

**ACTIVITY  
REPORT  
2023**



# 2023 in a Nutshell



## ADVOCACY

- Continuation of the internal **WGs on Cancer, Cross-Border Healthcare, and Digital Transformation**.
- Publication of a dedicated **EHDS position statement** and a **booklet collection of key regional practices** on health data and digital health.
- The official launch of the **strategic Manifesto** for building the future of European health and care with regional and local authorities at the centre.
- **Endorsement of the EUHPP Joint Statement on Mental Health in All Policies;**
- **Memorandum of Understanding with EIT Health**
- Continuous engagement with EU Institutions, in particular European Commission DG REGIO, DG SANTE and DG CONNECT, and the European Committee of the Regions.
- Participation in key partnerships: European Alliance for Value in Health; EU Health Coalition; EURAHL; Harnessing Talent Platform by DG REGIO.
- Support to the **fifth European Value-based Procurement Conference**.
- **Participation as experts and speakers** in several high-level events organised in Brussels.



## EVENTS

- #EURegionsWeek event: “Boost skills, embrace transformation: regions for green and digital skilling in healthcare” in partnership with the CoR’s NAT Commission and Interregional Group on Health and Well-being.
- EUREGHA High-level Annual Conference ‘Beyond 2024: discussing the future of EU health policy and innovation from the regional and local perspective’.
- 5 meetings of the Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing
- Final conference of the EU-funded project BOOST



## MEMBERS

- **1 High-level Annual Conference**
- **1 General Assembly** to elect the new Chair and Executive Board
- **12 Executive Board meetings**



## EU PROJECTS

EUREGHA successfully closed:

- The **BOOST project** on building mental health resilience in children
- The **PERISCOPE project** on the pan-European response to the impacts of COVID-19 and future pandemics and epidemics

It started implementing the new project **ONCO-DIR** on primary prevention of colorectal cancer.



## NEW MEMBERS

Joined Euregha:

- **Association of Kosovo Municipalities (RKS)**
- **Basque Country (ES)**



## EUREGHA'S MANIFESTO

- **7 Recommendations for the next EU mandate towards a stronger European Health Union**
- **Regional and Local Health Authorities at the centre of health policy development and implementation**



## COMMUNICATION

- 3412 followers (+409) 1097 followers
- 2404 followers (+750)
- 38 news articles on euregha.net
- 4 newsletters
- 24 biweekly newsletters members-only

Complementary information about this publication can be accessed



via **QR codes**

via the **textual hyperlinks**

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On behalf of the European Regional and Local Health Authorities (EUREGHA) Executive Board and Secretariat, it is with great pleasure to present to you our association's 2023 Annual Report. As we reflect on the past year, we must acknowledge collective efforts and enormous commitment of our member regions, local health authorities and associated partners towards advancing healthcare across Europe, addressing healthcare challenges such as ageing population, budget constraints, digital transformation and other.

Throughout 2023, EUREGHA, led by the passionate work of the Brussels-based secretariat, has served as a platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, awareness raising, and advocacy, facilitating the exchange and promotion of best practices and innovative solutions to address the evolving healthcare needs of our communities, within and beyond EUREGHA membership. This has also resulted in growth of our membership and welcoming two new EUREGHA members: the [Basque Country](#) and the [Association of Kosovo Municipalities](#).

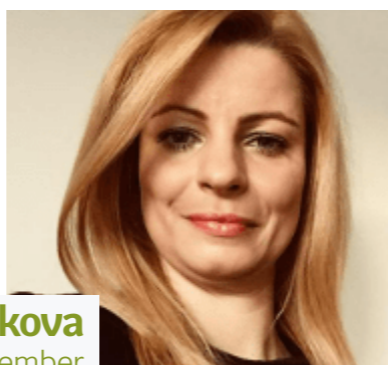
This report provides a comprehensive overview of the association's numerous and impactful activities and progress made so far in achieving our shared objectives of improving healthcare delivery in Europe for the better health outcomes and well-being of our citizens. In particular, the collaborative work of our three Working Groups on Cancer, Cross-Border Healthcare and Digital Transformation should be highlighted. Given the crucial discussion around the European Health Data Space (EHDS), the Group on Digital Transformation was particularly active in 2023, with the publication of a dedicated **EHDS position statement and a booklet collection of key regional practices on health data and digital health**. The association equally continued its important work in collaboration with the **European Committee of the Regions**, organising discussions on the topic of Health Data Space, greener healthcare, the pharmaceutical legislation and **health workforce skills**, with the latter topic being at the centre of EUREGHA's session at the European Week of Regions and Cities in 2023. This year we also saw on-going successful implementation of **European projects** such as BeWell, conclusion of the BOOST project focusing on youth mental health and the launch of a new collaboration with the ONCODIR Cancer Mission project on colorectal cancer primary prevention.

Year 2023 was concluded with another successful **EUREGHA Annual Conference 'Beyond 2024: discussing the future of EU health policy and innovation from the regional and local perspective'**, which brought together participants coming from different regions across Europe, representatives of the EU institutions and key stakeholders from different disciplines and profiles. The event was the occasion for the official launch of the abovementioned Booklet on health data practices and of our **strategic Manifesto for Building the future of European health and care with regional and local authorities at the centre**.

The Manifesto, welcomed by institutional representatives and key stakeholders, will be the guiding star for EUREGHA's efforts and activities in supporting and shaping a stronger European Health Union, also in view of the new European mandate from 2024.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my **sincere appreciation to all our members, partners, and stakeholders** for their invaluable contributions and persistent commitment to our shared mission. It is through your dedication, collaboration, and shared vision that we continue to make progress towards building a healthier, more resilient Europe. As we look ahead to the future, let us remain dedicated to our commitment to advancing health and well-being for all European citizens, bringing together regional and local health authorities and ecosystems across Europe to create positive change and impact on our health and social care systems.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the passionate and hardworking **EUREGHA Secretariat staff**, who made activities in 2023 activities happened: our Director Michele, our Policy and Project Officer Marco, our now former Communication Officer Robbin, alongside our 2022 trainees and assistants Erika, Elisa and Federico.



