



Dear colleagues

This edition follows the Board meeting held on 15 February, when we finalised our planning for this month's General Assembly kindly hosted by the Medical Chamber of Slovenia.

In February, we published the [Winter 2024 edition](#) of our magazine, looking ahead to the European elections with our five ambitions to continue building the European Health Union, particularly highlighting our call to tackle the health workforce. In the editorial our Vice President, Dr Martin Balzan encapsulates his solution in three key messages: we need more, better and happier doctors. We are also honoured to include a guest article by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU and an interview with MEP Sara Cerdas.

We also share news of our advocacy on the EU Air Quality Directives and the European Health Data Space plus much more in this month's edition.

Dr Christiaan Keijzer
CPME President



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Finances

Draft 2023 final accounts

- ▶ The Board reviewed the draft final accounts for 2023 after the external audit.

The result is a deficit of 5750 EUR. It was agreed that this is a more positive outcome than initially expected. The Board closed the accounts and forwarded them for approval to the General Assembly.

Draft 2024 budget

- ▶ The Board took note of the revision following the decision to reduce vice-presidential and treasurer fees by 50%.

Preliminary 2025 budget

- ▶ The Board requested the Secretary General to present a calculation of estimated salary cost increases ahead of the presentation to the General Assembly.

Internal Affairs

Rules of Procedure

- ▶ The Board agreed to proceed with the draft provisions for the update to the Rules of Procedure (RoPs) as amended.

The discussion confirmed that the proposals should be presented to the general assembly for further discussion and will feed into the general revision of the RoPs.

Planning for General Assembly in March 2024

- ▶ The Board discussed the draft agenda for the next General Assembly in Ljubljana, 22-23 March 2024.

Expressions of interest to call for Rapporteurs and WG chairs

- ▶ The Board confirmed the application by Adv. Leah Wapner as co-rapporteur on independence of the medical profession.

Policies

Council of Europe consultation on respect for autonomy in mental healthcare

- ▶ The Board decided to submit comments on the draft Recommendation on respect for autonomy in mental healthcare by the Council of Europe's (CoE) Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO).

The Recommendation aims to provide common principles to promote a human rights-based approach in mental healthcare, safeguarding the rights and self-determination of persons with mental health problems.

Transparency in relations with pharmaceutical sector

- ▶ The Board decided to support the proposal for the creation of national transparency registers for the relations between pharmaceutical industry and healthcare professionals in a voting recommendation for the revision of the General Pharmaceutical Legislation.

The Board also agreed to support amendments which limit the proliferation of free samples in line with the 2014 policy. The voting recommendations will be further updated by the Secretariat for dissemination. To respond to the European Parliament's timeline, this will be published ahead of the General Assembly.

Revision of the General Pharmaceutical Legislation

- ▶ The Board took note of the analysis of the revision of the General Pharmaceutical Legislation.

It was highlighted that all CPME amendments had been tabled by MEPs. Current discussions focused on compromise amendments but timelines were increasingly tight to conclude negotiations ahead of the parliamentary elections as planned.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2024

Quality of Basic Medical Education

- ▶ The Board was informed that the preliminary outcomes of the members' survey indicate support for a policy on the quality of basic medical education.

The results will be processed into a concept note for discussion at the CPME meetings in March.

Independence of the medical profession

- ▶ The Board decided that the co-rapporteurs will present a draft statement on the independence of the medical profession to the General Assembly in March for decision.

Call for evidence on the Report on the General Data Protection

Regulation

- ▶ The Board took note of a [response](#) to a call for evidence on the Report on the General Data Protection Regulation, considering a comment from the WG Digital Health.

The CPME rapporteur on data, Dr. Sjaak Nouwt suggested revisiting this issue at the next WG meeting to allow further exchange of experiences between NMA's on the GDPR implementation. If new issues appear, CPME would then request a meeting with the Commission's unit responsible to convey the additional information.

