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Doctors at a distance: EU healthcare gets technology prescription

Healthcare systems across Europe and how patients interact with medical professionals via technology received a big boost today with the launch of the European Commission's 'eHealth Action Plan'.

eHealth allows patients to consult their doctor and be monitored from a distance, enables consumers to take greater control over their healthcare by way of mobile apps and gives them easier access to their health records. eHealth also includes electronic prescriptions and new information systems which reduce waiting times and error rates.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC commented:

"eHealth solutions can significantly improve safety and quality of care. It's not only to the benefit of patients, but healthcare systems win too on efficiency and cost.

"At the same time, the storage of sensitive health information opens the door to potential risk and poses many challenges that need to be addressed. It's crucial that the medical information given by the patient is securely protected. It should not risk falling into the hands of unauthorised parties.

"For consumers to trust eHealth solutions we need robust data protection rules, wider access to the internet, reliable IT networks and awareness campaigns on its benefits and risks. If these conditions are met, then eHealth can be the future."

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