

# Preface

Dear readers,

In recent years, the integration of digital technologies into healthcare, known as e-health, has revolutionised how we manage and deliver medical services. From electronic patient records to telemedicine and electronic prescriptions, e-health encompasses a wide array of innovations aimed at improving healthcare accessibility, efficiency, and patient outcomes.

The publication **“E-health Development in Asia and Europe,”** published by the Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia (KAS PDA), delves into this rapidly evolving field, offering a comprehensive exploration of digital healthcare initiatives across two continents.

As editors, we have curated a collection of chapters that examine various aspects of e-health, comparing strategies and experiences from diverse countries and regions. As such, we provide a starting point for readers and interested parties to explore how to draw on best practices in e-health developments in both Asia and Europe, and how to advance our healthcare systems respectively for the benefit of our patients and society as a whole, in the spirit of mutual learning between the two regions.

It has become evident that the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of digital health solutions, such as in the field of contact tracing, checking of vaccine status and telemedicine consultations. It specifically accelerated the adoption of telehealth services, remote patient monitoring, and digital communication tools in healthcare settings globally. These advancements not only facilitated continuity of care during lockdowns but also highlighted the potential of e-health to transform healthcare delivery beyond the crisis. Most of the technologies adopted during COVID-19 – as we witnessed and as we will learn in the chapters below – are here to stay.

*“Digital Healthcare Advancements in Germany and Europe: Boosting Competitiveness in the Global Pharmaceutical Market?”* looks at Europe’s role as a pioneer in leveraging digital innovations to enhance healthcare outcomes and its attempt to maintain its status as a primary location for pharmaceutical companies (especially in Research & Development) within the global market. The author argues that the use of secondary healthcare data in a fully-integrated European Health Data Space can boost Europe’s pharmaceutical sector and ultimately its economy. Meanwhile, *“Addressing Challenges in mHealth Implementation: Comparative Analysis of ASEAN and EU Approaches”* provides a comparative lens on mobile health strategies, highlighting regional nuances and best practices. Some of the case studies are highly

context-specific and might not necessarily constitute a template, but they provide a general direction and idea.

Regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in shaping digital health adoption, as explored in *"Digital Health Regulatory Framework in Southeast Asia."* Additionally, *"Factors Influencing E-health Development in Asian Countries: A Comparative Analysis and Policy Implications"* sheds light on the socio-economic factors influencing e-health adoption in diverse Asian settings.

It goes without saying that inclusive and collaborative approaches are essential for sustainable e-health development and for gaining patients' trust, as evidenced by the insights from *"Building Inclusive and Collaborative Digital Health Development in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and Indonesia."* The potential of artificial intelligence in healthcare crisis management is further explored in *"AI in Health: How Technology Can Prevent Future Health Emergencies,"* which makes explicit references to the currently discussed ideas of a pandemic treaty or an update of the International Health Regulations (IHR).

Lastly, privacy concerns and policy readiness are crucial considerations, as highlighted in *"Privacy, Policy, and Preparedness and the Road Towards India's Digital Health Ecosystem."* Localised efforts, such as those examined in *"Bridging Digital Divides for Inclusive Healthcare in Bangladesh"* and *"Fall Prevention for Thai Older Adults: A Community-Based Policy Plan Leveraging Technology,"* add to the broader picture and improve our understanding of how sometimes tailored strategies that were first experimented with and implemented at the subnational level have the potential to become more widely adopted and agreed upon.

This publication therefore serves as a resource for policymakers, healthcare professionals, researchers, and stakeholders interested in the transformative potential of e-health.

We are grateful to our contributors, whose expertise has enriched this collection, and we invite our readers to explore these insights, envision future possibilities, and contribute to the ongoing evolution of e-health across continents.



Andreas Klein  
Director  
Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia