DAY OF THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS 2019
EESC – 13 November 2019
TRUST IN THE PROFESSIONS IN THE AGE OF DIGITALISATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

MAIN POINTS

Agreement on opportunities offered by AI:

- Cost reduction and consequent improvement in citizens’ health
- Less invasive operations with risk and time reduction
- Decrease in routine actions
- Efficiency, especially with digital therapies for chronic diseases
- Time-saving for pharmacists and more working time for direct patient care, identifying serious drug problems
- Facilitates interoperability, collaboration and integration within healthcare sectors and in relations with the public administration
- Learning and rationalising experiences to generate awareness
- Increase in the economic and social value of data
- Efficiency of reconnaissance projects on data analysis
- Enhancement of the ability to verify the authenticity of data and the compliance of data with rules/standards
- Damage detection in infrastructure
- Automatic adaptations within BIM systems
- Accident prevention
- Better mobility for people with disabilities
Issues to be taken into consideration:

- Quality of the database of AI applications (source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights)
  - Algorithms used in machine learning systems and AI can only be as good as the data used for their development. High quality data are essential for high quality algorithms
  - Being transparent about which data are used in AI systems helps to prevent possible violations
  - Bias occurring because of correlations applied by AI
  - All AI Systems have to be not only fully transparent but also reproducible
  - Perspective and requirements of professional practitioners needs to be included in development, design and validation of AI systems

- Particular issues concerning **personal and trustworthy provision of services** and **professional independence**:
  - Explanation of AI particularly for medical professionals – **informed consent**
  - Doctor-patient relationship – checking, explanation, justification of decisions
  - Protection of privacy and accountability of algorithms that need to be verified by outsiders
  - Potential conflict of interests: AI developers need data – professionals need AI
  - Bypassing the intermediation of the professionals means also renouncing critical thinking, intuition and subjectivity, creative and social intelligence, empathy

**Recommendations** to make sure that AI is used in the interests of the patients/clients insofar as **trust, reliability, responsibility, respect, data protection, no discrimination, ethical principles, competence, subsidiarity, protection of public interest** are enshrined in AI:

- **Professionals directly involved** in:
  - Formulation of digital policies and legislation as well as adaptation requirements for professional legislation at local, national and EU level
  - Establishment of criteria for assessment and evaluation of AI
  - Self-regulation and setting of quality standards with restrictions and sanction procedures in case of non-compliance
  - Development of AI from data-feeding to the final output
  - Design and control of information, communication and training of all stakeholders involved – including the final users (patients, clients) – on the functioning, opportunities, risks, challenges of AI in general
  - Design of specific sectoral professional training
  - Formulation of adequate (financial / infrastructural) support measures to ensure smooth digitalisation processes for liberal professions
• Support for the following needs:
  o Substantial public regulation of AI and its societal consequences
  o Adequate space for professional categories to exercise their ethical autonomy and play their role as intermediary bodies
  o Continuous professional training of professionals
  o Training and cultural preparation of young people in schools and universities
  o Infrastructure investment to bridge the gap between small operational entities and major professional groups

• Challenges for the legislator for a consumer-centred AI:
  o Efficiency, security standards and regulation change less rapidly than AI
  o Striking the right balance between binding regulation and soft law to adapt to change
  o Open and constant dialogue and involvement of civil society stakeholders – professionals, consumers, research ethics committees – in regulation, setting criteria and standards, assessments

• Next steps:
  o Possible EESC own-initiative opinion on the implications and opportunities of AI for professional services in Europe.