



HEROES

D2.5.Final Dissemination Report



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Deliverable Plan

Deliverable lead partner	National Directorate General for Hospitals - OKFO
Contributing partner(s)	SU,ICS ,NIVEL, UCSC, EU, AGENAS
Work Package	WP2
Deliverable type	Report
Contractual delivery date	30.06.2026
Actual delivery date	27.07.2026
Dissemination level	Public
Version	3.00

ABSTRACT

This Final Dissemination Report provides a comprehensive overview of the communication and dissemination activities carried out within Work Package 2 (WP2) of the HEROES Joint Action (HEROES JA) throughout the entire project lifecycle. Building on the foundations established in the early phases of the project, WP2 has successfully developed and implemented a structured and coherent communication framework that ensured the visibility, accessibility, and long-term usability of the project's results.

Over the course of the Joint Action, key milestones included the establishment of a comprehensive Communication and Dissemination Strategy, the continuous development and maintenance of the HEROES project website, as well as the active use of social media channels and newsletters to engage a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, the organisation of major events, including the Stakeholder Forum and the Community of Practice webinars, significantly contributed to knowledge exchange, stakeholder involvement, and the dissemination of project outcomes across participating countries.

While the project achieved substantial progress in strengthening its communication, several challenges were encountered during implementation. These included delays in content provision, varying levels of stakeholder engagement across countries, and the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of dissemination outputs beyond the project's duration. Furthermore, organisational changes within WP2 required adaptive management to maintain continuity and effectiveness.

This report not only presents the key achievements and outputs of dissemination activities but also reflects on the lessons learned throughout the project. It provides an analysis of the communication tools, channels, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms established under WP2, including the HEROES JA website, social media platforms, newsletters, the EU Health Policy Platform, the Stakeholder Forum, and the Community of Practice meetings. The report highlights how these activities contributed to increasing the visibility of the Joint Action, supporting knowledge exchange among participating countries, strengthening stakeholder involvement, and facilitating access to project results and deliverables. Furthermore, it identifies areas for improvement and formulates recommendations aimed at enhancing the long-term impact, sustainability, and future use of HEROES JA outcomes.

Ultimately, the report demonstrates how communication and dissemination have played a critical role in supporting the uptake of project outcomes and contributing to stronger health workforce planning across Europe.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

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Project data

Title	Joint Action HEROES (HEalth WoRkfOrce to meet Health challEngeS)
Acronym	HEROES JA
Number Grant Agreement	101082296
Type of Instrument	2.5. Final Dissemination Report
Topic	Dissemination, Events, Communication
Website	https://healthworkforce.eu/

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Glossary of acronyms

Acronym	Description
EC	European Commission
AE	Affiliated Entity
OGP	Original Good Practice
GA	Grant Agreement
SC	Steering Committee
WP	Work Package
SU	Semmelweis University
OKFŐ	National Directorate General for Hospitals (OKFO)
HEROES JA	Joint Action HEROES
(WP2)	Work Package 2

List of Annexes:

Annex 1- HEROES Design manual

Executive Summary

This Final Dissemination Report presents a comprehensive and reflective overview of the communication and dissemination activities carried out under Work Package 2 (WP2) of the HEROES Joint Action (HEROES JA) throughout the full duration of the project. Moving beyond the interim assessment of progress, this report consolidates the achievements, evaluates the effectiveness of the implemented strategies, and provides a holistic understanding of how dissemination activities have contributed to the overall impact and sustainability of the Joint Action.

Over the course of the project, WP2 successfully established and refined a structured and coherent communication framework that enabled the consistent and targeted dissemination of HEROES JA outputs. A key pillar of this framework is the development and ongoing management of digital communication channels, most notably the HEROES project website, which served as the central repository and access point for project results, deliverables, and updates. Complementing this, the strategic use of social media platforms and newsletters ensured a continuous flow of information, supporting both visibility and stakeholder engagement at European, national, and regional levels.

Throughout the project lifecycle, dissemination activities were further strengthened by the organization of major events, including the Stakeholder Forum and the Community of Practice meetings. These initiatives provided valuable opportunities for interaction, knowledge exchange, and the active involvement of stakeholders, thereby reinforcing the relevance and applicability of the project's outcomes.

At the same time, the implementation of dissemination activities revealed several challenges that required adaptive and flexible responses. These included delays in the provision of communication materials by partners, varying levels of stakeholder engagement across participating countries, and organizational changes affecting the coordination of WP2.

Addressing these challenges led to important methodological improvements, including stronger internal coordination mechanisms, clearer communication processes, and the establishment of structures such as the Editorial Committee to enhance the quality and consistency of outputs.

In its final stage, the HEROES JA has reached a level of maturity where dissemination activities not only support visibility but actively contribute to the uptake and potential integration of project results into policy and practice. This report therefore places particular emphasis on sustainability, highlighting the importance of maintaining dissemination tools, preserving stakeholder networks, and ensuring the continued accessibility of project outputs beyond the formal end of the Joint Action.

Ultimately, the report demonstrates that communication and dissemination have played a critical and transformative role in maximizing the impact of HEROES JA. As the work package responsible for connecting project activities, outputs, and stakeholders, WP2 served as a strategic enabler of the Joint Action's overall success. Through the development and implementation of a structured communication and dissemination framework, WP2 ensured that knowledge generated across the consortium became accessible, understandable, and relevant to policymakers, public institutions, professional associations, and other key stakeholders.

By facilitating stakeholder engagement, supporting knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration among partners, and promoting the uptake of project results, WP2 contributed not only to the visibility of HEROES JA but also to its effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term impact. In doing so, it helped bridge the gap between knowledge generation and real-world application, strengthening health workforce planning capacities across Europe and laying the groundwork for future initiatives in this field.

1.Introduction

The HEROES Joint Action (HEROES JA) represents a large-scale European collaboration designed to address one of the most pressing challenges facing contemporary healthcare systems: the effective planning and management of the health workforce. Bringing together 19 participating countries, the initiative has sought to strengthen national and regional capacities to ensure that healthcare systems remain accessible, sustainable, and resilient in the face of ongoing and emerging challenges.

The project is built on several core objectives. First, HEROES JA is committed to enhance the quality and consistency of workforce planning data, providing a solid foundation for decision making in all participating countries. Second, it focused on developing advanced forecasting methodologies to anticipate future workforce challenges and implement proactive solutions. Third, by improving the skills and capabilities of workforce planning professionals, HEROES JA aimed to strengthen national and regional planning systems. Lastly, the project emphasized meaningful stakeholder engagement to ensure its results are practical, relevant, and integrated into governance frameworks.

Effective governance depends on continuous and transparent communication. By creating structured dialogue between policymakers, technical experts, professional bodies, education institutions, and other stakeholders, HEROES helped transform evidence into shared priorities and concrete action. Communication is therefore not only a support function, but a key enabler of stakeholder ownership, alignment, and long-term implementation.

HEROES JA's objectives were especially relevant as healthcare systems across Europe face mounting pressures, from demographic changes and economic constraints to public health emergencies. By fostering collaboration among countries, sharing best practices, and building capacity, HEROES JA has contributed to long term improvements in workforce planning. This comprehensive approach not only supported immediate needs but also lays the foundation for sustainable healthcare systems capable of adapting to future demands.

Throughout its implementation, HEROES JA has operated within a rapidly evolving context, shaped by demographic shifts, increasing demand for healthcare services, workforce shortages, and the lasting impacts of public health crises. These factors have underscored the urgent need for more sophisticated and evidence-based approaches to workforce planning. In response, the Joint Action has focused on developing comprehensive solutions that combine improved data systems, advanced forecasting methodologies, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement.

At its core, the project has been guided by a set of interrelated objectives that reflect both immediate priorities and long-term strategic goals. A central focus has been the improvement of health workforce data, ensuring that decision-makers have access to reliable, comparable, and high-quality information. Building on this foundation, the project has worked to develop

and implement innovative forecasting tools and planning methodologies capable of anticipating future workforce needs and supporting proactive policy responses.

Equally important has been the emphasis on strengthening the skills and competencies of professionals involved in workforce planning. By fostering knowledge exchange, training, and the creation of communities of practice, HEROES JA has contributed to building a more capable and interconnected workforce planning community across Europe.

At the same time, the project has placed strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement, recognising that sustainable and effective policy solutions require the active involvement of a broad range of actors, including policymakers, healthcare providers, academic institutions, and professional organisations. Based on this HEROES approach, Policy Dialogues brought the right people into the same conversation. They gave policymakers, technical experts, professional bodies, education representatives, and other stakeholders a shared space to look at the evidence, understand each other's perspectives, discuss difficult choices, and agree on realistic actions.

In this context, communication and dissemination have played a fundamental role in ensuring that the project's activities and results extend beyond the boundaries of the consortium. By making knowledge accessible, facilitating dialogue, and supporting the exchange of experiences, dissemination activities have enabled HEROES JA to amplify its impact and foster a shared understanding of workforce planning challenges and solutions across countries.

As the project reached its conclusion, it becomes evident that HEROES JA has not only addressed immediate needs but has also contributed to shaping a longer-term strategic vision for health workforce planning in Europe.

Through its integrated and collaborative approach, the Joint Action has laid the groundwork for more resilient healthcare systems capable of adapting to future demands. This final dissemination report reflects this broader perspective, capturing both the achievements of the project and the pathways it has opened for continued development and cooperation.

