IHE-Europe Deployment Committee Activity Report

Date Activity Report Issued: 21 March 2022

Vision of IHE-Europe

A world with seamless and secure access to health information that is usable whenever and wherever needed.

Mission of IHE-Europe

The mission of IHE-Europe is to guide clinicians, health authorities, industry, and users in order to reach healthcare interoperability in Europe.

To fulfil its mission, IHE-Europe has the following strategic goals:

- IHE-Europe is the premier organisation of knowledge in healthcare interoperability in Europe.
- IHE-Europe promotes the knowledge and use of the IHE methodology through which IHE transforms international standards into testable specifications for which both tooling and related services are available from the IHE ecosystem.
- As such, it helps national and European stakeholders and policymakers in adopting and promoting the use of the IHE methodology to foster interoperability.

Objectives:

- supporting European IHE National Deployment Committees in their mission by facilitating the sharing of information and experiences
- broaden the European interoperability ecosystem
- promoting and facilitating the creation of testable specifications in European-level projects and supporting related activities
- organising the IHE Connectathon Week in Europe, together with the IHE National Deployment Committees
- recruiting users and developers at the European level to participate in IHE-Europe and in testing activities organised throughout Europe.
- incubating services in support of interoperability testing
- liaising with IHE Catalyst in order to help identifying the tools needed by IHE-Europe members
- relaying innovative ideas on interoperability within the IHE ecosystem
- interacting with relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations in Europe and maintaining close contacts with similar initiatives around the world.

Sponsors of IHE Europe

IHE-Europe has two benefactor organisations:

ESR	Founded in 2005, the European Society of Radiology (ESR) is an apolitical, non-profit organisation, exclusively and directly dedicated to promoting and coordinating the scientific, philanthropic, intellectual and professional activities of radiology in all European counties. ESR's mission at all times is to serve the health care needs of the general public through the support of science, teaching and research and the quality of service in the field of radiology. With more than 125,000 individual members across the globe as well as 64 Institutional and 53 Associate Institutional (non-European) members, it has grown to become the largest radiological society in the world and hosts one of the biggest and most innovative scientific meetings in Europe, the European Congress of Radiology (ECR), in Vienna each year. www.myesr.org **Key role:** ESR provides the Secretariat of IHE-Europe in their offices in Vienna and coordination support of the General Assembly and all Committees of IHE-Europe.
COCIR	COCIR is the European Coordination Committee of the Radiological, Electromedical and Healthcare IT Industry. A non-profit trade association created in 1959, COCIR encourages the use of advanced technology to support healthcare delivery worldwide. COCIR's key objectives include promoting worldwide trade of medical devices and maintaining the competitiveness of the European health sector. www.cocir.org **Key role:** COCIR is a long-time supporter of IHE in Europe with which IHE Europe strategically cooperates, especially at EC level.

IHE International Board Representative

Name of Representative: Lapo Bertini, Dedalus
Email: lapo.bertini@ihe-europe.net
Term ends: No term end

Date first recognized by IHE International Board

IHE-Europe was created in 2001 and incorporated as a not-for-profit association in 2008, before the creation of IHE International and was one of the founding members of IHE International.

Organisation of IHE-Europe

IHE-Europe Chairs
User Co-Chair: Stéphane Spahni, IHE Suisse
Vendor Co-Chair: Andreas Klingler, Siemens Healthineers

IHE-Europe Deputy Chairs
User Deputy Co-Chair: Peter Mildenberger, ESR
Vendor Deputy Co-Chair: Jürgen Brandstätter, IHE Austria

Financial Officer
Peter Hacker, Tiani Spirit

Financial Manager
Els Kooij

Executive Committee
Stéphane Spahni, IHE Suisse
Andreas Klingler, Siemens Healthineers
Peter Mildenberger, ESR
Jürgen Brandstätter, IHE Austria
Peter Hacker, Tiani Spirit

MarCom Committee
Chair: Esther Peelen, Nictiz
Vice-Chair: Karlien Erauw, IHE Belgium

IHE-Services Committee (in place until summer 2021)
Chair: Charles Parisot, InteropHealth
IHE-Services Director: Alexander Berler

