

EUROPEAN E-HEALTH POLICIES

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E-Health became one of the top issues of high interest not only for healthcare and IT&C professionals, but also for politicians, due to its high potential to address some major challenges of present healthcare. At European level, both governmental and nongovernmental organizations are engaged in various programs and projects to promote e-Health, both the research and the practical implementation. The European Commission (EC), through its Directorate General Information Society and Media (DG Infs), proved its commitment by several actions dedicated to the development of this field and plays now a leading role in European e-Health, having also the support of several European institutions and organizations, including EFMI – the European Federation for Medical Informatics. The paper tries to present an overview of the most important actions in the field, including the plans for the near future.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ACTIONS

e-Health High Level Conferences

In the series of e-Health High Level Conferences, which started in 2003, the official representatives of the ministries of health of the member states are offered the opportunity to present the achievements in their countries, their plans for the future and their proposals for improving the co-operation among the member states or with other countries. The Prague Declaration (2009), entitled “e-Health for Individuals, Society and Economy” underlines “the need to keep the momentum so that the potential advantages of gradual deployment of ICT in the health sector are not compromised by barriers of legal, technical, economic or any other nature.”

e-Health Action Plan

The e-Health Action Plan, elaborated by EC in 2004, set out targets for the years up to 2010. Some of these targets have already been fully or partially achieved. Thus, the Commission has created several fora to encourage sharing of good practice: national competence centres, the i2010 subgroup on e-Health, in which government representatives meet, the e-Health Stakeholders' Group - to offer a forum where healthcare providers, their suppliers and users are able to share their ideas and concerns. The major focus of these exchanges has been to improve interoperability between e-Health services and tools. Following widespread consultations, the Commission published the Recommendation on e-Health interoperability.

European e-Health Projects

The Commission pays a special attention to the R&D activities. In the last call of FP7 (2008-13), the e-Health topic was included in “**Challenge 5: Towards sustainable and personalized healthcare**”. Three major themes were included:

- *Personal Health Systems*, comprising: **Minimally invasive systems and ICT-enabled artificial organs**, (focusing on remote management and treatment at the point of need, including early diagnosis of further complications by making use of heterogeneous data to build integrative risk assessment models for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, renal and liver failure), and **Mental Health**: aiming to ICT based solutions for persons suffering from stress, depression or bipolar disorders.

- *ICT for Patient Safety*, with: **ICT for safer surgery**: innovative ICT based tools for training, pre-operative planning, and computer-aided surgical interventions, **ICT for integration of clinical research and clinical care**: Advanced environment for health professionals and researchers linking EHR with information in clinical research information systems, and **ICT-enabled early detection of public health events** - development of advanced applications for early detection of public health events of potential concern.

- *Virtual Physiological Human*, comprising: development of **patient-specific computer based models and simulation** of the physiology of human organs and pathologies and development of **ICT tools, services and specialised infrastructure for the biomedical researchers** to support sharing data and knowledge needed for a new integrative research approach in medicine (including synergies between bioinformatics, medical informatics, and neuro-informatics).

EFMI STRATEGY

The European Federation for Medical informatics (EFMI) is a pan-European professional non-governmental organization aiming to promote research and use of information technology tools in medicine and healthcare. The strategic objectives of EFMI comprise:

- increasing of EFMI visibility, by the presence of its members in all major actions in the field,
- extend collaboration with other regional groups within IMIA,
- maintain and enhance the traditional links with WHO and IFIP
- prepare recommendations for good practice and for medical informatics education and training
- encourage cooperation with other professional associations (HIMSS, Eurorec, EHTEL etc)
- provide expertise and support all initiatives of national societies concerning the deployment of successful e-Health projects or organizing conferences, summer schools or workshops.

The development of a long term strategy was also considered, starting from the analysis of the involvement, role and links between all stakeholders in the field: academia, healthcare professionals, industry, marketers and politicians.

Romania's engagement in European projects should consider all these issues as priorities in national projects as well as in all collaborations in international consortia.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Studies and Titles:

Professor of Medical Informatics and Biophysics, head of department

Graduated University of Bucharest, biophysics, 1967 and Timisoara, informatics

PhD in physics, University of Bucharest, 1979

Fulbright Fellow, Virginia Commonwealth University, Medical College, Richmond, Virginia

Titular Member of the Romanian Academy of Medical Sciences, 1994

Positions international and national:

EFMI President (2006-8) and Vice-President to IMIA (International Medical Informatics Association) since 2008

President of Romanian Society of Medical Informatics (SRIM) and Prorec Romania

Expert European Commission DG Information Society and Media, Brussels, since 2002

Director of National Centre for Health Statistics and Information, Ministry of Health, Bucharest, 2001

Member Editorial Board "Methods of Information in Medicine" (Schattauer, Germany), *Maedica* (Bucharest)

Most Important International Participations:

Invited speaker: Berlin 1987, Prague 1988, Tbilisi 1990, Harrogate 1996, New Delhi 1999, Budapest 2002, Saint Malo 2003, Athens, San Francisco 2004, Bad Gastein, Geneva 2005, Malaga, Maastricht, Antalya 2006, Brijuni, Madrid, Vienna, Brisbane, Regensburg 2007, Ottawa, Gothenburg, Toledo 2008, Dublin 2009

Scientific Research:

164 published papers, 22 citations in indexed journals

"Gheorghe Marinescu" Prize of the Romanian Academy, 1989

Main topics of interest:

- mathematical modeling and computer simulation of biological processes (esp. biomolecular kinetics)
- implementation of health information systems
- development of e-health strategies

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