

PHIRI

Population Health Information
Research Infrastructure

PHIRI – WP8 Rapid Exchange Forum (REF)

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1. Introduction REF

Rapid Exchange Forum

The Rapid Exchange Forum is a **structured platform for regular quick exchange of fellow countries, policy advisors, commission services and researchers** in the joint efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic

We offer

1. rapid responses to research and policy questions that are raised in countries
2. to promptly disseminate internationally agreed guidelines, standards and reports
3. to exchange (best) practices among countries regarding COVID-19
4. to provide expertise to policy considering the shifting landscape of evidence

Target groups **ACTORS** from competent authorities,
their **ADVISORS**,
RESEARCHERS and **STAKEHOLDERS**

2. Activities - One stop shop

You are welcome to
join the meetings

Services:

1. **Bi-weekly, 1-hour online meetings** in a moderated, structured format; Pre-agreed current COVID-19-topic contributed by the participating countries
2. **Support for urgent country requests** (ad hoc queries by countries)

Every 6 weeks there is a **special edition** where experts of international organizations present relevant findings and recent international activities related to COVID-19.

Attendees are national project partners, national experts (advisors to ministers and heads of agency), representatives of expert networks (e.g. Healthy Cloud), EU services (ECDC, JRC) and stakeholders (e.g. ELIXIR, PREPARE).

2. Activities - One stop shop

Countries participated in PHIRI WP 8 REF meetings



Number of countries that have participated in REF-meetings

28

Number of previous REF-meetings

32

Number of Special Edition REF-meetings

5

Major Conferences

3

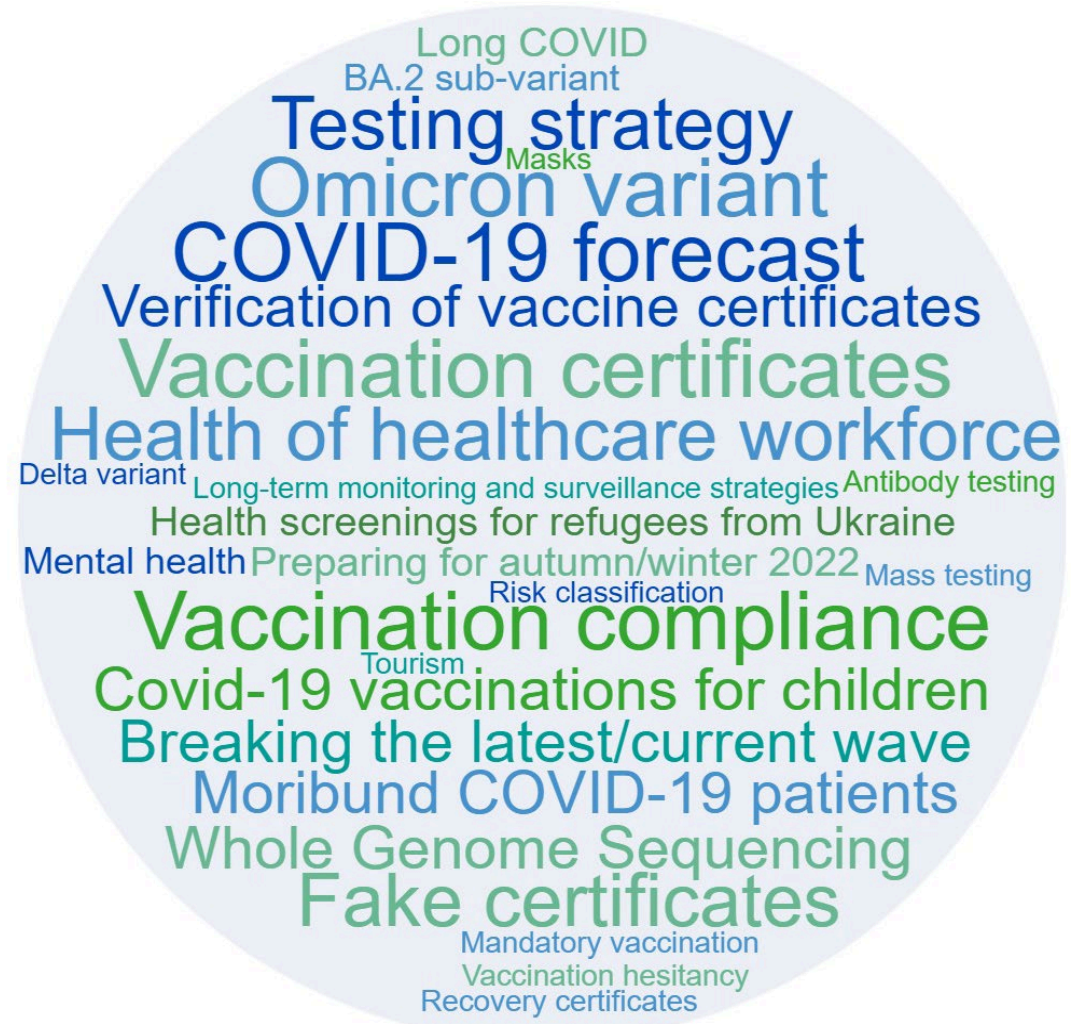
2. Activities – Regular info on measures and guidelines

Regular Collection and Mapping exercise of

- Experts (by thematic fields)
- policy and impact measures and
- guidelines, initiatives, projects and information sources
- related to the COVID-19 pandemic in EU Member States by web search and interviews

