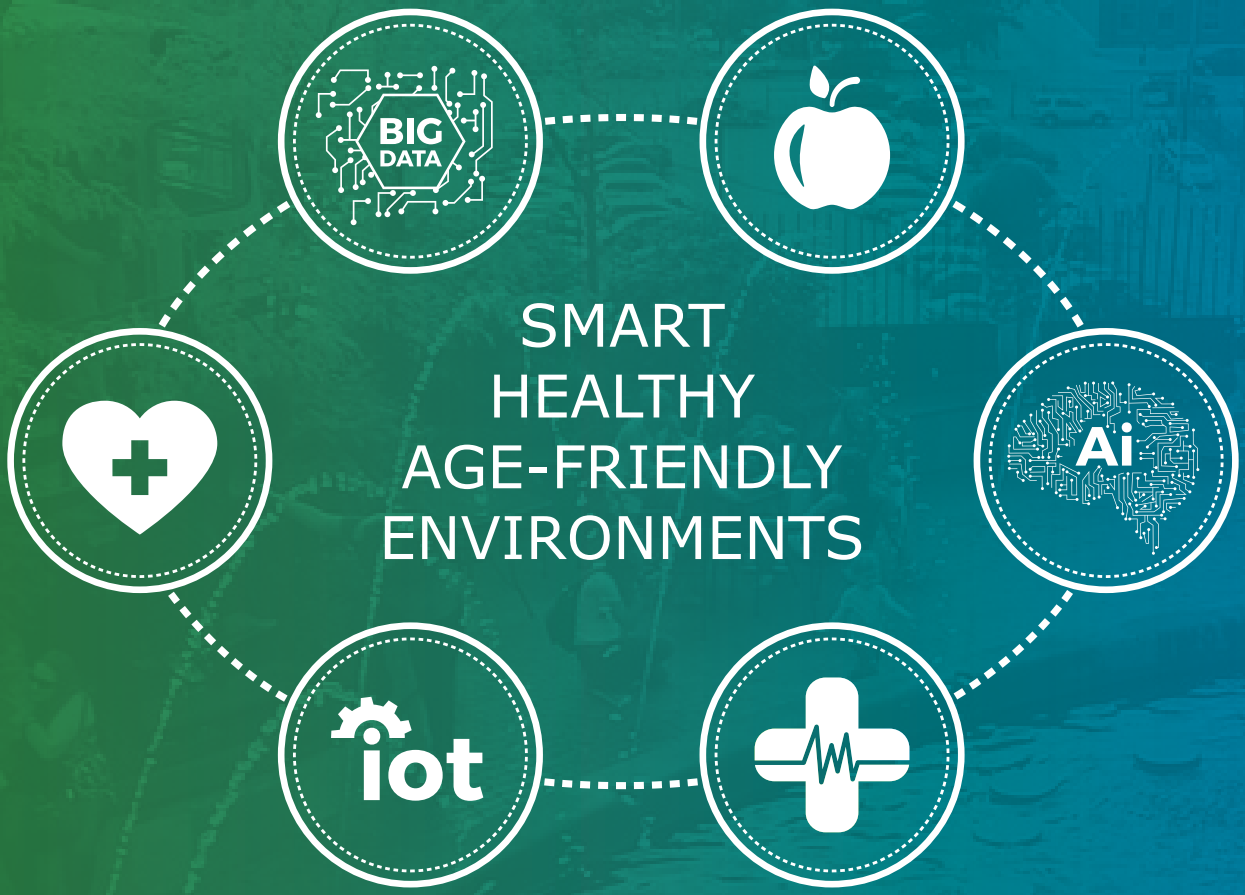
JOINT STATEMENT



THEMATIC NETWORK 2018

Cáritas Diocesana de COIMBRA

AFEdemy
age-friendly environments academy

CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that the population of the European Union is ageing, and the demographic old-age dependency ratio will increase significantly from 4 working-age people for every person aged over 65 years in 2010 to around 2 working-age people in 2070;[1]

Considering that health care services represent a high and increasing share of governments spending and total age-related expenditure and that ageing of the EU population may entail additional government expenditure;[2]

Considering that smart healthy age-friendly environments and eHealth/mHealth align with EU health priorities, such as the Communication on Digital Transformation of Health and Care and the Digital Single Market;[3]

Considering that the desk research on outcomes Wellbeing, Healthcare, Independent living and Efficiency/Efficacy shows many advantages on eHealth and mHealth solutions integrated with age-friendly environments;[4]