EU Affairs Committee
Chair: Pieter Devolder, IHE Belgium

Tools and Testing Strategy (T^2S) Committee
Chair: Anne-Gaëlle Bergé, Kereval

IHE-Europe Director of Interoperability (until the end of 2021)
Karima Bourquard

Representative to the IHE Catalyst General Assembly
Charles Parisot, InteropHealth

Representatives to the IHE Catalyst Board
Lapo Bertini, Dedalus
Peter Mildenberger, ESR

IHE-Europe Secretariat
Martina Szucsich
Phone: +43-1-533-4064-43
Email: secretariat@ihe-europe.net

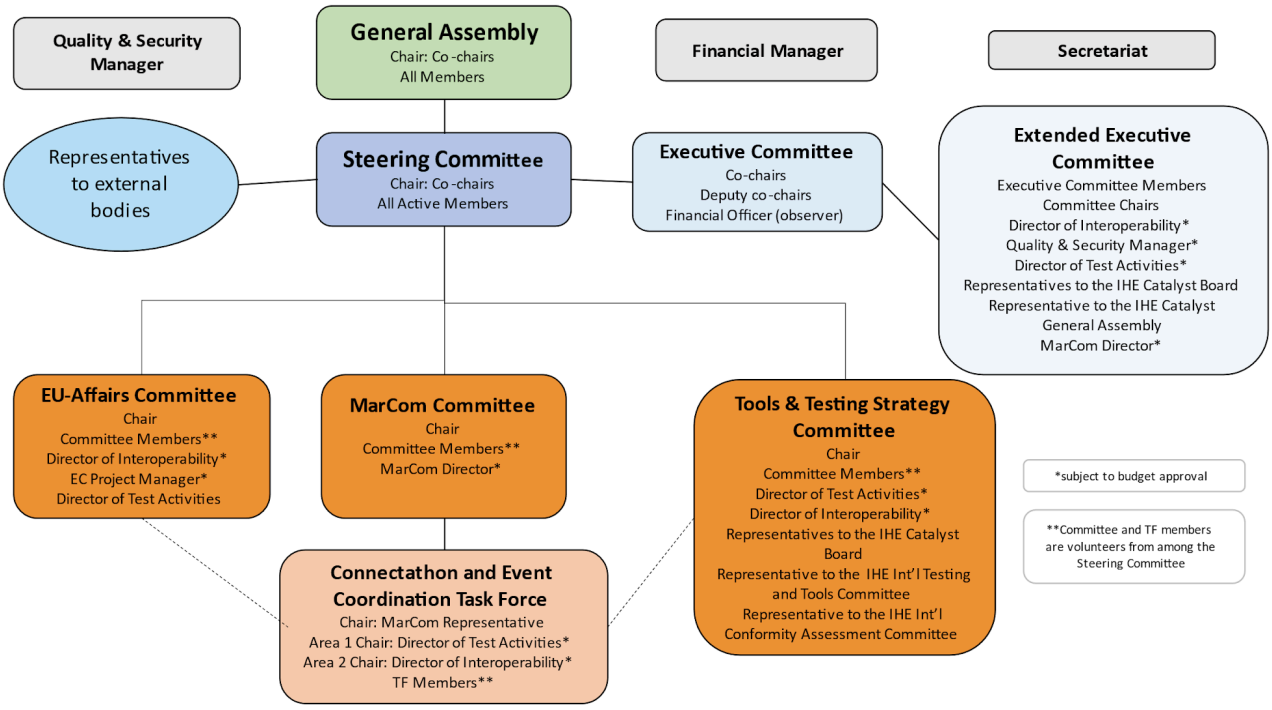
Governance

IHE-Europe is a not-for-profit association (aisbl) established under the laws of the Kingdom of Belgium which operates according to its Statutes and Internal Rules. The association is governed by a Steering Committee composed of all Active Members. Active Members of IHE-Europe pay an annual membership fee, while Associate Members are those members that do not pay membership fees and therefore do not have voting rights. Associate Members who are National Deployment Committees have the right to attend the Steering Committee meetings as observers. The General Assembly is composed of all members (active and associate) of the association and meets twice a year. The IHE-Europe Steering Committee usually convenes every month via teleconference and, if possible, twice a year face-to-face. The Executive Committee handles day-to-day operational executive tasks and is composed of two Co-Chairs and the two past/deputy Co-Chairs. The Financial Officer is a permanent observer at the Executive Committee. The Financial Manager attends Executive Committee meetings. The Co-Chairs are elected for a 2-year mandate, renewable once.