**Andrea Pavlickova**  
EUREGHA's Board Member  
Interim Chair and Treasurer

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# EUREGHA'S Manifesto for 2024 and beyond

# Collaboration with the CoR

Launched on the occasion of the EUREGHA High-level Annual Conference on 5 December 2023, the EUREGHA Manifesto offers a **set of recommendations** to improve health and care systems in Europe towards more efficient and impactful care and prevention, with a focus on the **regional and local dimension**, to engage, connect, and grant regional and local health authorities the right resources and opportunities to play a central role in the positive transformation, digital, green and organizational, of health and care delivery and policy. With the EU elections on the horizon, the Manifesto advocates riding the momentum to maintain health high on the political agenda and foster coordinated efforts towards the European Health Union, a key initiative to bolster healthcare systems, making them more resilient and future-proof, ultimately improving health outcomes for current and future generations.

In about two-thirds of EU Member States, local and regional authorities are at the forefront of healthcare service planning and delivery. Their proximity to communities enables them to identify health needs and challenges while driving research, innovation, and interventions addressing social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. These authorities serve as living laboratories for innovative healthcare approaches and play a crucial role in European cooperation and integration, especially in border areas. Moreover, they facilitate par-



Read the Manifesto here!

ticipatory co-creation models for health policies, bridging the gap between stakeholders.

Recognizing the importance of the regional and local dimensions is vital for advancing the shared Health Union project, ensuring policies are tailored to actual health systems and population needs. Our Manifesto's recommendations:

1. **TOWARDS A EUROPEAN HEALTH UNION BASED ON GOVERNANCE, ALL POLICIES FOR HEALTH APPROACH AND INVOLVEMENT OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**
2. **ADDRESS SKILLS AND SHORTAGES: A NEW DEAL FOR THE EUROPEAN HEALTH AND CARE WORKFORCE**
3. **CHANGING HEALTH THROUGH REGIONS: DIGITAL, GREEN AND ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**
4. **STRONGER ACTION ON PREVENTION, PROMOTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH AS A WHOLE**
5. **BOOSTED AND SYNERGETIC EUROPEAN FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORTING REGIONAL AND LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES**
6. **PUTTING CROSS-BORDER HEALTHCARE BACK AT THE CENTRE OF THE EUROPEAN AGENDA AND EXPLORING NEW PERSPECTIVES**
7. **MOVE TOWARDS THE VALUE-BASED TRANSITION IN HEALTHCARE**



Pillars of the EUREGHA Manifesto for 2024 and beyond



IRGHW webpage

As every year, the European Committee of the Regions' Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing met on February 9 for its constitutive meeting to set priorities for 2023. They identified the European Health Data Space as a key focus, particularly in light of the adoption of the [CoR's Opinion](#) on the topic, but also other important topics like the Pharmaceutical Strategy and digital and green skills in the health sector, with links to the European Year of Skills.

On March 16th, the IRGHW discussed the **European Health Data Space** (EHDS), a strategic initiative for the European Health Union project. Representatives from the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions provided insights into the EHDS design and implementation. Anna Prokúpková, Advisor on Health and Environment Policy at the European Parliament for GREENS/EFA highlighted the need for person-centred systems, digital health literacy, and clear regulations on the use of health data. She emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement in EHDS governance while avoiding conflicts of interest. On behalf of CoR's Opinion Rapporteur, Sirle Mere, Policy officer at NAT Commission, emphasized the need for a multi-level governance approach and presented CoR's view regarding data security, digital literacy, and realistic cost estimates. Both speakers agreed on the need for clarity and support in EHDS implementation, especially regarding funding and regulatory frameworks.

On July 6th, the topic of the discussion was the proposed reform of EU **Pharmaceutical Legislation**, a legislative file under particular spotlight during the Swedish Presidency. Representatives from DG SANTE provided insights into the legislative package, aiming to create a Single Market for medicines in the EU while ensuring access, availability, affordability, and regulatory competitiveness. Guest speakers representing local/regional authorities in Germany and Sweden shared their perspectives:

regions like Baden-Württemberg (GE) emphasized the need for updated legislation leading to improved access to innovative pharmaceuticals, while the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions advocated for ensuring access and affordability as the main priority.

On October 11th, EUREGHA partnered with the IRGHW and the CoR's NAT Commission in the organisation of an insightful session within the framework of #EURegionsWeek and the EU Year of Skills 2023. The event aimed to discuss the importance of **digital and green skills within the health sector**, with a spotlight on the role of regions in spearheading up- and re-skilling the healthcare workforce and voices from EU-funded projects BeWell and EUVECA.

On November 30th, 2023, the CoR IRGHW convened for its final meeting of the year, focusing on the **greening and sustainability of healthcare systems in Europe**. Arianna Gamba, Director of Programmes at Healthcare Without Harm Europe, described the environmental challenges facing the healthcare sector and outlined the organization's efforts to transform healthcare practices towards greener approaches. EUREGHA presented the new Hospital San Cataldo in Taranto, Apulia Region, showcasing the region's commitment to environmental guidelines and requirements in the design, construction and organizational aspects.



Meeting of the European Committee of the Regions' Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing (CoR IRGHW), 6 July 2023

# Participation in EU projects & tenders



The PERISCOPE project (**Pan-European Response to the Impacts of COVID-19 and Future Pandemics and Epidemics**) aimed to promote a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the outbreak and spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic through multidisciplinary research based on different levels of analysis: clinical, technological, socio-economic and political.



