

Disclaimer: We kindly ask to acknowledge that due to the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the questions and the dynamic pandemic situation some of the information might be incomplete or only correct for the time being. Thus, please consider the date 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.

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Table 1: Country responses: Communication strategies

Country	Topic: Communication strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication channels are currently used by official sources in your country to disseminate COVID-19 information / which is the most common tool? • In your opinion, which communication channels/tools are working best to reach the people in your country at this stage of the pandemic? Have there been any (recent) adaptations to your country's national communication strategies with respect to countering pandemic fatigue and improving effectiveness of communication?
Austria	<p>Information on epidemiology, containment measures and regulations, testing and treatments, etc. is available on the websites of the MoH and regional governments (examples below). Some of the information is available in several languages.</p> <p>https://www.sozialministerium.at/Informationen-zum-Coronavirus.html https://coronavirus.wien.gv.at/ https://vorarlberg.at/corona https://corona.ooe.gv.at/</p> <p>The main public TV news format, the red cross and other organisations also disseminate information on Instagram and TikTok. (e.g. TikTok: @zeitimbild, @roteskreuz_at; Instagram: roteskreuz_at, zeitimbild)</p> <p>In January 2022 a new campaign has been launched by the national public broadcasting services, the red cross, the social security agency and the association of medical doctors. The campaign aims to encourage constructive and respectful dialogs despite opposing opinions on pandemic-related topics. https://www.lasstunsreden.at/</p> <p>In late 2021 and early 2022 the red cross hosted a series of 9 webinars directed at children and young adults, parents and teachers. The aim was to provide information and dismantle disinformation on various pandemic-related topics. Participants could submit questions, webinars were held in various languages. https://www.gemeinsamlesen.at/corona</p>
Croatia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific website for dissemination of COVID-19 information: https://koronavirus.hr/, Civil protection website https://civilna-zastita.gov.hr/. Websites of Ministry of Health https://zdravlje.gov.hr/, Public health Authority, Foreign Affairs Ministry. Mainstream public service broadcasting. • Civil protection official COVID-19 live TV broadcast and https://koronavirus.hr/ <p>Frequency of the civil protection broadcasts has been reduced.</p>
Czech Republic	<p>No strategy can be recommended. In general most important information is communicated via websites MOH, Governmental Website. There is no much information in social media. Most effective way of dissemination of information was some kind of TV, especially for vaccination</p>
Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about different crisis have a specific website. At the beginning there was only COVID-19 crisis, but now there is also information on refugee crisis - https://kriis.ee/en <p>Weekly updates on the current situation of COVID-19 are presented on the Health Board webpage: https://www.terviseamet.ee/en and also on their Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/terviseamet)</p> <p>Vaccination information can be find https://vaktsineeri.ee/en/</p> <p>There were daily updates on the COVID-19 situation in the country on every local TV channel's (either national or private) news broadcasts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As there is a new crisis due to the war in Ukraine and the situation with the COVID-19 has improved a lot (infection rate and hospitalization is low, measures have been lifted) lately the proportion of COVID-19 information is in the background. Frequency of the press releases have been reduced (before once a day now once a week).



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Finland	<p>Since the pandemic slowed down, so did communication. Press conferences are still held every fortnight, at which, for example, the number of cases or hospitalisations are mentioned. There are still bi-weekly press conferences where, among other things, the number of cases and hospitalisations are presented. It is broadcast directly on the main news channels and also streamed on the internet. The website, including indirect impact of COVID, is updated regularly, as well as social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Migrants with their special needs are difficult to reach out. Most effective way to communicate depends on the audience, but at least the prime time news reaches most people.</p>
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an official website to disseminate information: https://koronavirus.gov.hu. Besides that government press conferences are used to declare new measures. • After the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic a special decision making body (Operatív Törzs, Operative Board) was set up. The Operative Board had regular meetings followed by press conferences to disseminate new measures. These press conferences were ceased in June, 2021. As the mask wearing measures were suspended and other restrictions were eliminated in the beginning of 2022 communication also subdued.
Ireland	<p>The Department of Health uses many communication channels, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publishing latest public health advice on @roinnslaite social channels via informative threads, graphics and videos. • issuing bank holiday weekend public health messages e.g. St Patrick Day and Easter. • Providing information to Government Ministers relating to the latest epidemiological situation and the latest public health advice. • Publishing the latest COVID-19 stats every weekday. <p>The Health Service Executive (HSE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to run targeted communications campaigns designed to maintain adherence to the public health advice and encourage vaccination uptake for boosters, children and primary doses. • continue to push public health and vaccine messages across platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube and TikTok with particular focus on advising those who had COVID-19 in December reminding they are now eligible for their booster. Extensive social media advertising and radio, translated into 10 languages broadcast in those languages on community radio and on digital audio. • Public Health Doctors around the country continue to engage with local media to re-iterate the public health messaging. HSE National spokespersons have also been available for media in the last few weeks. <p>Government Information Service continue to roll out their RSVP campaign reminding people to consider Risk, Symptoms, Venue, People.</p> <p>On 17 Feb 2022, the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) considered the public health measures in place and, due to a range of improving epidemiological factors, advised that the remaining mandatory measures could be removed with effect from 28 February as planned. This signified a shift in Ireland's COVID-19 response from mandated public health measures to individual responsibility.</p> <p>The channels outlined above continue to be the most effective. The communication objectives of this phase of Ireland's public health response are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to make data on the status of the disease publicly available