The Extended Executive Committee consists of the Executive Committee, the chairs and vice-chairs of Committees, the Financial Officer, Financial Manager, Director of Test Activities*, the Quality and Security Manager*, the MarCom Director*, the Director of Interoperability, the two representatives to the IHE Catalyst Board and the representative to the IHE Catalyst General Assembly. The various Committees of IHE-Europe are coordinated by and report to the Steering Committee. The Secretariat is based in Vienna/Austria and provides daily administrative and coordination support to all Committees.

*positions not assigned as of March 2022

Structure



European Connectathons

2001: Charenton-le-Pont, Paris, France
2002: Villejuif, Paris, France
2003: Aachen, Germany
2004: Padova, Italy
2005: Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands
2006: Barcelona, Spain
2007: Berlin, Germany
2008: Oxford, UK
2009: Vienna, Austria
2010: Bordeaux, France
2011: Pisa, Italy
2012: Berne, Switzerland
2013: Istanbul, Turkey
2014: Vienna, Austria
2015: Luxembourg
2016: Bochum, Germany
2017: Venice, Italy

2018: The Hague, The Netherlands
2019: Rennes, France
2020: Online (originally planned for Brussels, Belgium)
2021: Online
2022: Joint Connectathon, Switzerland + USA

Support and Interest by Stakeholder Groups

IHE-Europe members as of March 2022:

Users (Users' Associations)

Entscheiderfabrik (GUIG) www.guig.org
European Association of Hospital Managers (EAHM) www.eahm.eu.org
European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) www.eahp.eu
European Society of Radiology (ESR) www.myesr.org
GS1 Netherlands https://www.gs1.nl/
Nictiz https://www.nictiz.nl/
Société Française de Radiologie (SFR) www.sfrnet.org

Vendors (and Vendors' Associations)

Agfa Healthcare www.agfa.com
Arsenàl.IT www.consorzioarsenal.it
A-Thon www.a-thon.it
COCIR www.cocir.org
Computer Team SA https://www.cteam.gr/en/

Dedalus www.dedalus.eu
GE Healthcare www.gehealthcare.com
Gnomon www.gnomon.com.gr
Grapevine www.grapevineworld.com
InteropHealth www.interopehealth.com
Kereval www.kereval.com
Philips Healthcare www.medical.philips.com
Siemens Healthineers https://www.siemens-healthineers.com
Tiani Spirit GmbH www.tiani-spirit.com
VISUS www.visus.com
x-tention https://x-tention.com/en

National Deployment Committees (Active Members)

IHE Austria www.ihe austria.at
IHE Belgium www.ihe belgium.org
IHE Czech Republic https://www.ihe czech.cz/
IHE Finland www.hl7.fi/sig toiminta/ihe sig
IHE France www.interopsante.org

IHE Germany www.ihe-d.de
IHE Italy* www.ihe italy.org
IHE Luxembourg
IHE Netherlands www.ihe nl.org
IHE Spain**
IHE Suisse www.ihe suisse.ch

*applied for change of membership status to Associate Member
**exclusion process started

National Deployment Committees (Associate Member)
IHE United Kingdom www.ihe-uk.net

New member candidates are requested to complete an application form, including a declaration of acceptance of the IHE-Europe Statutes and Internal Rules and its annexes as well as a confirmation of their current IHE International membership. Membership applications are verified by the Executive Committee and validated by the Steering Committee prior to full acceptance by the General Assembly.

Activities and Achievements in the Preceding 24 Months

Marketing and Communication (MarCom)

The IHE-Europe MarCom Committee is tasked to provide marketing and communication support to IHE-Europe. This plays a vital role as communication is essential to IHE-Europe's mission to guide clinicians, health authorities, industry, and users in order to reach healthcare interoperability in Europe. The MarCom Committee provides support to the Connectathon and events (IHE-Europe Experience) marketing efforts, News Pulse, IHE-Europe website, IHE-Europe social networking channels, in addition to a variety of publications such as event and program flyers, the IHE-Europe 20th Anniversary paper, the Connectathon Whitepaper, etc. (all of which are available here).

