

POPULATION HEALTH INFORMATION RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE (PHIRI)

Health is a cross-border issue, recently demonstrated by the COVID-19 public health crisis. Especially in the area of **population health, a structured European mechanism for COVID-19 exchange** to organize and share information between countries is urgently needed. PHIRI allows for better **coordinated European efforts** across national and European stakeholders to generate the best available evidence for research on health and well-being of populations as impacted by COVID-19 to **underpin decision making**. In doing so, PHIRI lays the foundation for a federated research infrastructure on population health.

Main outcomes and developed services by March 2022 (Month 17 of 36):

PHIRI has launched its [Health Information Portal](#) in May 2021: a one-stop-shop facilitating access to population health and health care data, information and expertise across Europe. For the first time, catalogues of population health information sources from national and international organizations (210+), health information projects within countries and across Europe (150+) and training material and courses (55+) and research networks (11) are findable through a single Portal.

PHIRI maintains a strong [network of National Nodes](#) (27 nodes and growing): an organizational entity, often linked to a national institution or governmental unit that functions as a national liaison and brings together relevant national stakeholders in the country in a systematic way.

PHIRI adopts a [federated architecture](#), that is piloted by 4 different [use cases of immediate relevance](#) on COVID-19 impacts (on vulnerable populations, on perinatal health, on mental health and delayed cancer care) by conducting research. In over 20 datahubs, data is mobilized and ready to be analyzed in a distributed manner. First results are expected in May 2022 and will be published on the Health Information Portal.

PHIRI develops a consolidated framework to assess the direct and indirect [impacts of COVID-19](#) on population wellbeing, morbidity and mortality. Over 10.000 abstracts are scanned and at the moment indicators are currently extracted.

The COVID-19 pandemic demanded a quick exchange between experts and institutions supporting national governments in the crisis response. PHIRI's [Rapid Exchange Forum](#) offers a structured and highly needed platform for regular

quick exchange of fellow countries, policy advisors, commission services and researchers in the joint efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Up until now, 30 bi-weekly meetings have been organized and over 80 urgent research and policy questions answered. The answers, together with the current policy measures in each participating European country, is published on the [Health Information Portal](#).

PHIRI supports European countries in developing future scenarios to gain insights in possible future health impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak [modelling scenarios for national situations](#). PHIRI has developed a [compact guide to perform a Public Health Foresight Study](#). After an [advanced course](#) on foresight and scenario modeling, now 8 countries have started their own foresight study, supported by PHIRI.

PHIRI strives to exchange expertise, methods, and tools and identify synergies with other organizations, infrastructures, projects, and initiatives working in the same field to build on what exists, learn from each other and avoid duplication. PHIRI aims to reach out to the diverse players in the health data field, by organizing several [inclusive and targeted stakeholder meetings, discussions, dialogues](#).

PHIRI aims to map the health information systems (HIS) in European countries that monitor the effects of COVID-19 on population health, assessing the COVID-19 health information flows in countries [through virtual country visits](#). The assessments are performed in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal by the end of 2022. Italy was assessed by Belgium in January 2022.

PHIRI believes that the identification of best practices for handling the COVID-19 pandemic at

public health and clinical management level should also include the COVID-19 response to the infodemic. In this regard, PHIRI is actively organizing different activities to discover experiences, lessons learned and good practices regarding the [management of the COVID-19 infodemic](#).

The [European School on Health Information](#) that is maintained by PHIRI aims to strengthen the public health information workforce in Europe and to overcome health information inequalities. By providing numerous capacity building activities in the form of trainings, courses, webinars and workshops to strengthen the next generation of public health information professionals in Europe.

PHIRI has established an [External Scientific Advisory Board \(ESAB\)](#). This cross-domain group of independent scientific experts provides advice on the quality of the deliverables, ethical issues, general philosophy and direction of the project, eventual corrective measures in the content of the work and, if necessary, on the dissemination and exploitation of the project's results.

PHIRI is part of the [PREparedness and resPonse for emergency situAtions in euRopE \(PREPARE\) cluster](#) together with 12 other H2020 funded projects: Each of the projects (with a combined funding of €72 million) is tackling challenges specifically looking at the preparedness and response phases of crisis management and working together we aim to achieve stronger results and greater impact for our cause.

PHIRI is actively involved in the discussions on the [European Health Data Space](#): a common European Health Data Space that aims to promote better exchange and access to different types of health data (electronic health records, genomics data, data from patient registries etc.) for health research and health policy making purposes (secondary use of data). Furthermore, PHIRI is one of the early adopters that will test the technical services provided by the [EGI-ACE-project](#) which main goal is to implement the compute platform of the European Open Science Cloud. PHIRI tests will test the technical services provided by EGI-ACE that are essential to store and share data in a safely

manner (e.g. population health data, healthcare data).

PHIRI increases national and European pandemic **preparedness** through research and policy support. An integrated and sustainable EU-wide population health information system facilitates better **harmonized response** at EU level to the COVID-19 pandemic with far-reaching repercussions on citizens' health, wellbeing, mobility, and employment.

Timeline: 1 Nov 2020 – 3 years

Financing: DG RTD – 5M€

Coverage: 41 partners in 30 countries

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