Council of Europe report on the impact of AI in patient-doctor relationship

- ▶ The Board took note of a response to the Council of Europe, informing that all points of the response were based on CPME positions.

An additional point was received by a WG member after the CPME submission, which was submitted in addition to the official response.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2024

H-PASS Advisory Board invitation

- ▶ The Board decided not to participate in the Advisory Board of the “Health Professionals’ and the Digital Skills Advancement” (H-PASS) EU-funded project for the time being.

The Board agreed to revisit the invitation request in six months.

National surveys

- ▶ The Board took note of responses to questionnaires circulated by CPME on behalf of national medical associations.

The Norwegian Medical Association circulated a questionnaire that aims to gather insights on specialist training in EU countries and the Czech Medical Chamber made a survey on the benefits for overtime work.

Panhellenic Medical Association

- ▶ The Board agreed to follow the Panhellenic Medical Association’s (PhMA) request for support for the opposition to ‘clawback’ mechanisms which reduce some doctors’ income through imposed rebates.

The Secretariat will prepare a draft statement for decision at the general assembly and liaise with the PhMA. The Board also agreed to forward an invitation by the PhMA to host the CPME meetings in October 2025 to the General Assembly for decision.

European doctors' magazine tackles health workforce crisis

The [Winter 2024 edition](#) of our magazine, looks ahead to the European elections with our five ambitions to continue building the European Health Union, particularly highlighting our call to tackle the health workforce.

To emphasise the challenge now and for the future, the European Junior Doctors provide a stark reality-check in a guest article presenting a study revealing widespread dissatisfaction and job disillusionment. In the editorial our Vice President, Dr Martin Balzan encapsulates his solution in three key messages: we need more, better and happier doctors. He reflects on over 25 years experience at the Medical Association of Malta, where in recent years the country has reversed brain drain and made the profession more attractive for young Maltese graduates.

The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU has placed the crisis at the forefront of its agenda, the first time in over a decade a Member State has paid the topic such attention. Their guest article emphasises that sufficient health workers with the right skills are a basic condition for guaranteeing both access to healthcare for EU citizens and health emergency preparedness. The article also provides a wider overview of the health priorities of the Presidency.

In an interview, we spoke to MEP Sara Cerdas, a Portuguese medical doctor, to look back at her first term in the European Parliament and look forward to the next five years. She calls for a strategy for mental health and a standalone health committee with legislative power in the Parliament that truly considers the Health in All Policies approach.

In news from our members, the Bulgarian Medical Association reports on the conclusion of its successful national Congress, calling for 7 concrete actions to improve healthcare in Bulgaria. We are also privileged to have a guest article from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) about the 2023-25 Healthy Workplaces Campaign 'Safe and healthy work in the digital age' in which CPME is an official partner.

CPME advocates on EU Air Quality Directives

On 20 February, the EU Council presidency and the European Parliament's representatives reached a provisional political [agreement](#) on a proposal to set EU air quality standards. With the new rules, the co-legislators agreed to set out enhanced EU standards for 2030 in the form of limit and target values that are closer to the WHO guidelines and that will be regularly reviewed.

This is a step forward although CPME together with other health organisations has been advocating for a full alignment with the WHO recommendations. The agreement still needs to be confirmed by both institutions for formal adoption. This will hopefully take place before the EU elections. CPME joined a joint [press release](#) and President Dr Christiaan Keijzer was [quoted](#) by the Guardian.

European doctors call for more ambition on professional secrecy and patient confidentiality in EHDS

CPME [published](#) a statement highlighting key aspects for the trilogue negotiations on the European Health Data Space (EHDS), to ensure a positive impact for healthcare. Whilst European doctors welcome the recognition of the principles of professional secrecy and patient confidentiality in the non-binding part of the regulation's text, the opportunity to expressly devote an article on them should not be missed.

