



# IMMUNION

*Improving IMMunisation  
cooperation in the European UNION*

Working to deliver better vaccine education to healthcare professionals and better information to the general public

April 2021 - March 2023



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# ABOUT IMMUNION

IMMUNION (“Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION”) (2021-2023) was an EU co-funded project working to strengthen collaboration between healthcare professionals and other stakeholders - primarily via the Coalition for Vaccination - in order to communicate evidence-based information about vaccination and increase vaccine confidence and uptake.

IMMUNION, which was coordinated by [EuroHealthNet](#), enhanced the Coalition for Vaccination’s collaboration and visibility, developed and delivered training opportunities and resources for health professionals and students on vaccination communication, increased understanding of the drivers of vaccine inequalities, set up pilot activities in specific communities, and strengthened collaboration with the media on vaccination topics.



# IMMUNION PARTNERS



IMMUNION was supported by a **Scientific Advisory Board**, made up of members of the Coalition for Vaccination, as well as other organisations such as WHO/Europe, the Vaccine Confidence Project, and the Institute of Health Equity (University College London). More information on our **Scientific Advisory Board** is available [here](#).

# ABOUT THE COALITION FOR VACCINATION

## COALITION FOR VACCINATION

The [Coalition for Vaccination](#) brings together European associations of healthcare professionals and student associations in the field. It was convened by the European Commission in 2019, based on the 2018 Council recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases. The Coalition aims to support the delivery of accurate information on immunisation to the public and the exchange of best practices, while also combating misinformation around vaccines.



## IMMUNION AND THE COALITION FOR VACCINATION

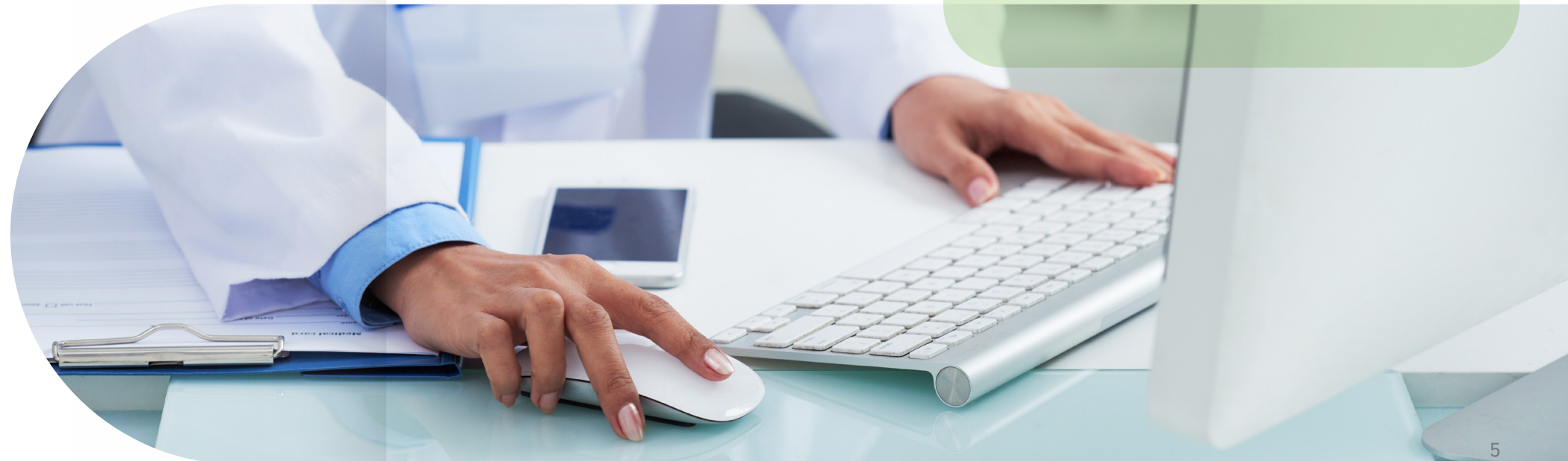
A primary objective of IMMUNION was to closely support the Coalition for Vaccination, by raising its visibility and awareness of its communication and advocacy efforts, as well as supporting the development of joint activities. The three co-chairs of the Coalition for Vaccination (the [Standing Committee of European Doctors](#), the [Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union](#), and the [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#)) were key partners of the IMMUNION project, collaborating closely within the wider project consortium to ensure the broader engagement of health professionals from across Europe in IMMUNION activities. Other Coalition members were also actively engaged in the project via the Scientific Advisory Board.

