

European Health Property Network: Regional Meeting Report

Cross-border Healthcare: A Necessity and an Opportunity

Trieste, 9 May 2016

On 9th May 2016 the newly formed Integrated University Healthcare Agency of Trieste (ASUITS) welcomed around 90 speakers and participants to a day of discussion and information exchange on the topic of cross-border healthcare. The European Health Property Network (EuHPN) regularly supports regional seminars which focus on themes which link changes to European health systems with the development of healthcare facilities, from the largest hospitals to the buildings used for primary and community care. The Trieste workshop was organised through a collaboration between EuHPN, ASUITS, the Italian Society of Architecture and Engineering for Health (SIAIS), Smartcare and the International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals & Health Services. We are grateful for the support offered by the Italian Ministry of Health, the Government of Catalonia and Istituto Superiore di Sanità.

Aims of the workshop

The European Directive 2011/24/UE on Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare emphasises the importance of cross-border care in relation to patient empowerment, greater choice, more cooperation and pooled expertise. These are welcome ambitions, but the reality of the implementation of cross-border health care is recognised to be complex and challenging. These challenges encompass national differences in medical training, education and practice, finance systems, administrative and governance processes, interoperability of information technologies and medical devices, and patient focused issues such as continuity of care.

The Trieste workshop's main objective was to build on the excellent work already undertaken by the health policy and health care organisations of Trieste and the surrounding region, alongside partners in Slovenia, Croatia and Austria, by bringing together a range of international experts to debate what works, and what doesn't work, in making cross-border care a successful reality. Knowledge generated in this area will have a direct influence on the capital assets which underpin and support health care in border regions, as technologies evolve to become interoperable, hospital services are shared and rationalised and specialist services adapt to serve more than just their local populations.

In broad terms, the Trieste workshop aimed to address the following topics:

- The role of Directive 24/2011 in encouraging health system cooperation, and in managing scarce resources.
- Creating shared financial mechanisms and planning protocols.
- The 'ingredients' for success: what can we learn from existing cross-border care programmes.
- Identifying the challenges and the potential benefits, in ICT, professional standards, performance assessment and patient care.

The speakers, the participants and the programme

We were fortunate to have a multinational group of expert speakers, representing Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Denmark and the Catalonia Region of Spain. The members of the audience came mostly from the Trieste region, but also from further afield in Italy and from Slovenia, Austria and Croatia.

Speaker	Affiliation
Adriano Marcolongo	Directorate of Health, social care integration, social and family policies, Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia – FVG
Antonella Bulfone	Medical Director, Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia
Dorjan Marušič	EU EXPH member “Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health”; former Minister of Health of Slovenia
Nicola Delli Quadri	Director of the Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste
Jonathan Erskine	Executive Director of the European Health Property Network (EuHPN)
Gianfranco Sinagra	Director of Cardiology, Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste
Serena Rakar	Medical Doctor, Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste
Massimiliano Mahnic	Central Directorate of Health, socio- health integration, social and family policies of the Region FVG
Sandra Sodini	Director of the European Group of Territorial Cooperation – GO / EGTC - GO
Lara Marchi	External Expert of the EU Commission working Group on Cross-border Cooperation
Luigi Bertinato	External Expert of the EU Commission working Group on Cross-border Cooperation
Jordi Gassió	Director of the Transborder Hospital de la Cerdanya, Department of Health, Catalunya Region
Karl Wulz	Director of Sanicademia, the foundation of the International Training Academy for health professionals EEIG
Daniel Eriksson	Director of TEM ; Founder of the Nordic Centre for Sustainable Healthcare
Elena Clio Pavan	Director of Estates Management, Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste
Ilir Qose	Cooss Marche – Coop social services, socio-health, assistance and training- Coordinator of Research Projects
Leopoldo Comisso	A.A.S. 2 "Bassa Friulana - Isontina", leader of the Work Package n.8 of HoNCAB European project- Hospital Network for Care Across Borders in Europe
Andrea Di Lenarda	Director of the Cardiovascular Centre, Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste
Gian Matteo Apuzzo	Senior expert and international consultant – Smartcare project
Daniela Pedrini	President of the Italian Society of Architecture and Engineering for Health; Scientific coordinator of the journal HP Hospitals & Public Health
Simona Ganassi Agger	Chairman of the Board, EuHPN - European Health Property Network; Member of the European Healthcare Climate Council (EHCC) promoted by Health Care Without Harm (HCWH)

The programme was arranged to cover first the nature and scope of the cross-border care Directive, the main challenges facing Europe's health care systems and the overall rationale for the workshop. Subsequent sessions examined:

- The practical consequences of the drive towards effective cross-border care, particularly in relation to the financial mechanisms which require alignment. This session drew on the example of the GECT project of Gorizia-Nova Gorica-Šempeter Vrtojba and the experience of the AAS2 'Bassa-Friulana Isontina', as well as the multi-national, multi-lingual 'Cerdanya' cross-border hospital in Catalonia.
- The detail of cross-border care from the perspective of specialist networks (e.g. the cardiovascular sector), workforce education and training (Sanicademica) and innovation in clinical and non-clinical areas (the Nordic Centre for Sustainable Healthcare).
- The challenges and benefits of cross-border care, in terms of spatial requirements, ICT interoperability, health tourism, data sharing and analysis (the European Cardiovascular Register) and scaling up integrated care pathways across regional borders

The workshop ended with a lively roundtable discussion, during which audience members were able to question and challenge the speakers, exchange differing views on the utility and relative importance of cross-border care projects, and speak openly about the potential difficulties in pursuing this aim. Nicola Delli Quadri, Director of ASUITS, closed the workshop with a powerful appeal to health system policy makers, managers and administrators to focus on patient need above all else, and to overcome the artificial boundaries of borders and national protocols in doing so. Simona Agger, Chair of the EuHPN, proposed a return to this topic in 2017 – potentially involving an even wider range of speakers and participants.

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