

POLICY MAPPING ON EHEALTH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ON CANCER CARE) IN THE **SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

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

- Florian Bálint, National Health Information Centre (NCZI), Slovak Republic
- Pavol Rieger, National Health Information Centre (NCZI), Slovak Republic
- MUDr. Mária Rečková, PhD., National Oncology Institute (NOI), Slovak Republic

The pre-filled country factsheet was **reviewed** by

- Department of Public Health, Screening and Prevention, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic

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.

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1 DEFINITIONS

Table 1 : Deviations in the use of international definitions for eHealth terms – Slovak Republic

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. » ¹	No deviation from definition. Definition in Slovakian available. ²
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 ». ³	No definition in official SK documents identified.
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 ». ⁴ 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. » ⁵	No definition in official SK documents identified.
telehealth	The WHO defines telehealth broader than telemedicine « as it includes computer-assisted telecommunications to support management, surveillance, literature and access to medical knowledge. » ⁶	No definition in official SK documents identified.
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	In 2015, the National Centre for Telemedicine Services was established in Slovak Republic. The National Center for Telemedicine Services defines

¹ [6. eHealth, Factsheet for European Parliament \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/ehealth/factsheet)

² <https://www.nczisk.sk/en/eHealth/Pages/default.aspx>, <https://www.slovensko.sk/en/title>

³ 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/> website. In *mHealth Assessment: Conceptualization of a Global Framework - PMC (nih.gov)*

⁴ [Events - Smart4Health](#)

⁵ [Digital health EURO \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/digital-health/euro)

⁶ [Telehealth – DigitalHealthEurope](#)

Term	Definition	Deviation
	health professionals) are not in the same location. It involves the secure transmission of medical data and information, through text, sound, images or other forms needed for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of patients. » ⁷	telemedicine as services including primarily teleconsultation, telemonitoring, teleradiology, teledermatology, telepatology, telesurgery etc.
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. » ⁸	No definition in official SK documents identified.
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 https://www.iso.org/standard/78182.html (2021), p 5). »	No definition in official SK documents identified.

Further information:

There is a legislative draft of the amended Act no. 153/2013 Coll. on the national health information system, where definitions such as telemedicine, telemonitoring, teleconsultation, teleexpertise, telecare, telerehabilitation and other terms should be included.

2 GOVERNANCE

Table 2 : Overview on eHealth governance – Slovak Republic

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 of the Slovak Republic oversees eHealth. ⁹
Does the Ministry who is in charge of health care also have a specific Department or Unit in charge of eHealth/dHealth?	Yes	There is a Digitization and Informatics Section in the Ministry of Health. ¹⁰
Is there a national eHealth governance board?	No	Not at the moment. Based on the request of the National Health Information Center (subordinate organization of the ministry in field of ICT, Národné centrum zdravotníckych informácií), NCZI, the Ministry of Health is preparing the creation of a working group/platform that will deal with the analysis and planning of the implementation of changes resulting from the EHDS legislation.

⁷ Telemedicine – DigitalHealthEurope

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

⁹ <https://www.health.gov.sk/Titulka>

¹⁰ <https://mzsr.sk/?sekcia-informatiky-1>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
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	NCZI is the Slovak national ICT service provider in field of electronic healthcare (eHealth), statistical health surveys, national health and national health administrative registries, statistical outputs and services of Slovak Medical Library. ¹¹
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.	Yes, infrastructure and some services	General services provided by NCZI are covered from national budget and legal contribution of health insurance companies. Services provided by health care providers are paid including telehealth consultation (consultation by phone due to the COVID pandemic) are included in public health insurance.
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 telereha) compared to standard treatments?		
Are there any comprehensive cancer centres focussing on ehealth or telehealth treatments? If yes, which ones and for which specific fields?	No	There are no comprehensive cancer centres focussing directly on eHealth or telehealth.