## Coalition for Vaccination Full members

Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)  
Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU)  
European Federation of Nurses Association (EFN)  
European Council of Medical Orders (CEOM)  
European Federation of Salaried Doctors (FEMS)  
European Junior Doctors (EJD)  
Council of European Dentists (CED)  
European Medical Students' Association (EMSA)  
European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP)  
European Midwives Association (EMA)  
European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP)  
European Nursing Student Association (ENSA)  
European Association of Senior Hospital Physicians (AEMH)  
European Pharmaceutical Students' Association (EPSA)  
Europe Region World Physiotherapy (ER-WP)  
European Specialist Nurses Association (ESNO)  
European Union of General Practitioners (UEMO)  
European Dental Students' Association (EDSA)

## Coalition for Vaccination Associated organisations

Active Citizenship Network (ACN)  
Coalition for Life-Course Immunisation (CLCI)  
EuroHealthNet  
European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE)  
European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH)  
European Public Health Association (EUPHA)  
Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM)  
ThinkYoung  
Vaccine Safety Initiative (VIVI)





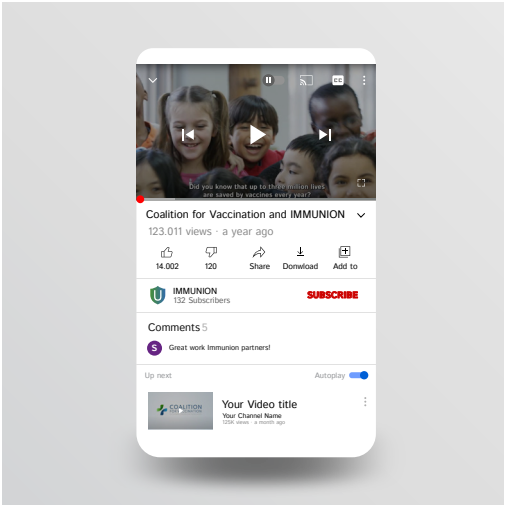
# COALITION FOR VACCINATION VISIBILITY MATERIALS



The Coalition for Vaccination [Website](#)



The Coalition for Vaccination Leaflet - available [on our website](#)



The Coalition for Vaccination Video [IMMUNION YouTube channel](#)



The Coalition for Vaccination [Social Media Channels](#)



# KEY PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for policy and practice emerged from the work of the IMMUNION project as fundamental building blocks needed to improve vaccine confidence, uptake and equity across Europe. They are aimed at policymakers and health authorities working across different levels of governance.

01

Support healthcare professionals to communicate with confidence and cultural competence about vaccination. This includes providing life-long training opportunities and funding innovative research into methods such as refutational learning. Work to understand and address vaccine concerns of healthcare professionals themselves.

02

Work with communities and relevant stakeholders across sectors (healthcare professionals, health authorities, civil society, media) to co-develop and deliver evidence-based, targeted and accessible communication campaigns to address issues in vaccine uptake, focusing on underserved communities.

03

Commit to improving health literacy about vaccination, across the life course, to reduce the influence of mis- and dis-information on vaccine decision-making at individual and community levels. This should start early in life, by including teaching on vaccines and vaccination in school curriculums.

04

Encourage cross-project collaboration and routine engagement with other key actors, such as the European Commission, WHO Europe and the ECDC, to ensure the key results and findings of complementary activities are fully and sustainably exploited.

# IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES SUMMARY

During the two years of the project, IMMUNION worked on improving vaccine communication, trust, and uptake by developing and disseminating training materials, tools, and resources that support healthcare professionals in discussing vaccination with their patients and the general public. IMMUNION also helped to enhance the visibility of the Coalition for Vaccination and its advocacy campaigns, strengthened media reporting on vaccination, and liaised with other projects to boost communication on immunisation. Key project outcomes are included in this booklet.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Materials (reports, training sessions) designed to help healthcare professionals discuss vaccination with their patients and increase trust in vaccines.

## ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

Campaigns and materials (social media campaigns, statements) designed to raise awareness of vaccination as a public health measure.

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Communication and community engagement tools (factsheets, videos, communication materials) to help healthcare professionals raise awareness of the benefits of vaccination, as well as the underlying research across four partner countries.

## LINKS WITH MEDIA

Close collaboration with EURACTIV Poland to provide media content on the latest developments in immunisation.

