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Steering Group on Prevention of Respiratory Infections  
European Scientific Working Group on Influenza (ESWI)

**Function:** Professor, Department of Medical  
Microbiology

**Main expertise (1-2 lines):**

- Evolutionary dynamics of human respiratory viruses

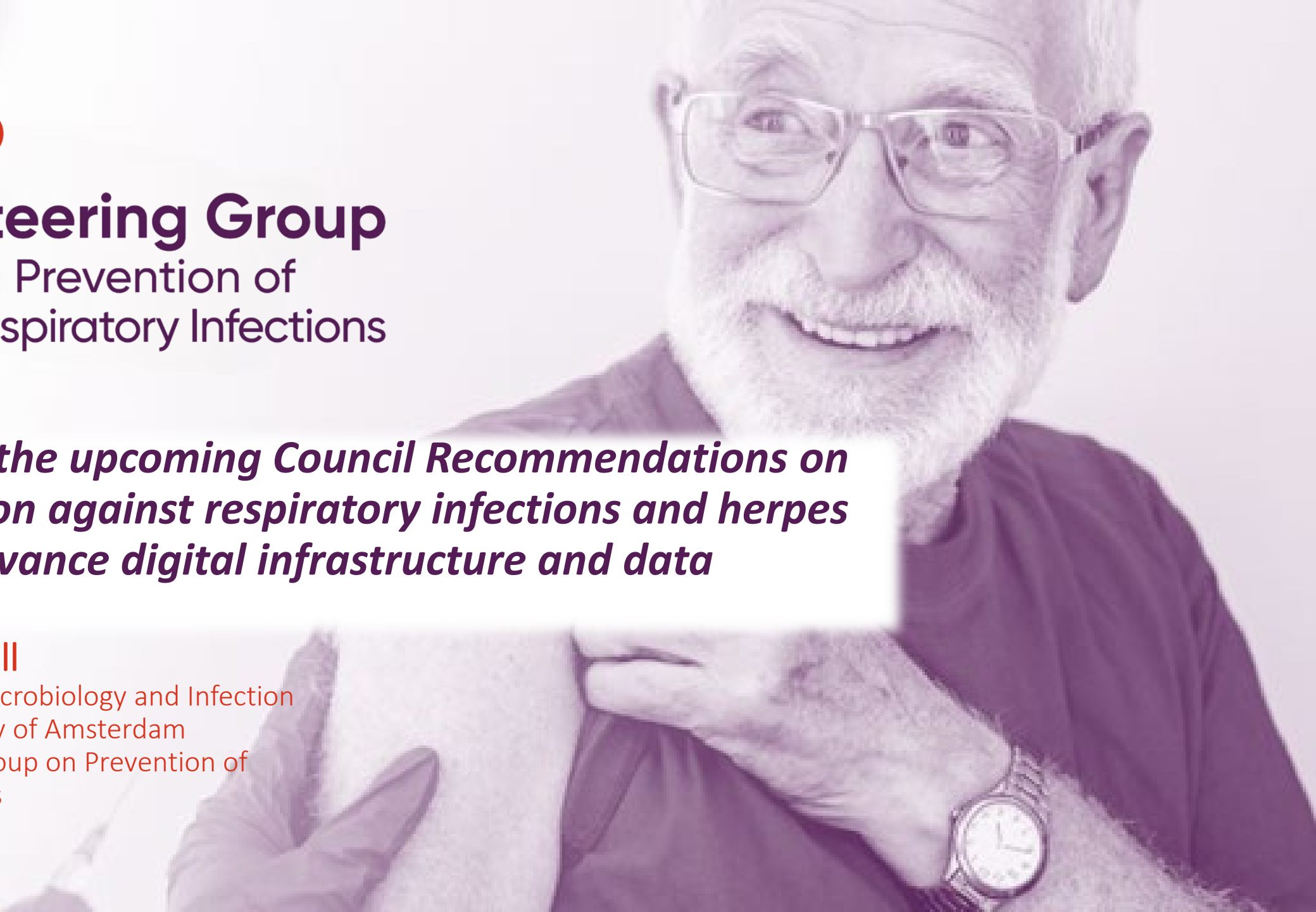


## **Steering Group** on Prevention of Respiratory Infections

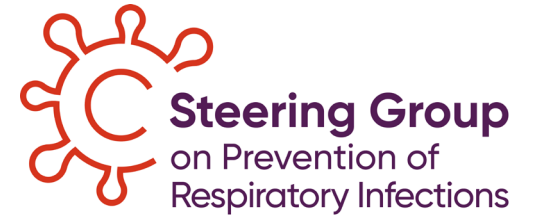
***Leveraging the upcoming Council Recommendations on immunisation against respiratory infections and herpes zoster to advance digital infrastructure and data collection***

**Prof. Colin Russell**

Professor, Medical Microbiology and Infection  
Prevention, University of Amsterdam  
Co-Chair, Steering Group on Prevention of  
Respiratory Infections  
Chair, ESWI

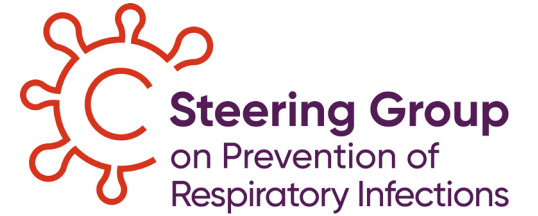


# About the Steering Group



# Our ask

## Calling for a new Council Recommendation on the value of immunisation against respiratory infections



A new Council Recommendation should:

### Call on Member States to:



**Use New Economic Governance Framework (NEGF) flexibilities** to exclude immunisation spending from caps on country's budget deficits.



**Fund education, training, and best-practice exchange** for healthcare professionals.



**Adopt EU-wide coverage targets** for influenza, COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease, using the 75% flu benchmark for at risk populations.



**Strengthen surveillance** by expanding existing flu systems to include COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease.

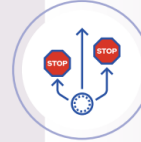


**Tackle misinformation** through transparent communication and community engagement.

### Invite the European Commission to:



**Commit dedicated EU funding** for immunisation access, innovation, and confidence.



**Issue guidance for Member States** on prevention budgeting under NEGF flexibilities.



**Empower the ECDC** to set harmonised reporting standards on coverage.



**Invest in digital infrastructure** to track immunisation coverage as a key performance indicator.



Develop guidelines to **embed immunisation** in medical education and daily practice.



