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Gregorio Gómez Bolaños highlighted the importance of the public telecare service within the social care model of the region Castile-La Mancha. He discussed how the service is managed by the Ministry of Social Welfare and responds to a very particular geographical and demographic reality: a large community, with low population density and a high number of small municipalities (93% with less than 5,000 inhabitants). This dispersion makes it difficult to implement face-to-face resources, which makes telecare especially relevant.

As he explained, technology must be put at centre of the service of care to allow people, especially the elderly and in a situation of dependency, to remain in their homes and usual environments, something that they express as a majority preference in all surveys. He believes that telecare is part of a new technological revolution that can reverse the effects of the rural exodus of previous times and keep populations in cities and the countryside stable.

Gregorio stressed that telecare in Castilla-La Mancha has evolved significantly: it has gone from a basic and reactive model to a proactive, predictive and personalised one in under five years. In collaboration with Tunstall, the service has been 98% digitalised, incorporating smart detectors, communication systems with family members and tools that contribute not only to safety, but also to reducing unwanted loneliness.

Currently, more than 63,900 home units serve more than 80,000 users, which represents a growth of 93% in the last 10 years. In addition, it is universally available for the elderly and dependent people and is offered free of charge.

However, he insisted that the effectiveness of the service depends largely on its integration with the rest of the benefits of the care system. He warned about the risk of fragmentation and treating resources separately, when the objective should be personalised and coordinated attention. He also raised the need to prevent technology from widening the digital divide, betting on accompanying it with training, both for users and for caregiver families.

Finally, he noted that the ageing population and the challenge of care must occupy a central place in the public agenda, since it is not only a problem of financing, but our human duty which requires organisation and coordination.