[Periscope website](#)

In February 2023, EUREGHA, AQUAS and Mental Health Europe finally launched a **Massive Open Online Course on “Strengthening territorial response for better health”**. The course, developed with the special contribution of EUREGHA’s members AreSS Puglia and GGD Zuid Limburg / euPrevent, is publicly available on [Coursera](#) and completely free of charge. It consists of 12 short lectures of around 6 minutes, covering four topics that emerged as strategic during the COVID-19 pandemic: **procurement lines, digital transformation, cross-border cooperation, and mental health**. This course aims to provide learners with key concepts and tools needed to get regions more prepared for future large-scale risks, regardless of their expertise level. The course is self-paced, and learners can reset and adapt deadlines as per their schedules. You can watch the [trailer](#) here.

This MOOC is part of the PERISCOPE training offer, which counts four other courses. Discover them all and get a taste by signing up for the introductory MOOC “[Tools and Practices for Addressing Pandemic Challenges](#)”!

In approaching the end of the project (October 2023), EUREGHA participated in a [podcast episode](#) of the PERISCOPE Monthly Talks to describe the role EUREGHA played in developing the MOOC and look

at Euregional collaboration in pandemic preparedness in Europe.

On 8 September, the project concluded its journey with its Final Conference “**From Data Science and Socio-Economic Research to Policy and Technology – Learning from COVID-19 to Build Better Health and Care in Europe**”, where EUREGHA actively contributed to the panel on the future of public health in the European Union. The event was the occasion to delve into the outcomes and findings from the research on socio-economic and behavioural impacts resulting from the policies, as well as the project’s tools and resources.



**PERISCOPE MOOC on Strengthening territorial response for better health**



Started in 2018, The BOOST project aimed to **strengthen social and emotional skills among primary school children** through the development of a holistic approach targeting teachers’ **Social and Emotional Learning** (SEL) competencies and the provision of tools for the whole school staff to facilitate implementation and uptake of SEL in schools.

As leader of the Work Package on Communication and Dissemination, in the last six months of the project, EUREGHA channelled all its energies to promote the #BOOSTApproach and the project’s outcomes at the European level and organise the project **Final Conference** held on **23 May in Brussels**. With 100+ attendees between onsite and online, this high-level event was the occasion to present and reflect on

research findings and project’s results, above all the **BOOST Approach** – officially launched during the conference – and discuss with EU institutions and relevant stakeholders how to exploit the potential of BOOST outcomes across the EU in the near future.



[BOOST website](#)

The BOOST Approach is a systematic, whole-school approach to helping schools organize and promote their work with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The resources, including a 5-step guide, are available [online](#) and are intended for school staff looking to implement it in their school ecosystem.

On the 21st of April, EUREGHA presented on behalf of the project in the **Stakeholder webinar “A comprehensive approach to mental health”** organised by the European Commission DG SANTE to gather concrete ideas for action on mental health to support the Commission’s work on building a [comprehensive approach to mental health](#), on which a Communication was adopted on 7 June.

This contribution follows the [response](#) to the call for evidence submitted by BOOST in February 2023 and the featuring of BOOST as good practice in the European Commission’s [Healthier Together – NCDs initiative](#) published in June 2022.



**BOOST Team group picture at BOOST Final Conference, Brussels, 23 May 2023.**



In 2023, the BeWell project ramped up its activities, with EUREGHA playing a growingly central role. BeWell, **Blueprint alliance for a future health work-**

**force strategy on digital and green skills**, is a project funded through an Erasmus+, entirely focused on skilling and upskilling of the health workforce. Over four years (2022–2026), BeWell’s partners will focus on developing a **green and digital skills strategy for the health ecosystem** that can be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately the European level through the Pact for Skills. The **first version of the strategy** was released in June 2023, and will be at the centre of an extensive consultation process from June 2024 onwards.

In the context of the European Commission’s Pact for Skills, BeWell, under the lead of EUREGHA (Work Package 8 lead), is leading the management and activities of the Pact’s **Large-Scale Partnership for the health ecosystem**. The Partnership is an initiative entirely devoted to bringing together all health stakeholders, initiatives and projects active in the field of skills, in particular, to support the Skills Strategy development, other key actions of the project and the exchange of practices between stakeholders.

Officially [launched](#) in 2022, the [Partnership](#) reached around 25 signatories by the end of the year and met for the first time in person in November 2023, with a **dedicated Partnership Workshop in Brussels**. The Workshop brought together around 30 participants to interactively discuss digital and green skills strategy and theory of change and debate on the design of the BeWell training pilots. Furthermore, in 2023 EUREGHA led the setup process and related two meetings of the **Partnership Steering Committee**, a group of 13 high-level experts on health workforce from institutions, academia, industry and professionals’ organisations that will help direct the activities of the Partnership.



[BeWell website](#)



**BeWell – First Workshop of the Large Scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem, Brussels (22 November 2023)**

## Health InnoFacilitator

Kicked off in October 2022, the Health InnoFacilitator project gathers 7 EU partners with expertise in **innovation procurement** including healthcare clusters, innovation and PPI support and public/private healthcare buyers, and aims to create a community leveraging capabilities and promoting innovation procurement in healthcare services.

As Leader of Work Package 2 on Community building, EUREGHA focused its activities on launching and promoting a **Community of Practices** on innovation procurement. The creation of this Community is part of the main objectives of the project and aims to demonstrate the relevance and effectiveness of cooperation between various stakeholders, from both the innovation and buyer sides, to promote and embrace **Public Procurement of Innovation** (PPI) in healthcare services. Hosted on the Healthcare Buyers online platform, the **InnoFacilitator Community** is conceived as an open and free-of-charge platform where experts and insiders can exchange knowledge, information, and best practices in health innovation procurement, expand their contacts, and be involved and updated on the latest developments of the InnoFacilitator project, such as trainings, co-creation activities, and **coaching sessions**. For the coaching sessions, the project launched a call whose results will be known in early 2024.



