

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today chaired the third meeting of the European e-health work group in the capital of Portugal; the meeting focused on the policy recommendations chapter of the drafted report.

“In a situation where the expenditures of the European Union Member States are increasing solely for demographic reasons, the more extensive and systemic implementation of e-health solutions will allow us to make the system more flexible, improve the health of people by exercising more efficient preventive measures, increase the awareness of patients and also save billions of euros,” President Ilves told.

“Difficult times have always favoured change. As we consider the current financial crisis and credit crunch, both taxpayers and doctors, insurance companies and countries could take interest in the implementation of e-health solutions. If a better exchange of information, combined with cross-border co-operation, such as data analysis to develop new medications, would also mean financial savings apart from better treatment opportunities, we should already agree during the planning of joint policy on who will enjoy the fruits of such a victory or, in economical terms, the profit reaped,” told the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves implored the developers of the report to focus also on those interest groups that resist the disclosure of statistical information on treatment, to a certain extent for legitimate reasons, but also the so-called professional code of honour, as such information would allow future patients to take well-informed decisions and chose between different methods of treatment, doctors and hospitals.

This spring, President Ilves accepted the proposal of the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso; Vice President, Neelie Kroes; and EU Commissioner, John Dalli, to chair a high-level advisory work group, which is tasked with shaping the future of e-health in the European Union. The first meeting of the group took place in May in Budapest and the second in September, in Tallinn.

By the end of its 15 months of work, the work group, consisting of health care experts, representatives of patients, medical, pharmaceutical and ICT industries, legal experts and politicians, is expected to send to the European Commission their proposals on using the e-health solutions to achieve a safer, patient-focused and more efficient organisation of health

care, which also extends to the spheres of diagnostics, prevention and treatment.

According to the plans, the report will be presented at the meeting of the European Union health care ministers in Copenhagen, in May of next year. Family doctor Madis Tiik, who is a promoter of e-health, is representing Estonia in the work group as an expert.

Furthermore, President Ilves today visited the Champalimaud Centre, which was opened in 2010 in Lisbon and where research studies are conducted in 15 laboratories in one wing of the centre, while a hospital is operating in the other wing.

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