The presentations given during the IHE-Europe Experience Sessions at the IHE-Europe Connectathon are made available to the public and form a valuable source of information.

Since 2019 the MarCom Committee has increased IHE-Europe's social media activities. The number of followers on both Twitter and LinkedIn is continuously growing. The current (January 2022) figures are:

- Twitter: 1092 followers
- LinkedIn: 2176 followers
- News Pulse: 804 subscribers
- YouTube Channel, most viewed video: IHE Catalyst: its value for users, governments and vendors: 155 views (January 22)

Cooperation

Since summer 2021 the MarCom Committee has had discussions with IHE International and IHE USA to materialize practical cooperation. The first step is the use of a joint social media calendar. This way we can share each other's messages and material and push forward joint messages into the globalized environment.

Future

To attract a younger and bigger audience we plan to create lively material such as videos, refresh the website's content and perform a campaign for the News Pulse. This way we will aim to consolidate and grow the presence and visibility of IHE-Europe to the relevant stakeholders.

Recognition of Monitors/Volunteer Contribution

In 2018, IHE-Europe started publishing large posters at the IHE-Europe Connectathon featuring the monitors to recognize their contribution to the success of the Connectathon. IHE-Europe continues to recognize the contribution of volunteers in regular News Pulses and during the Connectathon Week, it is a very important asset in enhancing monitors' visibility and an utterance of gratitude to their commitment.



Tools & Testing Strategy (T²S) Committee

The T²S Committee was established in September 2021, following the creation of IHE Catalyst to take on part of the IHE-Europe related tasks of the former IHE-Services Committee. These tasks include defining the testing strategy promoted by IHE-Europe and defining the test offerings of IHE-Europe, in particular the testing tools roadmap of IHE-Europe, to liaise with IHE Catalyst in order to ensure that the needs of IHE-Europe are recognized, potentially sponsor the development of test tools and offerings, to liaise with the IHE International Testing and Tools Committee and other relevant committees in order to ensure that the needs of IHE-Europe are recognized, and to provide information for technical decisions to be taken by the Steering Committee upon request by the Executive Committee.

The external projects performed by IHE Services in the past have been assumed by IHE Catalyst (see below).

IHE SHARAZONE

IHE SHARAZONE is a distinct, continuous object interoperability test offering that fully complements the IHE Connectathon. The IHE SHARAZONE is incubated by IHE-Europe in consultation with IHE International and the IHE Testing and Tools Committee.

IHE SHARAZONE uses a legal framework similar to that of the IHE Connectathon to support this continuous object interoperability testing between vendors. The concept is built on existing, well-proven tooling: a

dedicated IHE Gazelle capability. This is available globally 24/7 to registered vendors for selecting shared objects of interest and report testing results to the creators of these objects.

Currently the IHE SHARAZONE supports testing with DICOM objects. It is envisioned to expand the capabilities to other types of objects, e.g., FHIR resources or CDA documents, in the future.

IHE SHARAZONE registration has been open to all vendors since the launch on 1 November 2021. This has been preceded by intense pilot testing for several weeks engaging the 10 founder member vendors. The registration has a simple pricing model based only on vendor size, with a lower fee for vendors making objects available for testing by consumer products. Each vendor can register as many products / versions as they want.

IHE SHARAZONE enables vendors to perform their testing more easily; by being organised before products are released to the market. They can make sure applications can consume and display medical images coming from a variety of sources and from different vendors.

Vendors worldwide are invited to learn more about the IHE SHARAZONE and register one or more of their products. For further information on how to join see https://www.ihe-europe.net/IHE_SHARAZONE.

IHE-Services

Until the spin-off to the newly founded IHE Catalyst in summer 2021 as well as the creation of the IHE-Europe Tools & Testing Strategy (T^2S) Committee, the IHE-Services Committee had the mission to promote the deployment of IHE profiles within our member base and other beneficiaries such as national/regional programs in Europe by offering services. IHE-Services organised interoperability test sessions and developed interoperability test tools, leveraging more than 10 years of experience in these domains. This committee was open to Members of IHE-Europe for an additional fee. IHE-Services Director was Mr. Alexander Berler.