**Health InnoFacilitator website**

On 5th October, Health InnoFacilitator hosted a **webinar focusing on regional best practices in value-based procurement**, featuring examples from Apulia Region (IT), Catalonia (ES), and Wales (UK).

Lastly, on the 18th and 19th of October, project partners convened in Ivrea (IT) for the annual consortium meeting hosted by Bioindustry Park Silvano Fumero. This in-person gathering provided an opportunity to delve into the progress and outcomes of various Work Packages and plan activities for the project's second and final year.



**Health InnoFacilitator Community launch event, 21 June 2023**

## ONCODIR

Officially kicked-off on 12-13 June 2023 in Thessaloniki, **ONCODIR - Evidence-based Participatory Decision Making for Cancer Prevention through implementation research** aims to identify risk factors associated with colorectal cancer and will integrate multidisciplinary research methods and technologies (including health policy analytics, artificial intelligence and decision support theories) to deliver evidence-based and personalised recommendations on colorectal cancer prevention.



**Oncodir website**

For the next three years, EUREGHA will provide its policy-based and policy-oriented support to Work Package 2 on “Participatory Implementation Research Framework and System Co-Design”, Work Package 5 on “Financial, Clinical and Political Analyses for ONCODIR Adoption”, Work Package 6 on “Long-lasting Validation of ONCODIR Solutions and Methodologies and End-user upskilling”, and Work Package 7 on “Synergistic Impact creation & Bottom-up Innovation”



**Tender on Overcoming Obstacles to Vaccination**

This service contract with the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) and DG SANTE of the European Commission aims to **identify ad-**

**ministrative obstacles to vaccination in the EU**, assess how these obstacles impact vaccination coverage rates, and highlight promising practices to overcome them.

The project is continuing on the implementation of its six core tasks, from July 2022 until April 2025: a mapping of vaccination services and related hurdles in all EU Member States; a large-scale survey of EU citizens and health professionals to determine the



**Tender website**

obstacles' impact on vaccination coverage rates; identification of best practices developed by EU Member States to overcome identified challenges; organization of onsite visits to the EU Member States from which best practices have been identified; piloting best practices in volunteering EU Member States; and the development of final recommendations. Special attention in 2023 went to the **first onsite visits to explore exemplary practices**, including in particular the Su.Pr.Eme initiative from our Members of **ARESS Puglia** focused on boosting health care and vaccinations for undeclared, seasonal workers.

Within this project EUREGHA has a supporting role as subcontractor partner, mainly focused on facilitating participation and connections with Regional and Local Health Authorities from the inception phase of the Tender.

# Collaboration with other networks

In 2023, EUREGHA continued and strengthened its commitment to collaboration with other key stakeholders to further promote the role of regions and local authorities in health.



European Alliance for Value in Health

As a member of the European Alliance for Value in Health, EUREGHA maintains a strong presence in the realm of value-based healthcare. Collaborating with 11 partners and various affiliated organizations, we are committed to a collective vision of a Europe where health systems prioritize value, sustainability, and people's needs at their core. As a key highlight from 2023, the Alliance held a stakeholder engagement workshop in Brussels with the objective of **mapping and aligning the role of different healthcare stakeholders in transitioning towards value-based health systems**, building on the taxonomy developed in 2022. This mapping exercise, which was co-led by EUREGHA, was translated into the full report **'A Compass for Collaboration: Navigating Stakeholders' Roles in Transitioning To Value-Based Healthcare'** [published](#) at the beginning of 2024.



EAVH website



2023 was a busy year for EUREGHA's active participation in the European Health Coalition, a multi-stakeholder initiative bringing to more than 40 actors looking at mapping and shaping the future of

healthcare in Europe. In July 2023 the EU Health Coalition published the [Manifesto for a Healthier Europe](#). The Manifesto shows that the time has come for the health and life sciences sectors to be recognized as strategic pillars for Europe, complementing and reinforcing the green and digital transitions. Following the pandemic, European healthcare systems are facing numerous issues related to population health, but, at the same time, they are benefiting from the rapid progress of science and revolutionary innovations, which push the boundaries for better health. EU Health Coalition wants to promote a "One Health" approach that makes European healthcare systems truly integrated and people-centred, Invest in upskilling the European health workforce, reframe healthcare expenditure as an investment, not a cost, create the basis for Europe as a true research and innovation hub and create a health and life science office within the European Commission to guide a coherent European strategy for this sector.



EU Health Coalition website

As co-lead of the Coalition's Health Systems Integration Working Group, EUREGHA joined the ICIC - International Conference on Integration of Care, co-organised in Antwerp by IFIC - International Foundation for Integrated Care and Flanders' Department of Care in May 2023. During the conference, our Director Michele Calabrò moderated a session on Inter-professional Education and Training, building on key elements of the Coalition's Manifesto and [Recommendations](#).



International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp (22-24 May 2023)



The **European Coalition for Active and Healthy Living (EURAHL)** is a group of key stakeholders active in the broader European Active and Healthy Living (AHL) arena. EURAHL's mission is strengthening connections, promoting synergies, and bringing together the voices of European Networks working in the field of Active and Healthy Living. EURAHL is of particular importance for EUREGHA, due to the association's traditional focus on the field of Active and Healthy Ageing and Living, and for the role that EUREGHA played in leading the establishment of this coalition, alongside the University of Porto and in the framework of the activities of the EU funded project [IN-4-AHA](#) on innovation for scaling up active and healthy ageing, concluded in 2022.

In connection with the EURAHL objectives, EUREGHA supported the organisation of a [session dedicated to discussing practice and policy on active and health living](#) in the framework of the Forum Mediterraneo in Sanità, organised by EUREGHA members AReSS Puglia in September 2023. The session brought together speakers from the European Commission, EURAHL member organisations such as EHTEL and RSCN, and regional representatives including Andalusia and EUREGHA members Scotland, Kosovo, Flanders, and Puglia.