## CROSS-PROJECT COLLABORATION

Cooperation with projects and initiatives that share IMMUNION's mission and work on increasing vaccine uptake.

# IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Survey of Healthcare Professionals

In the summer of 2021, the Coalition for Vaccination co-chairs carried out a survey to learn about healthcare professionals' needs on vaccine training. Over 3200 professionals from across professions (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, midwives, dentists) and 35 European countries replied to the survey. 89% responded that they would welcome additional training on vaccination, with online training courses being the preferred type of support. A summary of the results can be found on our website [here](#).



**65% of Europeans trust healthcare professionals the most for information on vaccination.**



**89% of survey respondents** would be willing to take an extra course on vaccination, if provided.

## Webinars, reports and curriculum on vaccine communication

The University of Antwerp, in collaboration with other partners, developed a number of training sessions and resources to support healthcare professionals to communicate with confidence about vaccines and vaccination. All materials, including background documents and recordings, are freely available. Stakeholders are invited to develop their own EU/national/local training courses based on the available materials. In case of questions, please get in touch with the University of Antwerp here: [vaxcom@uantwerpen.be](mailto:vaxcom@uantwerpen.be).



### ALL-INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM ON VACCINES/VACCINOLOGY

The curriculum, developed as part of several projects including the EU Joint Action on Vaccination and IMMUNION, has a total of 8 modules, including a detailed module on vaccine communication. It served as a basis for the IMMUNION train-the-trainer sessions.

[ACCESS THE CURRICULUM](#)





### TRAIN-THE-TRAINERS EU SESSION

A 3-hour training covering issues such as vaccine hesitancy and literacy, the role of healthcare professionals in vaccination, as well as tips and tricks on teaching about vaccination. A background report provides helpful guidance for those seeking to organise a similar webinar.

[WATCH THE SESSION](#)

[READ THE BACKGROUND DOCUMENT](#)

[READ THE REPORT](#)

### SESSIONS ON VACCINATION COMMUNICATION FOR DOCTORS, DENTISTS AND PHARMACY STUDENTS

Three sessions were co-organised with the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the Council of European Dentists (CED) and the European Pharmaceutical Students' Association (EPSA), focusing on vaccine communication, vaccine literacy, vaccine hesitancy, and the role of the healthcare provider in the vaccination process. Details of the events, including the Q&A sessions, are included in the report, and two sessions are available to view.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

[VIEW THE CPME SESSION](#)

[VIEW THE CED SESSION](#)

### TRAIN THE TRAINERS NATIONAL SESSIONS: GREECE, LATVIA, ROMANIA

National partners in Greece, Latvia and Romania tailored the content and materials from the EU session to their local contexts, responding to the needs of health professionals in their countries. The recordings of the sessions are available on our YouTube channel.





[WATCH THE SESSION GREECE, LATVIA, ROMANIA](#)

[READ THE REPORT](#)



# The SEKI Platform

The [SEKI Platform](#) aims to provide a one-stop location for medical professionals to find vaccine training opportunities both online and offline. It is integrated into the Coalition for Vaccination website. It is:

-  A joint initiative of two Coalition for Vaccination members, the Vaccine Safety Initiative (VIVI) and the European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP)
-  An aggregator of training material for healthcare professionals in Europe
-  A living resource that is being updated regularly
-  A provider of validated training courses on topics including COVID-19 vaccines, routine immunisation, vaccine safety, and more



EXPLORE

# IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES TOOLS & RESOURCES

IMMUNION has developed a number of tools and resources designed to raise awareness, improve vaccine equity in target populations, and foster a better understanding of the dynamics that prevent access to vaccines. These resources are inter-related, and they support IMMUNION's mission to increase vaccine uptake in specific settings in four participating countries (Italy, Greece, Latvia, Romania). Learnings and processes can be used to develop tools and piloting activities in other countries across Europe.












# The Vaccine Communication Toolbox

The Vaccine Communication Toolbox was developed as a gateway to numerous communication and community engagement resources that can support healthcare professionals and health authorities in their efforts to raise awareness of the benefits and importance of immunisation.

## The toolbox:

-  Includes videos, factsheets, scientific articles, infographics, and other communication materials to facilitate discussions about vaccines
-  Includes materials in the local languages of the project countries (Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania), and in English for an international audience
-  Addresses a wide variety of population groups
-  Focuses on different vaccine-preventable diseases (HPV, measles, flu, COVID-19, etc.)
-  Features filters (language, disease, target audience, document type)
-  Provides the option of searching by keyword
-  Is a living resource and is open to contributions

EXPLORE

# Have your say - share your materials and contributions with us!

The toolbox of resources to increase vaccine uptake will continue to be updated with new resources and is open to contributions. New submissions to the toolbox can be made through a form on the website. We will check to ensure the submission meets the guidelines for inclusion in the toolbox before making it available online. All languages and topics are welcome.





## IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES

# TOOLS & RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EQUITABLE VACCINE UPTAKE

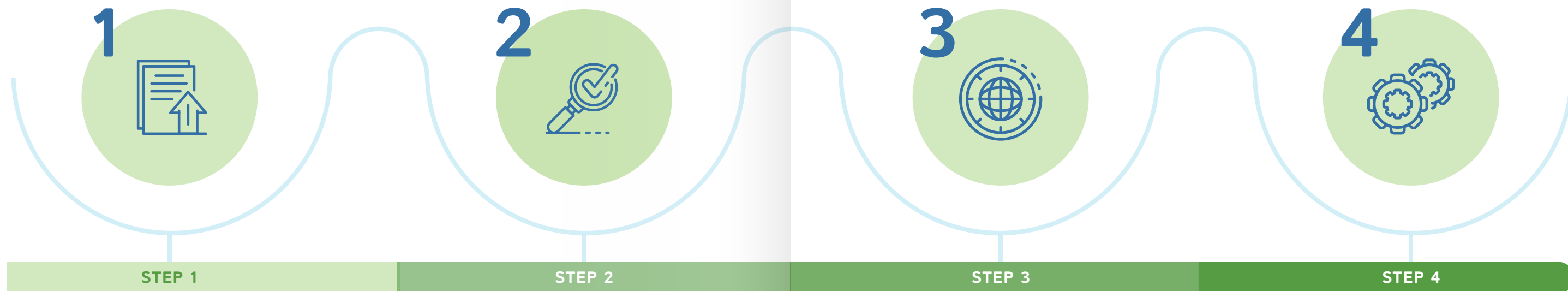
As vaccination is delivered at local level, within countries with varying health systems, one of IMMUNION's objectives was to improve the understanding of vaccine inequalities and draw lessons to help address these coverage issues.

IMMUNION worked with four national partners (Greece, Italy, Latvia, and Romania) to develop common methodologies for identifying barriers to vaccination and specific communities who have (or are at risk of having) low vaccine coverage.

This was done by first developing a 'reference grid' (Step 1) to understand national scenarios. Then each country developed a National Toolbox compiling community engagement tools to increase vaccine uptake in the target communities (Step 2). These tools were then discussed at National Roundtables (Step 3) with relevant national stakeholders to help co-design and/or co-select one of the tools to pilot, and finally, each country took forward specific piloting activities (Step 4) to utilise the co-selected tool within their community of interest.

This model and process of improving understanding of drivers of vaccine inequalities, developed for IMMUNION, will be exploited by the [Joint Action \(JA\) PERCH](#) ("PartnERship to contrast HPV "), which brings together 17 European countries to increase HPV vaccination coverage in Europe and reduce the incidence of cervical cancer and other HPV-related cancers.





**Developing an understanding of national scenarios, factors underlying low vaccine uptake, and underserved communities**

IMMUNION partners in four EU member states (Greece, Italy, Latvia, and Romania) developed a **reference grid** to analyse factors underlying low vaccine uptake. The methodology and results are detailed in the report below. The first grid analyses peer-reviewed articles, while the second grid focuses on grey literature.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

[GRID 1](#)

[GRID 2](#)

[ANNEX](#)

**Gathering communication and community engagement tools and building the online toolbox**

Building on the vaccine hesitancy reference grid, IMMUNION partners in the same four EU member states analysed and compiled a series of **communication and community engagement tools**, in English and local languages, to help increase vaccine uptake. A report was produced to detail the process of creating this toolbox.

[ACCESS THE TOOLBOX](#)

[READ THE REPORT](#)

**Discussing the tools with relevant stakeholders: national and regional health authorities, health professionals, citizens associations, parents, researchers, etc.**

In June 2022, **vaccination stakeholder roundtables and media trainings** took place in the four EU member states, involving a wide range of stakeholders, from health professionals and health authorities to civil society and the media. The discussions revolved around the ways to improve vaccine uptake in different target groups. The methods and results of these roundtables and media trainings have been detailed in the report below.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

**Co-developing (or co-selecting) a tool and piloting it amongst the target community to support efforts to improve vaccine uptake and vaccine equity**

In the final stage of the project, **pilot activities** – referring to the co-creation or co-selection of tools to increase vaccine uptake – were developed by the four partner countries. Each country developed specific initiatives, following a common methodology, but tailored to specific target groups. A report detailing all the activities performed up to 30 November 2022 can be found below.

