

AOB: Coordination and collaboration on post COVID-19

In the European Union, people from all Member States, in a wide range of ages and from diverse backgrounds, are being affected by post COVID-19. The World Health Organization defines this condition, which is commonly also known as long COVID, as the continuation or development of new symptoms three months after the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection, with these symptoms lasting for at least two months with no other explanation. **The Netherlands would like to advocate extended EU coordination to provide perspective to people affected by post COVID-19 symptoms.**

The work and cooperation of DG SANTE and DG RTD regarding post COVID-19 so far have been impressive, setting up specific research projects under Horizon Europe and organizing meetings to bring experts together, both within and outside the EU.

On the 9th of December 2022, in the framework of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), The Netherlands advocated doing even more with the European Commission and other Member States. For instance, The Netherlands called for a comprehensive and collaborative EU-wide effort to avoid duplication and to this means develop and support the post COVID-19 research agenda and to facilitate the exchange of best practices among clinical centers and practitioners. There was broad support from Member States for this call.

As such, The Netherlands warmly welcomes the European Commission's initiative that was presented in the Public Health Expert Group on the 3rd of February. The establishment of a network of expertise on post COVID-19, to exchange national experiences on the prevalence, diagnosis, treatment and management of post COVID-19 patients, and to identify priority areas, is of crucial importance to provide perspective to people living with post COVID-19.

The Netherlands would like to call upon the European Commission to explain further the announced network of expertise on post COVID and possible other initiatives taken, its progress and suggested timelines, to facilitate initiatives starting as soon as possible, making use of appropriate EU funding. Moreover, The Netherlands stresses the importance of including an evaluating whether there are any gaps in the efforts that are being taken in research, and to fill in those research gaps, e.g., in biomedical research, clinical research and research on the effect on quality of life. The Netherlands is drawing up a research agenda which, with regard to biomedical and clinical research, can serve as input to coordinate post COVID-19 research in the EU. The Netherlands would like to call upon Member States to fully support and take part in the network of expertise or any other formats of coordination and collaboration to ensure the progress we need in diagnosis and treatment of our patients with post COVID-19 symptoms, in a way that information and expertise is accessible for those involved in this process.

The Netherlands looks forward to work together with the European Commission and all Member States to create a meaningful, collaborative and comprehensive effort to provide perspective to those suffering from post COVID-19.