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Title	Proposed “eHealth and Data transfer across borders in the BSR” workshop during the upcoming EUSBSR Annual Forum
Submitted by	Life Science Nord Management GmbH
Summary / Note	<p>This document presents the purpose and other details of the above-named workshop proposed to be organized by the “Baltic Fracture Competence Centre – BFCC” project with support of ScanBalt fmba and the eHealth for Regions Network. Further, it discusses a possible role of the NDPHS in contributing to the preparation and running of the workshop.</p> <p>Given that the NDPHS Expert Groups decided not to apply for an own workshop/seminar during the upcoming EUSBSR Annual Forum, the above-named event offers the NDPHS to play a meaningful role during the Forum again.</p>
Requested action	For information and comments

Introduction

The Life Science Nord Management GmbH, which is the Lead Partner for the Interreg BSR Programme project “Baltic Fracture Competence Centre – BFCC” (www.bfcc-project.eu) has applied for a workshop at this year’s EUSBSR Annual Forum in collaboration with ScanBalt fmba. The title of the workshop is “Cross-border data transfer of eHealth data in the Baltic Sea Region.” It is planned that the workshop would be related to the Estonian presidency of the EU in 2017, as data transfer across borders is one of its focuses. ScanBalt fmba is already in discussion with the Estonian EU Presidency secretariat.

Background

On EU level the topic of electronic health data is of great priority. The Commission, in eGovernment Action Plan, has declared its support to Member States in the development of eHealth services that also enable cross-border exchange of e-prescriptions, telemedicine and tele-monitoring solutions.¹

We think that it is important to have a common eHealth strategy for the Baltic Sea Region member states as the BSR holds a high potential to become a role model for the rest of Europe in eHealth and electronic health data transfer. In the BSR is a discrepancy between the member states in the behaviour towards eHealth and

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/communication-eu-egovernment-action-plan-2016-2020-accelerating-digital-transformation>.

cross-border data exchange. For example Estonia and Finland recently signed a joint declaration on an initial roadmap for launching data exchange and e-services between Estonia and Finland.² In contrast other countries in the BSR like Lithuania, Latvia and Poland still lag behind in many e-related categories including eHealth.³ Electronic data does not flow freely between most of the BSR members states due to different barriers like lack of awareness, lack of trust and lack of legal clarity.

In December 2016, Top of Digital Europe, the digital think-tank which the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) hosts together with Microsoft, has launched a discussion paper titled "*Towards a Cross-border Open Data Agenda – A Case for a macro-regional agenda on open government data in the Baltic Sea Region.*"³ This paper shows that the Baltic Sea Region and its member states stand out as potential forerunners in the field of digitalisation and the digital economy but when it comes to open data, their current state of affairs is uneven, highlighting the need and potential for collaboration.

A cross-border exchange of eHealth data could create value for the BSR by opening new possibilities for patients, healthcare service providers, businesses, governments and the wider public through research and development. We think that now is the right time to address this topic as some countries in the BSR have already started to exchange their eHealth data. A common approach across all BSR countries would be needed to establish the BSR as a front runner in eHealth which will contribute to the wellbeing and health of its citizens. The results of the workshop will be used to address question like 'What should be done on BSR level?', 'What should be done on member state level?' and 'What could be done by patients' and doctors' organisations?' to overcome the barriers that stop the free flow of eHealth data. Furthermore the results of the workshop will be used to contribute to a paper of the EE EU presidency about 'How to improve eHealth on an EU level'.

Motivation

One of the main goals of the BFCC is the development and implementation of a transnational fracture registry platform including registry data from 6 hospitals in Finland, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, so the project is facing the challenge of a cross-border data transfer. Within the BFCC project we aim to hold a workshop to address this important topic. The BFCC consortium has 14 partners and the project has a life time of 3 years (April 2016 - March 2019) with a total budget of 3.6 M € and is funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

Organisation and support

The workshop will be organised by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme Project 'Baltic Fracture Competence Centre - BFCC' (www.bfcc-project.eu, Lead Partner: Life Science Nord Management GmbH) with support of ScanBalt fmba (scanbalt.org) and the eHealth for Regions Network (<http://www.ehealthforregions.net/>). Furthermore a collaboration with the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs is planned as the topic of eHealth and its cross-border data transfer is topic of their EU presidency. The think-tank Top of Digital Europe has also a strong interest in the workshop and we are currently liaising about their involvement in the workshop.

² <https://e-estonia.com/estonia-and-finland-to-start-sharing-patient-data-and-thats-just-the-start/>.

³ http://www.bdforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/OPEN-DATA-2017-WEB-A4_22-12.pdf.

Format

The planned workshop at the EUSBSR forum will take part as a panel discussion with panel member from different BSR member states and different backgrounds. It will be hosted by Prof Ronald Trill (eHealth for Regions Network). The panel will include Dr Ain Aaviksoo (Deputy Secretary General for E-services and Innovation, Ministry of Social Affairs, Republic of Estonia) whose institution is involved in the data exchange between Estonia and Finland. It will also include Prof Wolfgang Hoffmann (Institute for Community Medicine, Section Epidemiology of Health Care and Community Health, University Medicine Greifswald, Germany). Prof Hoffman is part of the BFCC consortium and his medical research institute faces the challenge of a cross-border data transfer in several projects. Furthermore Jaanus Pikani, the Chairman of ScanBalt fmba, will join the discussion. ScanBalt Health Region is a flagship in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy. The flagship promotes Cross-Sectoral and Transnational Projects for Innovation in Health and in Life Sciences. The panel will be also joined by a member of the Region West Sweden. And there is an ongoing call within the member of the eHealth for Regions Network for one or two further panel members.

Potential support of the NDPHS

The topic of the workshop could fit in to the second main priority field of the NDPHS '**enhance peoples' levels of social well-being and to promote socially rewarding lifestyles**'. One of the task of the BFCC project is to develop a sustainability strategy for project including the local and the transnational registries. A support of the NDPHS and a contact to the Expert Groups would be a great advantage for the process to transferring the results of the project to policy level. Especially the contact to the Expert Group on Primary Healthcare would be very valuable as the healthcare systems will play an important role in the sustainability of the project. The results of the project will provide an inside in the treatment of fractures in different BSR countries and will identify differences and best practice in fracture treatment which will contribute to improvement of the treatment across the BSR countries. This will reduce the hospital stays and improve the well-being of the people. Furthermore it will improve the cost-effectiveness of the treatment and will relieve the healthcare systems.

The NDPHS and the Expert group could support / contribute to the EUSBSR workshop by either participating in the panel discussion or helping to nominate further members for the panel. Furthermore the NDPHS could give feedback on the questions for the panel discussion or provide own questions. The results of the workshop will be used to contribute to a paper of the EE EU presidency about 'How to improve eHealth on an EU level' and to contribute of the implementation of the BFCC project.