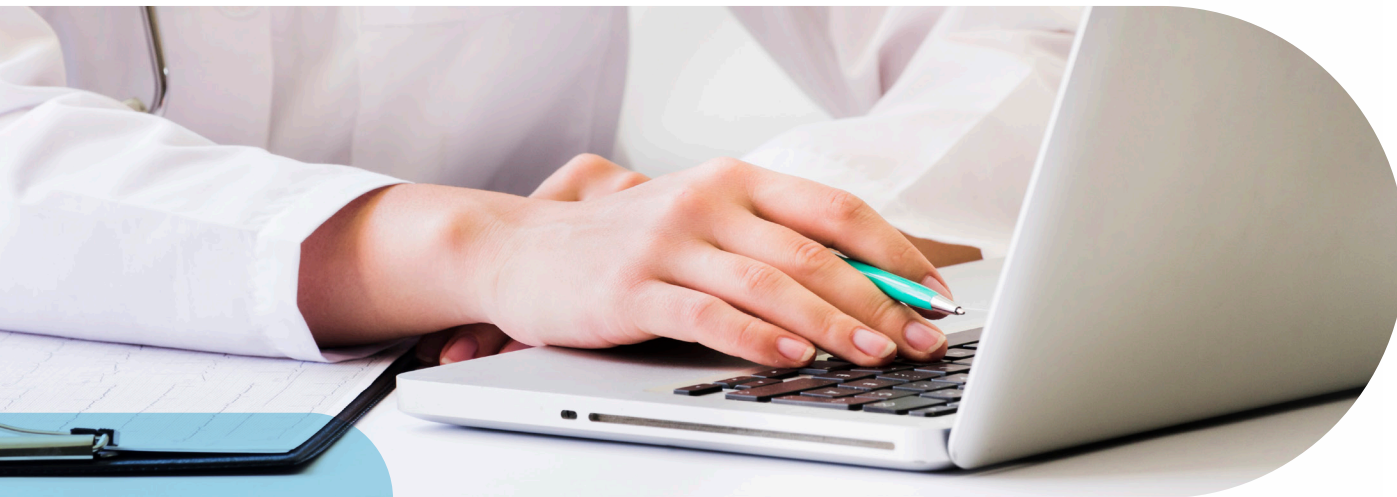
[READ THE REPORT](#)



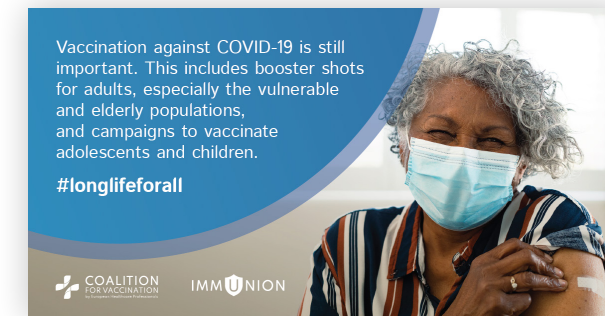
# IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES

## ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

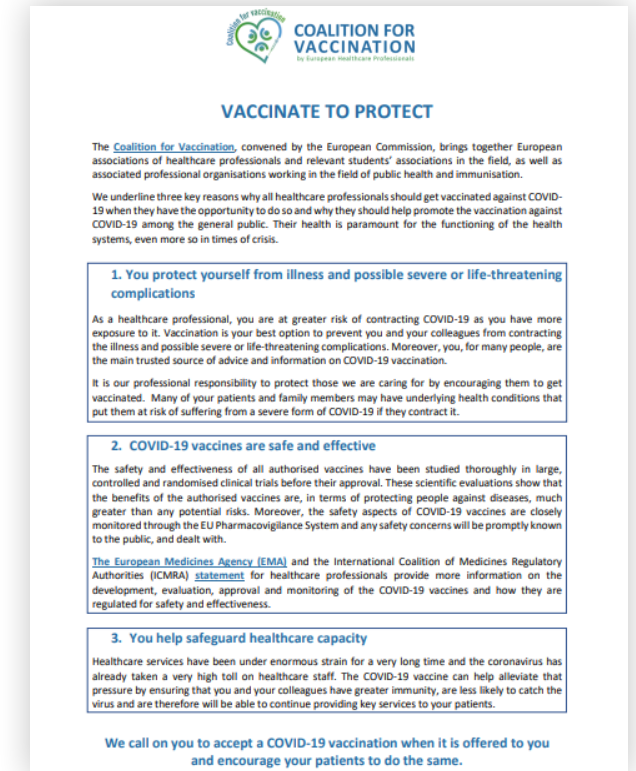
The Coalition for Vaccination has been very active in promoting vaccination across Europe through advocacy and communication campaigns that can be used by healthcare professionals and beyond. The purpose of these campaigns is to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination and support healthcare professionals in delivering accurate information to the public, consequently debunking myths and decreasing vaccine mistrust. The campaigns and materials have a [dedicated section](#) on the Coalition for Vaccination's website. Some examples are included here.



