COCIR
Advancing Healthcare

PRIORITY ACTIONS ON HEALTHCARE

2024-2029

COCIR, the European Coordination Committee of the Radiological, Electromedical and Healthcare IT Industry

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WHO WE ARE

COCIR is the European Trade Association representing the medical imaging, radiotherapy, health ICT and electromedical industries. Founded in 1959, COCIR is a non-profit association headquartered in Brussels (Belgium) with a China Desk based in Beijing since 2007.
COCIR represents corporate members and more than 10 national trade associations, together constituting more than 2000 companies.

VISION

Personalised and sustainable care that benefits patients, health professionals and healthcare systems.

MISSION

Our industry delivers innovative, data-driven, safe and efficient diagnostic imaging, radiotherapy and digital health solutions.

Our objectives are as follows:

- To support the transformation of European health systems, enabling better health outcomes and better experiences for patients and professionals.
- To promote the critical role of our industry as providers of essential or life-saving products and solutions for patients.
- To strive for the best innovation climate for our industry in Europe.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS DO

COCIR has a long tradition in supporting standardisation and inter-operability in healthcare, and COCIR sectors have been at the forefront of developing innovative technologies, such as the use of AI in digital health and imaging.

MEDICAL IMAGING

X-RAY

X-rays are the oldest and most widely used medical imaging technique. X-rays were discovered in 1895 and first used to visualise human tissue in 1896. They rely on ionising radiation to send beams through the body; depending on the density of the tissue, the X-rays are absorbed at different rates thus producing images of a person's internal structure.

COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (CT)

Also commonly referred to as a CT scan, Computed Tomography is an imaging technique that combines multiple X-ray images from different angles to produce detailed, three-dimensional cross-sectional internal images. The first CT scanner for medical use dates from 1972.

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI)

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a technology that uses radio waves and a magnetic field to provide detailed images of organs and tissues. The first magnetic resonance image was taken in 1973, and the first MRI scanner for medical imaging was developed in 1977.

MOLECULAR IMAGING

Molecular imaging is a diagnostic tool that allows metabolic processes to be visualised by administering small amounts of radioactive pharmaceuticals. This technique generates functional images.

ULTRASOUND

Diagnostic ultrasound, also known as medical sonography or ultrasonography, uses high-frequency sound waves to create images of the inside of the body. The ultrasound machine sends sound waves into the body and is able to convert the waves that echo back into a picture. The first image created with this technique was published in 1952.

DIGITAL HEALTH

Digital Health is a wide and evolving umbrella term that encompasses a broad range of products and services including:

- electronic health (eHealth)
- big data
- genomics
- artificial intelligence
- telehealth
- telemedicine
- mobile health (mHealth)

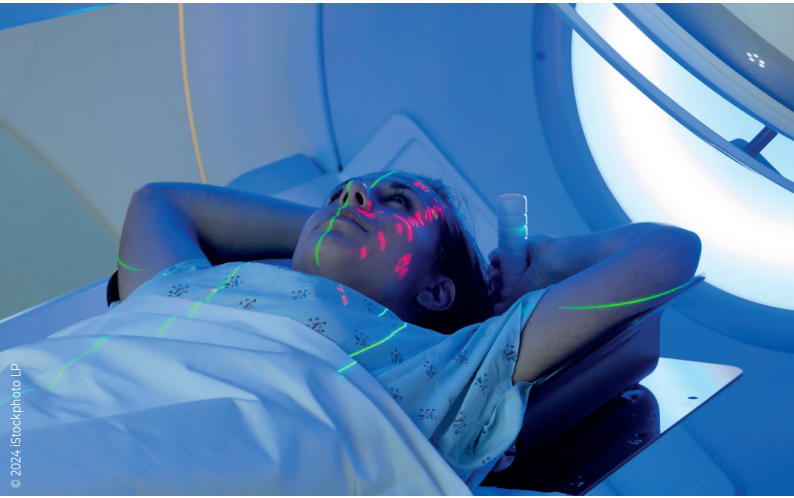
IMAGE-GUIDED THERAPY

RADIATION THERAPY

Radiation Therapy (RT) has evolved to be one of the essential therapies for cancer treatment. It uses photons from X-rays to impact the tumour and destroy its genetic material thus preventing its further growth.

