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High-Level meeting at the European Parliament “Digitalisation of the Healthcare Sector - End-user Co-creation”



The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), the united voice of 3 million EU nurses and 6 million European nurses, organised on 5 February 2020 a high-level meeting at the European Parliament (EP) to celebrate the hard work of nurses globally through a Nursing Now event. The Nursing Now campaign focuses on raising the status and profile of nursing globally, and on maximising the contribution that the nursing profession makes to the Universal Health Coverage. This is all within the context of the “World Health Organisation 2020 Year of the Nurse

and Midwife”. Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, took this opportunity to ease the audience into campaign, of which the EFN is the European Leader, and its objectives. She also said that “*nursing is not only a European but a global force for good*”.

The event continued with MEP Maria Manuel Leitão, who reminded that Health is not an EU policy yet – but she believes that it will be soon. Paul De Raeve, EFN Secretary General, picked on these ideas and took them further to explain how digitalisation is positively transforming the health ecosystems, together with the nursing workforce.



Then, the MEP Nicolás González Casares continued the meeting. He is a politician who has more than 18 years of experience as an emergency nurse. He explained the audience how Florence Nightingale, the mother of modern nursing (and in whose honour 2020 has been declared “WHO 2020 Year of the Nurse and the Midwife”) was also the first statistician who started collecting and analysing patient’s data. Today, there are many health innovations that are based

on data as well, reason for which he thinks we should advocate for a common European Data Space. However, he also said that “*we can digitalise health data, but we cannot digitalise the human side of nursing*”.

The floor was then taken by Thibaut Kleiner, from the European Commission’s (EC) DG Connect, who explained how one of the drivers of innovation is in fact budget –



without money being available, innovation cannot be developed nor applied. Hence, he gave a great importance to the two upcoming EU research funds - [Horizon Europe](#) and [Digital Europe](#). The latter programme, he explained, will focus on upscaling and deploying research that is already out there, ensuring that it does have an impact for the end-user.

The other topic for discussion was the digitalisation of healthcare, and more concretely, nurses' contribution as end-users to new tools such as Electronic Health Records.



The meeting continued towards its core session, named “End-User Co-Creation – How to reach Excellence and Impact”. Ricardo Gonçalves, project coordinator from UNINOVA, introduced Smart4Health, developing an online health platform together with a system of cross-operable Electronic Health Records. “Smart4Health will enable citizens to manage and bridge their own health data throughout the EU and beyond, advancing own and societal health and wellbeing”, he said.

After him, Marc Lange from EHTEL presented the InteropEHRate project, a similar H2020 project developing an interoperable and shareable Electronic Health Record.



These presentations were followed by Marc Taverner, INATBA's CEO, who reinforced the importance of adding an extra layer of security to these developments by using blockchain ledger technology. EFN is a member of INATBA.

To finalise, Jacqueline Bowman-Busato, Policy Lead of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO), elaborated further on what these two projects are doing so greatly: fostering co-creation with end-users, to ensure right deployment and impact.



Other high-level speakers during the afternoon session were Saila Rinne (European Commission), MEP Maria da Graca Carvalho, and Eva-Stina Slotte (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Affairs).

All sessions were actively engaged by MEPs, Commission representatives of DG research and DG Connect, Industry/SMEs and Civil Society, all reinforcing the importance of fostering end-user co-design in digital health, especially the frontline nurses.

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