

## Joint Statement on Digital transformation in the EURO Region

### 72nd Session of the World Health Organization RCM for the EURO Region

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates,

We thank you for this opportunity to jointly address the Regional Committee on one of the most important and innovative subjects of our times.

WHO-Europe has recognised the value that digital health solutions can bring to health system delivery, ensuring patient safety and quality care, and improving access for everyone.

The last two years have shown the combined impacts of complications due to COVID-19 and non-communicable multimorbidities, as well as interruptions to crucial medical interventions and ongoing care for people living with cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, stroke, cancer, and other circulatory and non-communicable disease conditions (NCDs) – those persons most at risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19. If guided and harnessed appropriately, digital health tools could greatly help in providing support to the overburdened and often ill-equipped health systems, overrun with gaps in human resources.

In order to achieve digital transformation of health systems, **the European Heart Network (EHN), the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and the World Heart Federation (WHF)** recommends EURO Member States:

- Create a secure and privacy-preserving system that delivers for people, patients, healthcare professionals, researchers, and innovators.
- Ensure that FAIR principles are applied at the source (data shall be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable).
- Ensure that structures are put in place, such as digital health authorities, health data authorities and surveillance authorities, and that this infrastructure for example registries, are fair, i.e., transparent, equal, trustworthy, and just.
- Increase digital literacy and digital health literacy to ensure uptake and successful diffusion of digital health data systems, thus improving access to health and addressing health inequalities.
- Ensure meaningful public and patient involvement by putting in place governance mechanisms that give a place to people—including patients, their representatives, and professionals– to allow secondary use of health data that supports the public interest, promotes the safe and ethical reuse of data, and is conducted in a transparent and inherently trust-building manner.

We encourage you to take advantage of the research and recommendations available in the WHF's [Roadmap for Digital Health in Cardiology](#) and we thank you for your attention. EHN, ESO and WHF remain dedicated to supporting you in these important endeavors, so that together we may, through digital transformation build a more robust, inclusive, and efficient health care system.

