



eHealth is moving up on the agenda but still a lot to do!

The many events of 2004 have, in this second semester of the year, been guided by the Dutch Presidency of the Council. The health programme of the Presidency has focused strongly on co-operation between Member States and on the relationship between health and other policy areas.

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[...]Among the issues defined as priorities are cross-border mobility of healthcare professionals and health and the market (eu2004.nl).

On 7-9 September, the Dutch Presidency organised a conference on healthcare. Titled "Shaping the EU Health Community: Balancing Health, Social Development and the Internal Market", the event focused on six areas central to healthcare, of which eHealth was one – giving eHealth an unprecedented key role in a healthcare conference. (www.euhealthcommunity.org)

Participants of the eHealth session arrived at the following conclusions regarding the further integration of eHealth into health and social care policies:

- ⇒ eHealth is a tool to ensure the required level of information, choice and empowerment, as requested by European consumers and patients.
- ⇒ Hence we cannot afford formulating health policies without eHealth being an integral part of it.
- ⇒ eHealth must comprise multiple communication channels for ensuring both equal access and ubiquity.
- ⇒ eHealth is a cooperative process intensifying and changing the interactions of all stakeholders in health and social care.
- ⇒ a full vision of the integration of eHealth into health and social care is needed from the Health Ministers of Europe.

The conclusions of the six sessions and of the overall conference were communicated to the Informal Health Council, which gathered in The Hague the ministers of health of the 25 Member States. **Read more about this event and the central supporting role of EHTEL on page 2 of this issue.**

EHTEL Reception at the European Parliament and EHTEL Annual General Meeting

**1.00 – 5.00 pm, Wednesday
1 December 2004, Brussels (BE)**

We are delighted to be holding a reception on Wednesday 1st December at the European Parliament in Brussels, under the patronage of Prof. Antonios Trakatellis, MEP.

This event gives our members the opportunity to meet Members of the European Parliament ("MEPs") and other decision-makers who influence European policy in the eHealth and telemedicine sector, to discuss issues and to network with them informally.

We have invited members of the Committees of the European Parliament that take an interest in eHealth and telemedicine, as well as the relevant Heads of Unit and staff from the European Commission. Also invited are representatives of non-governmental organisations and delegations based in Brussels.

The programme is as follows

- ⇒ The role of the EU Parliament in Health, Technology and Research;
- ⇒ How eHealth is transforming health and social care in EU;
- ⇒ Short practical demonstrations;
- ⇒ Evidence-based telemedicine;
- ⇒ The potential future role of eHealth in EU.

The reception will be followed by our Annual General Meeting, where members have the opportunity to hear from the Board of Directors of the Association about our activities over the preceding 12 months and to discuss and approve our plans for 2005.

eHealth & eGov. News

Annual European eBusiness Reports



e-Business W@tch has recently issued their annual European E-Business Reports.

This issue includes a chapter on Health and social services. It features summaries of the sector studies, a synthesis of main findings, and contributions on specific issues from a number of international e-business experts. Details are at www.ebusiness-watch.org

Furthermore the European Commission is to investigate the impact of e-health products and services – and of resulting gains in productivity – on the European economy.

Open Source Software in Healthcare



A recently issued report for the Dutch National Institute for ICT in Healthcare (NIC-TIZ) on "Healthcare and open source software" recommended that open source software be considered in the health sector.

Noting that there are not many health-specific open source software applications the report concludes that use of open source software that is not sector-specific, including system software, may be advantageous. Details are available at [eGovernment Observatory site](http://eGovernmentObservatorySite) (© European Commission)



The UK's National Health Service (NHS) has purchased 5,000 licenses for

Sun Microsystems' Java Desktop System (JDS), a move that will lead to the first large-scale deployment of desktop open source software in the country's public sector. Details at [eGovernment Observatory site](http://eGovernmentObservatorySite)

On the other hand the NHS reached a nine-year deal with Microsoft to In addition to offering a significant discount on its products, allowing the NHS to use up to 900,000 licences. Furthermore Microsoft will also develop a customised user interface for clinical systems free of charge. Details at [eGovernment Observatory site](http://eGovernmentObservatorySite)

EU Public Health Portal



The creation of the EU Public Health Portal (acronym: HEALTHGATE) is an initiative

taken under the EU Public Health Programme 2003-2008, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in September 2002. Its main objective is to provide citizens, patients, health professionals, policy makers, and other interested stakeholders with a single pan-European access point to data and information on public health from Commission as well as from national and regional sources. Details at [eGovernment Observatory site](http://eGovernmentObservatorySite)

EHTEL INSIGHT Article:

"Lessons learned" from the conference "Shaping the EU Health Community" held under the Dutch EU presidency in The Hague 7-9. 09 .2004

The conference provided an opportunity to influence the agenda-setting and policy-making at the EU level as the conclusions drawn during the conference were presented to the EU Ministers of Health who met following the conference.

