

## POLICY MAPPING ON EHEALTH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ON CANCER CARE) IN **GREECE**

This Country Factsheet was prepared for the eCAN Joint Action. It is prefilled with publicly available information and was sent for review to country experts on eHealth and cancer care. The Country Factsheet serves as the basis for the preparation of an overview of eCAN relevant policies and initiatives in all EU and EEA countries.

**eCAN is a Joint Action (JA) of 16 partners in EU-Member States on ‘Strengthening eHealth including telemedicine and remote monitoring for health care systems for cancer prevention and care’.** eCAN aims to bring the benefits of eHealth to all citizens and patients across EU-Member States (MS) focusing on cancer prevention and care. There is a need to harmonize telemedicine regulations and to explore the efficacy of teleconsultation programs and telemonitoring in the cancer field.

This country factsheet has been **pre-filled** with publicly available information by

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The pre-filled country factsheet was **not reviewed** by contacted country experts.

The country factsheet includes chapters on:

- 1 definition
- 2 governance
- 3 strategies/policies
- 4 legislation
- 5 cancer specific eHealth solutions

Any questions? – Please get in touch via [ecan@goeg.at](mailto:ecan@goeg.at).

# POLICY MAPPING ON eHEALTH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ON CANCER CARE) IN GREECE

## 1 DEFINITIONS

Table 1 : Deviations in the use of international definitions for eHealth terms - Greece

Term	Definition	Deviation
eHealth	The WHO defines eHealth as « the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health ». It also says that « eHealth is the transfer of health resources and healthcare by electronic means. » <sup>1</sup>	Yes, in a presentation from Hellenic Society of eHealth Services and Education eHealth is described as ‘the provision of health services, supported by electronic means.’ <sup>2</sup>
mHealth	« Mobile health (mHealth) is defined by the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Observatory for eHealth as « medical and public health practice supported by mobile devices, such as mobile phones, patient monitoring devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and other wireless devices ». <sup>3</sup>	No information available.
dHealth	The EU defines digital health (dHealth) and care as referring to « tools and services that use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and management of health-related issues and to monitor and manage lifestyle-habits that impact health ». <sup>4</sup> The WHO defines digital health as « the field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health. Digital health expands the concept of eHealth to include digital consumers, with a wider range of smart-devices and connected equipment. It also encompasses other uses of digital technologies for health such as the Internet of things, artificial intelligence, big data, and robotics. » <sup>5</sup>	Greek law does not have a definition of digital health, digital medicine, or digital therapeutics. On the issue of ‘e-Health,’ the Greek Ministry of Health (MoH) website refers to the definitions used by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the EU.
telehealth	The WHO defines telehealth broader than telemedicine « as it includes computer-assisted telecommunications to support management, surveillance, literature, and access to medical knowledge. » <sup>6</sup>	No information available.
telemedicine	The EU Commission defines telemedicine as follows (EU Commission definition, COM(2008)689) : « Telemedicine is the provision of health care services, through the use of ICT, in situations where the health professional and the patient (or two health professionals) are not in the same location. It involves the secure	No information available.

<sup>1</sup> [6. eHealth, Factsheet for European Parliament \(who.int\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.slideshare.net/eHealthForumAthens/does-greece-have-an-ehealth-strategy-plan>

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization *Frequently asked questions on Global Task Force on digital health for TB and its work.* [2017-02-27]. <http://www.who.int/tb/areas-of-work/digital-health/faq/en/> *webcite*. In *mHealth Assessment: Conceptualization of a Global Framework - PMC (nih.gov)*

<sup>4</sup> [Events - Smart4Health](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Digital health EURO \(who.int\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Telehealth – DigitalHealthEurope](#)

Term	Definition	Deviation
	transmission of medical data and information, through text, sound, images, or other forms needed for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of patients. » <sup>7</sup>	
teleconsultation	PAHO describes teleconsultation (also sometimes referred to as remote consultation or telehealth), as « interactions that happen between a clinician and a patient for the purpose of providing diagnostic or therapeutic advice through electronic means. » <sup>8</sup>	No information available.
health app	Essén et al. 2022 define health apps as « a computer program or software application (designed to run on a mobile device) “intended to be used specifically for managing, maintaining, or improving the health of individual persons, or the delivery of care” (ISO <a href="https://www.iso.org/standard/78182.html">https://www.iso.org/standard/78182.html</a> (2021), p 5). »	No information available.

