



# NEWSLETTER

June 2022



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the VAX-TRUST newsletter! This letter aims to communicate to you any actualities, novelties, and research results regarding the project. In this newsletter, you may find highlights of the first hybrid project meeting in Tampere, information on the completed situation analysis, accounts on the so far occurred media outreach, and a summary of what we are currently working on.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter!

## HYBRID MEETING IN TAMPERE

It was an amazing and much-anticipated experience when most of the consortium members were finally able to gather for a face-to-face meeting at the end of the year 2021. The gathering was held in Tampere, Finland, which is the home city of the coordinating institution of the project, Tampere University. A total of 18 members from eight out of ten partner organisations were able to travel on-site, and the representatives that were not able to travel to Tampere participated in the meeting remotely.

The two-and-a-half-day-long meeting was a success from many perspectives. For example, the relevant Work Packages were discussed thoroughly, the ways of cooperation were developed, and the schedules for awaiting tasks were planned. The meeting allowed us to also have more informal hallway discussions and lighter small talk which are important elements of team-building. To read more about the meeting and see also a few photos, go ahead and redirect to [this link](#).



*Group picture from the consortium meeting in Tampere, Finland. Photo by Jonne Renvall (TAU)*

## THE PROJECT

*Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe* (VAX-TRUST) examines vaccine hesitancy as a broad societal phenomenon with the primary aim to provide tools and support for healthcare professionals in encountering vaccine hesitant individuals.

VAX-TRUST is a H2020 funded project that started at the beginning of March 2021 and is to last until the end of February 2024.

Please visit our website for more information: <https://vax-trust.eu>



## THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIETAL CONTEXT

During the first ten months of the project, i.e., from March to December 2022, we had the vital task to complete Work Package (WP) 2 as it forms the base of the research conducted in the project. WP2 aimed at providing a situation analysis of vaccine hesitancy in Europe based on previous research. This was achieved by examining the results of the *Special Eurobarometer 488* and other public data sources.

The analysis resulted in clear outcomes according to which vaccine hesitancy should be understood as a complex social phenomenon that arises not only by individuals' perceptions and previous experiences with, for example, vaccination services and the healthcare system, but also from broader societal conditions, such as household composition, educational attainment, and socio-economic status. Moreover, it was shown that attitudes towards vaccination have a large degree of cross-national variation instead of being clear-cut in all examined European regions. To read more of the discoveries done in WP2, take a look at [this news item](#) written by the WP2 Leader, Ghent University.

## MEDIA DISCOURSES ON VACCINATION

Another part of our situation analysis was to study the discourses in the media in WP3. We conducted a study on vaccine discourse in two analytical periods, before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and in the initial phase of the pandemic (March 2020 – April 2021). The research was done in seven VAX-TRUST countries: Finland, Belgium Poland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

Our work addressed the questions: *What are the similarities and differences in meanings related to vaccines between countries?* We have employed a comparative lens and contributed to understanding the broad context in which vaccine hesitancy should be considered. The analyses were driven by a unified methodology and took into account country-specific socio-cultural contexts. We aimed to identify the way vaccines and vaccination are defined within countries and how these definitions could potentially influence vaccine hesitancy. To read more on the main results of WP3, see [the news item](#) by the WP3 leader, Jagiellonian University.

## MEDIA OUTREACH

The media interest in vaccine hesitancy has continued to be active. As was reported in the first VAX-TRUST newsletter, different media have continued to reach out to the consortium members with requests for interviews and other types of media appearances. Our researchers have continued to have an active role in discussing the phenomenon through its broad societal contexts.

To begin with a few examples, members of the VAX-TUST consortium have been interviewed on television broadcasts. Professor Pru Hobson-West from Nottingham University (UNOTT) in the United Kingdom discussed vaccine hesitancy on [BBC News](#), while Associate Professor Dino Numerato from Charles University (CUNI) in the Czech Republic was interviewed on [TV Nova](#).

The consortium has been present also in printed and online newspapers. For instance, CUNI Assistant Professor Jaroslava Hasmanová Marhánková provided comments in Czech to the online daily [Seznam Zprávy](#), while Research Fellow Dr Ana Patrícia Hilário from Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de



Lisboa (ICS-ULisboa) in Portugal has continued to provide frequent interviews. You can read one in Portuguese on [Público on this website](#). Finally, VAX-TRUST members have also participated in several events and seminars organised by different universities and even a primary school.

## FRUITS OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH



*Teamwork in Cassino in May 2022*

We are currently working on full steam with our vaccine hesitancy study. The study in WP4 involves interviews with healthcare professionals and vaccine-hesitant parents, observations at healthcare centres, and analysis of the gathered data. The data collection and analysis are coming to an end in early autumn this year. However, already now the complexity of healthcare systems, the multiplicity of healthcare professionals involved in vaccination and the differences in immunization programmes have become evident to us. Also, the war in Ukraine has

affected our working environment and possibilities to collect at the same time as the Covid-19 pandemic is still with us, making an enormous impact on research in the healthcare context.

Nevertheless, we have focused our minds on collecting a robust sociological knowledge base to draw upon in our interventions for healthcare professionals in WP5. To strengthen this collaborative endeavour, we organised two in-person meetings in May 2022. In our two wonderful meetings in Italy, we enjoyed the fruits of collaborative research, including sharing experiences of challenges and good moments of data collection, making decisions about details in analysis, and making cross-country comparisons around key messages from sociological research to healthcare professionals.

To stay updated about our research and achievements, keep following the updates on the project website as well as the project partners' websites and social media accounts.

Greetings from the VAX-TRUST consortium!



*A group picture in the wonderful warm evening in Turin, May 2022*

