



## EC eHealth Stakeholder Group

### Suggestions for first year priorities

Digital health is an essential element for the successful transformation of health and care systems. It has the potential to improve health outcomes for the whole population, across the social gradient. As stated in the mission letter of the Commissioner for Health, Stella Kyriakides, “*we need to make the most of the potential of e-health to provide high-quality healthcare and reduce inequalities*”. The aim of reducing inequalities frames the contribution EuroHealthNet wishes to make to the work programme of the eHealth Stakeholder Group, starting with our suggestions for the first year.

Digital innovation in the field of health, when developed hand in hand with programmes enhancing health literacy and digital literacy, can have positive effects on the efficiency and sustainability of health systems, with a stronger impact for vulnerable groups.

Well-designed eHealth policies, i.e. policies that are sensitive to the multi-faceted dimension of inequality, can strengthen preventative and health promoting models of care, lead to improved monitoring of behaviours and well-being, allowing people to actively manage their personal physical health, mental health and care, and ultimately lead to longer, healthier and more productive lives.

It is only in this way that digital health policies and developments can contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

EuroHealthNet suggests the following five priorities for the work programme of the eHealth Stakeholder group. Our overall recommendation is to embed equity in all the group’s activities related to the handling of data and development and implementation of digital tools in health.

In addition, we specifically suggest acting on:

- Standardising the design of digital tools (‘usability’) to ensure they are safe, comprehensible, easy to use and accessible. The ISO/IEC effectivity and reliability criteria for health and wellness can be considered in developing European standards.
- Supporting professionals (including through up- and re-skilling) to fully take advantage of new digital health technologies also in their work with lower socio-economic groups. eHealth and digital tools will need to be promoted as part of sustainable local health policies and implemented through community approaches, with local schemes for guidance and support to make them work for everyone.
- Developing sound digital infrastructures with high quality data that add value to health systems in a non-discriminatory way. This includes ensuring that AI algorithms are designed reflecting the needs, preferences and expectations of vulnerable groups. This also means that people with less



digital or health literacy, migrants, people with less education, older people, people with disabilities etc., are adequately included in questionnaires and focus groups as part of the underpinning research.

- Defining common European standards to overcome the lack of interoperability of data between different health settings and projects. This should include guidelines to ensure issues of data protection, anonymisation and privacy are addressed to avoid harms from private interests, ineptitude or inadequacy.
- Improving people's digital health literacy, allowing everybody to not only actively manage their personal health and care, but also to increase their understanding of the quality of apps, their marketing, what their data is being used for and other relevant issues

*EuroHealthNet is a new member of the e-Health Stakeholder Group. It is a not-for-profit Partnership of organisations, agencies and statutory bodies working on public health, disease prevention, promoting health, and reducing inequalities. EuroHealthNet's mission is to improve and sustain health between and within European States through action on the social, economic and environmental determinants of health, and to tackle health inequalities. Improving health literacy and digital health literacy is one of the Partnerships specific objectives. Some of our priorities above are based on the 4 steps towards [eHealth4All programme from PHAROS](#), a member of EuroHealthNet.*