## 2 GOVERNANCE

Table 2 : Overview on eHealth governance - Greece

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a Ministry or State Secretariat explicitly in charge of eHealth/dHealth? If so, which Ministry ?	Yes	The Ministry of Health is the primary organization accountable for eHealth in Greece. However, they work in collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Governance on the digital infrastructure and development.
Does the Ministry who is in charge of health care also have a specific Department or Unit in charge of eHealth/dHealth	Yes	Several organizations and institutions, both public and private, work with eHealth/dHealth. On the national level IDIKA (e-Government Center for Social Security) is the competent authority for many of the IT solutions, which are the backbone of the national healthcare infrastructure such as the Greek National Cross-Border eHealth Hub (NCPeH), myHealth mobile app, Electronic Personal Health Record, electronic prescription services. They are a part of the Ministry of Digital Governance. Another example is the GRNET, under the Ministry of Digital Governance, provides innovative services and e-Infrastructures to hospitals, blood centers and blood donor services. It offers high-speed internet connection to public hospitals (1Gbps to 10 Gbps), ensuring fast and secure storage, access and data exchange and high-speed secured network connection with research centers.
Is there a national eHealth governance board?	Yes	There has been established a « National eHealth Council » that covers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National standard of Electronic Health record for the citizen</li> <li>- National Interoperability Framework</li> <li>- National Contact Point for European citizens (cross-border healthcare)</li> <li>- Integration of Electronic referrals and prescribing</li> </ul> There is an ongoing work to establish the Electronic Healthcare Network. <sup>9</sup> Regarding telemedicine, the National Telemedicine Network (EDiT), established by the second YPE of Piraeus and the Aegean, has installed telemedicine systems in 43 healthcare units. The EDiT provides the following services:

<sup>7</sup> Telemedicine – DigitalHealthEurope

<sup>8</sup> <https://www3.paho.org/ish/images/docs/covid-19-teleconsultations-en.pdf?ua=1>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/74980>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teleconsulting;</li> <li>• tele-education;</li> <li>• tele-psychiatry; and the establishment of special healthcare units.</li> </ul> <p>Telehealth in Greece was mainly promoted to address the issues of lack of healthcare professionals and infrastructure in remote areas such as the Greek islands.</p>
Is there a public eHealth agency such as Elga GmbH in Austria or ANS in France? At which level (national, regional)? Which functions does this agency cover?	Yes	IDIKA has been authorized by the Ministry of Health for the provision of cross border services developing and providing digital e-health services in the EU (eHDSI). That includes ePrescription and Patient Summaries. <sup>10</sup>
Are dHealth / eHealth tools in the outpatient sector publicly paid or covered in your benefits package (e.g., by sickness fund or national health service). If yes, please describe how.	N/A	<p>The National Organization for Healthcare Services (EOPYY) is the national organization for healthcare services, which makes decisions about the provision of healthcare solutions to healthcare workers and reimbursement for the public. Greece has a unified national health insurance fund responsible for primary and outpatient healthcare facilities. The Greek health system is centralized and supervised by the state. The National Organization for Health Care Service (EOPYY) is the national health insurance fund and the sole purchaser of public health services. It is funded by social contributions and taxes. Its budget covers 60% of Greek health expenditure. The rest is funded directly by patients. The EOPYY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sets out the prerequisites for entering into contracts with health care providers</li> <li>• negotiates compensation, contract terms, and prices for pharmaceutical products and medical devices</li> <li>• reimburses primary care, diagnostics, and outpatient and inpatient specialty care</li> </ul> <p>Rural health centers and their medical offices, as well as urban health centers, are accessible free of charge.<sup>11</sup></p>
Are dHealth / eHealth tools in the inpatient sector automatically covered in your benefits package or do you need to pay extra (e.g., for telehealth consultations or telerehab) compared to standard treatments?	Some	It is not clear whether all eHealth tools such as telehealth consultations are covered as of now. An example is the Digital Clinic service app provided by the Hellenic Healthcare Group (One of the biggest private healthcare groups in Greece). The use is paid by the patient and as of now, HHG states that reimbursement is not available for that service. Another example is tele-interpreting, which is free of charge. Tele-interpreting facilitates hospital institutions and health centers in the handling of incidents where there is no common communication language between the patient and the health professional. <sup>12</sup>
Are there any comprehensive cancer centres focusing on eHealth or telehealth treatments? If yes, which ones and for which specific fields?	Yes, partly.	Athens Comprehensive Cancer Center (ACCC) does not have a strategic focus on eHealth or telehealth treatments as a part of the cancer treatment regimen. However, this does not necessarily mean that telehealth isn't a part of the ACCC's work. <sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/ehealth/6068-ypodomh-pshfiakwn-yphresiwn-hlektronikhs-ygeias-sthn-e-e-ehdsi>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.efka.gov.gr/el> and <https://www.hygeia.gr/en/digital-clinic/>