The statement also stresses that to provide safe healthcare, the European Health Record needs to signal that information has been restricted. European doctors therefore strongly support the Council's approach on the right to restrict access and information on access. European doctors further support the European Parliament's approach on medical liability, on protecting the vital interests and rights of health professionals, and on prohibited purposes. CPME regrets that small enterprises have not been exempted from providing data for secondary use, but see positively the solution proposed by the Council of "health data intermediation entities" to relieve healthcare professionals of this task.

European Medicines Agency requests healthcare professional organisations to monitor medicine shortages

EMA’s Executive Steering Group on Shortages and Safety of Medicinal Products (MSSG) recommended to continue close monitoring of the availability of several antibiotics and medicines used for treatment of fever in children. EMA is requesting patient and healthcare professional organisations to report any early signals of disruptions in supply for these medicines.

We invite you to report any such shortages to CPME secretariat@cpme.eu so they can be passed on to EMA.

Antibiotic	Situation
Amoxicillin/clavulanic acid	<e.g. Member states X, Y, Z: limited/no availability of paediatric formulations requiring HCPs to switch to <X > as alternative antibiotic treatment >
Azithromycin	
Clarithromycin	
Cefotaxime	
Ceftriaxone	
Piperacillin/tazobactam	
Paracetamol and ibuprofen in formulations such as syrup and suppositories	
Cough syrups for children	

MONITORING

The Secretariat monitors the news and uploads [weekly monitoring reports](#) the members' section of the website. In the following pages we include a selection of the most relevant news items.

EU Political Outlook

Poland focused its health priorities ahead of its 2025 EU Presidency

Poland's [priorities](#) for its 2025 Presidency are set to focus on the digital transformation of healthcare, the promotion of preventative measures, and addressing healthcare challenges linked to demographic changes. Poland will probably also oversee progress of ongoing efforts in comprehensive drug safety and the adoption of the package on the pharmaceutical legislation.

The European Council cuts budget of programmes impacting health and social priorities

Heads of State decided to redirect funds towards defence, security, and Ukraine, resulting in a 20% cut to programmes including EU4Health, cohesion funds, and Horizon Europe. Several [MEPs](#) and [civil society organisations](#) have expressed their disagreement and concern after this decision.

The European Commission appointed an EU SME envoy

[Markus Pieper](#), the newly appointed EU envoy for small and medium enterprises, will provide guidance and advice to the Commission on SME issues. He will also advocate for SME interests, including a reduction of their bureaucratic burden.

MONITORING

Council approved conclusions 'EU Global Health Strategy: Better Health for all in a changing world'

The Council [conclusions](#) emphasise that the EU and its Member States must play a leading role in ensuring that global health remains at the top of the international agenda, through political leadership, financial contributions, and technical expertise. They also advocate for a horizontal approach including peace and security, agriculture, climate, education, research, nutrition, social protection, trade, and water. CPME has provided input to the process.

The WHO Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) issued a statement on Gaza

The [statement](#) reports that more than three quarters of the population has been forced from their homes, and face severe shortages of food, water, sanitation, and healthcare. As of 19 February, only 12 out of the 36 hospitals with inpatient capacity are still functioning, most only partially. There have been more than 370 attacks on healthcare in Gaza since 7 October. The statement emphasises the need for an immediate cease-fire.

MONITORING

Professional Practice and Health Systems

WHO Europe launched a framework for action on the health and care workforce

An [event](#) entitled “Better working conditions for healthcare professionals in the European Union” was organised in the European Parliament to kickstart this framework. It aimed to highlight the difficult working conditions that healthcare professionals in the EU are facing and explore solutions for improvement. Five key actions that countries can take to help health professionals were discussed:

- Retain and recruit: improve working conditions, reduce heavy workloads, reduce excessive hours, more flexibility in contracts, and fair remuneration.
- Build supply: modernise healthcare education and training, including digital competencies.
- Optimise performance: increase efficiency of limited numbers of health workers available with digital technologies and by redefining teams and skill mixes.
- Plan: strengthen the capacity of human resources for health units and improve information systems
- Invest: increase public investment and optimise the use of funds, while making the economic and social case for investing in the health and care workforce.