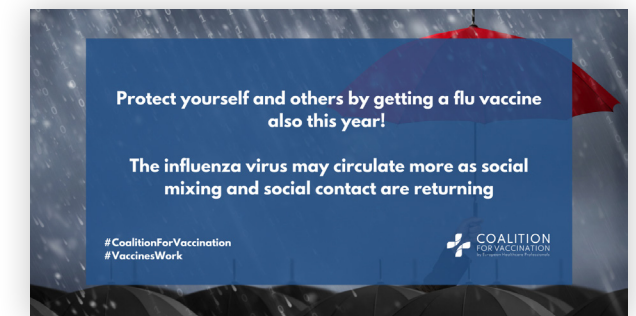
Childhood Vaccination Campaign



European Immunization Week 2022



COVID-19 campaign: Manifesto “Vaccinate to Protect”



Flu campaign 2021-2022

# IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES

## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEDIA

IMMUNION partner EURACTIV Poland organised media trainings in the four IMMUNION project countries (Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania) to exchange best practices and tips on vaccine communication. These trainings involved key national stakeholders such as representatives of institutions, health professionals, civil society, and media. More information can be found in the report on [national roundtables and media trainings](#).

EURACTIV Poland also produced various news articles and interviews on topics related to the latest developments in vaccination, vaccine trust, and vaccine uptake around Europe and beyond. They developed a [dedicated page](#) on their website that lists all the articles that were produced within the framework of IMMUNION. A few examples can be seen here.





# IMMUNION KEY OUTCOMES

## CROSS-PROJECT COLLABORATION

IMMUNION's mission was closely aligned with other EU-funded projects working to increase vaccine confidence and uptake. In order to amplify our messages and enhance our collective impact, the IMMUNION project took steps to establish a network of ongoing projects on vaccination. In early 2022, partners in the network agreed to form working groups dedicated to specific issues, including training, policy, communication and engagement. Specific results of the working groups include a scientific paper submission, joint work on project activities, and opportunities to improve awareness of key project results and findings. Participating projects include:



### VAX-TRUST

VAX-TRUST aims to uncover the reasons behind vaccine hesitancy in specific regions and gain a deeper understanding of different actors' positions related to vaccine hesitancy.



### JITSUVAX

JITSUVAX uses a combination of inoculation and refutational learning to help healthcare professionals communicate more constructively with patients and increase public confidence in vaccines.



### RIVER-EU

RIVER-EU works on improving access to vaccination among children and adolescents in eight target communities, reducing inequity in measles, mumps, rubella, and HPV vaccines.



### RISE-VAC

RISE-Vac is working on improving the health of prison population in Europe by promoting vaccine literacy, enhancing vaccine offer, and increasing vaccine uptake.



### AcToVax4NAM

Access to Vaccination for Newly Arrived Migrants (AcToVx4NAM) is working on increasing the vaccination uptake in newly arrived migrants.



### ImmuHubs

ImmuHubs is an interdisciplinary and intersectoral project working on a sustainable, innovative, culturally sensitive, bottom-up approach to improve trust and vaccine uptake.

## NEXT STEPS



While the IMMUNION project has closed, the **Coalition for Vaccination** will continue its efforts to support the delivery of accurate information on immunisation in order to improve vaccine trust and uptake across Europe.

Make sure to stay in touch and follow the website and social media for updates!

[www.coalitionforvaccination.com](http://www.coalitionforvaccination.com)



Coalition for Vaccination video  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=inOJSrA7zJQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inOJSrA7zJQ)



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