



Steering Group
on Prevention of
Respiratory Infections

**Our call for a Council
Recommendation on immunisation
against respiratory infections**

Mikaela Nordenfelt



Who We Are



Launch of the Manifesto

Toward a Council Recommendation on the value of immunisation against respiratory infections



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Core
policy
ask:

We call for a new Council Recommendation on the value of immunisation against respiratory infections.

In a world of rising health threats and mounting pressure on health systems, **the EU has a clear opportunity and responsibility to lead on preparedness by reinforcing investment in public health prevention.** Preventing and mitigating respiratory infections is not only a public health priority but also a vital component of EU resilience, safeguarding citizens, economies, and essential services from the destabilising effects of large-scale outbreaks.

As other global actors reduce their long-term public health investments, the EU can step forward to fill the gap and champion a model of long-term resilience. **Immunisation against respiratory infections is a proven, cost-effective tool** that strengthens strategic autonomy, reducing economic losses and reliance on emergency measures and external supplies during crises.

The EU has already taken steps to promote immunisation against influenza with the [2020 Council Recommendation on Seasonal Influenza Vaccination](#). This provides a strong foundation. However, to match the scale of today's challenges and address the reality of other respiratory infections, some with pandemic potential, further action is needed. These infections can overwhelm healthcare systems, disrupt essential services, and undermine workforce capacity and economic stability.

Safe and effective immunisation tools are available and the prevention of severe outcomes is both feasible and cost-effective. A comprehensive EU approach will save lives, protect economic productivity, and maintain public trust while ensuring that the EU is prepared for future cross-border health threats. Now is the time for the EU to take responsibility and act decisively to protect the health and security of its citizens.

A new Recommendation should:

Call on Member States to:

- Invest in immunisation to meet current and future public health needs:
 - Leverage the flexibilities of the [New Economic Governance Framework \(NEG-F\)](#) to **exclude immunisation expenses from individual country spending cap calculations.**
 - Fund initiatives for education, training, and best practice exchange on immunisation for healthcare professionals (HCPs).
- Implement an annual EU-wide coverage target for flu, COVID-19, RSV and pneumococcal disease using the 75% uptake target for flu in at-risk populations as a benchmark to increase immunisation rates across the life course.
- Strengthen surveillance and data collection by expanding existing flu surveillance systems to include COVID-19, pneumococcal disease and RSV.
- Address vaccine mis- and disinformation and strengthen vaccine confidence through transparent, evidence-based communication and targeted community engagement among the public and HCPs.



Invite the European Commission to:

- Commit dedicated funding for immunisation in EU budget planning to expand access, accelerate innovation, and support vaccine confidence monitoring by reinstating the State of Vaccine Confidence in the EU reports.
- Issue clear instructions to Member States on budgeting for prevention under NEG-F flexibilities.
- Support the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) by establishing harmonised guidelines for how EU Member States report immunisation coverage data.
- Support the implementation of digital infrastructure to enable immunisation coverage rates (ICR) as a programme performance indicator.
- Invest in targeted guidelines on embedding immunisation education and outreach into medical training and daily practice.
- Integrate immunisation into wider EU health and resilience strategies.



Our Key Asks

Calling for a new Council Recommendation on the value of immunisation against respiratory infections



A new Council Recommendation should:

Call on Member States to:



Use New Economic Governance Framework (NEGF) flexibilities to exclude immunisation spending from caps on country's budget deficits.



Fund education, training, and best-practice exchange for healthcare professionals.



Adopt EU-wide coverage targets for influenza, COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease, using the 75% flu benchmark for at risk populations.



Strengthen surveillance by expanding existing flu systems to include COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease.

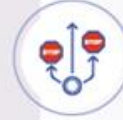


Tackle misinformation through transparent communication and community engagement.

Invite the European Commission to:



Commit dedicated EU funding for immunisation access, innovation, and confidence.



Issue guidance for Member States on prevention budgeting under NEGF flexibilities.



Empower the ECDC to set harmonised reporting standards on coverage.



Invest in digital infrastructure to track immunisation coverage as a key performance indicator.



Develop guidelines to **embed immunisation** in medical education and daily practice.



Integrate immunisation into all EU health and resilience strategies, including the forthcoming Cardiovascular Health Plan

Now is the time for the EU to take responsibility and act decisively to protect the health and security of its citizens.

Next steps

Continue to advocate for the recognition of immunisation against respiratory infections and herpes zoster as a key preventive measure for all populations, including for CVD patients.



Thank you!