<sup>12</sup> Voutsidou et al. 2019: International Journal of Recent Scientific Research Vol. 10, Issue, 08(E), pp. 34320-34325, August, 2019

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.eie.gr/nhrf/accc/NHRF\\_AthensComprehensiveCancerCenter\\_ACCC\\_2017.html](http://www.eie.gr/nhrf/accc/NHRF_AthensComprehensiveCancerCenter_ACCC_2017.html)

### 3 STRATEGIES/POLICIES

Table 3 : Overview on strategies and policies for eHealth and cancer care - Greece

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a national eHealth strategy?	Yes	Yes. The most recent that is usually referred to is the ‘Design and Implementation of the Greek National eHealth Interoperability Framework’, in development. <sup>14</sup> Greece has had several national eHealth Strategies albeit with different focus. <sup>15</sup>
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting the national eHealth strategy?	Several	In the development of the project several stakeholders have been involved such as software manufacturers, scientific bodies (SEPE, SEPE, ESPY, SEKEE, SEV, HL7 Hellas) and national/regional organizations.
Are there regional eHealth strategies? If so, can you indicate whether in all regions or only some? Can you provide some (exemplary) documents ?	No	Coordination of eHealth policy is mainly at a national level. Greece also involves regional bodies in their coordination activities. <sup>16</sup>
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting such regional strategy/ies?	N/A	No further information available.
Are there strategy/ies explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	N/A	No further information available.
If not, are there discussions ongoing to develop a national eHealth strategy?	N/A	Not relevant since there is a plan in progress.
Is there a National Cancer Plan? And does it refer to eHealth?	Not yet.	The most recent publicized national cancer plan is the “National cancer plan 2011-2015” together with a program for cervical cancer from 2021. <sup>17</sup> The cancer plan does not refer to eHealth, digital health, or any derivatives. According to the national cancer control plan, it is reported that Greece is working on adopting a national cancer control plan. The expected adoption year was 2020. <sup>18</sup>
In the light of the EU „Beating Cancer Plan” – are there any recent plans to update or modify existing plans? If yes, what is the timeline?	Yes	Following the EU “Beating Cancer Plan,” Greece is planning to proceed with specific programs for oncology patients. <sup>19</sup> The Integrated Oncology Patient Care System is one of five digital health programs funded by the European Recovery Fund. The total value of the program is \$40 million. The program implementation goal is 2024. The system is intended to digitize all cancer treatment and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the National Cancer Archive (Cancer Registry). Greece is one of the few countries in Europe that does</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> <https://echalliance.com/progress-of-the-project-design-and-implementation-of-the-greek-national-ehealth-interoperability-framework/>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.ehealth-strategies.eu/database/documents/Greece\\_CountryBrief\\_eHStrategies.pdf](http://www.ehealth-strategies.eu/database/documents/Greece_CountryBrief_eHStrategies.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [http://ehaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/13.1\\_D8.1-Integration-in-national-policies-and-sustainability\\_eHAction\\_16th-eHN\\_ANNEX.pdf](http://ehaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/13.1_D8.1-Integration-in-national-policies-and-sustainability_eHAction_16th-eHN_ANNEX.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.iccp-portal.org/map>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.iccp-portal.org/system/files/plans/Greece\\_-\\_National\\_Cancer\\_Plan\\_2011-2015%2C\\_Greek.pdf](https://www.iccp-portal.org/system/files/plans/Greece_-_National_Cancer_Plan_2011-2015%2C_Greek.pdf) and <https://www.ipaac.eu/res/file/outputs/wp10/national-cancer-control-plans-survey.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/greece-healthcare-beating-cancer-plan>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		<p>not have a systematic registration of tumors and consequently the development of the National Cancer Registry is a top priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Oncological Information System that will be installed in 10-12 selected public hospitals and provide:</li> <li>• A digital platform that will host the Oncological Councils of the hospitals to design the optimal treatment for each patient from interdisciplinary teams of doctors.</li> <li>• A chemotherapy planning and management system that include: planning based on treatment protocols, accurate and safe preparation of cytostatic drugs in the hospital, and monitoring of their administration.</li> </ul> <p>Support for patients with electronic applications (apps), so that patients have access, at any time, to key elements of their file, can manage their treatment plan, report symptoms and side effects of treatment and support their treatment, communicate easily with their doctor, be informed about their illness, and even share their fears and anxiety.</p>
Are there any indicators in eHealth policy or national programmes on cancer care measuring the progress of the use of eHealth in cancer care?	N/A	No further information available.
Are there any other cancer care specific eHealth initiatives, f.e. by other stakeholders than policy makers / public authorities?	N/A	No further information available.

