



CPME Statement on the draft report of MEP Claude Moraes on electronic mass surveillance (2013/2188(INI)) and the subsequent amendments

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.¹

CPME welcomes the draft report of MEP Claude Moraes on electronic mass surveillance of European citizens (2013/2188(INI)) and in particular the subsequent amendments tabled on medical professionals' confidentiality obligation (amendments 32, 38 and 353).

CPME fully supports the initiative taken by the European Parliament to inquire on the surveillance programme established by US authorities to access, store and treat the data of EU citizens. Considering the magnitude and the scale at which these data were accessed, we believe it is timely and appropriate that European institutions commit to their positive obligation to protect the fundamental rights of EU citizens to data protection and privacy, and - more specifically - patient confidentiality.

CPME particularly welcomes the proposal to launch a *European Digital Habeas Corpus* and its Priority action n°5 on the protection of professional confidentiality. Since the Hippocratic Oath, the medical profession is obliged to professional secrecy. The good conduct of medicine is based on the premise that the trust relationship established between a patient and his/her physician shall not be breached. Without this trust being guaranteed, the therapeutic relation risks of suffering irreversible consequences on the quality of and access to care.

Guaranteeing that the physicians' obligation to professional secrecy is not breached by a third party is a matter of protecting the most sensitive and intimate information of the individuals contained in health data. The fact that some personal health data – ie. medical records – might have been accessed by any unauthorised institutions constitutes a grave unlawful intrusion in the most intimate sphere of one's privacy.

¹ CPME is registered in the Transparency Register with the ID number 9276943405-41. More information about CPME's activities can be found under www.cpme.eu



COMITÉ PERMANENT DES MÉDECINS EUROPÉENS
STANDING COMMITTEE OF EUROPEAN DOCTORS



CPME highly appreciates the approach taken by the Parliament and invites MEPs to support the draft report together with the amendments n°32, 38 and 353 on professional confidentiality. For consistency purposes between these three articles, **we would advise that amendment 353 specifically mentions physicians as subject to professional confidentiality obligations.**

Altogether, we believe it is high time for EU institutions and Member States to take all necessary measures to protect patients' right to confidentiality.