Considering that despite the advantages, eHealth and mHealth still are no common ground in European independent living settings, in European households and buildings and in healthcare, social and community care;[5]

Considering that still barriers exist blocking large scale implementation of smart healthy age-friendly environments and eHealth and mHealth across Europe;

Considering that to break down those barriers joint, cross-sectoral and international cooperation and alignment is still needed;[7]

Considering that moving age-related topics to the big umbrella themes of Health and Digital Single Market is a vital process to pursue the societal scope of a Europe prepared to provide quality of life and well-being through the whole life cycle;

Considering that prioritizing the two main aspects of Age-Friendly Environments – Places and People – and aligning technological development with the construction industry in terms of policies and funding may ensure a more efficient health system with better quality at a lower cost;

Considering that understanding and bridging the main gaps between technological development and the needs and expectations of users, proposing policy measures that favour and reinforce the actual entry of new products into the market, will reduce inequalities in access to health services.

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[1] The 2018 Ageing Report: Underlying Assumptions and Projection Methodologies
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/economy-finance/2018-ageing-report-underlying-assumptions-and-projection-methodologies_en; Eurostat - Population structure and ageing
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population_structure_and_ageing

[2] European Commission, Communication from the Commission on effective, accessible and resilient health systems, Brussels, 4.4.2014
https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/systems_performance_assessment/docs/com2014_215_final_en.pdf

[3] European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market; empowering citizens and building a healthier society, Brussels, 25.4.2018

[4] Framing Paper Thematic Network 2018 Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments by Dantas, C.*, Staalduinen, W. van**, Mark, M. van der**, Jegundo, A.L.*, Ganzarain, J.**, Coimbra and Gouda, 2018. https://www.caritascoimbra.pt/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2018/10/2018-10-19-Framing-Paper-SHAFE-final.pdf

[5] OECD/EU (2016), Health at a Glance: Europe 2016 – State of Health in the EU Cycle, OECD Publishing, Paris.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265592-en

CALL TO ACTION TO CREATE AND UPSCALE SMART HEALTHY AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS ACROSS EUROPE

We, undersigned organisations, call upon the European Commission, the European Parliament and EU Member States' Governments to recognise the central role that smart healthy age-friendly environments play to foster health, independent living and well-being for all European citizens.

We urge them to consider the importance of addressing the health, social, economic, digital and structural barriers linked to the development and large-scale implementation of smart healthy age-friendly environments across Europe.

To this effect, the Digital Single Market, the European Pillar on Social Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU Health Strategy and related tools (as the EU Health Policy Platform) among many other initiatives, can play an important role on promoting more inclusive societies, wellbeing, health and independent living for European citizens, boosting also European small, medium and large enterprises to innovation and sustainable growth.

We therefore call on the EU Institutions, EU Member States, Local and Regional Authorities, other stakeholders and also European Citizens to prioritize the following actions to ensure that our European civil societies, economies and environments adapt to change.

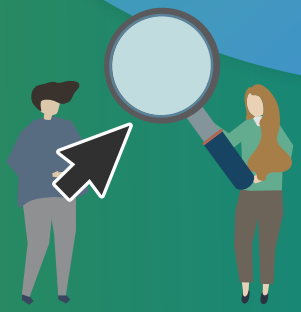
This means:

A SHARED VISION

NEEDS

COOPERATION
COMMUNICATION

FUNDING / CONDITIONS
FOR IMPLEMENTATION



RESEARCH FOR
PREDICTION / PREVENTION

CITIZEN
EMPOWERMENT

CALL 1 | CREATE A SHARED EUROPEAN VISION ON SMART HEALTHY AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

The first step to realise Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments is to develop a shared European vision, that is, a strategy that may foster different stakeholders as an inspiring sketch or blueprint to be used at local and regional level everywhere in Europe.

We thus urge the European Commission and Member States to **create the conditions to have this high--level agreement among relevant actors in Europe**, recognizing that smart healthy age-friendly environments can benefit whole society and therefore involve international agencies, national and regional authorities, as well as civil society and NGOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritizing Health and Care is essential but it is also necessary to favour "real-life" implementation, providing recognition and visibility to the different systems operating in Health and Care, understanding and connecting the common values, principles, guidelines, processes and tools. Europe needs to play the role of **guardian of the common values and principles embedded in the universal service provision of Health and Care, recognising these as a common good**. In that sense, we recommend the EC to:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- At a higher-level, aim at **evidence-based health and care services** and Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments promoting policies, **bridging politics and policies** and promoting health in all policies (HiAP), in accordance to the statement issued by the 2006 Finnish presidency of EU.