## 4 LEGISLATION

Table 4 : Overview on eHealth and cancer legislation - Greece

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
How would you evaluate the current state of legislation of eHealth in your country in general?	N/A	No further information available.
Is there legislation on how to use telemedicine in general?	Yes	The basic legal framework governing the operation of telemedicine in Greece is Law 3984/2011, article 66, paragraph 16 stating: <i>‘Telemedicine services are provided as long as the possibility exists and under the responsibility of the attending physician dealing with the incident at hand. The attending physician, for reasons of personal data protection, is responsible for requesting from the patient, or if this is not possible from a first-degree relative, the signed authorization to use telemedicine services. If this is not possible, then the attending physician uses telemedicine services at his discretion. The instructions of the Hospitals and Health Units that provide Telemedicine services are advisory and in no way mandatory.’</i>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		The most comprehensive effort that has been made to date in terms of its use and its penetration both in the community of health professionals and in the benefiting population, is the EDiT (National Telemedicine Network, Department 2 of the Ministry of Health of Piraeus, and Aegean). The EDiT is a network of telemedicine stations implemented by the 2nd Ministry of Health with funding from the OP "DIGITAL CONVERGENCE" 2007-2013. The EDiT started its production operation at the beginning of 2016 and operates within the area of responsibility of the 2nd Ministry of Health of Piraeus and Aegean.
Is there legislation explicitly referring to cancer prevention?	Yes	With a Law of 2019 Greek Government established a private National Cancer Control Programmes legal entity under the name of the Hellenic National Cancer Institute (HNCI), supervised by the Minister of Health. The aim of the Institute is to propose a national strategy and to coordinate and assist in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of solid tumor and hematological malignancy of patients of all ages, the promotion of research, public information and the ongoing training health professionals, as well as relief and health care for patients at the end-of-life stage.
Is there legislation explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	N/A	No further information available.
If yes, which of these legislation(s) do you consider most important in the context of eHealth and cancer care? And why?	N/A	No further information available.
If no, are there any reasons or barriers to the fact that there is no or only limited cancer specific eHealth legislation (i.e., discussions still ongoing, conflicting opinions or other).	N/A	No further information available.
What could be improved or would need to be done to improve these legislation for eHealth in cancer care in your country?	N/A	No further information available.

## 5 CANCER SPECIFIC EHEALTH SOLUTIONS

Table 5 : Overview on cancer specific eHealth solutions in use – Greece

Note : Not much information could be identified from published sources for the study team. Most of the apps identified seem to be in the test phases and have not been certified or scaled to a national level. The apps are developed on the project level at the moment.

Area of application/ type of solutions	Login Websites	Apps	Webinars	Multi-disciplinary teleconferences (HCP-HPC)	Teleconsultation (HCP-patient)	Telemonitoring via devices	Other, please specify
<b>Ecosystem</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Prevention of Cancer</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Treatment of Cancer</b>	-	Yes, e.g., app developed for thyroid cancer <sup>20</sup>	-	-	Yes, e.g., 'MyPal' <sup>21</sup>	-	-
<b>'Living with cancer'</b>	-	Yes, 'My Alma' app <sup>22</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Rehabilitation from Cancer</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Palliative Cancer Care</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7101500/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/horizon-magazine/mission-transform-palliative-healthcare>

<sup>22</sup> <https://ascopubs.org/doi/abs/10.1200/jgo.18.38700>



Table 6 : Number of eHealth solutions available and in use – Greece

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
How many eHealth solutions (in the sense of medical devices and thus ‘authority approved/certified’) solutions are existing currently in your country in the context of cancer care/treatment?	None.	There were no government sanctioned apps identified. <sup>23</sup>
Is there a website or other information on solutions that are recommended to the public for use (e.g., a selection of health apps that are recommended to cancer patients or in general)?	N/A	No further information available.
Can you give an estimation on how the split between private and public apps are available? Give an estimate percentage of public solutions.	N/A	No further information available.
How can providers and patients assess if the apps are reliable? Is there a certification or quality approval procedure in place? If yes, which kind of procedure?	N/A	As a part of the EU MDR-legislation, health specific apps might need a CE-certification. No further information identified.
How many Health Care Providers use such solutions? Which sector uses rather which types of solutions?	N/A	No further information available.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/74980>