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E-Health and Equity in the Global Health Communities

An initiative of the eHealth Unit, DG INFSO, European Commission, the workshop on 'eHealth and Equity in the Global Health Communities' will take place in Brussels, on December 15, at European Commission premises.

The potential of e-Health to help strengthen health systems and to improve the safety, quality and efficiency of care was recognised by the World Health Assembly in its resolution on e-health in 2005. In addition, e-health should improve health equity as a consequence of the ease of access to information and health services.

The workshop will seek answers to questions such as:

- What types of disparities does this ease of access minimise or exacerbate?
- How are health systems and their governance influenced by e-health solutions, policies and practices?
- What evidence is there to strengthen activities and programmes that support local, regional, national and global health communities?

Organisers are particularly seeking experiences and lessons learnt in low-resource settings including contributors from developing countries.

The workshop will act as a means of dissemination of the key findings to high-level decision-makers; as a promoter of stronger commitment on e-health interoperability and its wider application at global level and as a preparatory forum for selecting issues to present at the forthcoming World Health Assembly.

Prospective topics include:

- Equal access to health related information: The role of the digital divide;
- Interoperability as a means of achieving equity in healthcare;
- E-Health at local, regional, national and global levels as a way to enhance equity in healthcare and services;
- The role of telemedicine and remote care in reducing the healthcare divide on a global scale;
- Using e-health to widen access to information: Does this promote equity in low resource areas?;
- Managing Electronic Health Records for equity in care;
- E-Health systems for care at home: Bypassing age and distance discrimination;
- Legal issues; and
- Cross-border e-health services: Can they enhance equity in care?

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