By David Lloyd-Williams, EHTEL Board Member & Stephan Schug, EHTEL Manager

The conference was health-, rather than eHealth-, oriented, and it enabled us to discuss health issues and then to look at the eHealth context. It was encouraging to recognise the issues raised and to understand the similarity with the EHTEL agenda.

eHealth was one of the six parallel sessions of the conference, and EHTEL was very present, chairing, rapporteuring and speaking at this session. The two-day conference provided an excellent opportunity to show EHTEL at the front of eHealth to a broad audience.

The eHealth session focused on three different angles regarding eHealth:

- ⇒ The economic dimension of eHealth
- ⇒ The industrial dimension of eHealth
- ⇒ User views on eHealth.

The economic dimension fit well with the overall view that healthcare should be seen as an investment and not as a cost. The challenges evoked relate to stakeholder involvement, evidence of value, overcoming organisational and cultural barriers, with infrastructure highlighted as an early success factor. eHealth must be for everyone, not just the connected – it has to reduce rather than increase the digital divide.

The industrial dimension showed an array of products, present and future. Take-up is slow, however, and the inhibitors need to be carefully considered. Key factors, such as evidence of value, availability of skills, replication models and practical steps to be achieved, must be considered. In the race for replication, the health and social care sectors ought also to take advantage of proven process-level methods from other industrial scenarios and build simple process-related applications.

The user dimension confirmed many of the messages in the main conference:

- ⇒ Citizens want information they can trust, quickly and where they are.
- ⇒ They want easy access to informed high quality care.

⇒ They are not concerned about the difficulty, the political sensitivity, or the change management issues – these are the health system's problems in delivering a service.

⇒ Maybe we need different models for European EHRs to provide security and commonality of authorised access (using Trusted Third Parties like in the VISA model)

For conclusions of the session cf. page 1.

Stakeholder Group News: Healthcare Authorities (HCA): Bonn (DE) meeting

By Hannu Hämäläinen, EHTEL Board Member

EHTEL's Healthcare Authorities Stakeholder Group (HCA) held its second meeting of 2004 in Bonn (DE) on 25-26 October.

The two-day meeting brought together 25 participants from 17 countries representing national or regional health care authorities. The meeting was hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Health and Social Security, coordinator of the group, and by the private company GWI and was organised by EHTEL.

The meeting provided an opportunity to present the state-of-the-art and developments of eHealth in Member States, focusing in particular on national strategies and roadmaps and the possibilities and challenges for future co-operation.

The main points of the agenda included:

- ⇒ Follow up to current activities at a European level: EC's IST and eTen programmes were presented, as were activities of other EHTEL groups.
- ⇒ Monitoring the progress of interoperability work: the CEN/ISSS eHealth Standardization Focus Group's report was discussed, following an introduction of the Netc@rds project and a presentation of the I2Health proposal.
- ⇒ Coordination actions and collaboration projects: the development of a European eHealth Research Area was discussed, with participants emphasizing the vital role of EHTEL and its HCA group.

The group will meet again in Budapest (HU) on 4-5 April 2005. For more information, please contact info@ehtel.org.

Stakeholder Group News: EHTEL-like Organisations: (ELO) 6th meeting

By Mats Larson, EHTEL President

The EHTEL network of national eHealth organisations (a.k.a. "ELOs" or EHTEL-Like Organisations) held its sixth meeting in Paris on

22 October. Representatives from organisations coming from ten different countries (UK, France, Slovenia, Slovakia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Switzerland) met to discuss and exchange information.

Some of the issues that were in focus at this meeting included:

- ⇒ information exchange to support patient mobility. Different projects were presented, with the objective of defining a set of basic data to be communicated when patients are mobile nationally or internationally. The use of electronic healthcare records gives the opportunity to communicate vital information when patients move from one caregiver to another. The need and methodology to develop a basic model to communicate this information were discussed.
- ⇒ interoperability, in particular to identify current European initiatives to enhance and facilitate interoperability between systems that are used in different Member States.
- ⇒ use of Open Source Software (OSS) in healthcare. Reports from NICTIZ and Sweden examined the use of OSS in public service, looking into issues such as procurement and business-models. Both reports will be available in English soon.
- ⇒ the standardization process, with emphasis on the current discussions in the CEN/ISS Focus Group. Participants were encouraged to take part in the meeting of Amsterdam on 15 December to comment and react on the draft text from the CEN Focus Group.

The network will meet again in Norway, in late spring of 2005. For more information, please contact Mats Larson or Jacob Hygen (Jacob.Hygen@kith.no).

A new call for proposals for the European Union's e-health programme is out. Around €75m are available for successful projects submitted in this fourth round of awards.