- **Organise and facilitate one or more working groups that envisage, uptake and draw the sketch and vision on Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments in Europe** - experts and representatives of Member States, main and associated partners of the Thematic Network and involved directorates of the European Commission that merge and evolve the results into one European vision on SHAFE.

- **Know and Connect** - help the Member States to exploit the full potential of Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments by fostering cooperation (e.g. promoting and supporting the development of international meetings and other initiatives) that will pool expertise and prevent the duplication of work.

- **Leverage** on existing initiatives and networks by providing specific policy challenge and funding through e.g. more Coordination and Support Actions or similar calls for proposals; not creating new systems but linking and enhancing existing ecosystems that may provide policy recommendations, financial instruments, among others.

-- **Develop guidelines for public authorities and enhance agile legislation and standards, including measures for enforcement** inside the Member States (e.g. EU guidelines for mHealth apps; ethics; GDPR; accessibilities). Not all countries are evolving at the same speed or accept contributions equally, but it is important that standards, guidelines and best practices are widely known and universally recognised.

- **Promote exchange of learning and practical tools**, stimulating other sectors to bring knowledge from other areas to Health and Care, namely from the digital and the building industry.

- **Support the implementation of good practices** – many good practices are already identified; the essential part is now to support Member States and regions to implement them. For that purpose, the Commission may offer external expertise through Structural Reform Support Service or provide help to find an appropriate EU-level financial instrument.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it is up to Member State or national/regional governments to organize health care and ensure its functioning, the EU provides for the integration of national policies, ensuring that the common objectives of individual governments are achieved, generating economies of scale by sharing resources and helping member countries to address social issues such as the impact of demographic change on health and care systems and the development of the Digital Single Market.We thus recommend the Member States to:

MEMBER STATES

- Implement a **lifecycle approach** of Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments with interventions at an early stage (prevention).

- Invest in integrated care and innovation (digitally supported health and social care pathways) to achieve **sustainable and cost-efficient health systems**.

- Foster Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments to decrease inequalities in the access to basic human rights, guaranteeing the opportunity to live in good health and make use of quality healthcare, regardless of income, gender, ethnicity, or others.

- Promote the increasing role of the Digital Single Market in **standardization, harmonization of technical advances and guidelines** e.g. on Responsible Research and Innovation and remove market barriers.

- **Understand public health as community health**. European Structural Funds must be used to improve health, as happens with employment, education, social inclusion, etc.

- **Enable at least one national expert** to represent the national vision on Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments to be represented in the high-level agreement at European level.

CALL 2 | PROMOTE CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION

We need to bypass isolation. Joint collaboration makes things happen.

Crucial for the development of smart healthy age-friendly environments is the alignment of (policy) domains and an integrative approach. Politicians, policy makers and other important societal players need to abandon thinking and working in pillars and open up for cross-sectoral cooperation, including public services and social care, construction and ICT, urban planning and healthcare, housing and mobility.

To achieve a better integrative collaboration, we urge the creation of national and international interdisciplinary policy and societal working groups or ecosystems at all levels that are responsible for developing joint policies of the implementation of smart healthy age-friendly environments. The European common vision can be an inspiration.

Secondly, we propose that global information is more accessible at local level. How far does the info of or World Health Organization and the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing arrive to the local level?

A possible route is to drive EU policy towards a collaboration between Member States on integration of public welfare and the health and social care system with private healthcare providers. The joint-venture between public and private healthcare providers can become a fundamental element for improving projects, initiatives and services following a perspective of territorial collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- **Change the narrative around the concepts of ageing and health and care** to a more holistic and integrative concept, closer to Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments.

- Connect and align European Union and Member States objectives in order to achieve a **cross-sectoral and integrative approach** within regions. Regions not only focus on care and cure for patients, but also include transport, built environments, among others.

- Strengthen the dialogue with the Member States at the government level to **harmonize a model in terms of communication strategy**: Europe -> government > departments / regions/cities > NGOs > industry > academia/research.

-Increase the **presence in national networks forums and meetings**, to collect their inputs and contribute to strategic alignment.

- **Connect to regional and local stakeholders directly** and not only to Member States, as only the local level is able to describe needs and barriers, as well as existing initiatives and regulation issues.

- Demand a **quadruple helix approach** for all initiatives: industry/businesses – research/academia – policy makers – citizens. Inclusion of citizens lacks too often.

