
#eHW15: "Passive to Active" – Optimism as eHealth Week Closes



Influential ministerial delegates and eHealth experts from across Europe have come together to discuss how they can join forces to improve healthcare in Europe through information technology.

This year's [eHealth Week](#), held in Riga, Latvia saw more than 1,300 speakers, delegates and vendors come together to find new ideas and solutions, participate in educational sessions, exhibitions and networking opportunities and make key announcements.

The Nordic countries revealed interesting findings and next steps for them in terms of eHealth. Finland, for instance, announced they will be switching off paper-based prescriptions by 2017, as they "have reached nearly 100% coverage with electronic prescriptions now", according to Maritta Korhonen, Head of Development in the

[Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health](#).

Paul Timmers, Director Sustainable & Secure Society, [DG CONNECT](#) at the European Commission, who spoke during the closing plenary said he was rooting for a European eHealth Community which can turn actions into tangible results with real impact for patients. He said: "I am glad to see that the eHealth community is committed to deliver results with real influence in terms of healthier citizens, more efficient and better healthcare services and economic growth and jobs. By joining up forces and learning from each other we can deliver a social and economic return on digital investment in health and social care".

In addition, this year's discussions were very much focused on mHealth. Many sessions addressed the need to start regulating mobile health apps, especially if they are going to be used as a medical device. This regulatory discussion is very much dependant on safety and privacy challenges which go hand in hand with providing a legislative approach to mHealth apps. Misleading medical results or misdiagnosis are some issues these apps are currently facing.

Christina Roosen, Vice-President of [HIMSS Europe](#) said: "It is becoming increasingly important for decision makers throughout Europe to be able to meet at least once a year in an all-encompassing event eHealth Week is to be the meeting point.

"Once again, our collaboration with the Ministry and the European Commission has proven to be a successful way to provide a platform for everybody who matters within the European eHealth Community to meet. Many meaningful discussions have taken place during the three day event; President Ilves' keynote speech provided an insight to his 'Redesigning Health in Europe for 2020' project, which was extremely well received."

In his final address at the closing Keynote, Latvian Health Minister Dr Guntis Belevics summed up much of the spirit of the three-day event, acknowledging the core challenges that face Europe as it migrates to e-Health. "In the future, the role of the patient must shift from passive to active," he said.

[eHealth Week 2015](#) concluded with an invitation to join next year's edition in Amsterdam, on the week of 6 June, in The Netherlands, the country which will be holding the Presidency of the [Council of the European Union](#).

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