



## **European Society of Radiology**

### **Call for a European Action Plan for Medical Imaging**

The European Society of Radiology (ESR) calls on the EU institutions to focus on the reforms necessary to achieve and strengthen innovative and sustainable health systems.

We believe that this is necessary in order to improve access to better and safer healthcare for citizens, to promote good health, to prevent disease and to protect Europe's citizens from cross border health threats, in accordance with the provisions of the multi-annual programme *Health for Growth 2014-2020*, as well as the EU's *Horizon 2020* research programme.

A 'European Action Plan for Medical Imaging' targeting harmonisation in regard to quality and safety, education and training, as well as research and technology, will significantly improve European healthcare systems, and will ensure better quality and safety for European patients.

#### **Quality & Safety**

More targeted and more efficient use of medical imaging techniques will not only reduce unnecessary exposure to radiation, and thereby help prevent harmful effects, but it will also improve health outcomes through better diagnosis and more effective treatment. To ensure this is achieved consistently across member states, common indicators and parameters should be developed at the European level.

Improving and harmonising quality and safety in medical imaging across Europe directly contributes to the EU's health objectives of delivering improved healthcare quality and patient safety. The ESR has launched the EuroSafe Imaging campaign ([www.eurosafeimaging.org](http://www.eurosafeimaging.org)) to raise awareness of the importance of radiation protection, and to enhance quality and safety in imaging to improve patient care.

The quality of the imaging equipment available in Europe is a key aspect in this context. Updating and upgrading existing equipment will increase access to better healthcare, and raising awareness of radiation protection and promoting best practice in keeping radiation doses as low as possible while maintaining image quality, will improve healthcare for patients.

Efforts to improve quality and safety in imaging must include a focus on effective communication with patients. The ESR serves as a role model for collaboration with patient groups at the European level, having established a standing patient advisory group in 2013. Better communication and increased engagement with patients regarding healthcare decisions are key aims of the ESR's EuroSafe Imaging campaign.

To improve quality and safety in medical imaging, the ESR calls on the EU institutions to:

- Support the establishment of European quality and safety indicators, as well as imaging parameters that include specific criteria for imaging procedures.
- Support audit of imaging equipment, doses, image quality, procedures etc. of the medical imaging chain in Europe, and develop plans to modernise and improve the equipment base within member states.
- Support efforts to improve communication with patients.
- Improve and streamline inter-institutional cooperation for more coherent action within the area of health and medical imaging.
- Support the EuroSafe Imaging campaign ([www.eurosafeimaging.org](http://www.eurosafeimaging.org)) to raise awareness of the importance of radiation protection.

## **Education & Training**

The ESR fully acknowledges the need to promote intra-EU mobility of professionals in order to support the *Europe 2020* strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Concerning the radiology profession, it is essential that quality of care and patient safety are adequately secured in cross-border employment situations.

The ESR has developed a European Training Curriculum for Radiology (ETC), a living document, which is regularly updated and fully compatible with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Commission's Guidelines on Radiation Protection Education and Training of Medical Professionals in the European Union ([No. 175](#)).

In accordance with the ETC, the ESR has established the European Diploma in Radiology (EDiR) as a complement to established national qualification processes. EDiR is a test of knowledge deemed appropriate by the ESR for independent practice in general radiology. It allows individuals to gain an additional qualification, particularly in countries and societies that do not yet have an accredited national professional qualification.

To enhance the mobility of imaging professionals in the EU through training and education, the ESR calls on the EU institutions to:

- Support the harmonisation of radiology training across the EU by endorsing the European Training Curriculum and the ESR European Diploma in Radiology.
- Support mandatory continuous medical education (CME) and continuous professional development (CPD) for medical professionals throughout the EU.

## **Research**

Medical imaging plays a crucial role in the era of personalised medicine; a role that has been undervalued by policy makers thus far. From clinical trial design to individualised cancer treatments, the ESR calls on decision makers to fully recognise the important role of imaging in the development of personalised medicine, and to fully integrate medical imaging into policy making processes in this area.

The era of personalised medicine and biobanking has led to diverse heterogeneity of data, and the integration of imaging and 'omics' data has become essential. There is a strong need for

a structured repository for imaging data, in order to facilitate personalised medicine, clinical trials, and the evaluation of new drugs.

The ESR calls on the EU institutions to:

- Recognise medical imaging as an integral part of personalised medicine.
- Support the standardisation, as well as the technical and clinical validation, of imaging biomarkers.
- Support the development of European biobanks in medical imaging to simplify access to knowledge; improve interoperability, standardisation, and data management; and ensure a harmonised approach to quality assurance of data.
- Develop methods of integrating these data with 'omics' databases with the ultimate goal of achieving full integration of imaging data with the heterogeneous data generated by using 'omics' technologies.

## **eHealth**

Advances in information technology (IT) have revolutionised healthcare in general and within radiology in particular, but have also brought about new challenges regarding data volume, standardisation, data protection, etc. that require harmonisation efforts on a European scale. Teleradiology is increasingly being integrated into clinical workflow, and the current technological possibilities and European political agenda are paving the way for cross-border telemedicine services including teleradiology. Consequently, a need is arising for European standards regarding, quality, safety and liability issues, as well as the definition of teleradiology as a medical act.

The ESR calls upon the EU institutions to:

- Endorse the development of Clinical Decision Support (CDS) systems to improve clinical workflow, appropriateness criteria and training for referrers.
- Support the harmonisation of coding and terminology.
- Foster semantic interoperability.
- Support the further development of picture archiving and communication systems (PACS) in order to ensure harmonised standards in data transmission and reporting.

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The European Society of Radiology (ESR) is an apolitical, non-profit organisation, dedicated to promoting and coordinating the scientific, philanthropic, intellectual and professional activities of radiology in all European countries. The Society's mission at all times is to serve the healthcare needs of the general public through the support of science, teaching and research and the quality of service in the field of radiology. The ESR is the European body representing the radiology profession with more than 62,000 individual members and acts as the umbrella organisation of all national radiological societies in Europe as well as Europe's subspecialty organisations in the field of radiology.