- **Overcome barriers between sectors** – within health and beyond; either at the horizontal level with other areas, as politically, within each country and in Europe because there are many degrees of authority. this needs to be fostered by a top down approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MEMBER STATES

- Create **task forces between governmental departments**– separate departments don't allow to have a connected policy although that policy is essential to provide real change. Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments are possibly a neutral way to foster governmental departments to sit together and to jointly operate in all aspects of society.

- Ensure **all key stakeholders are integrated in this collaborative model** with the national authorities: industry, citizens, NGOs, researchers, in a holistic approach.

- Enhance **communication with citizens**, informing and clarifying about how interventions are organized, how they work and how to strengthen co-participation.

- Quantify the **cost-benefit of the implementation of Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments** (e.g. Social Return of Investement) to showcase economical return, by establishing long-term key performance indicators .

- Leverage on **concrete measures leading to patient empowerment**, already developed by the EC, such as the Electronic Health Records, the joint Ministerial Declaration on genomic health data or the E-prescription and exchange of patient's summaries between countries.

CALL 3 | FUND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SMART HEALTHY AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

We need to assume courageous political choices, especially in terms of budget.

There should be positive discrimination in budget and public funding to organisations that work on Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments. A shift to funding of implementation and upscaling of already existing, well performing examples of smart healthy age-friendly environments and independent living would better enhance the roll out across Europe.
It is very important that European funding and national funding schemes are aligned, so that innovation coming from successful European projects can be integrated in national frameworks and therefore scaled-up through Europe.
Also, very important is to create funding frameworks that integrate different elements on Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments, like Health, Social care, ICT and built environments in the same mission and calls, allowing effective implementation of long-term solutions.
These funding frameworks shall derive from the European vision and EU/Member States task forces on the subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Design funding programmes that provide support to innovative services in Health, **promoting European financial instruments that establish bridges and avoid silos** between different areas (urban planning, mobility, health, social care, digital…).

- Respond to Member States **requests for joint initiatives but also challenge them for new ones**, e.g. the work that the EC is leading on Electronic Health Records, preparing the market for digitalisation in terms of security standards, compliance with privacy regulation, etc.

- **Change funding mechanisms** from isolating or cascading calls **to a long-term follow-up** (closer to market and reality) and support the whole process of promising initiatives in terms of financing, transformation of structures, policy models, legal frameworks, payment and reimbursement models, market strategy, among others.

- **Evaluate and refine procurement processes** and further regulation, providing harmonised/homogenous procedures in all Member States to change the former model.

- **Improve efforts on standardisation/homogenisation** to destroy barriers at national level and allow companies to scale up to any of the EU countries (e.g. GDPR).

- **Invest on two ways of implementation**: large scale pilots for broad adoption but also small testing and adapting initiatives, as they are important to make use cases and to test technologies that comes from other settings/countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MEMBER STATES

- Invest on mechanisms that foster Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments through the implementation of **whole-life policies**.

- Unlock investments by consumers by **developing a (positive) vision about what age-friendly** homes & environments look like and how environments are essential to better health and wellbeing.

- Impose that projects funded under EU programmes (European or national programmes) **comply with universal accessibility and design principles, as currently these rules and principles** are not conveniently enforced.

- Promote and **guarantee the correct implementation** of signs and other features needed for the implementation of Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments by public services, such as train companies or national infrastructures.

- **Work closely with other organisations** such as the European Investment Bank, to assist on the selection of important initiatives in the area of Digital Health, that could be funded as real working modules, fostering the implementation and scaling-up of Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments.

- **Define tax incentives** for activities of citizens that promote Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments, such as physical activities, home adaptations and outdoor places maintenance.

CALL 4 | INVEST IN RESEARCH THAT DERIVES FROM SOCIETAL NEEDS AND CHALLENGES AND USE KNOWLEDGE TO PREDICTION AND PREVENTION

To achieve more impact regarding societal needs and challenges, we recommend increasing the funding calls that support effective implementation of pilots and initiatives, thus raising the demand on the social and economic impact of projects.

We believe we have already passed the point where our healthcare and social care systems could respond to all upcoming needs forever. The better way to guarantee sustainability is to invest in prevention through the life course and predict the upcoming challenges with enough time to address them with the minimum resources.

Research is essential to guarantee this and needs to be encouraged to privilege this approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Create a **database of health data collected through EU funded research** to avoid duplication of costly research, with one model for the exchange of health data and common standards in evaluation, in the same route as the database organised by the Worls Health Organisation (https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/datasets/european-health-for-all-database/).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATES

- Invest on **funding for actions that include the prediction** of health and social challenges and are connected to the implementation of prevention measures.

- Invest in **lifestyle medicine** and not only in pharmaceutics, regular medicine or treatments, so patients understand also the value of healthy lifestyles.