**Integrate immunisation** into all EU health and resilience strategies, including the forthcoming Cardiovascular Health Plan

# A new EU framework is necessary

High and growing burden of respiratory infections and herpes zoster

Combined impact strains health systems and preparedness

Immunisation uptake remains too low

Existing framework outdated (influenza-focused)



**Opportunity:**  
new Council  
Recommendation to  
move from fragmented  
to coordinated EU  
prevention framework

# The Council Recommendation can encourage increased vaccination coverage rates (VCR) across the EU

## Targets to measure progress

Include EU-wide coverage targets



### Targets should be:

1. Tailored to specific populations and risk groups
2. Reinforced & supported by **practical implementation measures**

## Digital infrastructure & data

Strengthen digital infrastructure & develop accurate data on disease levels and immunisation coverage to improve VCR in Europe.

### Denmark provides a useful case study



# Data is fundamental for meaningful surveillance of respiratory and herpes zoster immunisation coverage

- **Harmonised and timely data** is necessary.
  - Current challenge: **fragmented** and **delayed data reporting**.



The Steering Group calls for the Recommendation to reflect the **need for harmonised reporting**.

- Member States should implement or strengthen **integrated surveillance and data collection**.

# Final reflections

**A stronger, more resilient approach to respiratory infection and herpes zoster prevention in Europe**

**New Council Recommendations on immunisation against Respiratory Infections and herpes zoster provide the opportunity to shape a new, evidence-based EU Council Recommendation**

→ Ensure translation of evidence into practical, implementable policy across Member States.