1.1 Introduction of the Joint Action

The HEROES Joint Action is aimed at improving the HWF planning capacities of European countries so to ensure accessibility, sustainability, and resilience of healthcare services. The JA addressed three main objectives: 1) to improve databases used in HWF planning; 2) to develop effective tools and methods to carry out HWF planning; 3) to define the best skill-mix needed by professionals to carry out HWF planning.

Activities were organized around three main clusters of countries with similar characteristics in their healthcare systems. For each of the three objectives, clusters performed an “as is” analysis and defined a desirable “to be” scenario at the Member State level. Finally, each country designed a road map and carried out an implementation strategy to cover the gap detected. Clusterization and overall, JA coordination ensured mutual learning and sharing of successful practices across countries.

Already in the early steps of the HEROES JA, partners ensured a systematic involvement of different stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, public institutions, category associations, academia), who turned to be a part of a network of experts, called to guarantee the implementation, sustainability and continuous improvement of the HEROES JA's results. The

value of the HEROES JA is not limited to participating Member States but, on the contrary, directly applicable to all Member States.

These were able to benchmark their national HWF planning strategy with international experiences and adapt in consequently. It also benefited supra-national entities by providing the bases for more homogeneous and comparable data across national borders

The HEROES JA addressed three main objectives:

- 1) to improve databases used in HWF planning;
- 2) to develop effective tools and methods to carry out HWF planning;
- 3) to define the best skill-mix needed by professionals to carry out HWF planning.

1.2 Role of Communication in HEROES JA

At its core, communication and dissemination within HEROES JA has served to promote transparency, facilitate dialogue, and strengthen cooperation among stakeholders. It has created opportunities for mutual learning and supported the exchange of good practices across countries with different healthcare systems and policy environments. By maintaining a continuous flow of information and engagement, dissemination activities have also contributed to raising awareness of the importance of effective health workforce planning and forecasting, ensuring that this issue remains visible within broader policy discussions.

While communication and dissemination activities have significantly contributed to the visibility and accessibility of HEROES JA results, certain limitations should also be acknowledged. The level of stakeholder engagement varied across participating countries and stakeholder groups, reflecting differences in national contexts, institutional capacities, and policy priorities. In addition, communication indicators such as website traffic, social media engagement, newsletter subscriptions, and event participation provide useful information on outreach and visibility, but do not directly measure the extent to which project results are adopted or integrated into policy and practice. The long-term use and impact of HEROES JA outcomes will therefore depend not only on dissemination efforts but also on the continued commitment of stakeholders and institutions to build upon the project's results.

As the project has progressed towards its conclusion, the role of communication and dissemination has increasingly shifted from raising awareness to supporting sustainability and long-term impact. Ensuring that the results of HEROES JA remain accessible, understandable, and usable beyond the lifetime of the project has become a central priority. In this regard, communication is not only a means of sharing outcomes, but also a tool for supporting their continued use within policy development, professional practice, and future European cooperation in the field of health workforce planning.

1.3 Purpose of the Final Dissemination Report

This Final Dissemination Report serves as a comprehensive reflection on the communication and dissemination activities carried out within the HEROES Joint Action over its entire duration. Moving beyond the evaluative scope of the earlier mid-term report, this document consolidates the full range of experiences, achievements, and lessons learned, offering a complete overview of how dissemination has contributed to the overall impact of the project.

The report examines the evolution of communication and dissemination strategies, the effectiveness of different tools and channels, and the extent to which dissemination activities have succeeded in reaching and engaging relevant stakeholders.

Particular attention is given to the role of key platforms, including the HEROES JA project website, social media, newsletters, and stakeholder events, all of which have played a central role in ensuring the visibility and accessibility of project results.

In addition to documenting achievements, the report provides a critical reflection on the challenges encountered during implementation and the ways in which these were addressed. It highlights how adaptive management, strengthened internal coordination, and the gradual refinement of communication processes contributed to the development of a more robust and effective dissemination system.

Importantly, this report also places strong emphasis on sustainability, considering how the knowledge and outputs generated by the project can continue to be accessed, used, and further developed beyond its formal conclusion. In doing so, it establishes a link between communication and dissemination activities and long-term impact, underlining the importance of maintaining communication structures and stakeholder networks in the future.

The Final Dissemination Report aims not only to document communication activities, but also to demonstrate how dissemination and stakeholder engagement contributed to strengthening collaboration, visibility, policy dialogue and sustainability within the European health workforce planning landscape.”

1.4 Key Achievements and Challenges

Over the full duration of the HEROES Joint Action, communication and dissemination activities have reached a level of maturity that reflects both strategic planning and continuous adaptation. One of the most significant achievements were the successful establishment of a comprehensive and coherent communication framework, built upon the Communication and Dissemination Strategy and supported by a consistent visual identity. This framework has ensured that all communication outputs, regardless of their origin within the project, maintained a unified and recognisable structure, thereby strengthening the overall visibility and professionalism of the Joint Action.

The development and continuous enhancement of digital communication tools were another cornerstone of success. The HEROES JA project website has evolved into a central and stable platform for sharing information, providing stakeholders with reliable access to project deliverables, updates, and resources. Its role as a long-term repository became particularly important in the final phase of the project, as attention increasingly shifted towards sustainability and the preservation of knowledge. In parallel, actively managed social media channels have expanded the project’s reach, allowing for more immediate and dynamic engagement with a broader audience.

The organisation of key events, including the Stakeholder Forums and the Community of Practice meetings, Policy Board meetings, and Policy Dialogues, has further strengthened dissemination efforts by creating spaces for direct interaction and meaningful exchange. These events have enabled stakeholders not only to receive information but also to actively contribute to discussions, share experiences, and influence the development of project outputs. This participatory approach has enhanced the relevance and applicability of the results, reinforcing the connection between the project and real-world policy and practice.

At the same time, the implementation of communication activities highlighted several challenges that shaped the evolution of WP2. One of the most significant challenges was the need to manage organisational changes, particularly the transition of WP2 leadership.

This transition required careful coordination and adaptive management to ensure continuity in communication activities and to maintain the momentum of dissemination efforts. Although this process was ultimately successful, it underscored the importance of resilience and flexibility in project governance.

Another persistent challenge has been the varying level of engagement among project partners in contributing communication materials. While the success of dissemination activities depends heavily on the timely provision of content, differences in capacity and priorities across partners occasionally limited the availability of communicable outputs. Addressing this issue required the introduction of more structured coordination mechanisms, including the strengthening of platforms such as the Editorial Committee, which played a key role in facilitating content collection, review, and publication. Over time, the Editorial Committee was further integrated into the Steering Committee structure, which meets on a biweekly basis and brings together WP and task leaders to provide regular updates, strengthen cross-work-package coordination, and improve the continuity and timeliness of communication inputs.

In response to these challenges, several important improvements were implemented over the course of the project. Greater emphasis was placed on strengthening internal communication processes, providing clearer guidance and templates for partners, and planning dissemination activities more proactively. These measures contributed to a more efficient and coordinated approach, ensuring that communication outputs remained consistent and timely.

As the project concludes, it is evident that both achievements and challenges have contributed to shaping a more robust and effective dissemination system. The experience gained highlights the importance of continuous learning, collaboration, and adaptability in managing communication within complex, multi-country initiatives. By addressing challenges constructively and building on its achievements, WP2 has succeeded in establishing a strong foundation for the long-term sustainability and impact of HEROES JA.

2. Partners in the Joint Action

The following chapter describes different types of partners involved in the project, their roles and responsibilities towards the joint action and content management.

The partners in the HEROES JA project are structured into three main groups:

Beneficiaries – the core consortium members (e.g. ministries, national institutes, agencies) who implement the project and receive funding.

Affiliated entities – organisations linked to specific beneficiaries (e.g. universities, statistical offices) that support implementation under their responsibility, and receive funding.

Associated partners – external organisations (e.g. European associations, WHO, regional bodies) that contribute to the project's activities without receiving funding. Overall, the project is structured as a **core consortium of beneficiaries**, supported by their **affiliated entities**, and complemented by a wider network of **associated partners**.

2.1. Presentation of the WP2 Team

The organisation responsible for all dissemination activities is the National Directorate General for Hospitals (hereinafter OKFO) as the leader of Work Package 2.

The supporting organisations within the Work Package is the Semmelweis University (hereinafter SU), Agenas, and AE UCSC (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore).

During the implementation of the HEROES JA, Work Package 2 (WP2) underwent a significant organizational transition that required careful coordination and adaptive management. As a result of internal structural changes within the Slovak Ministry of Health, the leadership of WP2 was transferred to the National Directorate General for Hospitals (OKFO) in June 2024. This transition was prompted by capacity constraints within the former leading institution and was carried out in close collaboration with the project coordination team in order to ensure continuity and stability in ongoing communication and dissemination activities.

The handover process was managed in a structured and coordinated manner, allowing for the seamless transfer of responsibilities and operational tasks. Following this transition, OKFO assumed full responsibility for the implementation and coordination of WP2 activities, including the management of all key communication channels. These encompassed the continuous development of the HEROES JA project website, the administration of social media platforms such as LinkedIn and X, as well as the coordination of newsletter publications and other dissemination outputs.