France wants to grant working Visas to foreign doctors

France is going to [regularise](#) the situation of foreign doctors to combat medical deserts and the shortage of doctors, as announced by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal on 30 January. According to the hospital unions, between 4000 and 5000 doctors with qualifications from outside the EU are currently working in French public hospitals, representing around a quarter of all practitioners.

MONITORING

Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare

Council endorsed new measures to help prevent shortages of medical devices

The Council endorsed [key updates](#) to the regulation on medical devices aiming to prevent shortages and increase transparency and access to information. Some amendments include the extension of transition periods for certain in-vitro diagnostic medical devices, a gradual roll-out of the new electronic database for medical devices EUDAMED, and new requirements for manufacturers to flag potential shortages of critical medical devices.

One year left to transition to the new EU system for clinical trials

All ongoing clinical trials in the EU [must be](#) transitioned to the Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS) by 31 January 2025. To help sponsors make the transition, there is [guidance](#) available, a [best practice guide](#) for sponsors of multinational clinical trials, and [additional support materials](#). CPME [commented](#) on the technical problems with the CTIS last year.

The European Medicines Agency launched a platform to support data collection on sales and use of antimicrobials in animals

As of January 2024, all Member States in the EU and EEA [must](#) submit data on sales and use of antimicrobials in animals annually to the Antimicrobial Sales and Use (ASU) platform. The EMA will publish annual reports showcasing the main results of the analysed data, with the first report expected in March 2025. It will also develop a public interactive database that will help to further disseminate the outcomes of the ASU platform data analysis.

MONITORING

A project on antimicrobial resistance was launched under EU4Health

The project is called [JAMRAI2](#) and focuses on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and healthcare-associated infections. It aims to reduce the risk of exposure of citizens to antibiotic-resistant bacteria and will be supported with €50 million from EU4Health.

The WHO published the Medically Important Antimicrobials (MIA) list for human medicines

The [WHO MIA List](#) guides international, national and subnational antimicrobial stewardship efforts. It complements the WHO AWARe (access, watch, reserve) framework and antibiotic book which provide guidance on appropriate use of essential antibiotics within the human health sector. The list categorises antimicrobial classes based on their importance for human medicine and according to the AMR risk and potential human health implications of their use in non-human sectors.

European agencies report highlights the importance of reducing antibiotic use

The [report](#), co-written by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Food Safety Agency, and the European Medicines Agency, shows that countries that have decreased their consumption of antibiotics in both animals and humans have seen a reduction in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The report is based on the One Health approach and calls for continued efforts to tackle AMR at national, EU and global levels across the human and food-producing animal sector, harmonised surveillance of antimicrobial consumption and AMR in the human and animal sectors, and further studies to understand the spread of AMR.

MONITORING

The WHO launched a data visualisation dashboard on AMR

The [Dashboard](#) of the Global AMR and Use Surveillance System presents a comprehensive dataset of AMR up to 2021. It summarises resistance rates for 23 antibiotics, and provides insights into the implementation status, quality assurance, and standards of national AMR surveillance systems.

The European Commission called for feedback on a draft act on marketing authorisations for pharmaceuticals

This [draft act](#) reviews the rules for post-authorisation changes to a marketing authorisation for medicines for human use. The aim of the revision is to make the lifecycle management of medicines more efficient.

The European Medicines Agency started a pilot scheme for three non-profit developers of advanced therapy medicines

The EMA has accepted [three academic and non-profit organisations](#) developing advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMPs) into a pilot scheme. The agency hopes to guide non-commercial developers of promising ATMPs addressing unmet medical needs through the regulatory and scientific requirements of the EU and facilitate the development of their medicines.

MONITORING

The Heads of Medicines Agencies and the EMA launched two catalogues of real-world data sources and studies

The [catalogues](#) help medicines regulators, researchers and pharmaceutical companies to identify the most suitable data sources to address specific research questions and support the assessment of study protocols and results.

