



## Commission launches public consultation on Health and Care in the Digital Single Market

Brussels, 20 July 2017

**Today the European Commission launches a public consultation on how Europe should promote digital innovation in health and care, for the benefits of citizens and health systems in Europe.**

The input will feed into a new policy Communication to be adopted by the end of 2017, as announced in the recent review of the Commission's Digital Single Market strategy.

Welcoming the initiative Vice-President Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioners Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Mariya **Gabriel** and Carlos **Moedas** stated:

*'We are dedicated to improving European citizens' quality of living by improving Europe's health, care and research systems by using digital technologies to their full potential. This consultation will help us identify ways to offer citizens, medical professionals and researchers better access to health data, prevention, rapid response to pandemic threats, personalised treatments and care. We are considering new digital initiatives to deliver on the free movement of patients and data, to support the modernisation of national health systems, and to bring together scattered evidence and innovative knowledge from across Europe. At the heart of our policies, citizens and their wellbeing are our first priority.'*

The consultation will collect information on three main pillars:

1. Citizens' secure access to their health data and the possibility to share it across borders, clarifying citizens' rights and enhancing interoperability of electronic health records in Europe;
2. Connecting and sharing data and expertise to advance research, personalise health and care, and better anticipate epidemics;
3. Using digital services to promote citizen empowerment and integrated person-centred care.

Citizens, patient organisations, health and care professionals, public authorities, researchers, industries, investors, insurers and users of digital health tools are all invited to share their views via [EU Survey](#) until 12 October 2017.

### Background

Demographic change, growing prevalence of chronic diseases, re-emergence of infectious diseases and the rising cost of healthcare poses major challenges for healthcare provisions in Europe. The [Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems](#) concluded that the Member States' future ability to provide high-quality healthcare to all citizens will depend on making health systems more resilient, while remaining cost-effective and financially sustainable.

Digital innovation can offer cost-effective tools to support the transition from a hospital-based healthcare model to a person-centred and integrated model, improve health promotion, prevention and access to care, and contribute to the sustainability and resilience of healthcare systems. It can make effective the right for citizens to access their health data everywhere in Europe. It can help improve surveillance and early detection of infectious outbreaks. It can also drastically advance the diagnosis and treatment of patients. For instance, in the area of rare diseases, the current average time for diagnosing a known rare disease of 5.6 years could be shortened to one year thanks to molecular diagnosis and tele-consultations with specialists. Furthermore, the digital transformation of health and care stimulates the empowerment of citizens allowing them to manage their own health and interact more easily with health providers.

The recent [Digital Single Market Mid-term Review](#) tackles these issues. It proposes that the Commission addresses the need and scope for measures on digital health and care, in line with legislation on the protection of personal data, patient rights and electronic identification.

Commission work in this area builds on digital health initiatives already in place, such as the eHealth Action Plan, the Horizon 2020 and Active Assisted Living funding programmes for research and innovation, the Connecting Europe Facility programme, the European Reference Networks for rare and

complex diseases, or the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.

**More information**

[Digital Single Market Mid-term review](#)

[Special Eurobarometer 460. "Attitudes towards the impact of digitisation and automation on daily life](#)

[Health in the Digital Single Market](#)

[eHealth policies](#)

[Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems](#)

[Research and innovation in health](#)

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