Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

On behalf of Croatian Ministry of Health, it's my privilege and pleasure to welcome you all in Zagreb, and thank you for the opportunity to shortly address this prestigious international research community.

Medical informatics, digital health, e-health, and connected health – these are all interleaved areas of research and practice, aiming to provide healthcare services today with continuous utilization and support of information and communication technologies. The goals are to improve health of citizens, productivity and efficiency in healthcare delivery, and the social and economic value of health. E-health records and electronic prescriptions top the list of technically integrated systems at national and regional levels enabling electronic systems to work across a variety of healthcare contexts. The unification of language and classification systems emerged as a major issue when considering the interoperability of e-health.

Being aware of these challenges, we have finalized the comprehensive work on drafting the new Health Data and Information Law to improve health data and information management in Croatia. One of the aspects I would like to stress out is establishing the central e-health authority within the Ministry of Health, which will be responsible, among other duties, for managing the Catalogue of health information standards, which is greatly in line with similar efforts currently being taken at the EU level, in order to achieve and maintain cross-systems and cross-border interoperability.

Croatia is also taking part in establishing European e-Health Digital Service Infrastructure (eHDSI), and has recently agreed on EU-level cooperation in the areas of public health genomics and personalized medicine, as well as artificial intelligence. We also consider e-health cybersecurity as one of the priorities, and have been working actively on complying with the NIS Directive in order to achieve a high common level of security of network and information systems across the Union.

All these efforts surely need to be guided by continuous development of sophisticated decision support systems as well as up-to-date education for all stakeholders in healthcare. Therefore, I wish you fruitful two days at the European Federation for Medical Informatics (EFMI) Special Topic Conference and look forward hearing about your research results and knowledge exchange. Finally, I’m sure you’ll still find some free time after the conference to enjoy our beautiful city.

Thank you and welcome!