



17TH EHEALTH NETWORK 3 JUNE 2020, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

COVER NOTE

1.2 Cross-border digital projects during COVID-19

1. Issue at stake

The COVID-19 pandemics crisis management demanded expedite action from eHealth Network. Upon the need to act, the eHealth Network was able to trigger a coordinated action to share the best practices in each Member State as well as to step up action towards cross-border challenges requiring joint efforts for EU-wide effectiveness and impact.

However, one of the key assets governed by the eHealth Network - the “*My Health @ EU*” services (a.k.a. *eHDSI*) - did not add tangible value under the COVID-19 pandemic crisis management. This is due to the limited EU coverage of the services. In addition, the current data sets for the Patient Summary do not foreseen exchanging COVID-19 specific data. The eHealth Network Semantic Task Force got the eHealth Network mandate to prepare the recommended set of data, which should represent the data related to the COVID-19 disease.

2. Summary

eHDSI

During the COVID-19 pandemics crisis management several stakeholders reported unmet needs regarding cross-border exchange of health data. In particular, the need to exchange health information from COVID-19 patients (*or patients whose treatment was impacted by COVID-19 crisis*) receiving health care in cross-border related context.

The “*My Health @ EU*” services (a.k.a. *eHDSI*) where not able to provide reliable and sound answer to these needs giving place for *ad hoc* solutions, namely:

- Creation of COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System (CMSS) as videoconferencing tool between health professionals dealing with COVID-19 patients;
- Adaptation of Clinical Patient Management System (CPMS) to enable transfer of COVID-19 patients data;
- Adoption of commercial interoperability platforms to enable the exchange of COVID-19 patients data (i.e. radiology images, reports and patient summaries) in neighbouring hospitals/countries (e.g. the NL and the use of Philips);
- Provision to ECDC epidemiological relevant patient data (possibly aggregated data) about COVID-19 patients and clinical conditions;

- Availability for all needing citizens in all EU Members states.

These unmet needs and *ad hoc* solutions should deserve careful analysis and discussion at the eHealth Network since they may underpin opportunities and unlock “*My Health @ EU*” potential working as a stepping-stone to increase its usefulness and cost-effectiveness. The following questions aim at structure the analysis and discussion at eHealth Network

- Could/should “*My Health @ EU*” have provided further support during COVID-19 pandemic crisis management?
- Is there a way to strengthen the “*My Health @ EU*” services to add greater value in future cross-border health threats?

EWRS

During the COVID-19 crisis management and in particular in the context of the coordinated actions towards interoperability of contact tracing mobile apps, it was brought to the attention of the eHealth Network the existence of the Early Warning response System (EWRS).

The Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) is a web-based platform linking the European Commission, ECDC and public health authorities in EU/EEA countries responsible for measures to control serious cross-border threats to health, including communicable diseases. The platform was set up in 1998 to allow exchange of information on risk assessment and risk management for more timely, efficient and coordinated public health action.

EWRS has restricted access granted by the European Commission to a competent authority or authorities responsible at national level for notifying alerts and determining the measures required to protect public health, for the purposes of Articles 8, 9 and 10 of [Decision No 1082/2013/EU](#).

In 2017, the Commission adopted the [Commission Implementing Decision 2017/253](#), laying down procedures for the notification of alerts as part of the EWRS established in relation to serious cross-border threats to health, and for the information exchange, consultation and coordination of responses to such threats.

The EWRS is used for notifications on outbreaks, exchanging information and decisions about the coordination of measures among Member States. Over the years, it has played an important role to support health crisis related to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Ebola virus disease, avian influenza in humans and other communicable diseases.

The EWRS was also pointed out as a possible solution to address the communication needs between Public Health Authorities in the context of contact tracing mobile apps (e.g. communication of test results from citizens from another country or share of “relevant keys”). Nonetheless of a solid legal basis to do so, several doubts were raised about the EWRS technical capability to fulfil these needs. In order to further understand the current limitations, COM will provide an overview of: a) EWRS usage during COVID-19 crisis management (e.g. statistics); b) EWRS technical limitations.

3. Format of procedure in the meeting

For information.

The eHealth Network members will be invited to:

- Provide insights to the posed questions about eHDSI.
- Discuss the EWRS role in future cross-border health information communication.