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Answer given by Vice-President Katainen
on behalf of the European Commission
(15.4.2019)

As set out in Commission Communication 233(2018) on the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market¹, Member States, supported by the Commission, are building the eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure² to exchange e-prescriptions and summaries of patient health records. 22 Member States are expected to join this exchange by 2022. To further develop interoperability of electronic health records, the Commission recently adopted a Recommendation³ on a European Electronic Health Record exchange format to support the ability of citizens to securely access their health records across EU borders.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation⁴, processing of individual health data requires strict protection. The processing of health data is in principle prohibited, with the exceptions set out in Article 9(2). In the exchange of health data referred to in the paragraph above, compliance with the Regulation will be ensured, including Article 32 thereof, that obliges the data controller and processor to undertake a series of technical and organisational measures to guarantee the security of personal data.

The Commission proposes to support the above activities through the proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, which foresee an increased budget in the area of digital, including under the Digital Europe Programme. This programme will provide EUR 9.2 billion for digital transformation of society across all sectors but with health foreseen as a key sector. The structural funds will also include possibilities to support digital health.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0233&from=EN>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/EHOPERATIONS/eHealth+DSI+Operations+Home>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0243&from=EN>

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1–88.