



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

SANTE B4: Disease prevention and health promotion

Fourth meeting of the Network of Expertise on Long COVID (NELC) 30 April 2024 Flash Report

The Network of Expertise on Long COVID (NELC) held its fourth meeting online, chaired by DG SANTE. The representatives of 9 Member States, plus Iceland attended the meeting, together with representatives from WHO, OECD, DG ECFIN, DG SANTE, DG MOVE, DG ENV, RTD, the Dutch Organization for Health Research (ZonMw) and the Leiden University Medical Center.

Results and follow-up of the EU survey on NELC actions

DG SANTE presented the results of the NELC questionnaire, launched following the previous NELC meeting of 30 January 2024. The survey's main objective was to gather Member States insights to identify areas for improvement, welcome feedback and encourage practical contributions in relation to the following eight proposed NELC actions:

1. Identification of research needs and priorities
2. Professional training for healthcare staff
3. Guidelines, clinical recommendations, good clinical practice
4. International Collaboration on Long COVID
5. Patient support
6. Social and Economic Consequences of Long COVID
7. Case definition for Long COVID
8. Surveillance System

Overall, 12 answers were received from 11 Member States, which acknowledged the importance of all proposed actions and expressed their desire for their implementation in the foreseeable future.

Update on OECD and WHO approaches in support of the NELC actions

The OECD and WHO provided an overview of the “Supporting Long-COVID patients: insights and action” Action, as defined within the 2024 EU4Health Work Programme and their expected contributions to each of the eight NELC actions. As a follow-up, dedicated meetings will be held among the Commission, WHO and OECD to plan the next steps within the joint action and set up working groups in relation to the actions presented.

Presentation of the Dutch approach to post-COVID research

The Netherlands provided an overview of the Dutch approach to post-COVID research (the post-COVID programme), encompassing the Research programme and the infrastructure and expertise network. The presentation delved further into details covering the work packages (data, biobank, translational, platform trial, pathophysiology and implementation) and platforms (methodology, ethics, dissemination and persons with living experience) of the Post-COVID Network.

DG ECFIN paper on economic consequences of Long COVID

DG ECFIN presented the findings of its recent study '[Long COVID: A Tentative Assessment of its Impact on Labour Market Participation and Potential Economic Effects in the EU on the economic impact of Long COVID](#)'. The presentation gave an overview of the empirical evidence collected to estimate the impact of Long COVID on the labour supply in Europe and the ensuing findings with conclusions and questions that still need to be answered.

AOB and Conclusion

Two AOB points were tackled at the end of the meeting. First, a short overview on the launch of the open Stakeholder group on Long COVID, followed by a presentation of the tentative agenda of the NELC conference on Long COVID scheduled for 26 June 2024.

The chair then closed the meeting, thanking the participants for the valuable discussions.