



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

2013/2061(INI)

8.10.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020 - Innovative healthcare for the 21st century
(2013/2061(INI))

Rapporteur: María Irigoyen Pérez

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020, which updates the eHealth Action Plan adopted in 2004 by putting in place further actions, especially as regards improving access to health services, reducing health costs and ensuring greater equality among European citizens;
2. Perceives the increasing possibilities for personalised healthcare as one of the most important opportunities arising from eHealth, given that patients' medical records can be automatically stored in electronic form, are non-dependant on the location of patients, and can be accessed only by the patients themselves using a personalised ID;
3. Welcomes the Commission's intention to propose an eHealth Interoperability Framework by 2015, and sees it as a very important step towards patient empowerment in eHealth; believes it is important to include in that Framework the creation of standardised reporting in medical records, as well as support for the development of medical devices with the feature of automatic electronic storage of medical records;
4. Welcomes the Commission's intention to launch a study regarding the legal aspects of eHealth services; stresses, however, the need to take effective measures concerning reimbursement, liability and data protection;
5. Stresses the need to endorse the wider concept of eHealth, and emphasises the importance of strengthening the role of healthcare professionals such as doctors, pharmacists and nurses, as well as of patients and patient organisations, in the implementation and development of the eHealth Action Plan, keeping in mind that patients should have the possibility of viewing, using and consulting information concerning their health;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to play a major part in bringing different stakeholders together in order to share experience and best practices; calls on the Commission to focus in particular on its central role in supporting the sharing of best practices on rare diseases;
7. Stresses the need for suitably adapted assistance, information and training to be available throughout the Union in order to fully exploit the benefits of eHealth services while not increasing social or territorial inequalities; also stresses the need to develop systems that are accessible to all, keeping in mind the target for intuitive interface; underlines the necessity to preserve equal access for all to traditional healthcare services; believes that assistance and training should prioritise: 1) training in the use of IT tools and digital health training, upgrading the relevant skills for healthcare professionals; and 2) IT literacy and awareness of eHealth services for patients at national and cross-border levels, with a specific emphasis on social and territorial inequalities;
8. Is convinced that health literacy for patients - encouraging them to monitor and measure

their health and understand and control their health data, thus ending the present inequality of the specialist-patient relationship, is a crucial factor that is needed to improve the quality of health services, increase the transparency of health institutions, fight corruption and ensure that patients allow reuse of their data for creating new knowledge;

9. Emphasises the need to guarantee SMEs appropriate support in order to ensure a level playing field in the eHealth sector and boost SMEs' market access in this domain, notably by establishing a dedicated resource and research database for SMEs; underlines the fact that innovations in the field of eHealth create business opportunities and contribute to future growth;
10. Recalls the need for the future eHealth Action Plan to guarantee the following key principles:
 - optimising healthcare spending in times of economic crisis;
 - strengthening and promoting applications and solutions for market development;
 - ensuring the interoperability of healthcare and hospital information systems;
11. Calls on the Member States to take account of eHealth services in existing medical systems; stresses the importance of maintaining a human and patient-centred dimension in healthcare, especially in the context of an ageing population and the consequent frequent difficulty in distinguishing the medical from the social;
12. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to take urgent action to create a coherent legal framework to manage different types of health data and their use; stresses that the rapid success of social networking tools shows that individuals willingly share personal information and are not always aware of the implications of their decisions, while the terms and conditions of the new applications and tools collecting data are set by providers, often without adequate safeguards and protection; stresses that citizens' confidence is essential for both domestic and crossborder eHealth services; emphasises the need to comply with the rules on privacy and personal data protection, since this is an essential prerequisite for the protection of citizens, for patients' trust in eHealth services, and for the proper functioning and increased use of safe, secured and interoperable electronic communications and data storage systems, such as cloud computing, in the healthcare sector; emphasises that data protection measures should develop in the direction of strong individual protection, but in a way that does not hinder future health research; stresses that sensitive data, and in particular medical data, must be protected from hacking, leaks, privacy breaches and other forms of abuse;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to further cooperate in order to ensure healthcare professionals' liability at national and cross-border levels;
14. Calls on the Commission to publish every other year a review of progress in the implementation of the eHealth Action Plan in the individual Member States, showing how this tool has been innovatively modified in order to provide citizens with high-quality and efficient healthcare systems, and, in the light of this, to set effective indicators at national

and Union levels to measure the progress and impact of the actions planned, paying particular attention to potential discrimination or access inequalities that could affect consumers and patients.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	30.9.2013
Result of final vote	+: 30 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Preslav Borissov, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Birgit Collin-Langen, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Christian Engström, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón, Evelyne Gebhardt, Małgorzata Handzlik, Sandra Kalniete, Edvard Kožušník, Hans-Peter Mayer, Mitro Repo, Heide Rühle, Christel Schaldemose, Catherine Stihler, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Bernadette Vergnaud, Barbara Weiler
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Erik Bánki, Susy De Martini, Tamás Deutsch, Kinga Gál, María Irigoyen Pérez, Ádám Kósa, Morten Løkkegaard, Roberta Metsola, Marc Tarabella, Wim van de Camp, Patricia van der Kammen