Particular attention was given to maintaining consistency in external communication during this period of change. The transfer of specific operational tasks, including content management, website updates, and social media activities, was carried out without disruption, ensuring that stakeholders experienced no interruption in the flow of information. At the same time, OKFO continued to collaborate closely with Semmelweis University, which remained a

key partner in the technical maintenance and further development of the website as the central dissemination platform of the project.

Although the transition represented a moment of potential risk, it ultimately demonstrated the resilience and flexibility of the project's communication framework. The ability to maintain continuity and preserve the quality and consistency of dissemination activities throughout this process reflects the strength of the structures established within WP2. By the end of the project, this change in leadership had been fully integrated into the operational functioning of WP2, without negatively affecting the achievement of its objectives.

3. Communication and Dissemination Strategy

3.1. Communication and Dissemination Policy

In this section, we highlight the importance of input from partners, since all the content originated on their side and should then be shared with the WP2 team. Therefore, WP2 developed communication channels for partners to regularly share their inputs and must actively monitor, review, process, and publish the inputs received. These communication channels for sharing inputs are introduced in section 5 “Joint action communication and dissemination channels”.

The process of content creation started where the content originates – by partners – and was continually created during the whole HEROES JA based on the actual life-cycle stage of the JA. The precondition of the partners’ engagement in the content creation process was raising awareness about their role in the process and the creation of a platform for content inputs sharing. Then, the second step in the content creation process was the collection of the inputs by WP2, which includes active reminders towards partners and monitoring of their shared inputs, followed by the third and fourth steps – input processing into the content to be shared and finally content sharing.

3.2. The concept of the dissemination

The communication and Dissemination strategy of the HEROES JA addressed the following points:

- scope to disseminate – the aim and objectives of communication and dissemination activities in the HEROES JA;
- what to disseminate – deliverables and milestones of the HEROES JA that should be communicated and disseminated by the partners, and other results of the HEROES JA;
- to whom to disseminate – the target groups based on stakeholder analysis;
- how to disseminate – what dissemination channels will be used.

3.3. Objectives of the dissemination

The role and general objectives of the communication and dissemination strategy are:

- to create an overall knowledge of the HEROES JA and its aims among relevant target groups and stakeholders;
- to ensure that the results, outputs, and deliverables of the HEROES JA are known and shared with all the partners internally, but also to all relevant external stakeholders;
- to ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and to enable the HEROES JA partners to reflect on their views;
- to pool knowledge, experience and good practice from different countries and backgrounds;
- to raise and maintain constant awareness of the need for effective health workforce planning and forecasting.

We recognized that the impact and sustainability of the HEROES JA depended on the level of stakeholder engagement and the extent to which different stakeholders acquire key information and knowledge about the HEROES JA itself and, most importantly, about its results and outcomes. Good understanding and knowledge influenced the extent to which the results of the HEROES JA were implemented and adopted within national/regional/EU policy frameworks.

To ensure sustainability, WP2 ensured a systematic involvement of different stakeholders on the European, national, and regional level (e.g., policy makers, public institutions, category associations, and academia). Already in the early stages of the HEROES JA, stakeholders were a part of the network, called upon to ensure the implementation, sustainability, and further dissemination of the HEROES JA results.

Communication and dissemination activities should be:

- consistent,
- sustainable,
- effective in form, intensity, and frequency
- relevant in content.

Communication and dissemination activities covered internal communication among and towards the HEROES JA consortium partners, as well as the external communication and dissemination towards the wider stakeholder community. This included audiences within the European Union, who are not directly involved in the HEROES JA. Target audiences and the different content to be communicated and communication channels are described in more detail in specific sections of this document.

All dissemination activities were planned to be carried out in such a way that all participants work together, and all partners benefit from the results and outputs of the HEROES JA.

4. Milestones and Deliverables of the Communication and Dissemination Strategy

In the following sub-sections, HEROES JA deliverables and milestones, which are planned to be disseminated and communicated, are divided into 2 groups based on the form in which they will be communicated – to an external or internal audience. More information about each milestone or deliverable can be found in the Grant Agreement.

The following Deliverables were disseminated externally:

- D1.2 – Final deliverable on HWF planning: data, models and skills
- D2.2 – Initial Leaflet
- D2.3 – Website
- D2.4 – Policy Briefs
- D2.5 – Final Dissemination Plan
- D2.6 – Layman report
- D3.1 – Evaluation Plan
- D3.3 – Final evaluation report
- D4.1 – 20 policy action plans derived from policy dialogues
- D4.2 – Final sustainability report at the EU level
- D5.1 – WP5 Report on countries' data collection, HWF planning models and tools, stakeholders' involvement: Portugal, Norway, Greece, Sweden, Spain, Italy
- D5.2 – WP5 Report on workforce planning skills improvement Portugal, Norway, Greece, Sweden, Spain, Italy
- D6.1 – WP6 Report on countries' data collection, HWF planning models and tools, stakeholders' involvement: Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland
- D6.2 – WP6 Report on workforce planning skills improvement: Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland
- D7.1 – WP7 Report on countries' data collection, HWF planning models and tools: Belgium, Estonia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Czechia, Malta, Germany
- D7.2 – WP7 Report on workforce planning skills improvement: Belgium, Estonia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Czechia, Malta, Germany

The following Milestones were disseminated:

- M1: Kick-off meeting
- M2: Design Manual for website
- M3: Event calendar
- M31: Mid-term dissemination report
- M5: Draft Evaluation Plan
- M8: Methodology for sustainable framework for HWF intelligence
- M9: Guidelines for national policy dialogues
- M10: Policy board operating procedures
- M11: List of all the national Policy dialogue topics
- M12: First Sustainability Plan
- M13: WP5 Stakeholders' list
- M14: WP5 Sustainable framework for HWF intelligence
- M15: WP5 Advanced Minimum Dataset
- M16: WP5 Action plan to optimise HWF planning data
- M17: WP5 Action plan to optimise HWF planning tools

M18: WP5 “HWF planning” training materials
M19: WP6 Stakeholders’ list
M20: WP6 Sustainable framework for HWF intelligence
M21: WP6 Advanced Minimum Dataset
M22: WP6 Action plan to optimise HWF planning data
M23: WP6 Action plan to optimise HWF planning tools
M24: WP6 “HWF planning” training materials
M25: WP7 Stakeholders’ list
M26: WP7 Sustainable framework for HWF intelligence
M27: WP7 Advanced Minimum Dataset
M28: WP7 Action plan to optimise HWF planning data
M29: WP7 Action plan to optimise HWF planning tools
M30: WP7 “HWF planning” training materials

The following Deliverables were communicated internally:

D1.1 – Joint Action Guide
D2.1 – Communication and Dissemination Strategy
D3.2 – Mid-term evaluation report

4.1. Communication and Dissemination Activities

The communication and dissemination activities carried out under Work Package 2 (WP2) of the HEROES Joint Action (HEROES JA) were central to ensuring the project's visibility, accessibility, and sustainability. These efforts were designed to facilitate knowledge exchange and engage stakeholders. The Communication and Dissemination Strategy, developed by the Ministry of Health of Slovakia (MoH SK) and finalized in May 2023, provided a detailed framework outlining the objectives, target audiences, communication tools, and channels required to achieve these goals. The adjustments ensured its alignment with project objectives and stakeholder expectations.

The Communication and Dissemination Strategy served as the foundation for WP2, guiding both internal and external communication efforts. Internally, WP2 had supported knowledge sharing among HEROES JA partners through tools such as SharePoint, regular updates, and collaborative meetings. Externally, the strategy has driven the dissemination of project results via newsletters, active social media channels (Twitter/X and LinkedIn), and the HEROES JA website.

This Final Dissemination Report presents a comprehensive and reflective overview of the communication and dissemination activities carried out under Work Package 2 (WP2) of the HEROES JA throughout the full duration of the project.

In addition, the delivery of a unified visual identity in May 2023 further strengthened communication efforts by ensuring consistency across all project materials. Events such as the Stakeholder Forum held in October 2023 and the launch of Community of Practices (CoP) meetings in April 2024 have provided important opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. This section of the report offers an overview of the progress achieved and challenges encountered in HEROES JA’s communication and dissemination activities to date.

Social media Activities

Over its course, HEROES JA strategically directed its social media efforts toward LinkedIn, Twitter (X), and its website to strengthen its digital communication and expand its reach. These platforms were central to the project's strategy, facilitating regular updates, event promotion, and the dissemination of key insights to effectively engage both existing followers and new audiences. While LinkedIn emerged as the primary and most effective social media channel for stakeholder engagement and interaction, X and YouTube played a complementary role, providing additional visibility, content dissemination, and content-hosting opportunities that further supported the project's communication objectives.

Social media activities primarily focused on showcasing project milestones, sharing articles and publications, and increasing the visibility of events. By highlighting collaborations with other European initiatives (BEWELL, NURSING ACTION, TSI), HEROES JA fostered synergies and mutual promotion within the health workforce planning community. Posts also reflected HEROES JA's participation in conferences, workshops, stakeholder forums, and Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, providing a transparent view into knowledge-sharing efforts and stakeholder discussions.

However, notable challenges emerged. While engagement metrics reflected growth, achieving consistent interaction across a diverse range of stakeholders remained a significant difficulty.

Social media activities in the project:

- Promotion of articles and publications
- Promotion of project events (pre, during and post)
- Promotion of dissemination activities in external events
- Introduction of HEROES JA work to the wider audience
- Involving HEROES JA's new stakeholders
- Newsletter articles and subscription posts
- Season greetings

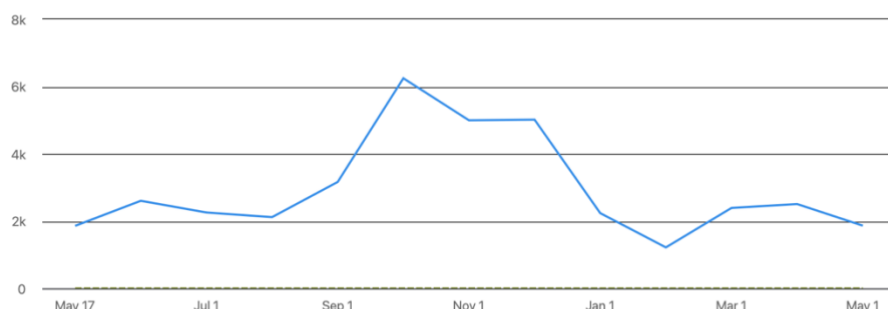
LinkedIn

Throughout the duration of the project, the HEROES JA LinkedIn account demonstrated strong engagement, reaching a total of 565 followers. The project's audience is predominantly European, with the largest follower groups located in Hungary, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Smaller but notable audiences were also identified in Canada, South America, India, and Egypt, demonstrating interest in HEROES JA beyond the European context. Content shared via the platform contributed to increased interaction and visibility within the professional network.

Analytics from the last year indicated that HEROES JA content generated 38,481 impressions, along with 1,311 reactions, 21 comments, and 35 reposts, reflecting a steady level of audience engagement.

Lessons learned from these activities highlighted that, in comparison to Twitter (X), LinkedIn proved to be a more effective platform for engaging with followers and expanding outreach. The platform achieved higher impressions and stronger follower growth, despite a lower frequency of posts, underscoring its value as a primary channel for professional communication and dissemination. Below is some data from our LinkedIn from the whole project lifecycle.

Impressions ▾



Organic

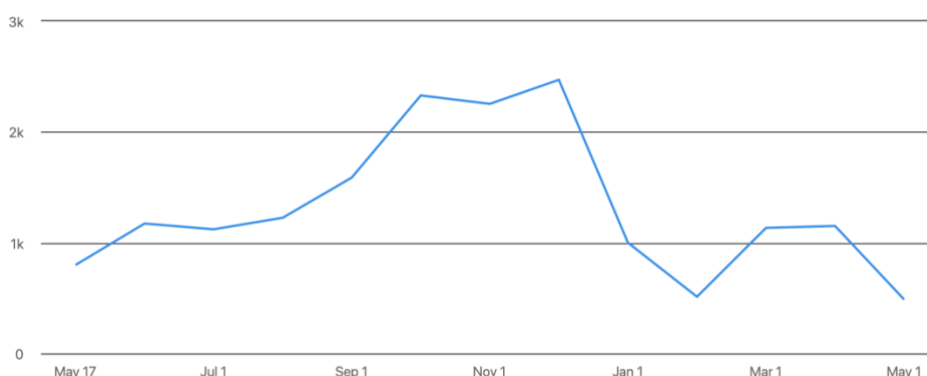
38,481



Sponsored

0

Members reached ▾



Organic

17,245

X (Twitter)

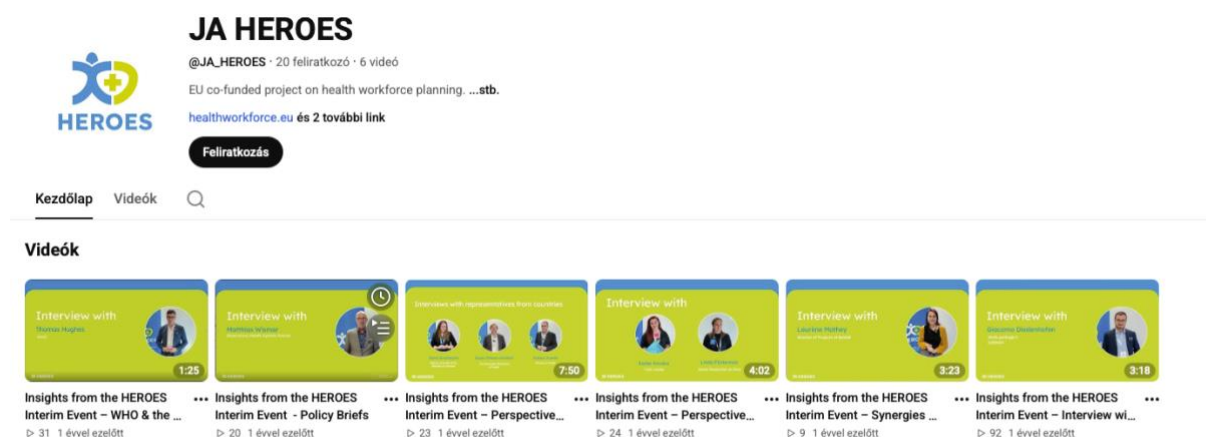
During the course of the project, the HEROES JA Twitter (X) account maintained an active presence, posting regularly to engage its audience through a variety of content, including project updates, event highlights, and informative visuals. These consistent efforts ensured ongoing communication and visibility among stakeholders.

As a result of these activities, the account reached a total of 105 followers by the end of the project period. This growth reflects the platform's contribution to expanding the project's reach and supporting community engagement, while also complementing the overall social media strategy.

Youtube

During the project period, a YouTube account was established to further expand the project's digital presence. Over time, a total of six videos were published on the platform, contributing to the dissemination of visual and informative content related to project activities.

By the end of the reporting period, the channel had reached a total of 55 subscribers. While the platform offered an additional opportunity to engage audiences through multimedia content, its overall uptake remained limited, highlighting the need for more consistent content development and promotion to fully leverage its potential.



Electronic newsletter

The HEROES Joint Action newsletter serves as a key communication tool, providing stakeholders with regular updates on project activities and relevant news. Designed to highlight the progress and achievements of the project, the newsletter offers an informative overview that encourages readers to explore HEROES JA in greater detail. The online newsletter is published, ensuring a consistent flow of information and engagement with stakeholders throughout the project's lifecycle. Newsletter articles were shared, accompanied by subscription posts to keep our growing audience informed and engaged with ongoing developments.

Each newsletter issue followed a structured format, maintaining a clear and logical flow to deliver information effectively.

The newsletters typically feature:

- Introduction: An opening note from the Coordination Team summarizing key updates.
- Project Highlights: Key milestones achieved, including deliverables, workshops, and stakeholder engagement outcomes.
- Event Summaries: Reports on major events, such as Stakeholder Forums, Community of Practices (CoP) meetings, and thematic workshops, often including input from different countries and partners.
- Synergies and Collaborations: Updates on partnerships and synergies with other EU funded projects to showcase collaborative efforts and shared goals.
- Country and Partner Spotlights: Contributions from HEROES JA consortium members, highlighting the work, experiences, and perspectives of different partners and countries.

- Upcoming Events and Next Steps: A preview of scheduled activities, meetings, and milestones to encourage continued engagement.
- The topics featured in each newsletter reflect the evolving progress of the project, focusing on fresh content, new developments, and contributions from a diverse range of consortium members. As the project grew, each issue incorporated insights and experiences from different countries, stakeholders, and partners, ensuring that the content remains dynamic and relevant.

The contacts of the newsletter were gathered from the consortium network, including policymakers, public institutions, and professional associations, and through subscription. This dynamic approach ensured that newsletters and other communications remained targeted and reached the most relevant audiences and fostered ongoing awareness, dialogue, and engagement around the project's results and milestones.

A total of five newsletters were published during the implementation period, with a sixth and final issue planned before the closure of the Joint Action. The newsletter remained an important dissemination channel throughout the project, providing regular updates on key milestones, deliverables, events, and policy-related developments. Over time, the subscriber base grew steadily, reaching 556 recipients by June 2026. Performance indicators demonstrate sustained stakeholder engagement, with open rates ranging between approximately 21% and 55% across the different editions, while click-through performance remained strong, particularly for content related to project results, events, and policy dialogue activities. The most recent newsletter achieved an open rate of 54.6%, generating 315 link clicks and maintaining a very low unsubscribe rate of 0.44%. These results indicate that the newsletter effectively supported the visibility of HEROES JA activities and provided a valuable channel for engaging stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.



Project Website

Over the reporting period from July 2023 to April 2026, the HEROES JA website has successfully fulfilled its role as defined in the Communication and Dissemination Strategy, where it is identified as a central external dissemination channel and primary information hub for stakeholders. The observed performance demonstrates strong alignment with the strategic objectives of ensuring visibility, stakeholder engagement, and effective dissemination of project outputs.

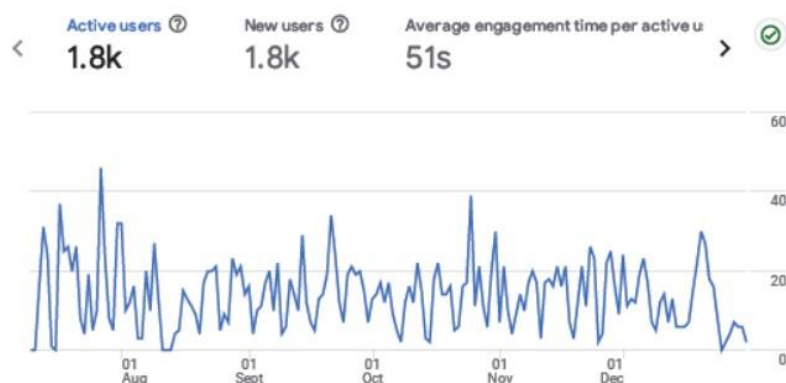
Alignment with strategic objectives

The strategy defines key objectives for communication and dissemination, including:

- raising awareness of the Joint Action,
- ensuring wide dissemination of outputs and deliverables,
- engaging stakeholders across EU and non-EU contexts,
- supporting sustainability and knowledge transfer.
- ensuring that the website's performance clearly reflects the successful achievement of these objectives.

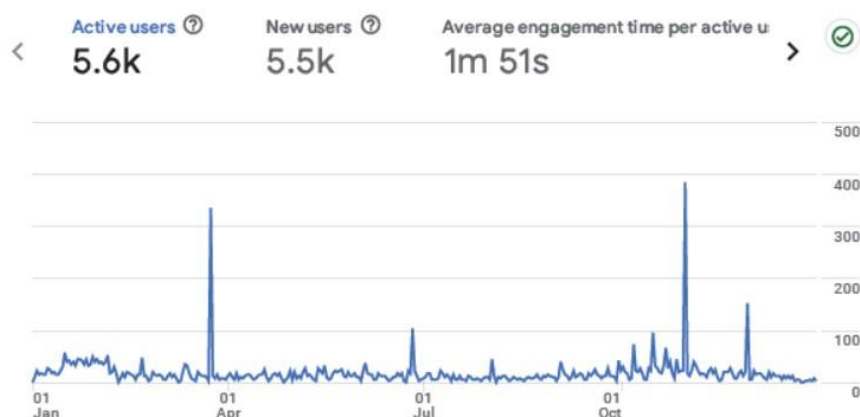
User growth and visibility

From its launch phase in 2023, the website established a solid baseline (1.8 thousand users, 7.1 thousand-page views), demonstrating early success in awareness-raising. This aligns with the strategy's expectation of creating initial visibility and knowledge of the Joint Action among stakeholders.



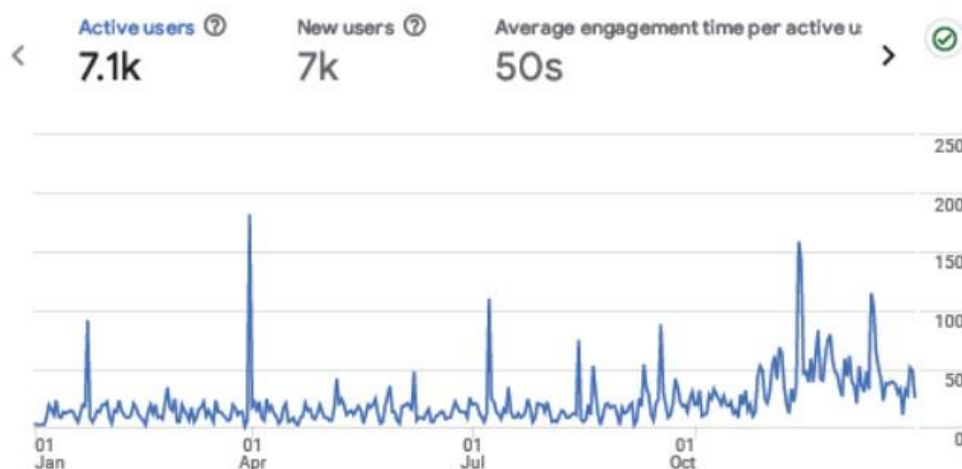
Website users' chart in 2023

The significant growth observed in 2024 (5600 users, 38.000 page views) confirms that the platform effectively expanded its reach, fulfilling the strategy's objective of broad dissemination to external stakeholders through digital channels.

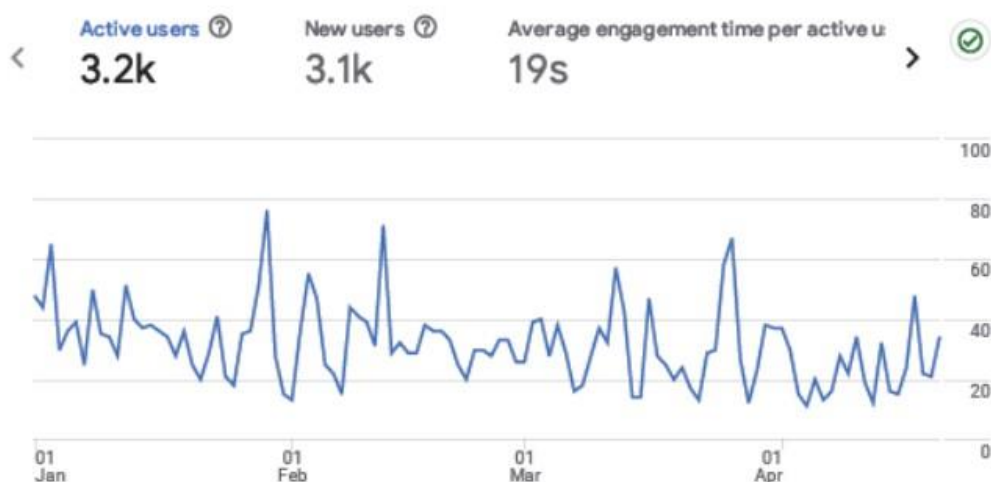


Website users' chart in 2024

Sustained performance in 2025 (7100 users) and continued activity in early 2026 further demonstrate that the website has achieved long-term visibility and continued stakeholder interest, which is a key requirement for dissemination sustainability.



Website users' chart in 2025



Website users' chart in 2026

User engagement and content relevance

The Communication Strategy emphasizes that dissemination should be effective, relevant, and continuous in form and content. This is strongly reflected in the engagement metrics:

- Increase in average engagement time from 51 seconds (2023) to 1 minute 51 seconds (2024)
- Continued stable interaction levels in 2025–2026
- Growth in file downloads, particularly in the most recent period

First user prim...channel group) +		Total users	↓ New users	Returning users	Average engagement time per active user
Total		17,302 100% of total	17,409 100% of total	1,502 100% of total	1m 05s Avg 0%
1	Direct	13,028 (75.3%)	12,932 (74.28%)	654 (43.54%)	44s
2	Organic Search	2,675 (15.46%)	2,675 (15.37%)	665 (44.27%)	1m 13s
3	Referral	1,252 (7.24%)	1,421 (8.16%)	141 (9.39%)	4m 39s
4	Organic Social	357 (2.06%)	356 (2.04%)	40 (2.66%)	29s
5	Unassigned	24 (0.14%)	24 (0.14%)	3 (0.2%)	14s
6	Organic Video	1 (<0.01%)	1 (<0.01%)	0 (0%)	0s

User acquisition for the whole reporting period

These indicators confirm that the website not only attracts users but also provides relevant and valuable content, supporting deeper engagement with project outputs and deliverables.

Global reach and stakeholder engagement

The strategy highlights the importance of reaching both EU and wider international stakeholders and ensuring engagement beyond the immediate consortium.

The website's geographical data demonstrates strong success in this area:

- Global audience of approximately 17 thousand users
- High engagement from non-EU countries (China, USA, Singapore)
- Strong European core audience (Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland)
- This distribution confirms that the platform effectively supports broad stakeholder engagement, extending the impact of the Joint Action beyond EU policy circles

Country	Active users	New users	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate
Total	17,301 100% of total	17,409 100% of total	7,822 100% of total	32.79% Avg 0%
1 China	3,942 (22.78%)	3,687 (21.18%)	115 (1.47%)	2.89%
2 United States	2,914 (16.84%)	2,926 (16.81%)	201 (2.57%)	7.05%
3 Singapore	1,015 (5.87%)	517 (2.97%)	70 (0.89%)	6.89%
4 Italy	942 (5.44%)	935 (5.37%)	886 (11.33%)	51.78%
5 Netherlands	832 (4.81%)	819 (4.7%)	351 (4.49%)	31.09%
6 Belgium	607 (3.51%)	595 (3.42%)	627 (8.02%)	54.33%
7 Ireland	587 (3.39%)	594 (3.41%)	310 (3.96%)	38.37%
8 Spain	476 (2.75%)	476 (2.73%)	381 (4.87%)	56.03%
9 Germany	442 (2.55%)	431 (2.48%)	155 (1.98%)	31.57%
10 United Kingdom	428 (2.47%)	429 (2.46%)	174 (2.22%)	34.05%

Demographic break down for the whole reporting period

Performance of content and dissemination of outputs

According to the strategy, the website should function as a structured repository for key project information, including deliverables, work packages, and updates.

The page performance data confirms this:

- Homepage (13 thousand views) as main entry point
- “The Project” page (4.1 thousand views) indicating strong interest in core objectives
- Continued engagement with “Partners”, “Work Packages”, and “Newsletters”

This demonstrates that users actively access both static (permanent) and dynamic (continuous) content, in line with the content structure foreseen in the strategy.

