

MAKING SERVICES EASIER TO FIND, REACH AND USE

Solutions for Optimal Service
Provision and Health Equity
in Remote Environments



Welcome to the first issue of the **SOSPHERE newsletter**! Our project brings together partners from Italy, Slovenia and Croatia to tackle a challenge that many communities across Central Europe share: ensuring that people - especially older adults and those in vulnerable situations - can effectively access the health, social and wellbeing services they need.

Through our work, we are mapping existing services, assessing citizens' needs and co-designing solutions together with local communities and service providers. Our aim is simple: **to make sure that no one is left behind** simply because they don't know what support is available, or because accessing it feels too complicated.



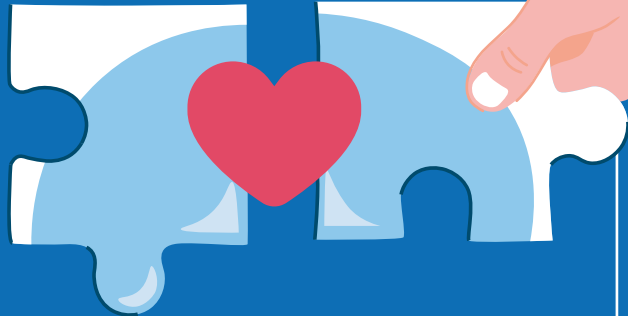
In this newsletter, you will find updates on our latest activities, insights from the field, and an invitation to share your own experiences with us. We hope you enjoy reading it - and we look forward to hearing from you!

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

A CLEARER PATH TO SERVICES IN LAGGING AREAS

In many parts of Central Europe, health and social services exist - but people still struggle to reach them. Our first article explores why access is failing not because services are absent, but because the pathways to them are unclear. We introduce our three pilot areas - Labin, Beltinci and the Santa Bona district of Treviso - and explain

how SOSPHERE will respond: by mapping local needs, listening to communities, and co-designing one-stop-shops that make guidance simple, human and local.



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WHAT IS A ONE-STOP SHOP? A SIMPLE EXPLAINER

What exactly is a one-stop shop, and why does it matter? In this article, we break down the concept at the heart of our project: a single, welcoming place where people can get clear information, guidance and support to navigate health and social services with confidence. We also explain the co-design approach we are using to build this model together with communities, rather than for them.

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HOW WE WILL MAP SERVICES ACROSS THREE REGIONS

Before we can improve access to services, we need to understand what already exists, and where things are not working as they should. This article walks through our three-step mapping approach across Labin, Beltinci and Treviso: from desk research to interviews with service providers, to focus groups with local residents. Mapping is just the beginning, but without it, everything that follows would be built on guesswork.

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WORKSHOP RECAP: WHAT LAGGING AREAS CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

On 5 May 2026, we brought together over 30 participants from seven countries for an online transnational workshop. From a community network in Friuli Venezia Giulia, to cross-border healthcare cooperation on the Italian-Slovenian border, to a small English town that changed how the NHS thinks about health - the experiences shared pointed to the same conclusions: **reduce fragmentation, build trust, and make services easier to navigate.**

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STAKEHOLDERS INPUT FORM

The SOSPHERE partnership is collecting inputs, best practices and experiences from stakeholders across Central Europe. Have you encountered innovative approaches to service mapping or needs assessment in your area? **Share your insights through our short questionnaire:** it takes less than 5 minutes, and your contribution will directly feed into our work.

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SOSPHERE Newsletter - Stakeholder Input Form

SOSPHERE is an Interreg Central Europe project working to improve access to health, wellbeing and social services in peripheral and lagging areas. As part of our needs assessment and service mapping activities, we are gathering inputs, best practices and experiences from stakeholders beyond our partnership.

L'invio di questo modulo non implica la raccolta automatica di dati come il nome o l'indirizzo e-mail, a meno che non vengano forniti volontariamente.

1. What organisation do you represent?
2. Your e-mail
3. From your experience, what are the biggest barriers that prevent people from accessing health, social or wellbeing services in your area?
4. Are there any good practices or innovative approaches to service mapping or needs assessment that you would like to share with us?
5. Do you have any recommendations on how to better reach and involve citizens (especially older adults or people in vulnerable situations) in contributing to how local services are planned and improved?



FIRST RESULTS FROM OUR MAPPING ACTIVITIES

Over the past months, our partners have rolled up their sleeves and got to work. Across our three pilot areas, they carried out a desk research exercise covering 61 services, conducted 22 interviews with service managers and frontline staff, and organised 5 focus

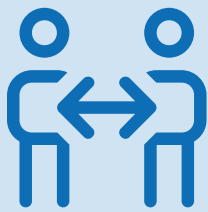
groups with local residents. The result is our **first comprehensive picture of how health, social and wellbeing services are currently functioning** in Labin, Beltinci and Treviso - and where they are falling short.

Here is what emerged.



The system is complex, and hard to navigate.

The most consistent finding across all three areas is straightforward: services exist, but **getting to them is another matter**. Information is scattered, providers rarely talk to each other, and there is no single point of contact to help people understand what is available and how to access it. In practice, **many people rely on informal networks** (a neighbour, a family member, a trusted local figure) just to find out what support they are entitled to. For older adults and people in vulnerable situations, that is not a minor inconvenience. It often means that help arrives too late, or not at all. Digital tools are not filling the gap either: online platforms are frequently difficult to use, and those who need services most are often the least equipped to navigate them.



Services exist but are not always reaching people.

Another clear pattern is the distance between what is available on paper and what people actually receive. **Services tend to be activated late**, once a situation has already become critical, and follow-up support is often patchy. Health, social and community providers rarely coordinate with one another. Staff shortages and tight budgets make things harder still, affecting both the continuity and the quality of what can be offered.



What comes next.

What our partners heard from the ground points toward three clear directions: earlier and more proactive outreach, before situations reach crisis point; **a single, accessible entry point** (a one-stop shop) where people can get information, guidance and a helping hand; and stronger community-based models that go out to meet isolated and vulnerable people rather than waiting for them to come forward.

These findings will directly shape the design of our local one-stop shops. **We will keep you posted as that work gets under way!**



OUR PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

The mapping activity behind our latest findings was led by **EnEA** (Ente Educazione Assistenza), a public service provider based in

Treviso, Italy. Deeply rooted in their community, EnEA works to ensure that everyone can age with dignity, health, and autonomy - and within SOSPHERE, they are leading the abovementioned mapping activities across all three project territories while piloting the one-stop-shop model in Treviso's Santa Bona district.



To learn more about our partnership and stay up to date with our activities, [find us on our socials!](#)

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