→ **Disseminated via REF, phiri.eu, webinars and Healthinformation Portal**

3. Topics covered (examples)

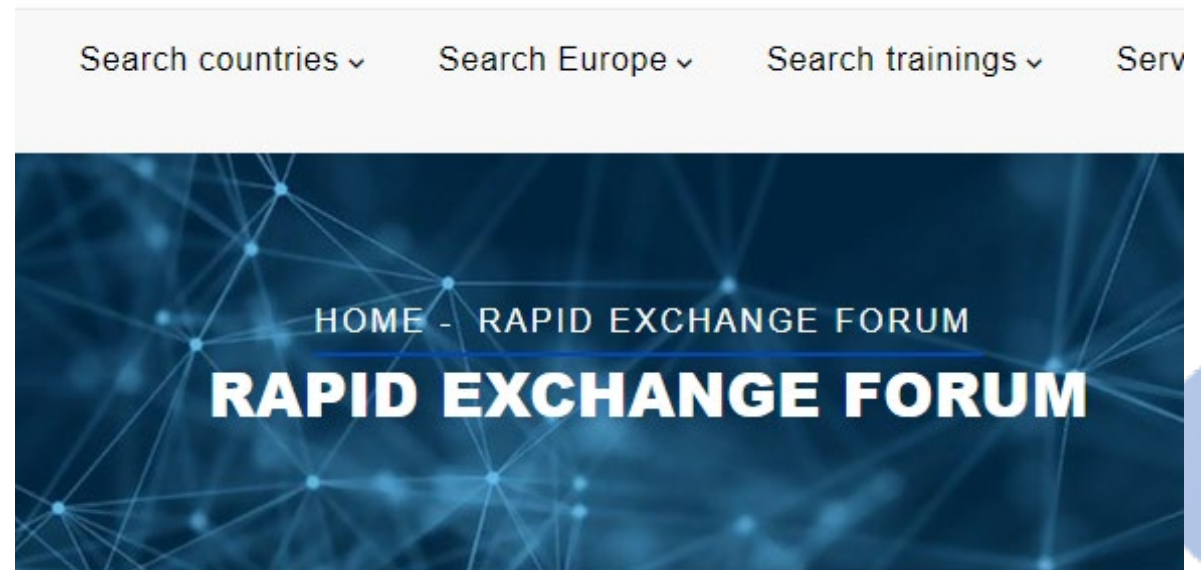


4. Providing rapid responses

<https://www.healthinformationportal.eu/rapid-exchange-forum>

Answers to REF questions by the consenting participating countries are published after each REF meeting on the Health Information Portal

Topic	Question	Date	Document(s)
31st Rapid Exchange Forum: Health screening for refugees from Ukraine	Health screening for refugees from Ukraine <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there any health screening protocol that is being put in place for arriving refugees from Ukraine in your country at the moment (concerning COVID-19 and/or other screenings)?COVID-19 certificates from Ukraine have been established as equivalent to EU certificates in the Commission Implementing Decision 2021/1380. Are there mandatory stipulations for entry of refugees arriving to your country from Ukraine when it comes to COVID-19 vaccination status, and/or is there a non-mandatory vaccination offer for arriving refugees?Are (and if so how are) additional vaccinations and vaccination history recorded for refugees from Ukraine in your country?	14-Mar-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">31_REF_minutes_questions.pdf
30th Rapid Exchange Forum: Long-term surveillance strategies	Long-term pandemic monitoring and surveillance <ul style="list-style-type: none">Was the 'state-of-emergency' activated in your country when the pandemic hit, or other emergency legislation set in place in order to set up a COVID-19 monitoring and surveillance system, including regulations for data access and linkage of data sources? Did your constitution already include such mechanisms before COVID-19?	28-Feb-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">30_REF_minutes_questions_1.pdf



5. Bolstering pandemic preparedness

Examples for specific topics covered in the REF meetings that have been most beneficial for national crisis management/response teams:

- Vaccination strategy – AT, BE, IE, MT, SRB
- Testing & reporting strategies – DE, MT, LV, ES
- Non-pharmaceutical measures (especially in schools) – AT, UK
- Long COVID (management) – DE, IT
- Tourism and travel (certificates incl. acceptance of recovery cert., validity, testing) – AT, MT, IE
- Vaccination compliance/Vaccine hesitancy – IE
- ICU – BE, AT

6. Stimulating exchange and discussion

Conference workshops

- **European Public Health Week 2021:** Special REF Edition 17 May 2021
- **EHFG 10/2021: Datademic** - Data-decision-behaviour: A consolidated approach? [Recording available here](#)
- **14th EPH Conference 11/2021:** Several sessions organised by PHIRI and others involving PHIRI members

Upcoming events -> please share the news in your networks

- **EHMA 15.6.2022, Brussels: Better information, better decisions!** Advances and challenges in pan-European health information systems during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **15th EPH Conference 9.-12.11.2022, Berlin:** several workshops and abstracts in planning

Webinars

- **Medicinal therapies for COVID-19** and their impact on population health – 25 January 2022
- **What next for pandemic preparedness in Europe?** Adapting to the COVID-19 hyperendemic and beyond.
Upcoming 20 May 2022 in the scope of EUPHW!

7. Building synergies

REF strives to identify synergies with EU services (ECDC, JRC) and other stakeholders and projects such as the PREPARE cluster





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