The focus is on the research and developments of ICT-based systems that process and integrate biomedical information from different levels and different places.

Support will go to the best projects that improve health knowledge and processes related to prevention, diagnosis, treatment and the personalisation of healthcare.

The call for proposals starts on 16 November 2004 and runs until 22 March 2005. A fifth round opens May 2005.

**EHTEL Strategy Review:
eHealth 2004 - 2005**

By D. Lloyd-Williams, EHTEL Board Member:

2004 has been an eventful year for eHealth and for EHTEL. In October the new Board of EHTEL undertook a full review of the strategy in the context of the changing eHealth marketplace and EHTEL's own position. The strategy for 2005 will be presented and discussed at the AGM - the paragraphs below give some indications of the way forward.

2004 needed some focus, a clear positioning, and some concrete activities to underpin progress for EHTEL during the year. We began to work towards being "the eHealth Portal for Europe", "a platform for information, lobbying, representation, networking, co-operation and task forces that support all stakeholders in implementing and using ICTs to deliver health and social care".

EHTEL carried out its mission through a range of activities via its various Stakeholder Groups and task forces.

And internally also, EHTEL made some changes to ensure more transparency, more involvement from the members, and more representation on public platforms, in the aims of making its voice heard to influence policy and investment decisions in eHealth and of looking for ways to facilitate implementation.

You will have heard and seen much of this through previous *Navigator* issues and at events throughout the year.

The conclusion of the Board's review was "So far, so good but there's much more to be done". 2005 will therefore continue in the direction of 2004, working ever more as part of the eHealth team / community, concentrating on issues that are the most important for our members, staying flexible enough to take on new things and to know when to stop doing other things.

The emphasis of the mission statement will change towards:

"To become the independent focal point for eHealth in Europe serving the stakeholders, the EU institutions and other interested parties complementing and adding value to existing specific interest groups".

EHTEL will work more closely with its stakeholder groups, task forces and other eHealth-related groups and more broadly with the European Commission to concentrate on *how* eHealth, rather than *why* eHealth.

We will continue to discuss this at the AGM on December 1st and we want to hear more from all of you Navigator readers.

eHealthNews:

**Global Health Challenges –
EHTEL at the European
Health Forum Gastein**

By Karl-Jürgen Schmitt, EHTEL Vice-President

Outgoing Commissioner for Health & Consumer Protection David Byrne was honoured for his many achievements at this year's European Health Forum Gastein. The Forum focused on "Global Health Challenges: European Approaches and Responsibilities" and last summer, Commissioner Byrne had launched a reflection process on the future role of the European Union in healthcare, later publishing "Enabling Good Health for All", on the necessity of a good health system not only for the benefit of the citizens but also for the economy of the Member States.

Indeed, healthcare is an investment of large proportions: EU nations spend an average 8.6 % of their GDP on healthcare, an industry that also employs 10% of the EU workforce.

But healthcare is also an investment that requires a certain wisdom: as the WHO's "Health Report 2000" explains, the amount of money spent in healthcare is not the determinant criteria for the quality of healthcare services and systems.

There is a need for much more transparency regarding quality and costs of different healthcare services. Quality of care and the citizen have to be put even more in the focus of all endeavours. One of the keys to realizing all this is the use of ICT in healthcare.

EHTEL was invited to speak on the role of ICT in health and social care at the parallel forum "Towards high-performing health systems: value for money and sustainable financing". We spoke of the benefits of using ICT in disease management, for example, both in terms of avoiding adverse events (cf. Institute of Medicine, 2000) and of optimising care for the chronically ill, an optimisation that augments the quality of life of the patient and that is also financially viable. In hospitals, the use of ICT has increased, and continues to do so - as competitive, "for-profit enterprises" hospitals face the need to improve efficiency, and have found solutions in ICT.

We also spoke of the need to create incentives for users to utilise IT in healthcare. Most of the eHealth projects showed feasibility, benefits for the patients and a high added value. However, thus far no eHealth project has been transferred into general care, simply because the users have no incentive to use this innovative technology.

More on www.ehfg.org.

Full article available on www.ehtel.org.

EHTEL's Citizen & Patient Stakeholder Group has continued advocating the role of patients in the eHealth evolution.

The group was present at the conference "Shaping the EU Health Community" in the Hague (NL) on 7-9 September, where Angelica Frithiof was one of three spokespersons representing end-users during the eHealth session.

David Garwood, Secretary of the group, spoke at the Clinical Information Systems and Electronic Records and eHealth 2004 Conference in London on 2 October.

Both conferences have resulted in a lot of informal feedback and interesting dialogues. Stay tuned for more of our activities in the months to come.

Four pages is not enough ...

