



Meeting of the Network of Expertise on Long COVID of 30 April 2024

Background information

Purpose and objectives of the meeting

The network of expertise on Long COVID (NELC) is a closed group that brings together national centres of expertise on the management of Long COVID into contact with each other, to exchange countries' experiences and best practices on the diagnosis, treatment, and management of Long COVID patients, and collect information regarding the situation on Long COVID in the different countries.

This fourth meeting of the NELC aims at:

- presenting the preliminary results of the follow-up survey to the previous NELC meeting to evaluate the suggested eight NELC actions
- providing the OECD and the WHO perspectives in relation to their project on supporting Long-COVID patients and their expected contribution to the proposed eight NELC actions
- providing an overview of the Dutch approach to post-COVID research
- presenting DG ECFIN's recent paper on the social and economic consequences of Long COVID

Results and follow-up of EU survey on NELC actions

Following the previous NELC meeting held on January 30, 2024, a survey was launched on February 28, 2024, with the aim 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

The preliminary results of the survey will be presented during this meeting, orientating the discussion on various inputs shared by the Member States.

The OECD and WHO perspectives on the NELC actions

The OECD and WHO will give an overview of the “Supporting Long-COVID patients: insights and action” Action, as defined within the [2024 EU4Health Work Programme](#) and its expected contributions to each of the eight NELC priorities. The two organisations have a crucial leadership, convening and coordination role in global health, in strengthening the world's preparation and response to public health emergencies and thus possess the expertise and capacity to implement this Action, falling under the Programme's general objective to improve and foster health in the Union (Article 3, point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2021/522), through the specific objectives defined in Article 4, points (a), (e), (f), (g), (i) and (j), of Regulation (EU) 2021/522.

Presentation of the Dutch approach to post-COVID research

The Netherlands will give an overview of the Dutch approach to post-COVID research (the post-COVID programme) and will deliver a presentation on the post-COVID network in their country.

DG ECFIN paper on economic consequences of Long COVID

Under this agenda point, DG ECFIN will present 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](#)'.

This paper provides a review of estimates of the prevalence of long COVID in the EU, and a tentative assessment of its economic impact, mainly on labour supply. In particular:

- The paper estimates the prevalence of long COVID cases at around 1.7% of the EU population in 2021 and 2.9% in 2022
- This yields a negative impact on labour supply of 0.2-0.3% in 2021 and of 0.3-0.5% in 2022, combining the effect of lower productivity, higher sick leaves, lower hours, and increased unemployment or inactivity
- These figures imply that long COVID could have caused an output loss of 0.1-0.2% in 2021 and 0.2-0.3% in 2022
- Available labour market data suggest a mixed picture when it comes to the impact of long COVID.