Launched officially in November 2023, the Harnessing Talent Platform (HTP) is a newly formed knowledge-building and experience-exchange platform, which seeks to support regions in addressing the consequences of the demographic change and in mitigating the challenges associated with the decline of tertiary educated populations across the EU. It ensures that impacted regions receive the guidance, information and knowledge they need to elaborate, consolidate, develop and implement tailored and comprehen-

sive strategies to train, attract and retain talents.

The HTP is composed of **four Working Groups** on the topics of: Digital, **Health**, Research & Innovation and Territorial development. The WGs have been established with the purpose of helping regions address specific professional or territorial challenges which influence a region's ability to be competitive and attractive for young and highly skilled workforce.

**EUREGHA has been suggested and selected by the HTP secretariat and DG REGIO as co-lead of the Health Working Group.** EUREGHA will work with all other [members of the WG](#), the HTP Secretariat and DG REGIO colleagues to carry forward the different planned activities until May 2026, boosting connections with key projects and initiatives such as the BeWell project and the Pact for Skills Large-Scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem.



Session on Active and Healthy Living in the Framework of the Forum Mediterraneo in Sanità, Bari (22 September 2023)



HTP webpage

## Digital transformation

EUREGHA's commitment to innovation and digital transformation has led to the establishment of a dedicated Working Group in 2022, through which EUREGHA works in a structured and synergistic way with its members to address the challenges of the EU digital health agenda. The WG activities in 2023 aimed at further fostering the internal debate about the European Health Data Space proposal, with an eye on regional ecosystem readiness and critical needs, as well as ongoing projects and initiatives. Two meetings were held during the year, one in spring and another in autumn, serving as the basis for the preparation of a [position paper on EHDS](#) and a [Booklet on best practices on health data](#). With 13 regional practices from its members, the booklet showcases how regional and local health authorities have already been extremely active in tackling digital health and health data challenges through strategies and projects.

In January, EUREGHA members had the opportunity to attend an [exclusive online info session](#) on Horizon Europe and upcoming funding opportunities of potential interest to regions, kindly provided by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA).

In June, EUREGHA was confirmed among the associations involved in the [European Commission's eHealth Stakeholder Group](#) for the period 2023 – 2026. [EUREGHA's inclusion](#) in the group enables us to provide input, expertise, and knowledge to the Commission and the other Group members.

Moreover, EUREGHA formalized a [partnership with EIT Health](#) through a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) to promote, among other common priorities, the common goal of creating a European Health Data Space (EHDS) that revolutionizes healthcare across the continent by recognizing the central role of the regions and the importance of their partnerships with start-ups, healthcare professionals, research centres and citizens.

During the year, EUREGHA and its members dedicated special attention to the topic of Artificial Intelligence and advanced technological tools. On 15 November, EUREGHA's Chair Giovanni Gorgoni and experts from EUREGHA regions Tuscany and Wales

participated in an event organised by CMR Surgical and hosted by MEP Tomislav Sokol at the European Parliament to discuss the potential of robotics, AI and innovation for better and more accessible healthcare in Europe.



**Booklet on Best Practices on Health Data**



**Discover our Booklet here**

## Cross-Border Healthcare

The Cross-border Healthcare Working Group serves as a vital platform within EUREGHA, enabling regional representatives and experts to exchange knowledge, best practices, and information on cross-border healthcare. On February 15, 2023, EUREGHA convened its annual inaugural meeting, setting forth its objectives and priorities. Key aims include simplifying administrative procedures for accessing cross-border healthcare, reducing financial risks for patients, enhancing information regarding patients' rights, and tackling public health and environmental health issues. Members also emphasized the need to bolster European cooperation in cross-border healthcare, particularly focusing on follow-up actions to enhance the implementation of the directive 2011/ 24/ EU on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.

Throughout the year, EUREGHA organised two WG meetings. On the 10th of May, DG REGIO joined the roundtable, providing valuable insights into the European Commission's latest initiatives and programs related to cross-border healthcare. Furthermore, on 20th of November 20th, the second session was dedicated to "Showcasing good practices in cross-border

healthcare: the healthcare workforce", with a particular focus on an example of international recruitment of healthcare professionals brought by Region Skåne (SE) and a study on nursing shortages in the Northern Dutch-German cross-border region presented by the Cross-border Institute of Healthcare Systems and Prevention.

In addition to these activities, EUREGHA had the pleasure of attending and promoting through its channels two interesting sessions joined by Lower Austria during the European Week of Regions and Cities.

## Healthcare promotion and prevention

Throughout the year, EUREGHA worked actively on mental health, a theme that in recent years has carved out an increasingly important space in the agenda of its members. In April, EUREGHA was among the first core endorsers of the [Joint Statement "Mental Health in All Policies approach as a key component of any comprehensive initiative on mental health"](#), launched by the EU Health Policy Platform's Thematic Network on "Mental Health in All Policies" on the occasion of the EU Health Policy Platform annual meeting in Luxembourg. The supporting organisations call for a Mental Health in All Policies (MHiAP) approach for public policies across sectors to promote population mental health and wellbeing by initiating and facilitating action within different non-health public policy areas, such as education, child protection, employment, income, housing, culture, environment, social protection and many more. EUREGHA contributed to the Statement drafting process, stressing the crucial role of regional and local authorities in designing and implementing community-based and community-oriented policies in the field and bringing the learnings and outcomes of the EU-funded project BOOST regarding the children and school dimension. EUREGHA has also responded to the [public consultation on the EU4Health programme](#), emphasizing the need for greater attention and action on disease prevention and health promotion, addressing health inequalities, promoting healthy lifestyles, and improving access to healthcare. In this respect, our members suggested strengthening cooperation with subnational levels, especially for disease prevention and access to healthcare, while advocating for increased

support for knowledge exchange and the implementation of best practices in the field



**Group picture of Statement's core endorsers during the EU Health Policy Platform annual meeting in Luxembourg, 19 April 2023**

## Value-Based healthcare and outcomes management

Value-based healthcare has always been at the core of EUREGHA's vision and work. Among the most prominent activities, the association confirmed once again its support for the organisation of the European Value-Based Procurement Conference, this year in its 5th edition themed "Navigating the VBP challenges and reaching the destination - from awareness to application," on 11th of December 11. Hosted by the Value-Based Procurement Community of Practice and bolstered by EHPPA, EUREGHA, BCG, and MedTech Europe, the event boasted a robust attendance of 120 stakeholders.

