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ESR takes initiatives to shape eHealth and medical education in EU policies

The ESR Department of European and International Affairs

In recent years, the European Union has increasingly shaped policies in the fields of health, research and digitalisation across member states. The ESR Department of European and International Affairs supports the ESR Board of Directors in effectively assessing EU policy developments and legislative initiatives that impact clinical practice for the radiology profession in Europe. In this respect, the ESR has gained recognition as a major healthcare stakeholder, successfully engaging with the EU institutions to defend members' interests at the pan-European level.

eHealth

The ESR has been a member of the European Commission's eHealth Stakeholder Group (eHSG) since 2012, representing the radiology community's voice in the development of policies related to eHealth. This membership was renewed for a three-year term in 2016.

Relying on previous initiatives to achieve recognition for teleradiology as a medical act in its own right, the ESR continues to drive the discussion in encounters with the European Commission. Moreover, the launch of a study in September 2017 by the European Commission is testimony to the renewed importance that is attached to the debate on telemedicine. The ESR also works with the EU institutions and partner organisations in the area of interoperability and standardisation, with the overall objective of including imaging data in biobanks and updating standard terminologies with radiology terms.

In response to the European Commission's communication on digital health, the ESR responded to the European Commission's Public Consultation: Transformation Health and Care in the EU. The ESR's input is based on recent activities and positions in the field of eHealth, data protection and digital innovation. The ESR's contribution will be re-used as part of its advocacy activities on digital health vis-à-vis EU policymakers and other health stakeholders.

EU Health Policy Platform Thematic Network led by the ESR

In 2017 the ESR led the EU Health Policy Platform (HPP) Thematic Network on Medical Education and Professional Development for Patient Safety. The HPP is an initiative established in 2016 to facilitate communication between the European Commission and health stakeholders. The development of joint statements is a central activity of the HPP aimed at fostering inter-stakeholder collaboration on policy issues.

The thematic network led by the ESR sought to connect policies on medical education and professional development with enhanced patient safety. To this end, the ESR produced a joint statement that was developed in cooperation with partner organisations and other health stakeholders. The joint statement presents the EU institutions with a concrete set of recommendations on how to align education and patient safety in EU policy initiatives.

As of December 2017, the joint statement has received 19 official endorsements from medical associations, educational stakeholders, patient groups and others.

European cancer initiatives

The ESR actively contributes to the development of EU cancer initiatives. In 2014, the ESR joined the European Joint Action on Cancer Control (CanCon JA) as a collaborating partner and was appointed a member of the policy paper drafting group to provide scientific feedback on the paper titled Tackling Social Inequalities in Cancer Prevention and Control for the European Population. CanCon JA deliverables were presented at the concluding conference in March 2017, featuring

among others the 'CanCon guide – improving cancer control' and the policy paper that benefited from the ESR's scientific advice.

Moreover, in 2015 the ESR became actively involved in the European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC). The initiative aims to revise the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnoses and develop new European Guidelines for Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis. In anticipation of the guidelines that are due for publication in 2018, the ECIBC released a new set of recommendations in 2017. Developed by the ECIBC Guidelines Development Group, the first four recommendations are focused on the breast cancer screening age group of 40–79 year olds and provide clear, evidence-based, and profile-tailored directions to women, professionals, and policy makers. ECIBC plans to publish over 90 evidence-based recommendations over the course of the next two years.

The initiative has been designed to identify and recognise imaging facilities that embody best practice in radiation protection and that are committed to putting the principles advocated and concepts developed by the European Society of Radiology (ESR) into practice.

The EuroSafe Imaging Stars concept was revised in mid-2017 to enhance the self-assessment and to better reflect the clinical environment and legal requirements. Imaging departments interested in joining the EuroSafe Imaging Stars network make efforts to give radiation protection greater visibility while at the same time having a positive impact on clinical practice.

The self-evaluation consists of 21 criteria which are structured according to the following topics: optimisation, justification, quality and safety, education, research, and regulatory compliance. Seven criteria require the submission of additional evidence. The criteria include, for example, the use of local diagnostic reference levels (DRLs) for CT and specific paediatric CT and fluoroscopy protocols, the availability of imaging referral guidelines, the use of operational Clinical Decision Support (CDS) in clinical practice, regular equipment quality control, operational clinical audit, as well as radiation protection activities.

After complete evaluation of the self-assessment and the supporting evidence, the participating imaging departments are awarded the respective number of stars from one to five and listed on the 'Wall of Stars' as of February 2018.

for imaging departments in Europe to support the implementation and development of clinical audit.

As of February 2018, there are 57 EuroSafe Imaging Stars from 17 countries, comprised of 34 five-star institutions, 21 four-star centres, and 2 departments with a three-star award.

If your department is not a EuroSafe Imaging Star yet, don't miss the chance to apply online or at the EuroSafe Imaging booth, located in the EuroSafe Imaging Coffee & Talk Lounge.

You can also attend the dedicated Coffee & Talk session on