



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Press Release

CoR/19/07.en
Brussels, 7 February 2019

EU Cities and regions call for a fully-fledged European electronic health record

The European Committee of the Regions unanimously backs the opinion of the President of the Murcia Region Fernando López Miras on the digitalisation of the health sector in Europe

The digitalisation of health systems can bring resource efficiency and effectiveness while improving quality and personalised assistance to patients. While life expectancy has been rising rapidly and steadily across the EU in the last decades, it has slowed down markedly since 2011. Better disease prevention and more effective health care interventions could avoid 1.2 million premature deaths in the EU annually (EC). EU Member States spend an average of 8.3% of their GDP on healthcare (Eurostat).

The members of the European Committee of the Regions have unanimously adopted an opinion on the **Digitalisation in the health sector**. The opinion responds and contributes to the European Commission's communication on **enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market; empowering citizens and building a healthier society** from April 2018.

Fernando López Miras (ES/EPP), rapporteur and President of the Murcia Region declared: "The digital transformation of health systems in Europe is crucial to develop more effective healthcare models that improve both disease prevention and personalised assistance. Data protection is nevertheless a prerequisite without which we cannot move the digitalisation of healthcare systems forward. We therefore welcome the new recommendations of the European Commission to create a secured European format for the exchange of electronic medical records. However our proposal goes further and we call for a fully-fledged European electronic health record."

Increase in chronic disease and multimorbidity in Europe results in growing demand for resources and costs across Member States.

EU Member States spend an average of 8.3% of their GDP on healthcare. Germany (11.2%), Sweden (11%) and France (11%) have the highest health care expenditure ratio to GDP. By contrast, healthcare expenditure accounted for less than 6.5% of GDP in Poland, Luxembourg and Latvia, with Romania recording the lowest ratio in the EU with 5% (Eurostat).

Digital solutions for health are contributing to reduce medical consultation time and facilitate multidisciplinary coordination for patients' treatments.

The digitalisation of the health sector would be of particular importance to tackle isolation and improve personalised assistance to citizens living in rural areas, remote regions, islands and low population density territories.

Members recall that mutually incompatible formats and standards in electronic medical records systems still persist across the EU.

The CoR calls on the European Commission to promote new reimbursement models for adopting digital innovation, geared, for example, to delivering payment in accordance with health outcomes, so as to support the business models of eHealth and mHealth companies offering high-quality services supported by digital technologies.

EU cities and regions call on Member States to avoid localising services as these are not always more secure, and to promote the use of international and open standards to avoid solutions that create dependency on a specific provider.

Local leaders consider it essential to create a connection between supply and demand and to promote co-creation processes relating to digital solutions.

Members urge the Commission to assess the possibility of assigning a unique identification to genetic studies carried out on European citizens yet with their consent and for clinical reasons. This would allow the information to be used for preventative, diagnostic or therapeutic measures.

The CoR calls for an EU system of accreditation, certification and validation of new applications and devices for patients and health professionals to determine those that are really considered useful or that may even be subject to prescription by a health professional. This would reduce red tape so that solutions approved in one Member State could easily be marketed in another country.

8th European Summit of Regions and Cities

The **8th European Summit of Regions and Cities**, 14-15 March, Bucharest will gather over 500 European, national, regional and local leaders from all EU Member States to debate on the contribution of local and regional governments to the "Future of Europe". Under the title "(Re) New EUrope", the Summit – to take place two weeks before the U.K.'s expected exit from the EU on 29 March, and two months ahead of the European elections, will be the largest political gathering of mayors, regional presidents and other elected local and regional representatives from across the Union this year.

The event will also gather 100 young local and regional politicians to actively engage in the debate on the future of Europe. It will also see the official launch of the Committee's initiative on a new **Network of Regional Hubs (#RegHub)** in the presence of the 20 participating regions.

Should you wish to participate in the event, you are kindly requested to register via **the media accreditation page of the EU Romanian Presidency** (deadline: 1 March) Please note that only registered journalists will be able to get media accreditation

Background information

April 2018 - European Commission - Communication on **enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market; empowering citizens and building a healthier society**.

November 2018 - **Press Release** - State of Health in the EU: more protection and prevention for longer and healthier lives.

Eurostat – **Healthcare expenditure statistics in the EU** (Data extracted in March 2018).

6 February 2019 - **Press Release** - European Commission makes it easier for citizens to access health data securely across borders.

Contact: David Crous | david.crous@cor.europa.eu | +32 (0) 470 88 10 37



The European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States. Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, its mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. To sit on the European Committee of the Regions, all of its 350 members and 350 alternates must either hold an electoral mandate or be politically accountable to an elected assembly in their home regions and cities. **Click here** for more details on your national delegation.

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