

A patient wait

Germany's healthcare industry is heading for a digital revolution despite the challenges of data protection

Berlin (GTAI) - For international investors, Germany's healthcare industry can look like a once-in-a-business-lifetime opportunity. A huge market in a country built around a top-quality digital infrastructure, a robust system looking after an ageing population and a national willingness to embrace innovation and change in the digital age. Germany's notoriously strong data protection laws have been a handbrake on his process for some time now, but progress continues to be made.

As recently as the start of this year, patients in Baden-Württemberg have been able to have a telephone or electronic consultation with doctors instead of the time-consuming face-to-face scenario, using apps such as Teleclinic. Privately insured patients have been able to get their prescriptions online after teleconsulting, then sent to the nearest convenient chemist. In Hamburg, one of the major health insurance companies has allowed doctors to send in the statutory sick-notes electronically as well.

Baby steps, but with all the other building blocks in place, Germany promises to be an ideal location for investment over the next few years. More and more European countries are unlocking their data regulations to enable the digital revolution in the medical industry, with Germany certain to follow suit. "Fundamentally, the health industry is embracing digital change, regardless of the challenges that data protection laws create," said Julia Pietsch, Manager of Digital Health at federal economic agency Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI).

"With the largest population in Europe, one which is also ageing, Germany is a key market for digital health solutions. The infrastructure, knowledge and workforce to support R&D is all in place. Generous government benefits enable investors in the digital health industry to come to Germany and continue value-creating operations patiently while these data protection challenges are overcome. "Once the system is in place – and we are now seeing from other countries that it is possible – companies with an investment in the German market will be in prime position to take advantage of the opportunities."

These opportunities will be discussed in depth at the conhIT – Connecting Healthcare and IT trade show in Berlin this week at the International Networking Lounge, hosted by GTAI. Most pertinently to potential foreign investors, there will be a panel discussion on the afternoon of Wednesday April 18 at 14.00 CET, where several investors will present their success stories and share their experience on how they managed to successfully enter the German healthcare market.

The international Networking Lounge will be located in Halle 4.2, where Ms. Pietsch and her colleagues will also be on hand to answer any enquiries you may have regarding the German healthcare industry.



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