

Two years of COVID-19: new report highlights the 100 weeks of WHO/Europe's efforts to protect lives and livelihoods during the pandemic



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11 March 2022 is a grim milestone as we mark 2 years since WHO categorized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic – a health emergency spanning countries and continents. Since cases of COVID-19 were first reported, more than 6 million people have died from the disease worldwide, with over 1.8 million of them in the WHO European Region.

The new WHO/Europe report titled “One hundred weeks of emergency response, one hundred million COVID-19 cases: working towards better COVID-19 outcomes in the WHO European Region” showcases the achievements of WHO/Europe’s COVID-19 Incident Management Support Team (IMST) – the mechanism activated to deal with emergency situations – from its establishment in early 2020, as the first cases of COVID-19 were being detected in the European Region, to 2022. It also includes insights into the work of the operational teams during this time as they supported some of the Region’s Member States in dealing with the challenges of a global pandemic.

Quoted in the report is Dr Dorit Nitzan, former Regional Emergency Director for WHO/Europe, who said, “The COVID-19 Incident Support Management Team has been the engine of WHO/Europe’s response to COVID-19 by generating knowledge and operationalizing it in countries with governments and partners”.

The report details the IMST’s work and the impact of its COVID-19 responses across various functions, including surveillance, public health and social measures, risk communication and community engagement, clinical and health interventions, essential health

services, vaccines and operations, showing how each of these pillars contributed to meeting the needs of countries in three key areas:

Commenting on the report's launch, Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, recently appointed Regional Emergency Director for WHO/Europe, said, "This new report underlines how the IMST's expertise and flexibility over the last two years have been crucial for providing Member States with the most timely and appropriate support for dealing with a complex and ever-evolving situation. Through solidarity, perseverance and patience, we can defeat this virus together".

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