... to report on all that is going on in EHTEL and beyond. You will therefore find additional information on the News page of www.ehtel.org and in particular on:

- ⇒ EHTEL projects EMISPHER, Health-ware and I2-Health;
- ⇒ other eHealth and eGov. news;
- ⇒ news about EHTEL people;
- ⇒ upcoming events.

Feel free also to inform the editorial team of any news that you would like to share with the EHTEL constituency.

Join EHTEL: Become a Member

EHTEL is an international, non-profit, non-political association of members representing all categories of stakeholders for eHealth in the health and social care domains.

Joining EHTEL means:

- ⇒ enabling the cultivation of partnerships and networking across the eHealth domain;
- ⇒ being a part of an independent organisation, influencing eHealth policies in Europe;
- ⇒ an opportunity to share experiences and to hear the lessons learned by others.

Members are also entitled to such benefits as reduced registration fees to seminars, workshops and other events, email notifications of important news in the eHealth field, as well as individualized access to EHTEL's website, www.ehtel.org.

If you'd like to hear more about EHTEL or about becoming a member, please call us at +32 (0)2 230 96 50 or email us at info@ehtel.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Task Force Progress Report "Reimbursement and Incentive Structures"

By D. Lloyd-Williams, EHTEL Board Member

One of the driving forces behind EHTEL's programmes for 2004/2005 is to enable the large scale deployment of eHealth to support the transformation of health and social care.

Studies on obstacles to automating healthcare delivery in the US and Europe have shown a consistent pattern where by far the largest barrier is people, processes and politics. A vital part of this is our understanding of people and processes, their views about how eHealth can help them, their willingness to participate and take ownership, and their understanding of the day-to-day benefits to be gained. We need to know more about how ICT is seen on the ground, how it can help and support rather than hinder and distract.

This task force was set up to address some of these questions in three stages:

- ⇒ Information collection to gather a baseline of material across Europe about perceptions of eHealth, specific inhibitors, local constraints / opportunities and about the potential available. This was done via a questionnaire-based survey sent to some 400 people across Europe.
- ⇒ This information and other published material will form the basis of an initial report designed to set the scene, as a basis for comment and discussion and to draw some early conclusions. This will be widely circulated to generate feedback and comment and to draw in people with a specific interest to form the basis of a more formal task force.
- ⇒ The task force within EHTEL will consider the material available, look at the implications for all stakeholders and policy makers and produce a first stage set of recommendations, to become a forum for discussion and dissemination for these issues on an ongoing basis.

Current Status: We have completed the survey and the analysis of results. The task force is currently completing the report; to put it out for consultation and then agree a final version with the EHTEL Board. Respondent and interested parties will receive this resulting document, which will then be updated once more based on the comments and input before presentation to the Task Force kick-off meeting.

(Contact: email info@ehtel.org).

eHealth Diary 2004/2005

November 22-24, Düsseldorf (DE),
European Health Care Congress
<http://www.ehcc.de>

November 24-27, Düsseldorf (DE),
MEDICA 2004, <http://www.medica.de>

November 26, Brussels (BE),
EUROREC 2004 "Implementation Guidelines,
Quality Labeling and Certification for EHR"
<http://www.prorec.be/events/eurorec2004>

November 29-30, London (UK),
TeleMed and eHealth '04 "Citizen-Centred
Care" <http://www.rsm.ac.uk/telemed04/>

December 1, Brussels (BE),
Reception at the European Parliament &
Annual General Meeting of the EHTEL
Association

December 6-7, Brussels (BE),
Council Meetings, <http://www.eu2004.nl>

December 7, Brussels (BE),
ESIP (Eur. Soc. Insurance Platform) Confer-
ence "How should the social insurance systems
respond to a changing European society?"
<http://www.esip.org/publications/pb16.pdf>

December 9-10, Prague (CZ),
MEDTEL 2004 / eEurope Smart Card Charter
9 Joint International Conference
<http://www.medtel.cz/data/c67/lib/Medtel.pdf>

December 13-15, Belfast (NI),
"Personalised Health: The Integration of
Innovative Sensing, Textile, Information &
Communication Technologies"
<http://www.phealth2004.ulster.ac.uk/>

December 15, Amsterdam (NL),
eHealth Interoperability conference
<http://ehealth.nen.nl>

April 4-5, Luxembourg (LU),
"Patient Safety - Making it Happen - The
European Perspective", www.cpme.be

6-8 April, Luxembourg (LU), Med-e-TEL
"International Trade Event and Conference for
eHealth, Telemedicine and Health ICT"
<http://www.medetel.lu/>

7-8 April, Paris (FR),
"World Health Care Congress - Europe"
www.worldcongress.com/europe

19-21 April, Munich (DE),
"eHealth 2005: Elektronische
Gesundheitskarte - Kernelement
sektorübergreifender IT-Anwendungen"
<http://atg.gvg-koeln.de/>

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