IHE-Services offered the following services to IHE-Europe Members: projectathons, Gazelle test-bed and tools, training, virtual Connectathons, the mentioned interoperability specification definition, test tools and test plans, interoperability showcases and Conformity Assessment (under IHE International). A fundamental operation engagement of IHE-Services was the support provided to IHE Connectathons (USA, Europe, Japan and China). IHE-Services' Connectathon support was a long-time commitment and integral part of the team activities.

IHE Catalyst

IHE Catalyst is a not-for-profit association formed by IHE-Europe and IHE USA and is set to be a catalyst in accelerating deployment and adoption of IHE to deliver interoperability quality in Health. As such, IHE Catalyst's mission is to support its members in IHE Connectathon planning, tooling, and technical operations, to deliver and support test platforms to deployment projects, and to accelerate rigorous testing adoption, including IHE Conformity Assessment. This mission is realized by the development of a robust test platform, associated consulting services, and methodology etc., as determined by its

members.
IHE Catalyst members are, as of November 2021, IHE USA and IHE-Europe but it is open to any IHE National/Regional Deployment Committee that is duly constituted as a legal entity in accordance with the laws and practices of its country of origin, is in good standing and reputation, is not a physical person, is a member of IHE International, is a not-for-profit organisation.

EU-Affairs Committee

EU-Affairs is a Committee of IHE-Europe with the mission to follow, understand, promote, influence the EU eHealth and Member States agendas as well as to educate and support national initiatives for the deployment of IHE profiles. This committee is open to Members of IHE-Europe and is attended by IHE-Europe's Junior Interoperability Solutions Architect S. Franconi. Coordinated by the EU-Affairs Committee, IHE-Europe membership has engaged in a number of European Commission sponsored projects directly related to ehealth and interoperability. These projects are the means to shape the interoperability agenda across Europe, expose a broader audience to IHE Profiles and testing support, as well as provide input for the evolution and creation of new profiles.

Since April 2021 the EU-Affairs Committee has benefited from a Junior Interoperability Solutions Architect as a permanent staff position for participating in European projects.

X-eHealth

Duration: 2020-2022

X-eHealth stands for "Exchanging Electronic Health Records in a common Framework" and is a European project with the objective to move towards a uniform interoperable data sharing format Framework. Four domains were selected (laboratory, radiology, hospital discharge and rare disease), managed by a consortium of 46 partners from Members States and Experts. X-eHealth is developing use cases, information model, clinical reports and services specifications for sharing those clinical documents in healthcare provider organisations, communities, cross-communities or cross-border. Based on the European eHealth Record Exchange Format (eHRxF), the X-eHealth project will deliver clinical content specifications developed with ART DÉCOR© and their corresponding testing tools to accelerate their uptake and **adoption in Europe.**

IHE-Europe is an active member of the X-eHealth project, with active participation of Ms. S. Franconi, and overseen by the EU-Affairs Committee. IHE-Europe leads Work Package 6 in X-Health that develops the X-eHealth content (laboratory report, diagnostic image report) and service specifications which is based on IHE Profiles and DICOM. IHE-Europe is also tasked to provide the interoperability testing tools for X-Health content and services specifications for Cross-Border exchanges of clinical documents and the X-eHealth Testing Strategy extended from eHDSI Testing Framework.

UNICOM

Duration: 2019-2023

The UNICOM project is helping to ensure that any medicine and what it contains can be accurately

identified anywhere in the world, by improving patient safety and facilitating better healthcare through ISO IDMP (IDentification of Medicinal & pharmaceutical Products) standards-based free flow of semantically interoperable Medicinal Product [MP] information. The concrete objectives are to support the implementation of IDMP (IDentification of Medicinal Products) at EU level & in Member States and facilitate mobility of European patients by cross-border ePrescription services adapted to IDMP for reliable dispensation.

IHE-Europe is an active member of the UNICOM project, with active participation of Ms. S. Franconi, and overseen by the EU-Affairs Committee. IHE-Europe is tasked to provide the interoperability specifications and testing tools for UNICOM specified Cross-Border content specifications and the coordination of various testing events that will occur during the project.