The conference aimed to dissect the hurdles hindering the adoption of value-based procurement in the procurement of medical technologies, while also proposing actionable strategies to surmount these barriers. A comprehensive agenda unfolded, spanning from theoretical frameworks to practical implementation. Featuring plenary sessions headlined by industry luminaries and eight targeted breakout sessions, the event delved into diverse topics such as value-based supply chains, patient-centric care, engagement strategies for healthcare professionals,



legal frameworks, and the integration of artificial intelligence in evidence gathering.

The proliferation of high-quality pilot projects in recent years has underscored the potential of embedding value considerations within procurement practices. While these initiatives have served as beacons of inspiration, they have also illuminated the intricate challenges inherent in system-wide transformation. The overarching objective of the VBP Community of Practice is to transition from viewing pilot endeavours as exceptions to making value-based procurement the prevailing norm. Although this transition remains a work in progress, both speakers and attendees expressed a unified commitment to expediting progress towards this collective goal.



**European Value-Based Procurement Conference, Brussels (11 December 2023)**

## Cancer

Cancer remained high on the EUREGHA agenda throughout 2023. In the three usual Working Group on Cancer meetings, EUREGHA members particularly debated the need for regions to **engage with EU initiatives and projects in the field**. To this aim, the second WG meeting in May was an occasion to establish a direct connection with the Joint Action CRANE, focusing on building an EU Network of recognised National Comprehensive Cancer Centres (CCCs) in every Member State. Additionally, in the third WG session, EUREGHA had the pleasure of hosting the Joint Action eCAN on strengthening eHealth for cancer prevention and care, and the Joint Action ECHoS aiming at establishing Cancer Mission Hubs in Member States and regions.

EUREGHA has strengthened its collaboration with the European Regions Research & Innovation Network (ERRIN) on the implementation of the Cancer

Mission under Horizon Europe, intending to join forces to better advocate for greater involvement of regions in related projects and initiatives, as also stressed in a [EUREGHA-ERRIN Join Statement](#) of 2020. In this respect, **EUREGHA** and **ERRIN** started a fruitful and continuous **dialogue with the DG RTD Cancer Mission Secretariat** (European Commission) on how to improve the engagement of regional and local health authorities in the Mission with a better definition of their roles and bridging the Mission's objectives with regional needs and capacity of action.

In February, EUREGHA's Director Michele Calabrò participated in the conference "Meeting the Requirements of Young Cancer Survivors" organised by the European Commission, bringing insights and examples from the regional dimension. The event endeavoured to highlight the importance of quality of life for individuals who have survived cancer during childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, among the key pillars of the EU Cancer Mission and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

In April, EUREGHA had the pleasure of moderating an insightful event on "European Beating Cancer Plan: 2 years on" organised by the Emilia-Romagna Region's Brussels Office and the Emilia-Romagna's Institute for the Study of Tumours (IRST) Dino Amadori. The event was designed to take stock of the situation on the Cancer Plan in the presence of European Commission officials and experts of international networks supporting research and innovation in the field of onco-hematology.

Moreover, thanks to our direct involvement in the **ONCODIR** project, which started in June 2023 (see the dedicated section above), EUREGHA will have the opportunity in the coming years to contribute to the Cancer Mission in the field of primary prevention of colorectal cancer.



**EUREGHA's Director Michele Calabrò speaking at the European Commission conference on "Meeting the Requirements of Young Cancer Survivors", 7 February 2023**

# Events

## EUREGHA General Assembly

The General Assembly meeting, kindly hosted in 2023 by Region Östergötland (Sweden), was a pivotal moment for delving into the governance and strategic direction of EUREGHA, garnering unanimous consensus among its members. During the initial day of the AGA, EUREGHA members and the Secretariat engaged in a full day of site visits and networking opportunities. One highlight was the visit to the **Finspång Primary Care Centre**, showcasing an exemplary model of Integrated and person-centred care transition. Later in the afternoon, the focus shifted to the Linköping University Hospital, where attendees explored the **CMIV – Center for Medical Image Science and Visualization**. The CMIV serves as a compelling testament to the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence & Health Data in enhancing patient outcomes, supported by a multidisciplinary research team and cutting-edge technological advancements.

On the second day, instead, the focus was entirely on governance. Regarding memberships, the board acknowledged **Viken County's membership in EUREGHA** until 2023 despite the dissolution of the region and officially welcomed in the network the **Association of Kosovo Municipalities** as a new associate member.

The Assembly also represented an opportunity to address and delineate the strategic orientation of the network through workshop activities. The first topic addressed was cross-border cooperation, recognized as a priority by members. Other priorities raised were the ageing population, health pro-



**EUREGHA Annual General Assembly 2023, Linköping (SE), 12-13 June 2023**

motion and prevention, the healthcare workforce, digitalization, and financial measures to alleviate pressure. The reflections generated during the debate were then brought together in the drafting of the [EUREGHA Manifesto for 2024 and beyond](#). Members discussed tools to further strengthen the communication and exchange between members, as well as the desire to plan more study visits in future.

