services."*

Tonio Borg, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, said: *"eHealth solutions can deliver high quality, patient-centric, healthcare to our citizens. eHealth brings healthcare closer to people and improves health systems' efficiency. Today's Action Plan will help turn the eHealth potential into better care for our citizens. The eHealth Network under the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive channels our joint commitment to find interoperable solutions at EU level."*

Members of the new eHealth Network, established by the Cross-border Healthcare Directive will help implement the Action Plan and provide a direct link to the national healthcare authorities and government departments.

Background

The new eHealth Action Plan responds to the 2009 request of Member States. To prepare the new plan, the Commission ran a public consultation in 2011.

The Digital Agenda for Europe includes three specific actions on eHealth aimed at widespread deployment of telemedicine, patients' access to their health data and interoperability.

Despite the economic crisis, the global telemedicine market grew from $9.8 billion in 2010 to $11.6 billion in 2011, while the global mHealth market is set to grow to €17.5 billion a year by 2017.

Some EU governments are spending up to 15% of their budgets on healthcare.

These facts indicate fast-changing situation that the eHealth Action plan must be flexible enough to address.

The European Commission has been active in eHealth for over a decade. Past Commission actions include:

- 2004 first eHealth action plan.
- 2008 Commission Communication on telemedicine.
- 2008 Large scale pilot Renewing Health, which is measuring the efficiency and cost effectiveness of telemedicine services across 9 regions of Europe.
- 2008 Recommendation on interoperable Electronic Health Records.
- 2011 adoption of the first EU law with provisions on the inter-operability of eHealth, the Directive on Patients' rights in cross border healthcare.
- 2011 epSOS Large Scale pilot has brought together 23 countries to pilot cross-border patient summaries and ePrescription services across Europe.
- 2011 European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIPAHA) which builds on 261 commitments from over 3000 EIP AHA stakeholders to improve the quality of life of four million European senior citizens between now and 2015. The commitments include the roll out of integrated care and chronic disease management using innovative telemonitoring solutions.
- 2012 Launch of the eHealth Network bringing together all EU Member States to work on guidelines for the interoperability of eHealth.

For more information

EHealth action plan 2012-2020: Frequently Asked Questions (MEMO/12/959)
Ehealth website http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/european-ehealth-policy
Commissioner Neelie Kroes:
http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kroes/
http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/neelie-kroes/
http://twitter.com/neeliekroeseu
Commissioner Tonio Borg:
http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/borg/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/policy/index_en.htm
eHealth Action Plan and Staff Working document, Staff Working Paper on Telemedicine:
http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/news-redirect/9139

Contacts :
Ryan Heath (+32 2 296 17 16), Twitter: @RyanHeathEU
Linda Cain (+32 2 299 90 19)
Frédéric Vincent (+32 2 298 71 66)
Aikaterini Apostola (+32 2 298 76 24)