

## Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Ms [REDACTED] 5.1.2e

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education  
and Youth

Ms [REDACTED] 5.1.2e

**Directoraat Generaal  
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Date

Subject Request for information regarding an EU-wide  
coordinated effort concerning post COVID-19**Our reference****Your reference***All correspondence addressed  
to the postal address quoting  
date and reference of this  
letter.*

Dear Commissioners [REDACTED] 5.1.2e

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 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.

On the 9th of December 2022, in the framework of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), I discussed the importance of doing even more with the European Commission and other Member States. The Netherlands called for a comprehensive and collaborative EU-wide effort to 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. Coordinated research will facilitate effective insight in common priority issues and improve validity of results. A coordinated EU-wide effort should highlight existing knowledge gaps and help streamline research. An effort to facilitate exchange of best practices among experts and health practitioners can help to provide the best possible care to people with post COVID-19 symptoms. I am convinced we should approach this at an EU level instead of working parallel on national levels.

I am very impressed with the work of DG SANTE and DG RTD regarding post COVID-19 so far, setting up specific research projects under Horizon Europe and organizing meetings to bring experts together, both within and outside the EU.

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. With this letter, I would like to call upon the European Commission to facilitate initiatives on exchanging experiences on the prevalence, diagnosis and treatment of post-COVID-19 within the remit of this network starting as soon as possible. It is essential to make use of appropriate EU funding and foster synergies with programmes such as Horizon Europe and EU4Health. Moreover, I would like to stress the importance of evaluating whether there are any gaps in the efforts that are being taken in research, and the importance to fill in those research gaps, e.g., gaps in biomedical research, in clinical research and in research on the effect of post COVID-19 on the quality of life.

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The Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU), The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) and C-support, a Dutch foundation that helps patients who suffer from post COVID-19, are ready to participate in the network of expertise as national centers of excellence concerning post COVID-19. Besides, 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.

I look forward to making even more progress in this field with both of you and would be more than willing to look into jointly addressing the coordinated response in the next EPSCO Council meeting on Health on the 14th of March 2023.

Sincerely,