



Press Release

ALEC2010
First international conference on Regions' e-he@lth

Luleå - Norrbotten (S), 5 February 2010.

The Assembly of European Regions' (AER) e-he@lth network has organised the first international e-he@lth conference that targets directly the regions and their partners. Over 200 regional politicians, officers, university experts and entrepreneurs from across Europe have come to the Arctic Light E-health Conference (ALEC2010) in Norrbotten (S) to share their successes and mistakes and discuss how they can work together to make e-health a reality for all citizens.

"The ultimate goal of the AER e-he@lth network is to improve our citizens' health and quality of life. E-health allows us to harness the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and to provide healthcare where our citizens want it and when they need it. Our citizens are at the centre of our work: we want to give them the knowledge and the tools they need to make informed decisions about their health," said **Agneta Granström**, Chairperson of the AER e-he@lth network and County Commissioner of Norrbotten County Council (S).

AER member regions are true incubators for innovation in healthcare. The Province of Noord-Brabant (NL) decided to act as a catalyst for the development of smart care in the region, even though this area is not listed among their primary competences. They have created a platform where regional, commercial and healthcare organisations, as well as user/patient associations, can work together to develop innovative responses to the challenges posed by demographic change and an ageing population.

Regions are cooperating to bring down borders in healthcare. The Canton of Basel-Stadt (CH) is working with neighbouring Germany on a pilot project that will allow citizens to receive medical treatment on the other side of the border. The obstacles they encountered ranged from creating acceptance among the health professionals to amending their respective legal systems, which previously did not allow patients to seek treatment abroad. Their experience has shown them that it is important to adopt an incremental approach to change, taking one step at a time, involving health professionals and end users from the very beginning and communicating success.

ALEC2010 aimed to shape the regions' e-health agenda for the coming years. *"The debates of the past two days have emphasised the importance of cooperation. We have the technology and we have the entrepreneurs. Our role as regions is to make sure that they create the e-health tools that our citizens and patients really need. If we all work together around the same table, we can make sure that e-health delivers not only quality healthcare, but also economic gains for our regions. The AER e-he@lth network will develop an education programme for regional politicians, to increase knowledge about how e-health can be successfully implemented across regions. There is no future without e-health,"* concluded Agneta Granström.

All presentations made during this event will be available shortly at:
<http://www.aer.eu/en/events/health-social/2009/ehealth-nll.html>

*The **Assembly of European Regions (AER)** is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organisations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation.*

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