

Disclaimer: We kindly ask to acknowledge that due to the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the questions and dynamic situations they pertain to, some of the information might be incomplete or only correct for the time being. Thus, please consider the date and date of last update with the below information. All available information was provided by a country representative from the PHIRI network during or in connection to the respective meeting.

Date: 20.11.2023

Table 1: Country responses – Covid-19 combined vaccination

Country	Topic: Covid-19 combined vaccination In countries where Covid-19 is vaccinated combined with another immunization, e.g. against influenza, was there a (remarkable) increase of Covid-19 vaccinations? What could have caused this increase, what are the possible reasons? Are there any learnings with such a system? Please share your experiences.
Austria	<p>Since September, there has been a vaccination recommendation for both vaccinations, especially for the elderly and people with pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>There is no overall coordinated strategy for combined vaccinations, but combined flu-Covid vaccinations are offered at vaccination centres run by cities and municipalities as well as workplace vaccination campaigns. Both vaccinations are also available in community-based practices.</p> <p>To our knowledge, this vaccination offer is limited in time, e. for example in Vienna, where it is only offered in November. While Covid vaccination is for free, influenza vaccination is available for a fee of 7 €.</p> <p>In fact, the number of Covid vaccinees in Austria has been rising since the end of September, so this cannot be explained by the combined vaccination service. Rather, it is more likely caused by the new corona vaccine adapted to the XBB.1.5 variant adapted corona vaccine, which has been available in Austria since the beginning of September.</p> <p>Since September 1, 326.847 people have been vaccinated with the Biontech/Pfizer vaccine (as at 20/11/2023) impfdaten.at.</p>
Belgium	<p>A vaccine against COVID-19 (available since September 2023) and a vaccine against the seasonal flu is recommended for everyone aged 65 and over, for people living in long-term care facilities or nursing homes, for people with underlying chronic health conditions, for housemates of vulnerable people, for pregnant women and for caregivers. Other people outside these target groups, can also get vaccinated if they wish. The vaccines for COVID and influenza are available at the pharmacy at least until the end of the year. Initially, it was the intention to vaccinate for both at the same time at the GP, but finally the timing did not really match (COVID vaccines were available earlier, and the wave was expected earlier, so many people went for COVID vaccination first).</p> <p>When comparing vaccine uptake, it's also important to consider differences between the two years. First, the main target population is different: last year people aged 50 years and over were advised to get vaccinated, this year it's people aged 65 years and over. Second, active invitations were sent last year (to people aged 50 years and over in Brussels and Wallonia, to people aged 18 years and over in Flanders). This year, invitations were not sent systematically. Third, the media coverage was much higher last year compared to this year (as there was still the worry that there would be another big winter wave), which likely contributes to people's intentions to get vaccinated. The vaccination rate is lower this year compared to the same time last year, despite the possibility to vaccinate together with the influenza vaccine, but in conclusion it is very difficult to attribute this to a single reason</p> <p>Dashboard for COVID-19: https://lookerstudio.google.com/embed/reporting/c14a5fc-cab7-4812-848c-0369173148ab/page/p_j1f02pfnp</p>
Ireland	<p>Overview</p> <p>Ireland does not have data on the number of COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccinations administered to patients simultaneously. However, the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive have actively promoted the uptake of simultaneous COVID-19 boosters (for certain groups) and Influenza vaccinations. Both are available at GPs and Pharmacists.</p> <p>Since Week 39 2023 there are observable correlations between the administration of Influenza vaccinations and third and fourth booster doses for COVID-19.</p> <p>COVID-19 Vaccination Trends</p> <p>At Week 39 2023, 4% of the population had received a fourth booster dose and 10% had received a third booster dose.</p> <p>By Week 45, 7% had received a third booster and 14% had received a third booster. These figures represent increases of 75% and 40% respectively. These doses are targeted at the immunocompromised and those in certain age categories, so we do not have a population denominator.</p> <p>Influenza Vaccination Trends</p>

	<p>Between Week 38 and Week 45, the population coverage of this season's flu vaccine from ~0% to 9.5% for children aged 2-12, to 18% for Adults 50-64, and to 59% for adults 65+. The figures for the adult groups are about 5 percentage points lower than the same time last year.</p> <p><i>Learnings</i></p> <p>The learning from the Irish system is that winter public health campaigns on vaccination require clear messaging, combined with ease of accessibility and affordability for at-risk groups.</p> <p><i>Links to information:</i></p> <p>COVID-19 Vaccinations: https://covid19ireland-geohive.hub.arcgis.com/pages/vaccinations</p> <p>Influenza coverage: https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/influenza/seasonalinfluenza/vaccination/</p> <p>Powerpoint "Influenza Vaccine Uptake in Ireland in 2023-2024 season (Week 38-45)" https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/influenza/seasonalinfluenza/vaccination/HPSC_website_flu_uptake%20%20_data_week%2043_v1.2_fiu_slides%2014%2011%202023.pdf</p>
Italy	<p>The COVID vaccine can be administered together with the flu vaccine in the same vaccination session. The indications are contained in the circular 'Indications and recommendations for the 2023/2024 autumn/winter anti-Covid-19 vaccination campaign', signed by the Director of the Prevention of the Ministry of Health (https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/vaccinazioni/archivioNormativaVaccinazioni.jsp).</p> <p>The data updated by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità on 17th of November show that, compared to 40,513,980 people vaccinated with the third dose for COVID-19, only 6,785,677 were vaccinated with the fourth dose and 546,598 subjects received the fifth (https://www.governo.it/it/cscovid19/report-vaccini).</p> <p>Focusing on the target of those over 60, the data are these: only 0.03% of the over 60 population (5,667 people) have received an anti-Covid vaccine in the last 4 months. Things are not better on the flu vaccination front: while coverage in the general population remains almost stable (around 20.6% in the 2022/2023 season compared to 20.5% in the previous season), in recent years there has instead been a progressive decline in vaccinations against seasonal flu among elderly people over 65: from 58.1% in the 2021-2022 season to 56.7% in the 2022-2023 season, far from the peak of 65.3% reached in 2020/2021 and the minimum objective of 75% coverage.</p> <p>Possible reasons of the vaccination decline: during the Covid emergency, vaccinations were carried out "everywhere", even in places of cultural interest to reach the population. To continue in this direction, the Ministry of Health in the latest circular suggested: "the provision of recommended vaccinations can take place directly at the service in charge of the patient, without prejudice to the possibility of resorting, for this purpose, to interdepartmental and/or intercompany protocols".</p>
Norway	Norway promotes co-vaccination with influenza-vaccine, but in reality, this seems not to be performed all that often. The reason is likely that influenza-vaccination is performed by the GPs, while covid-19 vaccines still are less suitable for decentralized vaccination and is more often offered in vaccination centres.
Serbia	Immunisation with Covid-19 and influenza at the same time is recommended by the national guidelines. But there are no data about concrete numbers available so far.
Slovenia	There is no increase in Covid-19 vaccination, but in fact the vaccination rate is very low. No effect of a combined vaccination is visible at the moment.