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PRESS RELEASE

Highlights from Zoran Stančič's Keynote Address on the EU eHealth Agenda

BARCELONA (16 March 2010) – Deputy Director-General DG Information Society and Media at the European Commission Zoran Stančič today addressed in his keynote speech on the EU eHealth Agenda the European Commission's activities and the vision behind its strategy in this field. He highlighted the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to face today's health challenges (e.g. demographics and health system sustainability), and their role as tools to help people saving people, provided they are correctly applied.

Zoran Stančič underlined that eHealth is a key policy priority for the Digital Agenda currently under preparation by the European Commission and stressed the Commission's commitment in supporting interdisciplinary research and eHealth deployment over the past 20 years, with more than 400 projects funded and a contribution of over 1 billion €.

He went through the key steps undertaken by the Commission to first supporting connectivity and effective information sharing among health institutions, and then to connecting citizens and engaging patients in the process of care. The Commission has been doing so through a number of policy and research initiatives, including: funding standardized telemedicine services and actions on cross-border eHealth services (such as epSOS and Calliope) involving several Member States; issuing policy guidelines (e.g. the eHealth Action Plan, the Communication on Telemedicine); tackling market issues and supporting Member States cooperation through the Lead Market and the eHealth Governance initiatives; promoting projects such as the TEN-HMS on home telemonitoring of heart failure, thanks to which patients showed improvements in survival

rates by 15% compared to traditional care; addressing legal issues related to liability, licensing of professionals and privacy protection.

More recently, the Commission has taken further steps by extending the scope of eHealth beyond its original focus on healthcare and by engaging in the other two areas linked to our health status: our genetic predispositions and exogenous determinants such as nutrition, lifestyle and environment.

Zoran Stančič also stressed the Commission's efforts to make the eHealth market – which is the fastest growing pillar of the healthcare industry - more innovation friendly, transparent and defragmented for the benefits of businesses, and particularly for the thousands of small and medium size enterprises waiting for the economic and societal returns of their innovative ideas. In this respect, the industry and trade associations are invited to closely cooperate with the Commission to develop this domain under the umbrella of the Lead Market Initiative.

Zoran Stančič highlighted the need for Europe and its member states to work together and take the next step to consolidate a long-term vision which goes beyond research projects and pilots, and which is based on political commitment, user-driven deployment and a clearer legal framework. He stressed how current policy developments - such as the eHealth Conference Declaration announced yesterday and the eHealth Governance Initiative – can provide the momentum to progress faster towards shared goals for the benefits of all.

Finally, Zoran Stančič mentioned the EU-US cooperation in the eHealth field and invited the audience to follow the session on this topic which will take place this afternoon.

For additional information:

- eHealth Conference Declaration:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=658
- eHealth Action Plan:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/policy/index_en.htm

- Communication on Telemedicine:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/policy/telemedicine/index_en.htm
- Lead Market Initiative:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/policy/lmi_ehealth/index_en.htm
- epSoS project: www.epsos.eu
- Calliope project: www.calliope-network.eu
- TEN-HMS:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/eten/cf/opdb/cf/project/index.cfm?mode=desc&project_ref=ETEN-26408
- ICT for Health, European Commission – policy and research:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/index_en.htm

About the High Level eHealth Conference 2010:

Co-organised by the forthcoming Spanish Presidency of the European Union and by the European Commission, with the cooperation of the Regional Government of Catalonia and the Foundation TicSalut, the High Level eHealth Conference 2010 is a ministerial event, representing since 2003 an important annual milestone in the field of ICT for healthcare. The conference theme of this 8th edition – “eHealth for Sustainable Healthcare Delivery: global challenges through local actions” – acknowledges the pressing perspective of a rapidly ageing European society, where the progressively extended life expectancy and the consequent increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases are globally posing serious challenges to the sustainability of national health systems. The conference will present how and why eHealth can make the difference in facing such a global challenge. Visit www.ehealthweek2010.org for more information.

About the World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition:

The World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition is the leading forum for the advancement of Health IT in Europe. Addressing the needs of key stakeholders in the European eHealth Community, The World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition offers professional development sessions, vendor exhibitions, best practice exchanges, networking sessions, and debates and discussions on the issues that will shape the future of eHealth. The WoHIT Organising Committee comprises the EC (European Commission), HIMSS (Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society), EUROREC (European Institute for Health Records), COCIR (European Coordination Committee of the Radiological, Electromedical and Healthcare IT Industry), EHTEL (European Health Telematics Association) and EFMI (European Federation for Medical Informatics). Since its inception in 2006, WoHIT has welcomed over 5,000 attendees and 180 exhibitors from over 60 countries throughout Europe and Worldwide. Visit www.worldofhealthit.org for more information.

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