## EWRC session "Boost skills, embrace transformation: regions for green and digital skilling in healthcare"

On 11 October, EUREGHA, together with the Committee of the Regions' NAT Commission and Inter-regional Group on Health and Well-being, organised an insightful session within the framework of **#EURegionsWeek** and the **EU Year of Skills 2023** to discuss the importance of digital and green skills within the health sector, with a spotlight on the role of regions in spearheading up- and re-skilling of the healthcare workforce and voices from EU-funded projects BeWell and EUVECA. The session was focused on European health and care systems and their transition towards greener, more digital solutions. Skills are key factors in supporting this transformation, empowering the healthcare workforce, and creating more sustainable ecosystems. The session explored the role of regions in spearheading green and digital up- and re-skilling as part of a strategic blueprint for sectoral cooperation across Europe and within the EU Pact for Skills and the Year of Skills. The wide participation confirmed how critical skills are in supporting healthcare systems' digital and green transition, em-



powering the healthcare workforce and creating more sustainable ecosystems.



**EUREGHA session at European Week of Regions and Cities, 11 October 2023, European Committee of the Regions**

## EUREGHA High-level Annual Conference 2023

On December 5th, EUREGHA convened its Annual Conference at the European Committee of the Regions, under the theme “**Beyond 2024: discussing the Future of EU Health Policy and Innovation from the Regional and local perspective**”. [This flagship event](#) brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including 80 participants representing various European regions, EU institutions, and key actors in health policy, workforce development, and research.

The conference provided a dynamic platform for robust discussions and multi-level dialogues on the trajectory of health policy within the European Union, particularly in anticipation of the upcoming European elections in spring 2024. High-level speakers, including esteemed representatives from EU institutions, delivered keynote addresses that underscored recent advancements and achievements in EU health policy over the last EU mandate, like the strengthening of regulatory bodies such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the establishment of the Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA), the Cancer Plan, and the Mental Health Strategy, among others. Of particular significance was the recognition of regions as pivotal players in addressing contemporary health challenges and driving innovation. This sentiment was echoed in the unveiling of [EUREGHA's Manifesto for 2024 and beyond](#), launched during the conference together with [the EUREGHA Booklet of best practices on health data](#).

The conference also featured engaging panel debates,

where speakers delved into critical issues shaping the future of health in the EU. Topics ranged from integrated care and multi-level governance to the pivotal roles of the healthcare workforce and health data. Participants actively exchanged insights, sharing experiences and best practices to underscore the importance of high-quality, comparable data and collaborative approaches across borders. In the closing remarks, it was emphasized the indispensable role of political commitment and foresight in shaping a robust and effective European Health Union. The pivotal role of regions in realizing this vision was underscored, emphasizing their unique capacity to drive innovation and advance health outcomes for all citizens.



**EUREGHA High-level Annual Conference 2023, Brussels (5 December 2023)**



**Annual Conference event highlights**

# About us

## Governance

### EUREGHA board composition 2023

**Chair:** Apulia

**Co-vice Chairs:** Lower Austria & Östergötland

**Treasurer:** Scotland

**Executive Board:** Flanders, Emilia Romagna, Wales, Scotland, Lower Austria, Östergötland, Apulia

Find out more about our Board members [here!](#)

As concerns the **EUREGHA Annual General Assembly**, the other regular key governance activity for 2022, please refer to the dedicated section under the events heading of this Annual Report.

## Secretariat

In 2023, the EUREGHA secretariat had a capacity of 4 full-time employees, a Director (Michele Calabrò), a Policy and Project Officer (Marco Di Donato), a Communication and Project Officer (Robbin Kappelhof – until August), and a Policy and Project Assistant (Erika Musiari – until October), and it was supported by 2 trainees (Elisa Galli and Federico Diegoli) who joined the secretariat via the ongoing collaboration with the University of Bologna.



**Robbin Kappelhof, Communications and Project Officer (until August 2023)**



**Erika Musiari, Policy and Projects Assistant – University of Bologna (until October 2023)**



**Federico Diegoli, Trainee – University of Bologna**



**Elisa Galli, Trainee – University of Bologna**



**Michele Calabrò, Director**



**Marco Di Donato, Policy and Project Officer**

## Newsletter

Throughout 2023, the EUREGHA Secretariat curated and circulated four newsletters to its extensive subscriber database, which were also shared across our social media platforms. These newsletters primarily featured updates on EUREGHA's ongoing activities, events, EU health policy developments, and project updates. Additionally, our Secretariat offered bi-weekly info-flashes exclusively to our members, furnishing them with timely updates on EU policies, funding opportunities, upcoming events, and more. While the EUREGHA newsletters cater to a broader external audience, the bi-weekly info-flashes are tailored specifically for EUREGHA members, often including member-specific news and occasionally attaching event reports crafted by our team.

## Communication and social media

Throughout the year, the EUREGHA Secretariat has actively engaged across various social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, in addition to publishing 38 news articles on the EUREGHA website. By the close of 2023, EUREGHA's Twitter account had surpassed 3000 followers, while our LinkedIn following experienced substantial growth. Our website functions as a comprehensive hub, providing access to EUREGHA's mission, statutes, minutes of CoR IRGHW meetings, and Annual Conferences, alongside project updates and pertinent publications like member best practices compilations, public consultation submissions, and annual activity reports. Leveraging our social media channels, we effectively disseminate these resources, while also live-tweeting events and amplifying partner organizations' communications.

Twitter / X: **3412 followers** (+409)

LinkedIn: **2404 followers** (+750)

Facebook: **1097 followers**

## Participation in Conferences

**16 JAN** Horizon Europe info session for EUREGHA members.

**7 FEB** Cancer mission event young survivors.

**9 FEB** CoR Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing – Constitutive Meeting.

**15 FEB** AI for patient-centric personalisation of medicine: AI Applications to Improve Patient Journey.

**3 MAR** EUREGHA meets North Sweden-Vasterbotten.

**7-9 MAR** ProMIS Winter School 2023.

**16 MAR** CoR Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing “Discussing the proposal on establishing a European Health Data Space”.

