

## EIP AHA holds a European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing

The summit held on 9-10 March 2015 was organised in the frame of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA). Dianne Gove, Alzheimer Europe's Director for Projects, reports that the summit successfully brought together stakeholders with a common goal and vision of active and healthy ageing.

### Technology: the entry card to today's society

Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for Digital Technology, opened the conference and provided an overview of ageing in Europe. He pointed out that Europe is the continent with the oldest population in the world and that everything must be done to ensure that people are able to live healthy, long and active lives. He drew attention to the need to modernise the healthcare system, ensure that older people remain in employment and continue to pay pension contributions but at the same time that a younger workforce is brought in.

Mr Oettinger described today's world as a digital society in which older people who cannot or do not want to use technology create a barrier, as technology is the entry card to today's society. He stated the need to ensure a dialogue with older people and to produce smart devices, hardware, software and IT services, all of which represent a chance for economic growth and employment.

### Sustainable healthcare for an ageing population

Martin Seychell (DG Sanco, European Commission) suggested that economic sustainability is not the end aim: this should be the provision of quality services and quality treatment. In his opinion, healthcare is not geared towards the needs of a multi-morbid, frail and older population; innovative practices are needed along with a shift from care to prevention. He criticised the current "hospital-centric" system which leads to people receiving care and treatment when their condition is already

fairly advanced. He also explained that the EIP AHA has identified thousands of good practices and agreed on a scaling-up process which will be implemented in the next 12 months.

Finally, Mr Seychell noted that technology is the driver of increasing costs in healthcare and that innovation, by definition, is destructive as it challenges the system, demanding more than just a bit of tweaking here and there. Other speakers throughout the day came back to this issue, suggesting that it is important to encourage some degree of calculated risk taking: as it is often safer to do nothing, there must be a system of penalties for not implementing change as well as rewards for doing so.

### Improving government efficiency

Mr Rafael Bengoa (Deusto Business School, Spain) highlighted the need for a stronger skill set to manage the paradigm shift that is needed. He felt that governments are not being sufficiently ambitious, that their responses must be related to the speed of change and that they are not pulling enough policy levers. He also questioned whether Europe had the necessary leadership to achieve its goals in healthcare provision for the ageing population. Mr Bengoa suggested that a key problem was the emphasis on cost containment: this may be to some extent necessary, but must be accompanied by an aggressive transformational agenda.

According to Jeroen Tas (Global CEO, Philips Informatics) people should not be paying for procedures but for outcomes. Lambert van Nistelrooij, MEP (Netherlands) suggested the need to think about investment policies and to give guarantees so that smaller companies can take on greater risk.



"Technology is the entry card to today's society."

GÜNTHER OETTINGER

"Healthcare is not geared towards the needs of a multi-morbid, frail and older population."

MARTIN SEYCHELL

## Active & Healthy Ageing

*A European Innovation  
Partnership*



Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for Digital Technology

### Impact of the growing silver economy

Throughout the summit, themes which frequently occurred included the need for stakeholder involvement, to think in terms of prevention rather than cure and a community-based rather than hospital-centric approach to the healthcare of older people. The “silver economy” was frequently cited as a considerable opportunity for growth but the possible need to avoid segregating older people as a potential source of economic growth was also raised. Sarah Rochira (Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, UK) described the Welsh approach to healthcare for older people: a strong focus on human

rights, frailty and decline (but not as an inevitable part of ageing) and integrated health and social care. She also emphasised the need to consider social fairness, equity and future sustainability. Helen Campbell (Vice President of Age Platform Europe) drew attention to the heterogeneity of the 50-100 age group and the need to consider older people as living within a particular community. This highlights the importance of recognising the needs of older people as a group, many of whom may have or at some point develop dementia, but also of respecting individuality, relationships and autonomy.

“People should not be paying for procedures but for outcomes.”

JEROEN TAS

### What is the EIP AHA?

The partnership, a European Commission initiative, gathers stakeholders from the public and private sectors that work on shared interests, activities and projects to find innovative solutions that meet the needs of the ageing population.

The overarching target of the EIP AHA is to increase by two the average number of healthy life years in the EU by 2020. The main goal is to obtain commitment and investment from stakeholders – public and private, EU, national and local – who have jointly agreed on the following action areas:

- prevention, screening and early diagnosis
- care and cure
- active ageing and independent living

<http://ec.europa.eu/active-healthy-ageing>

