



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 30 May 2008

9749/08

SAN 92

NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Council

Subject: EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
COUNCIL MEETING ON 9 AND 10 JUNE 2008

Conference “eHealth without frontiers” (6 – 7 May 2008, Portorož, Slovenia)
- Information from the Presidency
(Other business item)

With a view to the Council meeting (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer affairs) on 9 and 10 June 2008, Delegations will find in the annex a note from the Presidency on the above-mentioned subject.

Report
on the eHealth Without Frontiers conference

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Slovenia and the European Commission (INFSO and SANCO Directorates General) organised the eHealth 2008 conference held on 6 and 7 May 2008 in Portorož in Slovenia. The conference was an important annual political event in the sphere of eHealth on a high level – the sixth year in a row. With the main topic of the eHealth Without Frontiers conference, the two organisers exposed the opportunities brought by information and telecommunications equipment in removing obstacles for collaboration among participants and entities in health care in a geographical and institutional sense.

The conference was attended by 590 participants from 38 countries from the EU, EFTA, the group of EU candidate countries and the Western Balkans countries among others.

The conference comprised a series of plenary and parallel lectures, panels and round tables, which were complemented by an exhibition prepared by the European Commission, Slovenia and interested countries.

Among the key topics at the conference were:

- Treatment of chronic patients with a help of telemedicine,
- Interoperability of information solutions in health care,
- Quality of electronic health records,
- Cross-border collaboration,
- Good practice in the participating countries,
- Safe health care services.

Upon the conference closure, the participants adopted the so-called Portorož Declaration, in which they exposed the following key objectives for further implementation of eHealth solutions:

- To continue developing solutions in accordance with national strategies and plans and to ensure exchange of information and experience among countries and regions.
- With regard to the agreement of the consortium of the Member States and industrial partners, to implement an extensive pilot project for cross-border access to two important sets of electronic health records: summary of patient's record data and electronic prescription.
- For the European Union, to publish recommendations for interoperability of health care information systems, with the aim of an important contribution to the accessibility of medical data, which is important for the safety of health care services.
- To more tightly include stakeholder groups and industry, and develop successful eHealth solutions.
- Ensure further development of the market of eHealth tools with an emphasis on innovations.

The participants exposed the following three key initiatives:

- Development and implementation of telemedicine and innovative tools for chronic disease management.
- Ensuring more attention to the opportunities brought by research and development of new technologies.
- Urgent provision of a harmonised and clear legal basis, which will clearly define responsibilities, rights and obligations of individual entities included in the eHealth processes.

The EU Member States and the European Commission supported the development of high-capacity infrastructure and infostructure for health care and social care networks and services, such as telemedicine, ePrescription and eReferral.

The Slovenian Ministry of Health emphasised the need to use information and telecommunication tools for ensuring comprehensive health care. It also stressed the importance of the differences between the Member States in the sphere of eHealth, with a purpose to reduce and eliminate them as soon as possible.