The Parliament adopted two reports on medicinal products

MEPs [adopted](#) two reports on supplementary protection certificates (SPC). SPCs are an intellectual property right extending a patent for an authorised pharmaceutical product by up to 5 years. The reports aim to facilitate the obtention of SPCs by reducing fragmentation and administrative burden for companies filing for this extension, thereby fostering innovation.

Public Health and Disease Prevention

ECDC reports that high vaccination coverage is key against expected increase of measles cases in EU

Measles cases are [expected](#) to continue increasing in the EU/EEA in the coming months due to sub-optimal vaccination coverage, high probability of importation from areas experiencing high circulation, and the coming months being the seasonal peak of the virus. At least seven deaths have been reported from 2 countries.

Council and Parliament strike a deal on “Breakfast directives” with new rules on composition, labelling, and naming on certain foods

The [directives](#) cover honey, fruit juices, fruit jams and milk. They aim to promote a shift to healthier diets, help consumer make informed choices, and ensure transparency on product origin.

WHO reports warns about the rise of disinformation in public health emergencies

The [report](#) explores disinformation in the context of public health emergencies during Covid-19. It proposes 3 steps to address this issue: awareness-raising and capacity building, adopting globally accepted terminology, and strengthening international partnerships and collaborations.

MONITORING

The European Commission failed to publish a proposal on smoke-free environments

On 31 January, the proposal on smoke-free environments was pulled at the last minute. This means that novel tobacco and nicotine products, such as e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches and heated tobacco products, keep enjoying the same liberties that cigarettes had in the past. The Commission's Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, published three years ago, promised a number of tobacco control actions such as the revisions of the EU Tobacco Tax Directive (TTD), the EU Tobacco Products Directive (TPD), and the legal framework on cross-border purchases. None of these have been delivered. [According](#) to the Smoke Free Partnership (SFP), the tobacco industry's interference is undeniable. CPME is a partner of the SFP Coalition.

European Ombudsman's finds maladministration regarding the European Commission's meetings with tobacco lobbyists

The ombudsman [signalled](#) that the Commission's failure to take a consistent approach across all its departments to comply with its obligations concerning the transparency of interactions with tobacco industry representatives constitutes maladministration. This included the failure to keep and make available minutes of meetings with tobacco interest representatives, as well as the failure to ensure a systemic assessment, across all directorates-general, as to whether potential meetings with tobacco industry representatives are needed.

Canadian Cancer Society released the 8th edition of its report "Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report"

The [report](#) ranks 211 countries and territories based on the size of the health warnings on their cigarette packs. The report finds that the implementation of plain packaging and graphic picture warnings, measures which have proven effective, are on the rise.

MONITORING

European Commission partially registered a European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) on cannabis

The [initiative](#) calls on the Commission to foster access to medical cannabis and allow the transportation of cannabis and its derivatives prescribed for therapeutic purposes, and to allocate the resources for researching cannabis for its therapeutic purposes. Following this registration, the organisers have a year to collect one million signatures required for the Commission to act.

European Commission presented recommendations for 2040 emissions reduction targets

The Commission published possible [pathways](#) to reach the goal of climate neutrality by 2050. It recommends a 90% net greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2040 compared to 1990 levels. A legislative proposal is to be made by the next Commission, as agreed under the EU Climate Law.

The Scottish government has published new Vaping Ban Regulations

The [ban](#) will cover the sale and supply of single use vapes in Scotland. The goal of these new regulations is to reduce vaping among non-smokers and young people and take action to tackle the environmental impact of single use vapes. The Smoke Free Partnership, of which CPME is a member, has welcomed this development, underlining that this will be a useful precedent for other countries looking to ban disposable e-cigarettes.

The WHO announced recommendations for influenza vaccines

The WHO offered [recommendations](#) for the viral composition of influenza vaccines for the 2024–2025 influenza season in the northern hemisphere. The recommendations issues are used by the national vaccine regulatory agencies and pharmaceutical companies to develop, produce, and license influenza vaccines for the following influenza season.