Page title and screen class	Views	Active users	Views per active user	Average engagement time per active user	Event count All events
Total	75,364 100% of total	17,301 100% of total	4.36 Avg 0%	1m 05s Avg 0%	140,141 100% of total
1 (not set)	35,250 (46.77%)	894 (5.17%)	39.43	11m 36s	37,600 (26.83%)
2 JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project – A WordPress Full-Site Editor Theme	13,045 (17.31%)	7,552 (43.65%)	1.73	20s	37,823 (26.99%)
3 The project – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	4,090 (5.43%)	2,344 (13.55%)	1.74	28s	9,561 (6.82%)
4 Page not found – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	3,923 (5.21%)	2,949 (17.05%)	1.33	3s	10,376 (7.4%)
5 Partners – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	1,304 (1.73%)	880 (5.09%)	1.48	30s	2,767 (1.97%)
6 JA HEROES Project on health workforce planning – A WordPress Full-Site Editor Theme	1,072 (1.42%)	302 (1.75%)	3.55	41s	2,652 (1.89%)
7 Work packages – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	1,016 (1.35%)	650 (3.76%)	1.56	33s	2,061 (1.47%)
8 Newsletters – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	882 (1.17%)	477 (2.76%)	1.85	17s	2,058 (1.47%)
9 Knowledge hub – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	807 (1.07%)	492 (2.84%)	1.64	25s	1,690 (1.21%)
10 Promotion materials – JA HEROES Health Workforce Planning Project	788 (1.05%)	521 (3.01%)	1.51	19s	1,538 (1.1%)

Views by page title for the whole reporting period

Support to sustainability and knowledge transfer

The strategy identifies the website as the main tool ensuring sustainability of dissemination and long-term accessibility of project outputs.

The increasing number of file downloads (278 total, with growth in 2026) indicates a clear shift from passive information consumption to active use of project results, confirming:

- effective dissemination of deliverables
- contribution to knowledge transfer
- support to long-term impact and sustainability

Overall assessment

Overall, the performance of the HEROES JA website demonstrates strong alignment with the Communication and Dissemination Strategy and confirms that the platform has successfully delivered on its intended role.

The combination of:

- continuous growth in users and visibility
- strong and improving engagement metrics
- wide international reach
- effective dissemination of structured content
- increasing active use of outputs
- clearly indicates that the website is a high-performing dissemination channel that meets—and in several aspects exceeds—the expectations set out in the strategy.

Development of the website

The development of the HEROES JA website demonstrates a clear progression from its initial conceptual design to a fully operational and high-performing dissemination platform. At the outset of the project, as outlined in the website design manual, the primary objective was to establish a structured, user-friendly, and visually consistent online environment that would serve as the central hub for communication and dissemination activities.

The initial focus was therefore placed on defining the website architecture, including a clear menu structure, the categorisation of content into permanent, plannable, and occasional elements, and the integration of essential technical and visual components. At that stage, the website was still under development, with emphasis on ensuring usability, accessibility, and alignment with the project's visual identity and communication needs.

Over the course of implementation, the website has evolved beyond these initial technical and structural foundations. While the original design aimed to support dissemination activities, the current version of the platform demonstrably fulfils and extends this role by delivering measurable impact in terms of visibility, engagement, and content utilisation. The website has not only succeeded in attracting a steadily increasing audience but has also enhanced the quality of user interaction, as evidenced by longer engagement times and deeper navigation across multiple content areas.

While the initial concept distinguished between different types of content, the implemented website effectively operationalises this approach by ensuring a regular flow of updates, including news, newsletters, deliverables, and event-related information.

The increasing number of file downloads observed in the later stages of the reporting period further illustrates this shift from passive information access to active content use, indicating that the website plays a meaningful role in knowledge transfer.

Another significant advancement concerns the geographical reach of the platform. Although the original strategy primarily targeted European stakeholders and defined stakeholder groups based on mapping exercises, the current website performance demonstrates a much broader international visibility. The platform has successfully attracted users from outside the European Union, particularly from Asia and North America, while maintaining a strong European user base. This expanded reach suggests that the website has become relevant beyond its initial target audience, thereby enhancing the overall impact and visibility of the Joint Action.

In addition, the effectiveness of the website's structure and navigation, initially designed to ensure user-friendliness, has been validated through actual user behaviour. The data shows that users consistently access key sections such as the homepage, project description, work packages, and partner information, confirming that the logical organisation of content supports intuitive navigation and facilitates access to relevant information. This demonstrates that the design principles defined at the beginning of the project have been successfully implemented and are functioning as intended in practice.

The platform furthermore provides long-term access to project outputs and serves as a stable repository of knowledge, supporting the ongoing dissemination and potential uptake of results beyond the project's lifetime.

Overall, the comparison between the initial design concept and the current performance clearly indicates that the HEROES JA website has evolved from a technically defined communication channel into a strategically effective dissemination instrument. While it successfully meets all the original requirements in terms of structure, usability, and content organization, it also exceeds expectations by achieving strong international reach, sustained user engagement, and increasing utilization of project outputs. This progression confirms the effectiveness of the website in supporting the communication and dissemination objectives of the Joint Action and highlights its central role in enhancing visibility, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge transfer.

EU Health Policy Platform- Performance in relation to the strategy

The Communication and Dissemination Strategy emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange, and continuous communication through appropriate channels. Within this framework, the EU Health Policy Platform has functioned as a targeted stakeholder engagement channel, complementing broader dissemination tools such as the website. Since its launch, the HEROES JA network has published 20 posts, contributing to the dissemination of project updates maintaining visibility within a professional stakeholder environment. The moderation by designated representatives ensures structured content creation and quality control, in line with the strategy's emphasis on coordinated communication processes.

While the network currently includes 25 members, which reflects moderate stakeholder uptake, this should be interpreted in the context of:

- the platform's specialized and policy-oriented audience
- the strategy's distinction between broad dissemination channels (e.g. website) and targeted engagement channels

Planned additional posts (bringing the total to 26) demonstrate continued activity and commitment to sustained engagement, supporting the strategy's requirement for continuous and consistent communication.

Overall assessment

The EU Health Policy Platform has effectively fulfilled its role as a focused stakeholder engagement tool, supporting:

- knowledge exchange among professionals
- dissemination of key messages to targeted audiences
- ongoing visibility within EU-level policy networks
- consistent content output and planned continuation of activities, so the platform contributed positively to the overall dissemination ecosystem.

Final conclusion

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the communication and dissemination activities-particularly through the website and EU Health Policy Platform-are well aligned with the objectives, channels, and processes defined in the Communication and Dissemination Strategy.

The results demonstrate that:

- dissemination activities are effective and continuous,
- stakeholder engagement has been successfully established,
- project outputs are being actively accessed and used,
- and the foundations for long-term sustainability and impact are in place,

Overall, the performance is strong, confirming that the strategy has been successfully implemented and has effectively supported the visibility, engagement, and dissemination objectives of the HEROES JA project.

Event Organisation

Event organization served as a key mechanism for knowledge sharing, stakeholder engagement, and dissemination of project outcomes. These events, organized under Work Package 2 (WP2), had brought together consortium members, policymakers, public institutions, and stakeholders to foster dialogue, collaboration, and progress toward achieving the project's objectives.

Events Held

Kick-off Meeting (February 2023)

The Kick-off Meeting was held on February 15-16, 2023 in Rome, marking the official launch of HEROES JA. Organized by AGENAS with the support of the Ministry of Health of Slovakia (MoH SK), this event introduced the project to consortium partners. It provided an overview of the project's structure, goals, and work packages, ensuring clarity and alignment among all participants. The meeting set the foundation for cooperation and outlined expectations for the project's progress.

Stakeholder Forum (October 2023)

The first Stakeholder Forum took place on October 3, 2023, representing a critical milestone in HEROES JA's external communication efforts. Organized by AGENAS and MoH SK, with technical assistance from SU and organizational support from OKFO, the event brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including policymakers, health workforce professionals, and academic experts. Discussions focused on the challenges and needs in health workforce planning, as well as HEROES JA's contributions to addressing these issues. The forum also showcased early achievements of the project, fostering valuable input from attendees and strengthening engagement with external partners.

Interim Meeting (November 2024)

Scheduled for November 4-5, 2024, held in Budapest Hungary, the Interim Meeting was organized by OKFO with technical support from SU. The participants discussed in detail the progress HEROES JA has achieved so far, including major milestones and deliverables. It provided an opportunity for reflecting on progress, exchanging ideas, and preparing for the remaining project duration of HEROES JA.

Second Stakeholder Forum (2025)

WP2 organized a second Stakeholder Forum in 2025 to further engage key stakeholders and present the advanced outcomes of HEROES JA. Although the organization of this second forum has experienced a slight delay, efforts ensured its timely delivery and alignment with the overall project timeline. The event remained a key milestone for HEROES JA, as it solidified the project's achievements and provided a final opportunity to engage stakeholders before the conclusion of the Joint Action.

Rome Workshop (May 2024)

The Rome Workshop, held in May 2024, brought together representatives of participating countries, work package leaders, and key stakeholders to review progress achieved during the first phase of the Joint Action. The event provided a dedicated forum for cross-cluster discussions, knowledge exchange, and collaboration on the development of health workforce planning methodologies, data systems, and capacity-building activities. Through a combination of plenary sessions and thematic workshops, participants shared experiences, discussed common challenges, and explored opportunities for strengthening cooperation across countries. The workshop played an important role in supporting the transition from the analytical phase of the project towards the implementation of planned actions and roadmaps.

