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E-Health Action Plan Public Consultation Results Published

A final report on the public consultation on the eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020 has been published. The consultation, which involved a range of stakeholders including NGOs, academic institutions, enterprises, health and social care providers and public authorities from many Member States, aimed to validate four proposed objectives and to explore possible actions to be undertaken in the coming years. More than 90 percent of the stakeholders agreed with the four main objectives of the eHealth Action Plan and concluded that the main benefit of eHealth solution is to improve the quality, the efficiency and the sustainability of the available healthcare services.

The four objectives were:

- To increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities, of eHealth, and empower citizens, patients and healthcare professionals;
- To address issues currently impeding eHealth, interoperability;
- To address issues currently impeding eHealth interoperability;
- To support research and innovation in eHealth and development of a competitive European market.

Therefore, the lack of interoperability, user awareness (both patients' and healthcare professionals') and reimbursement schemes as well as inappropriate legal frameworks, were identified as constituting the key barriers preventing the large scale deployment of eHealth solutions. As a way of addressing such barriers in the context of the eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020, the consultation participants proposed that the European Commission contribute by:

- Supporting systematic evaluation of benefits, costs and usefulness of eHealth solutions;
- Providing guidance for achieving EU wide interoperability (e.g. the use of common standards, profiles, terminologies); and
- Supporting deployment of eHealth services/solutions based on evidence facilitating cooperation between Member States and/or regions to address common challenges.

The implementation of the relevant actions had initially been foreseen for the end of 2011. However, in light of the launch of a number of initiatives relevant to the development of the eHealth agenda at the European level, the Commission intends to postpone the adoption of measures related to the eHealth Action Plan in order to make sure that measures are built on consolidated views and visions from Member State representatives, stakeholders and experts.

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