

Background

In the EU/EEA, circulation of SARS-CoV-2 has been significantly reduced during winter 2024/2025 compared to previous years, in part due to widespread vaccination and the development of significant population hybrid immunity, but also the re-emergence of seasonal circulation for other respiratory viruses following the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic¹. However, as of 2025, SARS-CoV-2 continues to circulate among EU/EEA citizens, with no established predictable or seasonal pattern for circulation.

While disease burden associated with acute infections has been lowered with increasing population immunity, a significant disease burden has also been attributed to post-acute sequelae associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection. A wide range of qualifying post-acute symptoms have been described collectively as “long COVID”, with the World Health Organization developing a consolidated clinical case definition in October 2021, applying the specific terminology ‘post COVID-19 condition’ (PCC)². Estimates of PCC prevalence vary widely between studies due to differences in study design, the populations studied, and the timing of these studies. While most COVID-19 patients recover, during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 5–20% of people are estimated to have developed PCC following SARS-CoV-2 infection^{3,4}.

Ongoing research initiatives are dedicated to identifying the underlying mechanisms, risk factors, and effective treatments for PCC, as well as investigating its long-term consequences on physical and mental well-being. As our understanding of PCC evolves, it is essential to continue adapting public health strategies to minimise risk and mitigate its impact.

Scope and objectives

This ninth “research to policy action” (R2P) meeting aims to facilitate a collaborative dialogue between EU-funded research projects working on PCC and public health policy actors for a better understanding of activities in key areas of mutual interest. The meeting will provide a platform for EU-funded research projects to share their latest findings, including preliminary results, and engage in an open discussion on how to address current knowledge gaps for PCC.

Building on a previous R2P meeting in May 2023, this event will facilitate a collaborative dialogue on the following key questions:

1. What are the current risk and protective factors (e.g. COVID-19 vaccination) for developing PCC, and have risk factors evolved with increasing population hybrid immunity to SARS-CoV-2?
2. What evidence has emerged from cohort data on symptom progression, symptom duration and long-term health outcomes of individuals with PCC?
3. What are the latest developments in biomarker identification and validation for diagnosis, clinical stratification and monitoring of PCC?
4. What therapeutic strategies have been identified, or are under evaluation, to treat PCC?

By bringing together researchers and policymakers, the R2P meeting aims to inform future policy actions and support public health risk assessment related to PCC.

¹ ECDC and WHO Europe. [European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary \(ERVISS\)](#)

² WHO (2021) [Clinical case definition of post COVID-19 condition](#)

³ ECDC (2022) [Prevalence of post COVID-19 condition symptoms: a systematic review and meta-analysis of cohort study data](#)

⁴ ECDC (2025) [Does COVID-19 vaccination reduce the risk and duration of post COVID-19 condition?](#)

Expected outcomes

The meeting aims to provide participants with a deeper understanding of the latest evidence and research findings regarding the current and future risks posed by PCC. These insights can inform public health policy and future research actions to improve case ascertainment, burden assessment, prevention and treatment strategies for post-acute infection sequelae for COVID-19 as well as future pandemics.

Following the meeting, a brief internal report will be circulated to all participants, summarising the key discussion points and takeaways.

Attendees

The meeting will bring together representatives from relevant EU-funded projects, including coordinators and work package leaders. Additionally, colleagues from various directorates and units within the European Commission, as well as representatives from ECDC, EMA, and HaDEA, will also be in attendance.

Agenda

10:00 - 10:05 DG R&I – Welcome and introduction
10:05 - 10:15 ECDC presentation

Block 1: Epidemiology and clinical characteristics of PCC (Questions 1 and 2)

10:20 – 10:30 ORCHESTRA
10:30 – 10:40 VERDI
10:40 – 10:50 END-VOC
10:50 – 11:00 COVICIS
11:05 – 11:25 Discussion block 1

Block 2: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Management of PCC (Questions 3 and 4)

11:25 – 11:35 EuCARE
11:35 – 11:45 EPIVINF
11:45 – 11:55 UNDINE
11:55 – 12:05 Long COVID
12:05 – 12:20 Discussion block 2

12:20 – 12:30 Closing discussion: Lessons learned and way forward