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# PRESS RELEASE

# Ministerial Conference on Citizenship, Ethics and Health Data, 2 February 2022

**The European Union sets out a framework of trust as a basis for digital health**

Digital health must be used to improve the health and well-being of both humanity and the biosphere. In light of this aim, the health ministers of the EU and the European Commission, through Sandra Gallina, Director-General of DG SANTE, the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, who was representing the Commissioner for Health, Stella Kyriakides, and Roberto Viola, Director General of DG CONNECT, commended the adoption of the European principles for ethics in digital health at the conference on “Citizenship, Ethics and Health Data”. Several countries from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Area (EEA) also participated. These principles were approved by the eHealth Network, which was already responsible for implementing the EU COVID certificate. This represents a major step forward for digital health in the EU.

The network[[1]](#footnote-1), established by the EU Directive on cross-border healthcare[[2]](#footnote-2), is composed of EU Member State representatives responsible for digital health.

Proposed by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 16 European principles for ethics in digital health, reflecting European values, were thus adopted with rapid consensus. These principles, presented in a simple and straightforward style, are directly addressed to the EU citizen and incorporate four ethical dimensions: “placing digital health within a framework of humanist values”, “enabling people to manage their own health data digitally”, “developing inclusive digital health”, and “implementing eco-friendly digital health”. The principles do not concern security and interoperability aspects, which are addressed elsewhere. They will be regularly updated. The eHealth Network will continue its work and propose ways to implement these principles at its meeting in Paris on 1 and 2 June.

These European ethical principles for digital health will be a tool for improving mutual understanding to facilitate discussions on the future European regulation on the European Health Data Space.

At the launch of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the President of the French Republic called for building a stronger Europe and founding its ambitions on shared values. These convictions are furthermore at the heart of the roadmap for digital health on which France has drawn for three years. The French Presidency’s strategy for digital health in the EU thus fully fits into these two dynamics.

This conference was an opportunity for health ministers and the European Commission to recognise the importance of these principles to satisfy EU citizens’ requirements for trust.

1. <https://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/eu-cooperation/ehealth-network_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:088:0045:0065:fr:PDF> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)