



Sustainable Competence in Advancing Healthcare

Corporate Members

- AGFA-Gevaert
- Canon Europe
- Dräger Medical
- GE Healthcare
- Hitachi Medical Systems Europe
- IBA Ion Beam Applications
- Kodak
- Philips Medical Systems
- Siemens Medical Solutions
- Toshiba Medical Systems Europe

National Associations

- Belgium**
AGORIA - Multisector Federation for the Technology Industry
- France**
SNITEM - Syndicat National de l'Industrie des Technologies Médicales
- Italy**
ANIE - Federazione Nazionale Imprese Elettrotecniche Ed Elettroniche
- Germany**
ZVEI - Division Medical Engineering
- The Netherlands**
FARON - Association of Medical Technology Enterprises in the Netherlands
- Spain**
FENIN - Federacion Espanola de Empresas de Tecnologia Sanitaria
- Sweden**
SLF - Swedish Association of Suppliers of Medical Devices
- United Kingdom**
AXrEM



COCIR* for a European Healthcare Infrastructure



COCIR – Sustainable Competence in eHealth

The development of Healthcare IT or eHealth is crucial for improving the safety, quality, accessibility and efficiency of healthcare in Europe. Many Member States of the European Union (EU) have programmes to introduce some form of Electronic Healthcare Record (EHR). The European Commission, through its eHealth Action Plan is looking to promote or recommend certain approaches. Depending on the EU's political priorities, for example the aging society, regional development and infrastructure in the new EU Member States, various opportunities will present themselves for industry to influence developments in eHealth in Europe. COCIR has been addressing the opportunities and challenges of eHealth for several years already as the only European association representing the Healthcare IT industry.

Towards ONE European Market for Healthcare IT

One of the key issues for a prospering Healthcare IT industry in Europe is to prevent that the approaches of the Member States result in a chaos of 25 or more different directions. This is not only very inefficient and costly for the Healthcare IT industry, but would also cost more for the European citizen than a coordinated approach. COCIR is actively involved in various initiatives at different levels, working to achieve a more harmonized roadmap in Europe with aligned architectures and a common set of standards for interoperability, security and privacy. For example COCIR is actively participating (and a COCIR representative was elected to be Co-Chair) in the eHealth Stakeholders Group set up in December 2005 by the European Commission which has a challenging charter for making concrete recommendations on EHR interoperability by mid-2007.

Monitoring eHealth Opportunities

COCIR is monitoring and participating in the many organisations, conferences, workshops, programmes and projects in the area of eHealth throughout Europe and within the European Commission. Through its participation, COCIR is able to influence such important initiatives. COCIR presents one voice for the industry and keeps its members informed of political and business developments. Opportunities for receiving public funding are shared. For example, COCIR is supporting the process to secure EU structural funds for the development of healthcare infrastructure in the new EU countries. A COCIR workshop was organised at the last European Health Forum in Gastein with key speakers from governments, EU and industry.

Regulation and Certification

The medical industry is highly regulated. However, for software and IT, regulation and certification is in its infancy. The European Commission has set up taskforces and projects to explore this. COCIR is actively involved in these developments and consultation and will try to ensure that measures, if necessary, are effective and efficient. There are currently various initiatives in Europe (as well as in the USA) for introducing certification of EHR product functionality and interoperability in healthcare. COCIR member companies have extensive experience with the successful development, testing and use of interoperability standards. COCIR fears that a classic product certification process may not be able to address the complex application level interoperability that is required, and may unnecessary delay opportunities in the integration of healthcare systems. COCIR believes that an adequate self-validation process performed by industry is a better alternative. COCIR is also actively involved, together with its sister organisations in the USA and Japan, in influencing regulation in the field of privacy and security. The organisations have published joint papers to explain the industry position on privacy and security regulations.

Cooperation between Healthcare Providers and the Healthcare Industry

Healthcare providers, healthcare professionals and the healthcare industry need to work together in their endeavours to improve healthcare. We see too many situations where solutions are proposed but which do not have a solid footing in good healthcare practice. COCIR is actively pursuing cooperation with healthcare providers in order to arrive at optimal solutions. In Europe, COCIR has started the 'Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise' (IHE) programme, which has an excellent process for achieving practical solutions for workflow and clinical decision-making on the basis of close cooperation between users and vendors. The representative from COCIR is the industry Co-Chair for IHE-Europe, and COCIR provides its legal framework. COCIR believes that IHE (itself relying on standards such as HL7 and DICOM) is the only successful international programme for interoperability across healthcare IT standards. Following the IHE process would significantly help achieving more harmonisation in Europe's roadmap towards an EHR.

Global Cooperation

COCIR is cooperating closely with its sister organisations in the USA and South-East Asia, including Japan. COCIR members are active in bodies such as HL7, IHE and DICOM as well as many other pan-European organisations and associations. COCIR promotes European participation in global standards and agreements, representing European interests in the development of global standards. The use of proven global standards is preferred over developing exclusively European standards (or even national ones). COCIR member companies often discuss key issues in the COCIR IT Committee prior to taking individual positions in the other meetings.

COCIR for a European Healthcare Infrastructure

COCIR is active in spreading its vision to the EU and its Member States, and to other bodies that play a role in advancing eHealth in Europe. For example, COCIR played a key role in a recent meeting organised by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to explain the challenges and opportunities of eHealth in Europe. COCIR is also participating in conferences such as the annual eHealth High Level Ministerial Conference and is one of the organisers of the new annual conference, The World of Health IT, which will be held for the first time in Geneva from 23-25 October 2006.

COCIR: an experienced partner

COCIR started many years ago representing the radiological and medical device industries in Europe. With the important developments of IT in healthcare, COCIR has developed into an organisation which now is also actively covering healthcare IT. Since this role is not taken up by any other organisation in Europe, COCIR has emerged as the industry's voice in healthcare IT for Europe.