- Invest on **flexible and eclectic programs for training, education and lifelong learning** that lead to professionals capable of embracing multidisciplinary challenges and holistic approaches.

- **Standardise the measurements and taxonomy used for diagnostics between systems** and trend monitoring, to avoid misevaluations of quality of care and availability of care options and prevent underinvestment / underdevelopment in some countries.

- Invest in deep knowledge about **citizen's needs, preferences and care pathways** through the use of big data.

- Increase **investment on knowledge about population health** that can better inform options for different approaches, support priorities for the strategic actions to be taken on prevention or to implement Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments.

CALL 5 | GUARANTEE THE EMPOWERMENT OF CITIZENS AND THE PROMOTION OF PEOPLE-CENTRED POLICIES AND MEASURES

Sustainable development needs to start earlier: have a lifelong approach.

We have to start from conception and birth to develop more healthy life styles. This will generate impact.

Citizens need to be involved from the start of each development that is concerning their living environments and their health and care. They are starting to be engaged in initiatives with research, but their participation is not yet structured which might be related with the lack of digital literacy and health literacy.
Moving from treating diseases to focusing on prevention and well-being will be critical. Mind-set need to change, and education is the key. Promotion of healthy lifestyles and well-being is making people autonomous through education.

It is also necessary that citizens get the opportunity to initiate improvements in their living environments themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATES

- Enable and empower citizens by promoting more **lifelong learning possibilities and higher participatory budgets**.

- Encourage more education activities on aspects such as **digital literacy, health literacy, and political / societal mobilisation** to guarantee full and conscious engagement.

- Invest in programs that improve Intergenerational Solidarity and reduce ageism.

- Promote that **participatory approach methods** are intrinsic parts of academic curricula and new professional profiles that link areas of knowledge with management and communication skills shall be developed.

- Enhance **communication and awareness with citizens**, either in the medical field, as also at the management level so they can understand and appreciate the available services.

- Promote **participation and involvement** – facilitate people´s connection to the services and feedback tools, to improve health monitoring and confidence among users of digital tools.

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITIZENS

We call on those who can and never will drop those who cannot!

- Accept the **new care pathways** brought with the XXIst century.

- **Be co-responsible** for yourself and your community regarding health and well-being.

- **Embrace healthier lifestyles** and take conscient decisions on health and care.

- Adapt your living environment to the friendliest usage possible.

- **Participate in society and politics** to have a voice in decisions.

BE EMPOWERED TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN LIFE!

The challenge that is launched through the work developed for SHAFE - Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments is one of the most strategic challenges for Europe nowadays and future days.

This is an eminently humanist debate, representing as cornerstone, a fundamental option.

The option to decide on what kind of society we want to live.

If in a society that cares about human values, or in a technocratic, economic society, that financialises people's lives.

It is not about overcoming science and rigor in the analysis of reality. It is about going further, knowing how we want to respond: involving everyone - because today's young people are the parents and grandparents of tomorrow - or just a few.

In other words, we must begin by questioning whether we promote a generationally conscious society, where everyone knows that there is room for everyone, with no definite place for exclusions and misunderstandings or unnecessary cleavages.

His Excellence, the President of the Portuguese Republic

Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa

(extract of the official message on SHAFE)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITIZENS

WE EXPECT YOU TO PARTICIPATE

+ HEALTH LITERACY

+ PHYSICAL EXERCISE

+ ADAPTED ENVIRONMENTS

+ ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

COORDINATORS

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AFEdemy age-friendly environments academy

MAIN PARTNERS

European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing

ECHAlliance

EUROCITIES

Towards an Age-Friendly Europe Covenant on Demographic Change

EIP ON AHA RSCN

EHTEL EUROPEAN HEALTH TELEMATICS ASSOCIATION

ECTP INNOVATIVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EIP-SCC European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

404 Lab

ad elo associação de desenvolvimento local da bairrada e mondego

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AGE Platform Europe

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ANGES associação nacional de geriatrologia social

apcc Associação de Paralisia Cerebral de Coimbra

apdp Diabetes Portugal

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Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria Federico II

bbri.be

BMGI Consulting

Caregivers Portugal

Case Western Reserve University EST. 1826 think beyond the possible

Aarhus Kommune

Center for Assisted Living Technology

Católica CNS - Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Health

Centro de Solidariedade Social da Adémia

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Cáritas Coimbra and AFEdemy led on the development of this Call to Action in 2018, via the EU Health Policy Platform in collaboration with organisations working in the health, social ICT and building sectors

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