The upcoming National eHealth Centre
of Czech Republic explores good practices

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What does it take to set up a leading eHealth Centre? EHTEL, together with a group of eHealth experts, has performed an in-depth analysis of nine European Competence Centres. Each is in charge of deploying the national and regional eHealth infrastructure to support the digital transformation of healthcare. The analysis covered institutions such as Elga (Austria), MedCom (Denmark), NHS Digital (England), THL (Finland), gematik (Germany), Lombardia Informatica (Italy), Agence eSanté (Luxembourg), NICTIZ (Netherlands), and NHIS (Slovakia).

> *"There is considerable diversity among competence centres, influenced by their healthcare systems and other unique national factors"* reported Rachelle Kay, EHTEL Director and main author of the analysis report. *"At the same time, there are clear commonalities, as well as lessons to be learned from the experience of each centre. The overview of all of them can provide valuable guidance for the structure and operating principles of the planned Czech Republic eHealth Centre."*

On 14th and 15th May 2018, staff from the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, the Austrian Agency for Economic Development (AED) and EHTEL reviewed this substantial analysis. They learned in greater detail about the experiences of Elga (Austria), MedCom (Denmark), and NHIS (Slovakia).

> *"The overall experience concerning definition and roll-out of national eHealth exchange interfaces and services is that it is essential to focus on a few well understood use cases. Early involvement of the future end-users (such as doctors and other health care professionals) and other important stakeholders is essential to achieve successful deployment"* emphasised Jan Petersen, from MedCom. *"Experiences from existing national eHealth centres suggest that their being jointly owned by national key eHealth players is a main contributory factor to their success."*

Six major success factors identified will help the Czech Republic to create its own National eHealth Centre. They are:

1. **A preliminary mapping exercise**: The mission of the National eHealth Centre should include mapping and coordinating existing Czech eHealth projects to ensure their alignment to the National eHealth Strategy adopted by the government, facilitation of stakeholder engagement, and the definition of a national eHealth infrastructure.
2. **Budget**: The eHealth Centre should be financially supported by funding from the State, the country's health insurers, and its regions.
3. **Legal status**: Creating a legal entity distinct from the Ministry of Health, working under the regime of private law but owned by the public authorities that will fund it, should be considered. Such a structure would offer the flexibility needed to recruit staff according to market rules and to contract suppliers.
4. **Stakeholder engagement**: Involving all stakeholders at an early stage of the set-up process and in a formal and transparent way is key.

5. **Standardisation processes**: Working with standardisation organisations and collaborating with all stakeholders on the definition of the national eHealth infrastructure is also key.
6. **Strategy development**: The National eHealth Strategy needs to evolve continuously to stay in line with the changing needs of the health care system as well as the evolution of supporting technologies.

On the basis of these six factors, the staff of the Ministry and the invited experts have sketched out an implementation roadmap for the Centre. The plan's first milestone is to make a set of concrete decisions on the initial set-up for the eHealth Centre during summer 2018.

A stakeholder engagement conference will be organised in September 2018 to kick off the set-up phase of the National eHealth Centre of the Czech Republic.

To achieve the set-up of the National eHealth Centre of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Health is being supported by the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of the European Commission. The SRSS has contracted the Agency for Economic Cooperation and Development (AED) of Austria in partnership with the Austrian Ministry of Work, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Rights to work on this initiative. EHTEL is part of the project team for this contract.

Photo 1: Entrance of the Czech Health Ministry

Note for editors

EHTELconnect supports EHTEL in its activities. It is a service package developed by implementers and for implementers, and is tailored to implementers' needs. Like today in the Czech Republic, it brings the digital health expertise available in Europe direct to implementers' desks. EHTELconnect facilitates a common multi-stakeholder understanding of implementation projects and a self-assessment of implementation successes and challenges.

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