**29 MAR** European Beating Cancer Plan: 2 years on.

**19 APR** Annual Meeting of the EU Health Policy Platform

**23 MAY** Final Conference of the BOOST project.

**22-24 MAY** International Conference on Integrated Care.

**30 MAY** Health InnoFacilitator workshop #1: The Process of Procurement of Innovation.

**8 JUN** Health InnoFacilitator Webinar – The EURIPHI project: an example of cross-border value-based innovation procurement action.

**19 MAY** IN-4-AHA Workshop “Public-private collaboration: Successful practices in up-scaling of innovation in AHA”.

**31 MAY** Euro Health Net Seminar “Growing strong in times of crisis”.

**8-9 JUN** Annual General Assembly.

**12-13 JUN** EUREGHA Annual General Assembly 2023.

**12-13 JUN** ONCODIR project kick-off.

**20 JUN** Health InnoFacilitator Workshop #2 – Legal aspects in the implementation of a PPI.

**21 JUN** Health InnoFacilitator Community launch event

**5 JUL** ProMIS Summer School 2023.

**6 JUL** CoR Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing “Discussing proposal for reforming EU pharmaceutical legislation”.

**8 SEP** PERISCOPE's Final Conference.

**18 SEP** Bridging the skills and talent gaps in the EU health industry at EIT House.

**19 SEP** How would a new European legal tool solve cross-border obstacles? – Beyond Borders, Webinar.

**27 SEP** Skills Partnership for the Health ecosystem – ProMIS.

**3 OCT** [Health InnoFacilitator Webinar: “Real cases of innovation procurement in the health sector: learnings and best practices”.](#)

**5 OCT** Health InnoFacilitator webinar on “Leveraging on best practices”.

**10 OCT** #EURegionsWeek Workshop on Promoting cross-border access to health services: Breaking barriers to cross-border cooperation.

**11 OCT** EUREGHA Workshop at the #EURegionsWeek: “Boost skills, embrace transformation: regions for green and digital skilling in healthcare”.

**11 OCT** #EURegionsWeek Workshop on Health data across borders: breaking barriers for cancer care.

**12 OCT** #EURegionsWeek Workshop on How the EU Cancer Mission can support regions.

**12 OCT** #EURegionsWeek Workshop on Working together for a healthy Europe by Enhancing Cross-Border Collaboration and Digitalisation.

**26-27 OCT** Brain Innovation Days 2023.

**17 NOV** WHO RHN Annual Meeting.

**20 NOV** Demographic Change Regions Network event “Health services delivery in demographic transition regions”.

**24 NOV** DG REGIO's Harnessing Talent Platform launch event.

**28 NOV** 1st workshop of the Pact for Skills: Large-scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem.

**30 NOV** CoR's Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing meeting on “The sustainability and greening of the EU healthcare systems”.

**5 DEC** EUREGHA Annual High-Level Conference “Beyond 2024: discussing the future of EU health policy and innovation from the regional and local perspective”.

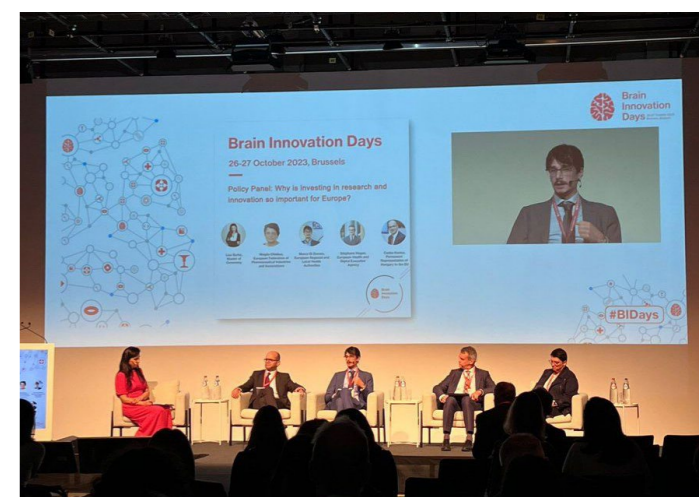
**11 DEC** 5th European Value-Based Procurement Conference.



**EUREGHA's Director, Michele Calabro', speaking at ProMIS Winter School in Trieste (IT), 9 March 2023.**



**Michele Calabro' and Marco Di Donato participating in the PERISCOPE Final Conference in Brussels, 8 September 2023.**



**EUREGHA's Policy and Project Officer Marco Di Donato at the Brain Innovation Days in Brussels, 26 October 2023.**

**EUREGHA is the reference network for European regional and local health authorities.** It brings together a critical mass of knowledge and expertise and encourages diversity to help our members to improve the efficiency and quality of health systems and services in Europe.

## EUROPEAN REGIONAL AND LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES

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# Our members

**Apulia (IT)**

**Basque Country (ES)** **NEW MEMBER**

**Catalonia (ES)**

**Emilia Romagna (IT)**

**Flanders (BE)**

**German Speaking Community of Belgium (BE)**

**GGD South Limburg (NL)**

**Liguria (IT)**

**Lower Austria (AT)**

**Northern Ireland (UK)**

**Podlaskie (PL)**

**Östergötland (SE)**

**Scotland (UK)**

**Skåne (SE)**

**Tuscany (IT)**

**Veneto (IT)**

**Viken (NO)**

**Wales (UK)**

*Associate Members:*

**Cross-border Institute of Healthcare Systems & Prevention - CBI (NL)**

**The Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives - CESCO (HU)**

**Association of Kosovo Municipalities – AKM (RKS)** **NEW MEMBER**