Malta Workshop (October 2025)

The Malta Workshop, organised in Valletta in October 2025, served as one of the final major project-wide events of HEROES JA. The workshop focused on the sustainability and long-term impact of the Joint Action, bringing together project partners, policymakers, experts, representatives of the European Commission, HaDEA, and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. Participants reviewed the achievements of the project, discussed policy implications, and exchanged experiences regarding the implementation of national activities and policy actions. Dedicated sessions explored the sustainability of project results, future cooperation opportunities, and the integration of HEROES outputs into national and European health workforce planning practices. The workshop further strengthened collaboration among participating countries and contributed to the consolidation of a shared European approach to health workforce planning and forecasting.

Final Conference (July 2026)

The JA HEROES Final Conference, held on 7–8 July 2026 in Rome and online, marked the successful completion of three and a half years of collaboration among 19 participating countries and stakeholders on health workforce planning. The event brought together around 150 participants to present the project's key achievements, innovative tools and policy outcomes, while exploring their long-term sustainability and impact. The conference was opened by the Italian Minister of Health, alongside high-level representatives from the European Commission and WHO Europe, highlighting the strategic importance of evidence-based health workforce planning. It concluded by emphasising that the partnerships, methodologies and policy recommendations developed through HEROES will continue to support resilient health systems across Europe.

Community of Practice

The Community of Practice (CoP), coordinated by AGENAS within Work Package 2 with the support of USCS, represented one of the key stakeholder engagement, dissemination, and peer-learning activities implemented throughout the HEROES Joint Action. Established as a dedicated platform for knowledge exchange on health workforce planning, the CoP was designed to extend the project's reach beyond the consortium by creating an open and interactive environment for dialogue, collaboration, and mutual learning among health workforce planning experts, policymakers, public authorities, professional associations, researchers, healthcare professionals, and other interested stakeholders.

Bringing together participants from all 19 countries involved in HEROES, as well as external experts and organisations when relevant, the initiative provided a structured forum for sharing experiences, discussing emerging challenges, exchanging good practices, and exploring innovative approaches to health workforce planning. The CoP supported the development of a collaborative network of professionals and contributed to the identification and dissemination of transferable practices and lessons learned across different national contexts.

Beyond its dissemination function, the Community of Practice served as a practical peer-learning mechanism supporting countries in the implementation of activities developed within HEROES.

Through regular thematic workshops and webinars, participants were encouraged to jointly reflect on specific workforce planning challenges, exchange expertise, discuss policy and implementation issues, and explore potential solutions informed by both national experiences and international perspectives.

Through a series of thirteen thematic meetings held between April 2024 and March 2026, the CoP facilitated discussions on a wide range of topics relevant to health workforce planning, including workforce flexibility, mobility and retention, demographic trends, task shifting, competency development, forecasting methodologies, data governance, nursing workforce policies, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Reflecting the diversity of challenges and priorities emerging across participating countries, the Community of Practice covered a wide range of thematic areas throughout the project. The overview below summarises the thirteen meetings organised during the implementation of HEROES, highlighting the organisations involved, the topics discussed, and the level of participation achieved.

CoP	Date	Host	Topic	Key Focus	Pax
1	22 April 2024	AGENAS (Italy)	Workforce Flexibility in Healthcare	Exploring how workforce flexibility can be integrated into health workforce planning through flexible working arrangements, skill-mix changes, training and development, digital health solutions, and supportive policies to improve health system responsiveness and resilience.	67
2	3 June 2024	OKFŐ and Semmelweis University (Hungary)	Managing Health Workforce Mobility: Insights and Strategies for Policy and Distribution	Examining health workforce mobility through the analysis of mobility data and indicators, their integration into workforce planning datasets, and the role of EU and national policies in supporting equitable distribution, workforce retention, and evidence-based decision-making.	67
3	19 September 2024	Nivel (Netherlands)	Research for Policy: How to Project the Need for Health Workforces?	Exploring innovative approaches to health workforce forecasting through the presentation of the SANDEM model and national pilot studies linking workforce requirements to demographic, epidemiological, and healthcare utilisation trends to support evidence-informed workforce planning.	70
4	8 October 2024	Ministry of Social Affairs Estonia (Estonia)	(R)evolution of Advanced Practice Nurses in Estonia	Examining the development and role of Advanced Practice Nurses in Estonia, highlighting their contribution to addressing health workforce shortages, enhancing multidisciplinary care, optimizing skill mix, and improving the efficiency of healthcare delivery pathways.	63
5	5 February 2025	Spanish WP5 Group (Spain)	Shifting Competencies Between Health Professionals	Exploring the redistribution of competencies among healthcare professionals, highlighting the impact of organizational models, emerging skill requirements, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovative approaches to optimizing workforce capacity and patient care delivery.	66
6	7 March 2025	Norwegian Directorate of Health (Norway)	An Introduction to the Norwegian HWF Planning and Forecasting Model: Can It Be Used in Your Country as Well?	Presenting the Norwegian HWF forecasting model (Helsemod), its underlying data requirements, and its application in national workforce planning, while exploring the transferability of forecasting methodologies and tools across different country contexts.	74
7	16 May 2025	National Institute of Public Health (Slovenia)	Keeping the Healthy Stock of Health Workforce – What Should We Focus On?	Examining the key factors influencing health workforce retention, mobility, and intentions to leave the profession, while exploring strategies to improve working conditions, strengthen workforce sustainability, and enhance the attractiveness of healthcare careers.	64
8	29 September 2025	WHO Regional Office for Europe	Addressing Structural Barriers	Exploring how governance, institutional arrangements, data systems, financing mechanisms, and labour market structures influence health workforce planning, while showcasing country experiences in overcoming structural barriers to strengthen workforce governance and policy implementation.	59

9	21 November 2025	Department of Health (Ireland)	Managing Data in HWF Administration	Examining how health workforce data can be transformed into actionable intelligence for planning and policy-making, with a focus on data quality, professional registries, workforce modelling, forecasting methodologies, and the development of integrated workforce intelligence systems.	107
10	December 2025	Administração Central do Sistema de Saúde – ACSS (Portugal)	Job Satisfaction of Healthcare Professionals in Portugal and Retention in the National Health Service	Exploring the relationship between job satisfaction, workforce retention, mobility, and burnout among healthcare professionals, while discussing evidence-based policy interventions to improve working conditions, professional recognition, organizational support, and long-term workforce sustainability.	54
11	January 2026	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (Germany)	Dealing with Uncertainties in the Future – Projection of Healthcare Professions within the German Health Workforce Monitoring	Examining long-term projections of supply and demand for healthcare professions in Germany, with a focus on demographic change, labour market dynamics, occupational mobility, scenario analysis, and approaches to managing uncertainty in health workforce forecasting and planning.	71
12	27 February 2026	WHO Regional Office for Europe	Nursing Action	Presenting the WHO Europe Nursing Action initiative, with a focus on nurse retention, quality of employment, and the mapping of safe nurse staffing policies and practices across 21 countries to support evidence-informed nursing workforce planning.	68
13	6 March 2026	Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)	Safe Staffing for Better Care: Aligning Workforce Planning and Wellbeing	Exploring the relationship between safe staffing policies, workforce planning, and healthcare professionals' wellbeing, with a focus on staffing standards for doctors and nurses, mental health challenges, and national experiences in implementing safe staffing approaches.	52

Across the thirteen Community of Practice meetings, a total of 882 participations were recorded, demonstrating sustained interest and engagement throughout the Joint Action. Beyond representatives from the 19 HEROES participating countries, the initiative successfully attracted a broad range of external stakeholders, confirming its role as an open platform for knowledge exchange extending beyond the consortium.

Participants represented national ministries of health, public health institutes, healthcare authorities, professional regulators, universities, research centres, healthcare providers, regional health authorities, professional associations, international organisations, and European networks. The Community of Practice brought together policymakers, workforce planners, researchers, statisticians, economists, healthcare managers, clinicians, nursing leaders, human resources specialists, and health workforce experts.

The meetings also benefited from contributions from several prominent European and international organisations, including the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO Europe), the European Commission (DG SANTE and Joint Research Centre), the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the European Health Management Association (EHMA), Wemos, Health Workforce Canada, and the European Public Health Association (EUPHA), among others.

At national level, speakers and participants represented a wide variety of institutions involved in health workforce planning and governance, including ministries of health, workforce planning units, professional councils and regulators, public health institutes, statistical agencies, health services, universities, and research organisations from across Europe and beyond. The participation of organisations from non-HEROES countries, including Canada, Serbia, the United Kingdom and Ukraine, further enriched discussions by bringing additional perspectives and experiences.

Overall, the Community of Practice succeeded in creating a multidisciplinary and international learning environment, strengthening collaboration among stakeholders, facilitating the exchange of evidence and good practices, and contributing to the development of a broader European network of professionals committed to advancing health workforce planning.