MONITORING

Updated WHO benchmarks for strengthening health emergency capacities expanded to include public health and social measures

The [updated document](#) was published to support the implementation of the International Health Regulations and the health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience capacities. The benchmark now includes public health and social measures as a critical new technical area.

A project on non-communicable diseases was launched under EU4Health

The project is called [JAPreventNCD](#) and focuses on prevention and non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental health issues. It aims to monitor factors leading to cancer and other NCDs, with a view to reduce social inequalities. It will be funded with €76 million from EU4Health.

MEPs and Council adopted new rules on harmful substances at the workplace

The Parliament and the Council [adopted](#) new exposure limit values for lead for the first time in 40 years, and for diisocyanatos for the first time ever. The Directive will apply retroactively to workers who have high blood lead levels and provides further protection to women of childbearing age.

An EU-funded study explores the rise of home deaths during the Covid-19 pandemic

The [study](#) examines trends in places of deaths for adults in 32 countries, comparing pre-Covid years to 2020–2021. According to the study, the rise in home deaths can be linked to the increased pressure faced by hospitals and health institutions during the pandemic, as well as to families pondering the pros and cons of hospital admissions given the risk of infection and restricted visits.

MONITORING

WHO released new guidance on monitoring the social determinants of health equity

The WHO released an [operational framework for monitoring social determinants of health equity](#) and actions addressing them. This framework aims to support countries in evidence-based policymaking to improve health equity. It reviews previous research and work on the topic, offers a menu of indicators, and indicates a step-by-step process for technical monitoring.

Dr Pamela Rendi-Wagner nominated as new Director of European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Before her appointment, Dr Rendi-Wagner will be invited to make a statement before the European Parliament and answer the questions of MEPs. Her biography can be found [here](#).

WHO Europe and the European Commission defined priority areas for further cooperation

Commissioner Stella Kyriakides and WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge [met](#) early this February to reflect on further strengthening the strategic collaboration between their two organisations in light of current key issues in public health. Areas of shared interest include security against health emergencies and threats, accessible and resilient health systems, comprehensive response to non-communicable diseases with a focus on cancer, and cooperation with non-EU countries in the WHO region.

MONITORING

The Commission is calling for NGO representatives to join the Advisory Forum of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

The goal of this [call](#) is to appoint members of NGOs representing patients, professionals, and academia to the Advisory Forum of the ECDC for a 3-year mandate. The Advisory Forum advises the Director of the ECDC on the quality of the scientific work undertaken by the agency and is composed of representatives of national public health institutes and agencies.

The Commission published two reports on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

The Commission published an updated [roadmap](#) summarising all actions taken under the 7 priorities of the Plan with the prospective timeline, as well as a [report](#) summarising conclusions from the high-level conference hosted by Commissioner Kyriakides in January on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

The Commission opened a call for actions to prevent non-communicable diseases

The Commission invites EU-level health associations to [present their ideas](#) to reduce the NCD burden, covering health promotion, socioeconomic and commercial determinants of health, mental health, and prevention of NCDs. The call is part of the Commission's [Healthier Together – EU NCD](#) initiative. A selection of the submissions will be presented during a [stakeholder webinar](#) on 20 March.

MONITORING

Digital Health

Swedish stakeholders worried about the cost of European Health Data Space (EHDS)

Swedish sources [confirmed](#) that an agreement on the EHDS proposal should be reached in March, but that several issues are still open, including the implementation times and costs for several elements. There is little technical interoperability between caregivers and IT solutions in Sweden today, meaning that the necessary information does not always follow the patient as they interact with different healthcare professionals. Stakeholders are working on calculating the costs of implementing the EHDS.

