eHealth Ministerial Conference 2013
Dublin 13-15 May 2013

<u>Irish Presidency Declaration</u>

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Ministers of Health of the Member States of the European Union and delegates met on 13 May 2013 in the framework of the Ministerial e-Health High Level Conference organised jointly by the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.

The Conference was a major opportunity for policy makers and stakeholders to share good practices, their achievements and methodologies, as well as to discuss the main policy priorities to facilitate the use of ICT in health to contribute to better, safer, sustainable and innovative healthcare systems.

Ministers underlined the importance of addressing the remaining barriers to fully deploying eHealth solutions in their countries and endeavoured to surmount them in order to ensure benefits for citizens, the sustainability of health and care systems, economic growth and jobs. The eHealth Network of Member States, holding its third meeting in Dublin can respond to the need for continuing development of interoperable cross border digital health services and infrastructure. The lessons learned from European pilot projects, such as epSOS, will facilitate the deployment at national, regional and local levels by ensuring the development of convergent interoperability frameworks, tools and solutions. A strong commitment to developing eHealth ecosystems in support of reforming health systems and innovation was demonstrated by all participants.

Ministers agreed that effective implementation of eHealth tools and services requires a high level of digital skills and, therefore, access to Health Informatics and IT training should be made available for all healthcare professionals by 2015.

eHealth ecosystems, comprising health and social care providers, industry, research institutions, authorities, and end users throughout Europe represent a positive response to the opportunities and challenges in a specific geographical area, and can accelerate the development and adoption of innovative solutions to specific problems in health and social care, providing real and tangible benefits for individual patients and other citizens.

With a focus on innovation and deployment derived from a user and patient driven and centred approach, ecosystems aim at engaging the entire range of health, wellbeing and social care stakeholders, collaborating within mutually beneficial relationships committed to accelerating the adoption of eHealth solutions.

The eHealth Task Force Report "Redesigning health in Europe for 2020", highlights that the digital environment is growing and evolving rapidly with an increasing trend towards collaborative working. In this context the Irish Presidency welcomes the "eHealth Action

Plan 2012 – 2020 – Innovative healthcare for 21st century", several actions of which are vital for establishing successful ecosystems.

There are practical reasons for creating an eHealth ecosystem

Establishing multi-sector partnerships of critical mass, ecosystems have the potential to create the optimum organisational and working environment to facilitate the development of a shared vision and the achievement of policy, strategic, business and service delivery objectives. In particular, eHealth ecosystems:

- Improve the understanding of healthcare needs
- Support the health reform process
- Improve user acceptance for improved process management
- Increase understanding and exploitation of new and innovative public/ private business models
- Provide the rationale to build the necessary partnerships
- Incentivise plans for pilot-to-deployment, and
- Create multi sector synergies

The objectives of an eHealth ecosystem are to:

(1) Promote private and public sector innovation on a cooperative basis

(2) Ensure a vibrant economy for the deployment of eHealth applications

(3) Support national, regional health and social care strategies

During the course of the Ministerial discussions all parties agreed that these aims can only be achieved by:

- Strengthening coordination of all policies related to e-Health (from support for research and deployment, to developing a legal framework in specific areas like medical devices, patient safety, cyber security and interoperability), in particular through the high level eHealth Network under the Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.

- Promoting an ecosystem dialogue aimed at mutual learning and sharing of good experiences between purchasers and providers, academia, patients, citizens, industry throughout the public and private sector health industry.

- Implementing disruptive innovation schemes, using any innovative concept, product and service that can create new markets by applying new sets of rules, values and models which will ultimately disrupt and overtake existing markets by displacing earlier technologies and alliances, and

- Facilitating the use of cross-sectoral high risk, but high value solutions, in the context of achieving high societal impact and commercial return.

- Accelerating the implementation of existing and proven devices and processes through intensive innovation techniques and innovative procurement tools to ensure that citizens receive the benefits in a shorter timeframe, by delivering on existing priorities.

In order to fully benefit from eHealth ecosystems which are uniquely able to provide access, structure and fuel to the rapidly developing eHealth market, Ministers agreed to focus on the following actions:

Patients, Carers and Citizens (End Users):

- Active involvement in designing the delivery of technology services
- Giving them the opportunity to influence the deployment of new technologies and services to underpin patient care

Research Organisations:

- Provide access to domain knowledge for partner organisations, health service delivery bodies, industry, clinical or other research organisations
- Gain a deeper understanding of user needs and requirements
- Active involvement in preparing the research agenda at the national and the EU level

Health and Social Care Providers:

- Create truly innovative service delivery models
- Develop more efficient care services and business models to improve the quality of services for the benefit of patients
- Provide access to state-of-the-art technology and knowledge for partner organisations - industry, clinical, other research organisations
- Carry out professional, independent, cost-benefit evaluation
- Benefit from early adopter opportunities
- Employ stage-gated sustainable deployment to reduce risk

Industry:

- Provide access to domain knowledge for partner organisations - health service delivery, industry, clinical or other research organisations
- Analyse the health service user needs
- Support large scale deployments
- Perform professional and independent cost-benefit evaluation
- Investigate opportunities for collaborative working with other companies

Authorities:

- Ensure cooperation with all relevant stakeholders
- Support a promising new sector of the economy

Further potential for ecosystems:

Ecosystems have the potential to support national initiatives to implement eHealth solutions, the European Innovation Partnership on Healthy and Active Ageing, the eHealth Action Plan and the EU-US Memorandum of Understanding, eHealth roadmap. The participating countries welcomed the work of the eHealth Network, the European Commission's efforts to provide legal clarity and a level playing field for innovative companies and developers by publishing the Staff Working Document on the applicable EU Legal Framework to Telemedicine and its ongoing preparation of a Green Paper on Mobile Health and Well Being Apps. The focus of the European Commission on public sector innovation and on the important role of collaborative research and innovation such as that envisioned in Horizon 2020 is welcome. Public/private and cross-sectoral collaboration is a key component of an ecosystem, particularly in the field of healthcare.

eHealth solutions may be rooted in both sustained and disruptive innovation. The Irish Presidency calls on the Member States to utilise an ecosystem approach to stimulate both types. There should be a focus on a user centred approach that allows the opportunity to share best practices and experiences in cooperation with the European Commission in the context of the framework mentioned above, for the benefit of all. It is essential that eHealth ecosystems become integral and supportive mechanisms that do not 'stand apart' from the key players at national or regional levels.

Member States are called upon to publicise and to encourage their researchers, practitioners and entrepreneurs to make use of the opportunities offered by Horizon 2020 for research, deployment, inducement prizes and open disruptive innovation. EU research funding mechanisms are being revised in line with the recommendation of the eHealth Task Force that EU funds be earmarked for user driven innovation, support for fast proto-typing and low thresholds for access.

Member States are also encouraged to develop such models to open their research programmes to disruptive innovators. Further, Member State Ministries are encouraged to involve themselves in ecosystems and to be open to listen to providers of disruptive innovation, and in particular to incentivise such approaches.

The Irish Presidency calls on Member States to enhance their cooperation on eHealth and calls on the European Commission to support Member States in their efforts to deploy eHealth solutions through ecosystems, utilising the appropriate tools and instruments available.