- External beam therapy
- Particle therapy
- Brachytherapy

ROBOTIC SURGERY



WHAT WE ASK

COCIR envisions personalised and sustainable care that benefits patients, health professionals and healthcare systems.

We support the objectives of a strong European Health Union: common preparedness and response to health crises, availability of innovative medical supplies, and improvement of prevention, treatment, and aftercare [1].

Here we offer five core recommendations to European policy- and decision-makers to make these common objectives a reality.

1. KEEP THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) ATTRACTIVE TO INNOVATION

Medical technology companies operate in a very dynamic sector. They contribute significantly to the EU's GDP and create highly skilled jobs, know-how and attractive innovation eco-systems across the EU. Our products underpin the functioning of healthcare systems and enable broad access to diagnosis and care.

EU R&D financing through the Horizon programmes and the **Innovative Health Initiative (IHI)** is critical and needs to be expanded. The EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) should include a dedicated and integrated roadmap for funding the resilience, sustainability, and health innovation of healthcare systems. Healthcare infrastructure investments via the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds should be enhanced. The RRF and the Cohesion Policy are essential mechanisms for steadily reducing health inequalities across the EU.

1. Source : European Commission *https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-health-union_en.*

2. SUPPORT A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

We ask the European institutions to critically assess the shortcomings of the **Medical Device Regulation (MDR)**, with a particular focus on the digital transformation and the green transition. Collaboration with the industry to ensure proper implementation is key. Our shared goal is a harmonised and effective framework that ensures patient safety and access to medical devices, prevents shortages, fosters innovation, and maintains a robust medical device industry in Europe. A strong internal market should ensure a sufficient level of harmonisation across EU Member States and avoid any market fragmentation.

To achieve a successful **digital transformation**, the **AI Act** should be implemented in coordination with the MDR, avoiding duplication of administrative procedures and removing unnecessary administrative burden and red tape. European healthcare systems should effectively implement national data spaces and embrace the opportunities provided by the European Health Data Space, whose implementation should be supported by an **EU roadmap for digitalisation of healthcare**, while encouraging the effective and secure use of cloud services. The review of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) should achieve a better harmonisation of data protection and privacy.

The European Union must ensure a legal framework that promotes growth and competitiveness and fosters research and development of new medical technologies that can enable the **green transition** of health systems while at the same time improving access to better healthcare for patients. Such a transition must support the ecosystem in which medical devices are developed. It should not be limited solely to Europe but should aim to be global, fostering sustainable trade by systematically including provisions in each of the sustainability chapters of trade agreements to incentivise green innovation.

3. RECOGNISE THE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY SECTOR AS CRITICAL FOR HEALTHY POPULATIONS

Our industry needs continuity of supply chains and priority access to raw materials and components. In times of crisis, supply should be prioritised to produce medical devices as an essential sector. We also need to establish innovation procurement to address the broad disparities in equipment density amongst European countries. Strategic stockpiling of medical equipment at EU level should be established so that it can be quickly activated in response to health emergencies and other crisis situations.

4. SUPPORT THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Our industry develops high-tech medical devices and healthcare services for a global market and needs support in achieving global regulatory convergence and in removing trade barriers. The European institutions should abolish tariffs for medical products on a permanent basis, ensure open supply chains, and address market barriers in third countries.

