

# **EHEALTH: INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES, STRUCTURES AND TRENDS**

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eHealth is brought to life by contemporary changes of our world. Extraordinary achievements in medicine, changing demographics, rapid aging of population; globalization; changes of disease patterns; the necessity to be prepared and respond to natural disasters and possible bio-terrorism; cheaper and affordable information and communication technology solutions plus the necessity to cut the costs of healthcare budgets spent worldwide are only some of the catalyzes of eHealth development. The way how people give and receive health care has been changed!

The aim of this presentation is two folded:

(a) To outline the eHealth action territory and to draft an initial inventory of existing international structures and initiatives in the field as well as

(b) To underline the necessity of networking in understanding, developing and implementing eHealth.

Brief attention is also paid to outline European eHealth policy and the role of Europe in the creation of two nesting places for international networking in the field of eHealth.

The messages of the presentation are:

- eHealth is truly international and its international component is essential for the further development,
- We must continuously learn from each other as there is no need to reinvent the wheel!
- Cooperation and coordination is necessary at all possible levels
- Networking is vital
- In a world dominated by communication technology, communication still remains one of the most challenging issues!
- As we concentrate on our daily activities, we must yet be aware of the global frame in which all this has its place and expands.

Key words: eHealth, networking, international structures and initiatives