IHE-Europe Experience and Connectathon Week

In 2016, IHE-Europe created the concept of an "IHE Connectathon Week", designed to bring all stakeholders together in one place and to leverage the IHE-Europe Connectathon's unique features. It included the IHE-Europe Symposium, which further evolved towards IHE-Europe Experience day(s), a series of educational sessions given by invited expert speakers, organised for the first time in 2021.

So far, the following events have been held:

- 2015: at Med-e-Tel in Luxembourg alongside the European Connectathon in April 2015;
- 2016: in Bochum (Germany) in April 2016, during the European Connectathon Week;
- 2017: in Venice (Italy) in April 2017, during the European Connectathon Week (more information here).
- 2018: in Den Haag (The Netherlands) in April 2018, during the European Connectathon Week (more information here).
- 2019: in Rennes (France) in April 2019, during the European Connectathon Week (more information here).
- 2021: Online IHE-Europe Experience in June 2021, during the Online European Connectathon Week (more information here).

The IHE-Europe Experience is now a stable element of the new concept of the IHE-Europe Connectathon Week.

Connectathon 2021

IHE-Europe Experience

The IHE-Europe Experience offered a meeting space for all IHE-Europe members and non-members.



Want to know more about how IHE-Europe Connectathon can help your eHealth programme or project? Please contact IHE-Europe by email

Follow IHE-Europe on LinkedIn

Useful LINKS

- Connectathon Results
- Technical Registration & Resources
- Products Registry

The IHE-Europe Experience Sessions provided a unique 'meeting space' for all those interested in enhancing their understanding and knowledge of 'all things interoperability'.

Date: Tuesday 15, Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 June 2021

Notable Challenges

IHE-Europe is increasingly encountering general bandwidth problems in getting enough volunteers from member organisations for filling positions in our committees and taskforces (chairs, work items, etc.). Indeed, the workload has increased every year and it is not easy to identify enough return on investment for the participating volunteer's organisation. Workload is expected to be reduced due to the spin-off of IHE-Services to IHE Catalyst, but this has not materialized yet. This problem is especially acute for user organisations and in particular for the User Co-Chair position. One key action IHE-Europe is therefore working on is to identify and highlight the benefits for a user organisation to become a member of IHE-Europe and to actively contribute to its operation.

Additional measures may have to be investigated to be able to continue to operate IHE-Europe according to its statutes.

Other major challenges are the relatively low participation at the online Connectathons, the big uncertainty about future Connectathon participation in general, **and the need to coordinate with IHE USA to avoid cannibalising the Connectathons.**

Connectathon participants often do no find test partners, not least because of the lack of a clear IHE strategy to push certain profiles and withdraw/deprecate profiles which do not meet market demands (anymore).

Additionally, focus on FHIR draws vendors away from the IHE Connectathons (HL7 uses the term "FHIR Connectathon" for certain FHIR related activities which are performed completely differently than IHE Connectathons. This weakens the Connectathon brand value as a well-defined and supervised interoperability testing event for IHE Profiles between vendors.)

Planned Activities

As mentioned before, one key activity for IHE-Europe in 2022 will be the identification and consolidation of the benefits its members can get from participating in the Association. This should result in an enhanced dialogue in particular with IHE National Deployment Committees as well as user associations in

Europe. This will go along with the restructuring of the organisation in order to adapt it to the new landscape resulting from the spin-off of IHE-Services to IHE Catalyst. Based on the refined Vision and Mission of IHE-Europe (see above), the roles and tasks of our operational committees will be reviewed.

As in the past, IHE-Europe will continue looking for opportunities to participate in new projects / consortia in order to promote interoperability and the use of IHE Profiles. For projects where intensive specification work or operational activities are required IHE-Europe will partner with/subcontract IHE Catalyst, as the operational arm of IHE.

The next IHE Connectathon Week will be held from 12-16 September 2022 in collaboration with IHE USA in Montreux, Switzerland and the USA. Efforts will continue in alignment with IHE USA to establish, promote and carry out the Joint Connectathon to maximise participation and leverage the global IHE community.
The Connectathon Week will include several parallel conferences including IHE-Europe Experience sessions.

Another key activity in 2022 will be to continue incubating and promoting the IHE SHARAZONE to make it a successful IHE test offering in addition to the IHE Connectathons.