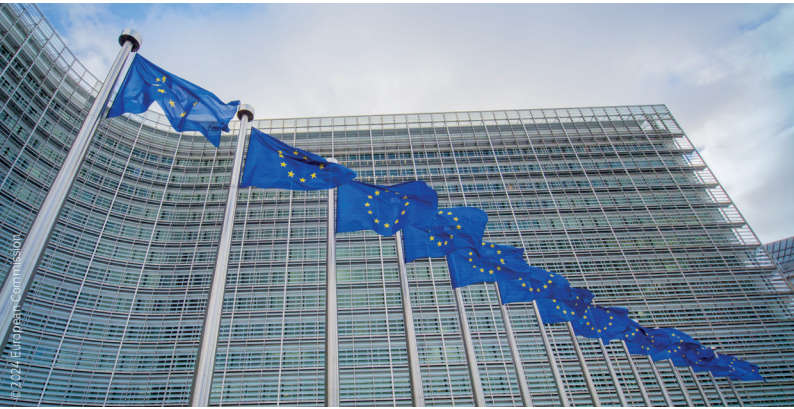
Harmonised international standards are an essential tool for global convergence and global market access for European companies. Mutual Recognition Agreements with relevant jurisdictions help improve patients' access to safe and effective medical devices, while reducing the burden on companies to demonstrate compliance with legislation.

5. LEAD ACTION AGAINST NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

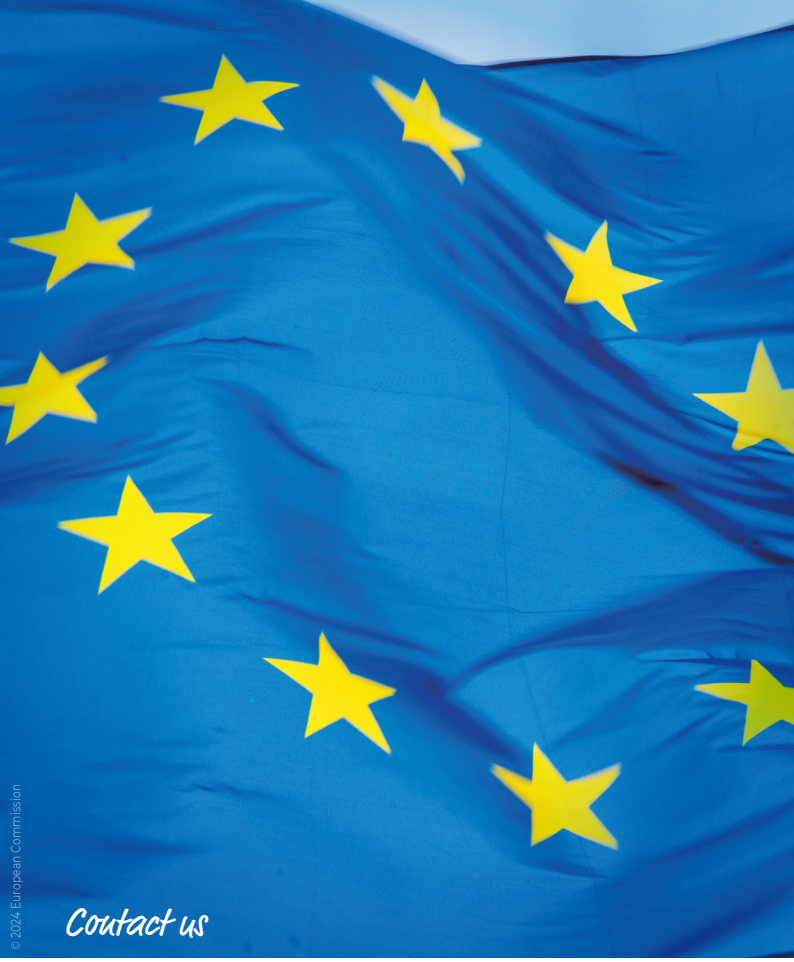
Europe needs to strive to achieve the target of Sustainable Development Goal 3.4 on noncommunicable diseases, to reduce premature mortality by one third through prevention and treatment.

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death globally. An estimated 17.9 million people died from CVDs in 2019, representing 32% of all global deaths. Of these deaths, 85% were due to heart attack and stroke[2]. Access to prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases is uneven across the EU Member States.

While continuing to build on the achievements and maintaining momentum on the ongoing implementation of the Beating Cancer Plan, the EU should target cardiovascular diseases as a health priority for the next mandate, and propose an **EU cardiovascular health plan** embracing prevention, early detection, treatment and after-care. COCIR is ready to provide its input to the plan and to work with stakeholders to achieve its objectives.



2. Source: WHO *https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-(cvds)*



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