

VAX-ACTION

Tackling Effectively Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe

NEWSLETTER

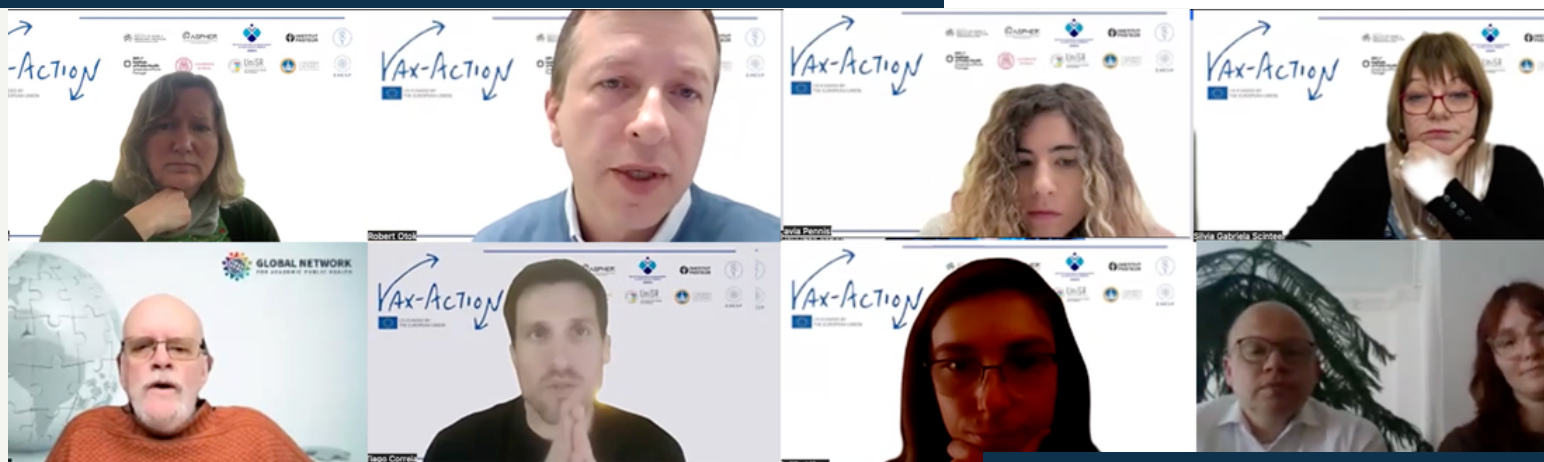
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The Vax-Action project to tackle vaccine hesitancy is wrapping up at the end of July 2026. As we look forward to sustaining and scaling up from the project results, this final newsletter considers key outcomes from the project's interventions, synergies and cooperation with other European projects, and outreach to inform a broad audience of stakeholders.

Vax-Action Key Results from Targeted Interventions

Vax-Action aimed to support EU Member States and relevant stakeholders to implement a combination of tailored, evidence-based interventions to reduce vaccine hesitancy. Building on sound theory, existing evidence, and best practices, it focussed on two sets of interventions for Frontline Health Workers (WP4) and targeted populations (WP5).

Frontline Health Workers (FHWs)

Recognizing the key role of FHWs in addressing hesitancy, Work Package 4 evaluated an innovative digital intervention designed to strengthen FHW capacity to promote influenza vaccination. The combined intervention consisted of Motivational Interviewing Training (MINT) and the Short Mapping and Reflexivity Tool (SMART) in five countries — France, Italy, Portugal, Romania, and Czechia.

Results found participants from across the countries reporting improvements in motivational interviewing techniques and in their confidence to address vaccination with hesitant patients. Participants especially appreciated the SMART tool for structuring conversations and responding to patient hesitancy. However, the study highlighted implementation challenges, notably recruitment difficulties and participant retention in a multi-step longitudinal design, reflecting the time constraints and workload pressures faced by healthcare professionals.

TOP NEWS

Key Results from Targeted Interventions

Cooperation between European Vaccination Promotion Initiatives

Vax-Action Final Events

Key Results - contd.

Targeted Populations

Work package 5 explored the use of a Direct contact and Remote Intervention through Video for Vaccine Engagement (DRIVE) intervention to targeted older populations from four partner countries: Romania, Italy, Czech Republic and Portugal. The intervention followed a structured, two-component model, combining a culturally adapted educational video with facilitated group dialogue.



The tailored vaccine communication intervention demonstrated both high effectiveness and high acceptability with the intervention groups across counties showing significantly higher post-intervention levels of vaccine confidence, improved vaccine-related knowledge, and increased intention to vaccinate.

The two-step structure allows the intervention to be scaled without over-reliance on highly specialized personnel, as the video delivers the core evidence-based information, and the discussion can be facilitated by locally trusted actors trained in moderation rather than persuasion. Its modular design allows standardization of core components and evaluation tools, while enabling flexible adaptation to different vaccines, target populations, and delivery settings.

Policy for Europe

The findings demonstrate that the interventions are not only effective but also feasible, acceptable, and scalable across diverse European contexts. Policy Briefs and Policy Report project deliverables will lay out detailed recommendations based on the findings for country and European-level settings.

