

Short Communication

Strengthening Vaccination Policies Towards the European Elections: from Recommendations to Concrete Experiences

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1. Introduction

As the European elections approach, numerous recommendations are proposed on the priorities of the new institutions. Yet, there is a risk of overlooking the substantial work already underway [1]. Therefore, the aim of the Italian NGO Cittadinanzattiva-Active Citizenship Network is to address this oversight, with the aspiration that the newly elected politicians will continue to recognise and advance these initiatives [2]. Therefore, it is imperative to highlight the concrete actions taken by key stakeholders in several sectors. For this reason, the institutional event at the EU Parliament planned on 14 of February 2024 and titled "Strengthening vaccination policies towards the European elections: from recommendations to concrete experiences" kindly hosted by MEP Beatrice Covassi (S&D) with the support of the MEPs Interest Group "European Patients' Rights and Cross-border Healthcare" aims to present concrete activities carried out in the field of vaccination policies - by different stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the private sector, European project consortia [3-5]. In order to promote the importance of vaccinations and the need for effective communication strategies aimed at improving access to and uptake of vaccines. Hence, a number of issues and strategies that the next institutions should consider strengthening vaccination policies, promoting dialogue and collaboration, thus aspiring to shape a healthier and more resilient European community, will be explored. This event will highlight different aspects of public health and vaccination strategies. Presentations will cover recommendations and concrete activities within EU projects, addressing topics such as boosting immunity in the aging population, establishing a national Observatory for best vaccination practices, MEPs' interest in life course immunisation and the EU Immunisation Strategy for a more resilient Europe. The initiative represents an opportunity for networking, knowledge exchange and collaborative discussions and is the final step of the European project #VaccinAction2023, carried out by Cittadinanzattiva - Active Citizenship Network, which focuses on the need to continue to advocate for strengthening adult immunisation in Europe, to protect the value of routine immunisation and its benefits,

and to facilitate dialogue between key stakeholders and the European institutions [1-6].



Figure 1: The Save The Date of the Initiative on vaccination Policy Organized at the EU Parliament on 14th February 2024.

References

1. European Parliament: "2024 European elections: National rules.
2. Cittadinanzattiva APS is an organization, founded in Italy in 1978, which promotes citizens' activism for the protection of rights, the care of common goods, the support for people in conditions of weakness in Italy and abroad. since December 2001, Cittadinanzattiva operates daily, not only at the local and national level in Italy, but also at the European level thanks to its EU branch called "Active Citizenship Network" (ACN). Active Citizenship Network is part of the Cittadinanzattiva APS legal entity and is one of the most widespread and flexible European networks.
3. Active Citizenship Network: "Strengthening vaccination policies towards the European elections: from recommendations to concrete experiences.
4. Beatrice Covassi, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.
5. The idea to encourage a MEPs informal Interest Group focused on patients' rights follows the widespread request of 100 civic and patient organizations sent to the

EU Parliament to recognize officially the value of citizens' initiatives, such as the European Charter of Patients' Rights, based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the European Patients' Rights Day, which has been organized every year on April 18th since 2007 at local, national and EU level.

6. Active Citizenship Network: "Protecting the value of vaccination during -and after- the COVID-19 pandemic across Europe: impact, experiences and perspectives from citizens' and patients' advocacy groups & relevant stakeholders" (#VaccinAction2023).