

ECA Assessed EU Funding for Digitalisation of Healthcare

Thomas Wahl



News

EU support for Member States to digitalise their healthcare systems was overall effective, but EU funds were difficult to use due to the number of different rules. These are the main findings in the [European Court of Auditor's \(ECA's\) Special Report No 25/24](#) which was released on 20 November 2024.

The ECA's audit assessed not only whether the EU policy framework provided Member States with clear objectives and support, but also whether the Commission helped EU countries to identify and use the EU funds available to finance e-health projects, and monitored progress in healthcare digitalisation, including the use of EU funds by the Member States. The report voiced overall satisfaction with the promotion of the digitalisation of healthcare during the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods so far. The auditors found that the Commission provided effective support and guidance overall, and the audited projects in the selected countries (Spain, Malta and Poland) contributed to the digitalisation of healthcare.

However, given that different EU programmes with different rules finance projects on healthcare digitalisation, made it difficult for some Member States to identify the EU funds available, and created obstacles for them when applying for funding. Problems further arose because neither the Commission nor most Member States have a comprehensive overview of the EU funds used for healthcare digitalisation projects. As a result, it has been difficult to establish the extent of EU financial support in the Member States. Shortcomings also existed with regard to the tracking of progress in healthcare digitalisation, in particular due to different methodologies applied for indicators and benchmarks.

The ECA recommended that the Commission should especially improve its reporting on the use of EU funds for healthcare digitalisation across the various financing programmes by 2026.

ECA's Special Report 25/24 is connected to its [2019 report on EU actions for cross-border healthcare](#). In its 2019 report, the ECA concluded that although EU actions in cross-border healthcare enhance Member States' collaboration, the benefits for patients were limited.

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