Driving Digital Health Forward: HL7 Europe and IHE-Europe Strengthen Their Collaboration to Enhance Interoperability

Brussels, 12 November 2024 — The European Health Data Space (EHDS) signifies a new era of data accessibility and exchange within the European Union, presenting an unprecedented opportunity for Member States to elevate healthcare standards. Recognising the pivotal role of the EHDS, HL7 Europe and IHE-Europe have jointly embarked on a unified mission to optimise their organisation's support for this endeavour.

Central to this initiative are regular meetings with the leadership of both organisations to ensure best alignment. Both HL7 Europe and IHE-Europe are committed to employ methods and standards of their parent organisations for advancing digital health in Europe. For this they work together in projects of the European Commission to make the EHDS a reality, perform common test events, and educate stakeholders.
The deepened collaboration of these two pioneering organisations marks a defining moment, placing interoperability at the forefront and simplifying its implementation. Together, they pave the way for a legacy defined by streamlined digital health data exchange in Europe.

As a first step the organisations will form a joint technical committee to accelerate the implementation of the EHDS and other areas in the uptake of digital health in Europe.

Commenting on this announcement, IHE-Europe Vendor Co-Chair Janos Vincze of GE Healthcare expressed enthusiasm, highlighting: "With the EHDS Europe will make a big leap in digital health, thereby improving the lives of patients, enhance the access to data for physicians and researchers, and create a more unified European market for vendors. I am excited that HL7 Europe and IHE-Europe double their efforts to collaboratively support this initiative".

Giorgio Cangioli, Technical Lead for HL7 Europe, said about this agreement: "At HL7 Europe, we recognize the transformative potential of the European Health Data Space in creating truly integrated healthcare across Europe. Together with IHE-Europe and other standards-developing organizations, we aim to build a strong foundation for an efficient, accessible, and secure health data landscape. We look forward to deepening our collaboration, actively engaging our communities—including HL7 Affiliates and the HL7 Europe Technical Coordination Team—to deliver concrete, impactful solutions for our stakeholders".

As chair of the European Health Informatics standards committee CEN/TC 251, Robert Stegwee sees his aspirations of close collaboration between standards developing organisations (SDOs) take hold in Europe, fueled by the EHDS: "We are already very successful in global collaboration on the set of standards for the International Patient Summary. I'm very glad to see this strengthened by HL7 and IHE in Europe as well and look forward to broader SDO collaboration, through the xShare project, in establishing the European EHRxF Standards and Policy Hub".

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About HL7 Europe: The mission of HL7 Europe, in line with the mission of HL7 International, is to provide standards that empower European health data interoperability. To this end, HL7 Europe has taken the lead and participated in numerous European projects, including epSOS, eStandards and xShare. A clear example of our commitment is the current eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure, MyHealth@EU, which is based on HL7 standards for the exchange of Patient Summary and ePrescription/eDispensation in support of cross-border health services, and will extend its services based on the HL7 FHIR standard.

About IHE-Europe: The mission of IHE-Europe is to improve patient care by advancing the interoperability of healthcare IT systems and the appropriate sharing of relevant information. Towards that end, IHE-Europe conducts education, testing, demonstrations and other activities promoting the deployment within Europe of systems compliant with the IHE Technical Frameworks developed by IHE International. IHE-Europe interacts with relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations in Europe. It also maintains close contacts with similar initiatives around the world.