Digital technology is fully part of our modern society, and the EU's role is to ensure the right conditions for allowing digital developments to flourish. To this end, we adopted the Digital Single Market Strategy in 2015.

We are now at the half way point. And the mid-term review published today highlights areas – including digital health and care – where further efforts are needed.

There are three key proposals for improvement on the health aspect of the Strategy with a strong focus on eHealth.

The first one relates to the right of every citizen to access and share securely their personal health data.

52% of EU citizens want online access to their health records, according to a survey published today.

Electronic health records will empower patients, and help improve clinical practice and continuity of care, by giving health and care practitioners a more comprehensive view of the patient’s medical background and history.

Whereas the infrastructure for cross-border exchange of e-prescriptions and patient summaries should be operational by 2020, the report calls on the Commission to intensify efforts to ensure that all citizens can, in full privacy and confidence, access and transfer their complete electronic health record when receiving healthcare abroad.

Secondly, regarding big data for health, the report highlights the potential of the European Reference Networks (ERNs).

I have launched these networks in March this year in order to pool medical expertise and data for faster diagnosis and treatment of rare or complex diseases. These are diseases which affect around 30-40 million Europeans.
These networks are based on virtual collaboration. They use telemedicine tools and create valuable European data sets for research, development, and future clinical trials.

We would like to set up a strategy for the potential research use of patient data gathered by these Networks.

It is heartening to note that 70% of EU citizens are ready to share their health data for research and better treatments.

**The third proposal is to facilitate feedback and interaction between patients and healthcare providers.**

We are keen to support digital solutions that gather user feedback and foster interaction between patients and healthcare providers, to advance promotion of good health and prevention of diseases; and quality, patient-centred care.

We aim to specify these actions further in a dedicated **Communication on digital health** by the end of the year.

Another area of great potential is **Health Technology Assessment**, a key tool to help policy makers use limited resources wisely, finding a balance between granting access to innovation and ensuring the sustainability of healthcare systems.

HTA is highly relevant for eHealth and telemedicine. The Commission has already supported work in this area, and we are working towards greater coordination in evidence generation.

We are keen to make all of this happen. The EU provides the necessary support through funding and by providing collaborative networks where Member States work together and share knowledge and expertise.

But we need the support, knowledge and expertise of all stakeholders and every EU country to help drive eHealth forward.