Cooperation between European Vaccination Promotion Initiatives

Several other major European level initiatives taking on vaccine hesitancy are reaching completion in 2026. Of note, these include the co-Operator and RIVER-EU projects.



co-OPERATOR aims to improve vaccine uptake by addressing vaccine hesitancy through community-driven, participatory approaches tailored to the needs of specific populations. The project focuses on strengthening literacy, building trust, and supporting healthcare professionals and communities with digital solutions and behavioural science to better understand attitudes toward vaccination and to develop evidence-based communication strategies. A final output of the project is an evidence-based and citizen-driven Virtual Observatory for sharing data and best practices between Member States on vaccine hesitancy evidence. .



RIVER-EU aims to improve access to vaccination services for children and adolescents in selected underserved communities, specifically reducing inequity in ethnic, religious and cultural minorities across Europe. It has been working to identify enablers to and to support the design and implementation of interventions to improve vaccine uptake in selected underserved communities.

Vax-Action consortium partners are in dialogue with these projects to identify commonalities, strengthen findings and outcomes, and improve sustainability and ensure upscaling of best practice strategies to improve vaccination acceptance across Europe.

Dissemination and Exploitation: Vax-Action Final Events

In the final months of the Vax-Action project, partners have been increasing the project's visibility through participation in a series of events to disseminate outcomes, ensure exploitation of findings and provide recommendations for Europe.

European Public Health Week

During European Public Health Week, Vax-Action partners held a webinar to present project findings. The consortium chose May 8, which was dedicated to supporting the health workforce in order to highlight the role of frontline health workers (FHW) in vaccine promotion and confidence-building; explore how interventions can be adapted and translated across different national and regional contexts; and identify synergies with related initiatives to strengthen collective impact and scalability.

RIVER-EU Final Conference

On 19 May, the RIVER-EU project held its closing conference on 'Making vaccine equity work: Community-led solutions for a healthier and more resilient Europe'. Vax-Action partners from the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) and the Institute of Public Health at University of Porto (ISPUP) attended in person in Brussels, Belgium.

Vax-Action Advisory Committee Meeting

All Vax-Action partners met with project evaluators and advisors on 21 May to receive feedback and discuss direction for policy and recommendations for exploitation and project results. The project advisors will be instrumental to provide input and support to policy reports.

European Health Management EPMC Conference (EPMC)

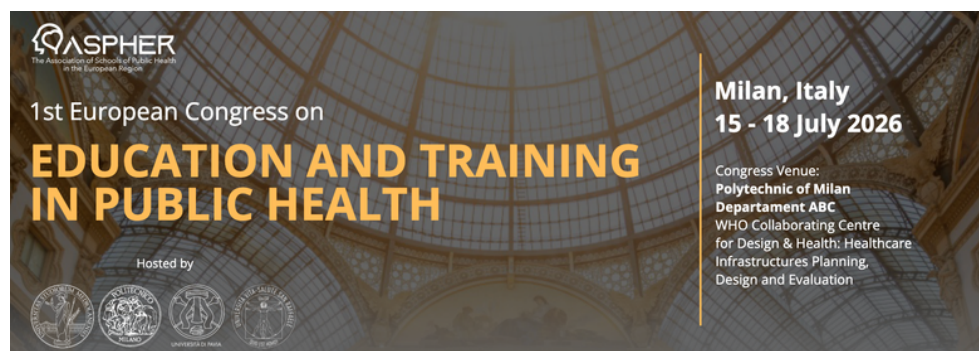
Vax-Action partner, the National Institute for Health Services Management, Bucharest (INMSS) attended the EPMC Conference in Barcelona, Spain from 10-12 June. The European Health Management Association, whose mission is to spread knowledge on effective health management to benefit of European citizens and communities, utilises their own Annual Conference to build capacity and skills. It proved to be a rich setting to discuss about Vax-Action's success building communication strategy skills in frontline health workers.

co-OPERATOR Transnational Meeting

On 16 June, Vax-Action Coordinating Partner, Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (IHMT), NOVA University, Lisbon participated in the co-OPERATOR project transnational meeting, with Anabela Pereira presenting the main priorities, activities and results of the VAX-ACTION project, in which you are involved. Her presentation was followed by a fruitful discussion with the co-OPERATOR consortium to explore future opportunities for collaboration.

Final Vax-Action Event - ASPHER 1st European Congress on Education and Training in Public Health

On 16 July, in the context of [the ASPHER 1st European Congress on Education and Training in Public Health](#), Vax-Action will hold its final event in workshop format to disseminate results and experiences from the project, consider relevant policy and identify pathways for future action, sustainability and upscaling of project results and recommendations. Representatives from the co-OPERATOR project will be present to discuss synergies and project advisors from the ASPHER Vaccination Task Force will comment. The Vax-Action consortium invites all interested parties and individuals to attend.



About Vax-Action

The main objective of Vax-Action is to support EU Member States and relevant stakeholders to implement a combination of tailored, evidence-based interventions aimed to reduce vaccine hesitancy. The combination will be based on evaluation of effectiveness of interventions that build on the existing evidence with interventions to be conducted in selected target regions in five EU member states (Portugal, Italy, France, Romania, and Czechia).

Vax-Action interventions and recommendations are designed to build on sound theory, existing evidence, and best practice in application of evaluation using a co-design model to engage Frontline Healthcare Workers (FHWs), specific vulnerable population groups (e.g., newly arrived migrants, hesitant parents, people of low socio-economic status) to tailor interventions to their requirements and the specific issues raised by recently approved vaccines for emergent diseases/infections/virus such as Covid-19 and mpox, mass vaccination and loss of trust in long-standing vaccines included in national vaccination programmes.

Learn more about Vax-Action at <https://vax-action.eu>.

Vax-Action Partners



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