

# Digital skills for improving and supporting development across the life course while leaving nobody behind

## EuroHealthNet's vision contributing to the European Commission's Call for evidence on digital skills – improving their provision

EuroHealthNet welcomes the [European Commission's initiative](#) to set up a strategic outlook to digital skills development and promote a high quality, inclusive, coherent and coordinated approach to the provision of digital skills across all levels of education and training.

On many occasions before, EuroHealthNet has systematically stressed the importance of digital literacy, for example, through consultations and publications regarding Digital Health Literacy, the European Health Data Space and EU Digital Targets 2030 as well as dedicated workshops and seminars (see useful links at the end of this document). The digital transformation of our societies is happening at a fast pace, whilst being further accelerated by the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. To truly take advantage of the benefits of digital technologies, notably in the health sector, it is crucial that the digitisation process goes hand in hand with programmes that boost people's digital literacy skills. This is certainly the case when considering the field of digital health<sup>1</sup>.

Limited by the space available for this feedback, EuroHealthNet places its focus and input on four top priorities to guide the development of a long-term plan for Digital Skills.

- 1. Ensure strong equity principles in the provision of digital skills.** EuroHealthNet welcomes the Roadmap which brings attention to the principle of inclusivity of digitalisation. We further recommend putting more emphasis on rights-based approaches and actions that should be implemented to ensure equity. This includes agreeing on specific objectives, addressing vulnerable and socially excluded groups and that budgetary allocations for this purpose are made.
- 2. Embed data literacy in digital skills programmes.** Digital transformation will entail a widespread use of digital data. The successful enrolment of initiatives such as the European Health Data Space will imply a more frequent use of digital portfolios, electronic health records, and associated services. People will need to adapt their habits to benefit from such technologies. Improving data literacy across the population will therefore be fundamental to ensure the use of associated digital health technologies and their dissemination. It would allow people to better handle new digital technologies, but also to increase their understanding of the quality and

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<sup>1</sup> See also [Joint Statement by EuroHealthNet and other Non-State Actors](#) regarding the Regional digital health action plan for the WHO European Region (EPW flagship)

suitability of apps (including mHealth apps), their marketing, what their data is being used for, how they can control it and other relevant issues. Improved data/digital health literacy would also increase trust in digital innovation in health, care, and related sectors.

3. **Need for more disaggregated data.** The future outlook should put forward further mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the level of digital (health) skills across the EU population. Data should be integrated with health-related specific indicators, namely, to measure, monitor and assess levels of digital health literacy and health data literacy across diverse population groups and health workforce. This would allow to set out quantifiable targets and develop tools to act in this sphere at EU level.
4. **More ambitious targets:** Although the Digital Targets 2030 and the European Skills Agenda 2025 already set out overall objectives to increase basic digital skills across the population (up to 80%), the new framework should put forward more realistic and defined targets, with specific ones for different groups (e.g.: per age, socioeconomic status, education levels, etc.). Specific targets regarding investments should also be clearly mentioned. The digital skills programmes should include specific goals for up- and re-skilling of health and social workforce to stimulate the development training and capacity building programmes for professionals. Public health and social care professionals should not be neglected in this process. The European Year for Education, Skills and Training could offer an important opportunity set out such competitive and ambitious targets.

EuroHealthNet is a not-for-profit partnership of organisations, agencies and statutory bodies working on public health, disease prevention, promoting health, and reducing inequalities. Its core mission is to tackle health inequalities and to improve and sustain health between and within European States through action on the social determinants of health.

Publications and relevant activities:

- [Digital health literacy: how new skills can help improve health, equity and sustainability](#)
- [WHO Joint Statement by EuroHealthNet and other Non-State Actors](#)
- Feedback on the European Health Data Space ([1st](#) and [2nd](#))
- [Feedback on 2030 Digital Targets](#)
- [EuroHealthNet Annual Seminar: Promoting Digital Health Literacy for Europe's Digital Future](#)
- [Input on making Europe's Digital Decade fit for children and young people](#)
- [Consultation on Consultation on the European Health Data Space](#)



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