WHO reports outline responses to cyber-attacks on healthcare

The [report](#) examines the threats of cyberattacks on healthcare during the Covid-19 pandemic, aiming to provide a clearer understanding of health security risks and reduce their likelihood and severity. The report highlights that IT infrastructure is increasingly targeted by cyber-attacks, at times hindering hospitals from delivering timely care, and that enhancing cyber-maturity is necessary to address the growing digital risk to healthcare.

WHO introduced a Health Technology Access Pool (HTAP)

The WHO announced the [HTAP](#) as the successor to the Covid-19 technology access pool. It incorporates structural and processing changes that will enable it to attract and support a diverse range of priority technologies more effectively. The HTAP will promote access to health products that respond to public health priorities including pandemic preparedness.

MONITORING

European Court of Human Rights ruled that disclosure of identities and medical data was a breach of right to private life

11 Greek nationals, of which 10 were sex workers, seized the Court for breach of right to private life. They were arrested in Greece and underwent medical screenings, during which they were diagnosed with HIV. They were charged with attempt to inflict serious bodily harm, and their names and photographs were made public, as well as the reasons for the criminal proceedings and a reference to their HIV-positive status. The applicants complained about the dissemination of sensitive personal and medical data. The Court [considered](#) that the publication of this data had amounted to disproportionate interference with their right to respect for private life and was not justifiable by the declared claim of “protection of the rights and freedoms of others”.

WHO meeting report on mental health with guiding principles for developmentally-appropriate online content for young people

The [report](#) provides a detailed summary of discussions from a roundtable exploring themes, challenges and opportunities in defining and applying principles for online communication that promotes and protects young people’s mental health. Due to limited research on audiences under 13 years, the report focuses on discussing evidence and experience primarily in relation to young people aged 13–17 years.

The UK government announced the ban of mobile phones in schools.

The UK government is looking to minimise disruption in classrooms and improve the behavior of students. To this end, mobile phones are [set to be prohibited](#) in schools, including at break times.

MONITORING

The Commission launched a Transparency Database Update to monitor the implementation of the Digital Services Act

The Commission has launched a new user interface of the DSA Transparency Database and a new interactive [dashboard](#) that makes it easy to access summarized information on statements of reasons submitted by providers of online platforms. These statements notably explain to users why access to content has been removed or restricted.

DG SANTE published lessons learned from cross-border contact tracing during Covid-19

The [study](#) examines the process and digital technologies used at national, EU and international level for cross-border contact tracing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The goal is to identify areas where EU-support is needed, strengthen the EU's health security framework and assess the feasibility of linking national and EU-level digital technologies.

The European Economic and Social Committee adopted an opinion on digitalization of social security systems.

The opinion refers to the Commission's [Communication](#) from September 2022, taking stock of the currently available tools and initiatives for the digitalization of social security systems and setting out mid-term and long-term visions for this process. The EESC's [opinion](#) highlights the limitations of current administrative practices and advocates for a simplification of cross-border social security and healthcare coordination through digitalization, while accounting for the risk of digital exclusion.

MONITORING

Ukraine

WHO Europe expressed concerns on the increasing impact of attacks on health and education in Ukraine

Since February 2022, the WHO has documented 1552 attacks on health and impacting health providers, supplies, facilities, warehouses, and transport in Ukraine. WHO Europe [declared](#) that they were “deeply concerned about the recent drastic increase in attacks impacting civilians and civilian objects across Ukraine, in particular health and education facilities”.

European Commission signed an agreement with Ukraine to provide specialised support for rare diseases

Under this [administrative agreement](#), Ukrainian healthcare providers will be able to seek advice for patients with rare or complex diseases from members of the European Reference Networks. The initiative aims to contribute to capacity building and best practice sharing with Ukraine and will be funded with grants totalling €77.4million.

The WHO and Ukraine released a Cooperation Strategy for 2024–2030

This [plan](#) will focus on strengthening health systems and financing, looking towards EU accession. The strategy outlines the WHO’s commitment to support Ukraine in its efforts to reform the health system, emphasizing the need for investment in healthcare infrastructure, workforce development, and implementation of reforms to align with EU standards.

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