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a cultural shift towards embedding individual and collective personal behaviours around the public health advice to mitigate against COVID-19 and other respiratory infections • Support specific groups, e.g., over 55's, those with high-risk medical conditions, those who are immunocompromised, those who are pregnant, with appropriate public health advice • Encourage those people who are still very concerned about COVID to safely resume their former lives at a pace that is comfortable to them • Encourage the take up of the COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, particularly among minority groups who are traditional vaccine hesitant • Ensure the appropriate resources are in place to step-up communication if local or national surges of disease re-occur, including support and training for local public health teams to promote public health messages • Continue to monitor public sentiment.
Malta	<p>In Malta, the communication message is more closely tied to the source in terms of its effectiveness. In addition to TV programmes, press releases and (official) social media, ensuring that GPs are well informed and up to date with the latest research has proven most effective. Communication has been coming down, daily updates became weekly, then irregular and finally none at all, with the exception of newspaper reports.</p>
Norway	<p>NIPH provides extensive information on COVID both for general public and for health professionals: https://www.fhi.no/en/id/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/. Since February there are almost no restrictions for general public and therefore less focus on communication strategies than earlier.</p>
Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites of Ministry of Health, Public health Authority, Foreign Affairs Ministry. In form of Decrees, Notifications. Mainstream public service broadcasting. • Regretably social media with non-guaranteed content work better than official statuses of government.
Slovenia	<p>Communication channels are: □ 1. websites NIJZ and Cepimo se as main communicational channels □ 2. social media networks - Facebook (NIJZ and Cepimo se) , Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube □ 3. Monthly newsletter □ At this stage of pandemic we believe, that websites still work the best to reach the people in our country. We use social media as support element to take our followers to our website for more information. So social media channels are also very important. We have large engagement in Facebook and Twitter. We are also very well seen in Instagram and TikTok and LinkedIn. We believe that social media networks are very important for reaching people in our country. We use different tools - videos, photos, gif-s, stories, polls, we ask questions and try to engage as much as possible. □ As new adaptation to our communication strategy we could mention podcasts. We are planning to start addressing the public with podcast conversations with various exper</p>
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Health (https://www.sanidad.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov/home.htm) and regional health services (https://www.sanidad.gob.es/en/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov/enlacesCCAA.htm) use the common channels, such as their institutional webs, social media (twitter and LinkedIn) and mass media to inform about any COVID-19 aspect. Also the Carlos III Health Institute (ISCIII), that belongs to the Ministry of Science and Innovation, is the entity of international reference in the field of Public Health and Biomedical Research. It uses their own website (https://cnecovid.isciii.es/) and their social networks (twitter and LinkedIn) to inform about the COVID-19 situation. • With the current incidence rates and with most of the restrictions lifted or/and relaxed there is no need of any special communication strategy.
United Kingdom	<p>Communication now is largely passive through website advice. This differs subtly across UK nations. See - https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus for England which states: The government has removed remaining domestic restrictions in England. There are still steps you can take to reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get vaccinated - Let fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meet outside - Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces <p>See https://gov.wales/coronavirus for Wales which states: Keep Wales safe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get both jabs and your booster



- Outdoors is safer than indoors
- If you have symptoms, self-isolate and get tested
- Wear a face covering

Read the current guidance.

Recent and upcoming changes from 18 April: Face coverings remain a legal requirement in health and care settings

See <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/> for Scotland which states:

All covid rules and restrictions have been lifted in Scotland, but the virus has not gone away.

Use 'Covid sense' to help protect yourself and others:

- Get your vaccine when offered to ensure you are fully protected
 - Open windows when socialising indoors
 - Wear a face covering in indoor public places and on public transport
 - Wash your hands to protect yourself
 - Take a PCR test and isolate if you have symptoms
 - Take an LFD test before visiting someone in a hospital or care home
- Care for yourself and others to help slow down the spread of the virus and reduce pressure on our health services.

See <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19> for Northern Ireland:

There are a number of sections:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): self-isolating and close contacts. If you have symptoms of or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 you should self-isolate. If you are identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, follow the guidance on self-isolation and testing.



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