3 STRATEGIES/POLICIES

Table 3 : Overview on strategies and policies for eHealth and cancer care – Slovak Republic

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a national eHealth strategy?	Yes, but outdated	There is a national strategy/programme on eHealth with main goals ¹² including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of National Health Portal with basic information; • The development and launch of the following applications (within pilot operation): Citizen Health eBook, ePrescription, eMedication, eAllocation; • Creating conditions for integration of healthcare providers information systems (IS HCP) with national eHealth solution, verifying integration with IS HCP during pilot operation. A revision and update are needed, as the document is outdated. The National project on Electronic Health Services was completed in December 2015.
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting the national eHealth strategy?	N/A	The Council of the Minister of Health for the eHealth Implementation Program is not working, currently.

¹¹ <https://www.nczisk.sk/Pages/default.aspx>

¹² https://old.ezdravotnictvo.sk/en/eHealth_Programme/Pages/default.aspx

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Are there regional eHealth strategies? If so, can you indicate whether in all regions or only some? Can you provide some (exemplary) documents ?	No	No further information available.
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?	No	No further information available.
If not, are there discussions ongoing to develop a national eHealth strategy?	No	No further information available.
Is there a National Cancer Plan? And does it refer to eHealth?	Yes	There is a National Cancer Plan in place. ¹³ In its activity 1.2 it supports the involvement of the Slovak Republic in projects for the creation and implementation of the EU mobile application for prevention in the Slovak Republic. But there is no real implementation yet.
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	There is a plan to work on updates in 2024-2025.
Are there any indicators in eHealth policy or national programmes on cancer care measuring the progress of the use of eHealth in cancer care?	No	There are no indicators in place.
Are there any other cancer care specific eHealth initiatives, f.e. by other stakeholders than policy makers / public authorities?	Yes	The National OnkoAsist Project works on the management of the patient's journey from medical findings to the start of treatment. The 'Improving cancer care coordination and screening in Latvia and Slovak Republic (IARC)' project works on supporting cancer control in eastern Europe. It is a joint initiative with the EC and the ministries of health of Slovak Republic and Latvia to help reduce cancer mortality. However this project is focused on screening governance and not eHealth initiatives.

¹³ <https://www.noisk.sk/about-us/national-oncology-program>

4 LEGISLATION

Table 4 : Overview on eHealth and cancer legislation – Slovak Republic

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
How would you evaluate the current state of legislation of eHealth in your country in general?		Very complicated to assess due to the national interpretation of GDPR. There is a strong focus on data protection not on purpose. There is a need to change the current paradigm that eHealth means only very well ‘protected’ digital data. There is a need for improvement around using the data for policy purposes.
Is there legislation on how to use telemedicine in general?	Yes	There is Law no. 153/2013 Coll. on the national health information system (eHealth), which is currently under amendment. ¹⁴
Is there legislation explicitly referring to cancer prevention?	Yes	Law No. 577/2004 Coll. (Annex 2) on the scope of health care paid for based on public health insurance and on payments for services related to the provision of health care.
Is there legislation explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	No	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).		The reason is that cancer specific eHealth legislation is a specific topic. Currently solving the basic principles is still priority.
What could be improved or would need to be done to improve these legislations for eHealth in cancer care in your country?		Setting up systematic and strategic functional (and not political) governance for eHealth.

¹⁴ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2013/153/20230101>

5 CANCER SPECIFIC eHEALTH SOLUTIONS

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

Area of application/ type of solutions	Login Websites	Apps	Webinars	Multi-disciplinary teleconferences (HCP-HPC)	Teleconsultation (HCP-patient)	Telemonitoring via devices
Ecosystem	Yes, e.g., National Health Portal (My Health Book - personal health records, prescription records, patient summary); National Cancer Registry of Slovak Republic (NOR)	No	-	-	-	-
Prevention of Cancer	No	No	Yes, organized by Slovak Medical Chamber as a part of continual medical education	Yes, organized by Slovak Oncology Society, National Oncology Institute, as a part of continual medical education	No	No
Treatment of Cancer	-	-			Yes, on individual basis regarding to the technical skills of the physician and patient	-
'Living with cancer'	-	-				-
Rehabilitation from Cancer	-	-	No	No	-	-
Palliative Cancer Care	-	-	No	No	-	-

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

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?	N/A	No further information available.
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)?	No	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?	No	No further information available.
How many Health Care Providers use such solutions? Which sector uses rather which types of solutions?	N/A	No further information available.