Indicator	Value
Community of Practice meetings	13
Total participations	882
HEROES countries represented	19
External countries represented	Canada, Serbia, United Kingdom, Ukraine, etc.
International and European organisations involved	WHO Europe, EC, JRC, OECD, European Observatory, EFN, CPME, EHMA, EUPHA, Wemos, Health Workforce Canada
Stakeholder categories represented	Ministries, regulators, public health institutes, universities, healthcare providers, professional associations, research centres, regional authorities

To ensure a consistent and recognisable identity throughout the implementation of the Community of Practice, a dedicated communication and visual branding approach was developed in line with the HEROES Joint Action communication guidelines. Standardised templates were created for agendas, promotional materials, and social media content, contributing to a coherent visual identity across all thirteen meetings and strengthening the visibility of the initiative.

The Community of Practice was actively promoted through the HEROES communication channels, including the project website and social media platforms, helping to reach audiences beyond the consortium and encouraging the participation of a diverse range of stakeholders. Dedicated announcements and promotional campaigns were used to disseminate information about upcoming meetings, share key messages, and raise awareness of the topics discussed.

In addition, a dedicated section on the HEROES website provided information about the Community of Practice, its objectives, and upcoming activities, supporting transparency, accessibility, and stakeholder engagement throughout the duration of the Joint Action.

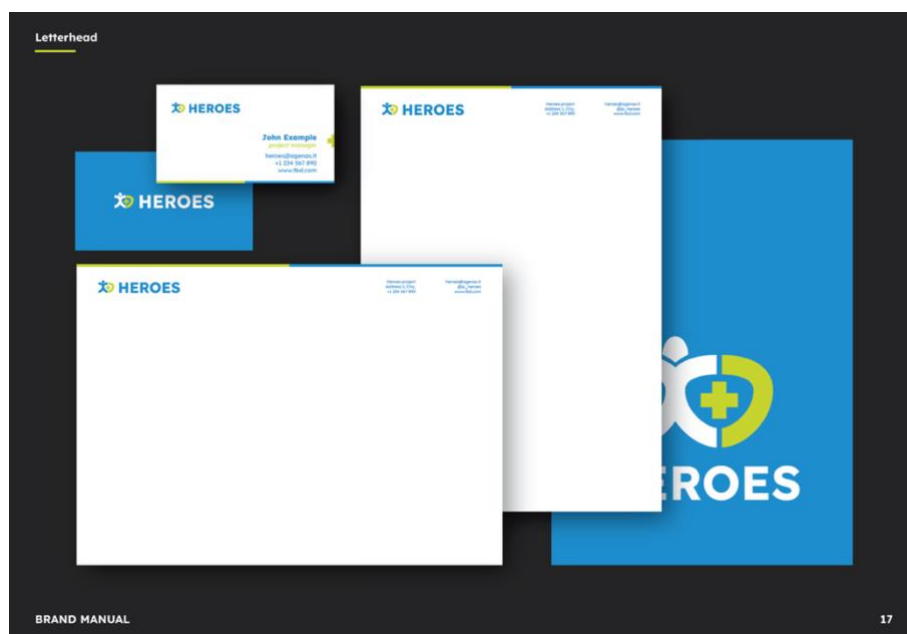
The combination of thematic content, targeted communication activities, and a consistent visual identity contributed to establishing the Community of Practice as a recognised and valued forum for dialogue, peer learning, and knowledge exchange in the field of health workforce planning.

4.2. Visual Identity Promotional materials

(Annex 1- Heroes Design manual)



Promotional materials were a vital component of the communication and dissemination activities under Work Package 2 (WP2), ensured consistent branding and effective messaging across all platforms and events. These materials reflected the project's visual identity, reinforce recognition of HEROES JA, and supported stakeholder engagement through clear and professional design.



HEROES promotional materials

The visual identity of HEROES JA was developed and delivered in May 2023 by the Ministry of Health of Slovakia (MoH SK). The visual identity served as the foundation for all communication and dissemination outputs and provided a cohesive and recognizable look across materials.

It included:

- Letterhead templates (vertical and horizontal versions)
- Deliverable templates
- Agenda templates
- PowerPoint presentation templates
- Templates for social media posts
- Project-specific fonts
- HEROES Deliverable template

The development of these materials ensured consistency of HEROES JA's external and internal communications throughout the entire project period. Whether shared through official documents, presentations, or social media posts, the visual identity strengthened the project's professional image and fostered a unified brand.

Initial Leaflet



The Initial Leaflet was created and delivered alongside the visual identity in May 2023 following feedback from WP1 and WP3. The leaflet served as an introductory document, provided a concise overview of the project's objectives, expected key activities, outcomes. It was specifically designed to support early stakeholder engagement, offering partners, policymakers, and external audiences a clear understanding of HEROES JA's mission to

improve health workforce planning across Europe. The leaflet has been distributed at various project events, including the Kick-off Meeting in February 2023 and the Stakeholder Forum in October 2023, as well as through digital platforms such as the HEROES JA website.

5. Joint Action Dissemination Channels

5.1. External Dissemination channels

The external channels are focused mainly on external stakeholders and their aim is to communicate the key messages and outputs to those, who are not directly involved in the HEROES JA. On the other hand, they also serve for communication towards internal partners of HEROES JA.

Website

The [HEROES website](#) was developed as a central dissemination and communication platform. Based on the original communication and dissemination plan, the website was intended to serve **both external and internal** stakeholders by providing structured access to project information, outputs, events, news, and collaborative resources.

The current website reflects the majority of the originally planned structure and functional requirements. It includes dedicated sections covering:

- General information about the HEROES Joint Action and its objectives,
- Work Packages and project activities,
- Partner organisations and participating countries,
- Related projects and historical continuity with previous EU initiatives,
- News and updates,
- Promotional materials,
- Knowledge hub: Insights-Outcomes
<https://healthworkforce.eu/knowledge-hub/outcomes/>
- Events,
- Newsletters,
- Contact information,
- Archive sections for previous initiatives such as SEPEN and JAHWF.

The website demonstrates strong alignment with the original dissemination objectives. It functions not only as a project information portal but also as a long-term knowledge-sharing platform supporting European cooperation in health workforce planning. The continuity with earlier initiatives, particularly the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting and SEPEN, is clearly visible through the integrated archive sections and references to previous outputs.

The implementation of the three originally defined content categories can also be observed:

1. **Permanent Content**

The website contains stable core information including project description, objectives, partner information, newsletter subscription, contact details, and promotional materials.

2. **Continuous Plannable Content**

The site is regularly updated with newsletters, event announcements, deliverables, policy dialogue activities, and dissemination materials. Several newsletters and

event-related publications are available online, demonstrating continuous maintenance and content generation throughout the project lifecycle.

3. Continuous Occasional Content

The news section contains dynamic and ad hoc updates from participating countries, stakeholder forums, policy dialogues, reflecting active partner contributions and ongoing project developments.

The website further supports stakeholder engagement through newsletter subscription functionalities, event promotion, downloadable materials, and links to external communication channels such as LinkedIn.

From a strategic perspective, the website successfully fulfils its role as:

- a dissemination platform for EU-funded project outputs,
- a repository of knowledge and resources,
- a communication channel for stakeholders and policymakers,
- and a sustainability tool preserving outputs beyond the duration of the project.

The platform also demonstrates compliance with EU visibility requirements, including references to EU funding, HADEA, GDPR/privacy information, and continuity with broader European Commission health workforce initiatives.

Overall, the HEROES JA website is fully operational and well aligned with the original project vision. The structure, content organisation, and regular updates indicate effective collaboration among WP leaders and partners, while the evolving news and event sections demonstrate active and ongoing dissemination activities throughout the implementation period.

Social media

HEROES JA has its LinkedIn and **X account** which is used for:

- further promotion of activities published via website
- dissemination of key deliverables and outcomes of HEROES JA
- communication of crucial public events of HEROES JA
- communication of national events organized by partners with connection to HEROES JA and healthcare resource planning
- promotion of activities of HEROES JAs, projects and programmes linked to HEROES JA

Newsletter

Newsletters give the preliminary information on the current ongoing and upcoming events but they also serve as the notification for the activities or information that require special attention of project partners or provide presentation of deliverables. 5 newsletters were sent out during the HEROES JA lifecycle and one will be after the project ends, and the content of newsletters were based on inputs from partners, collected via email or online meetings.



Leaflet

The **Leaflet** contains key information on the HEROES JA and its partners and stakeholders. It is dissemination tool that is used to make the objectives of the Joint Action known to wider audience. The leaflet is free to download at our website.

The content of the leaflet covers the key facts about the HEROES JA, general objectives, the structure of the HEROES JA, and brief content description of each Work Package and has been created at the beginning of HEROES JA as one of the first promotion materials.



Policy briefs

The HEROES Policy Briefs are concise reports tailored to the needs of health policy-makers and designed to inform them about available evidence on specific questions and issues. The first policy brief emphasizes the importance of effective health workforce forecasting and planning to be able to establish new models of care delivery crucial to the availability, distribution, and ultimately, sustainability of the HWF. The second policy brief in the series examines how health workforce planning and forecasting can be strengthened in Europe, with a particular focus on improving methods and availability and quality of health workforce data. The final policy brief highlights how health workforce planning and forecasting can be institutionalized. This series of policy briefs was used as evidence in the European and national level policy dialogues and considered in the final report summarizing the evidence collected in the whole Joint Action (D1.2). The policy briefs were published as Deliverable D2.4 of Joint

Action HEROES and disseminated, among others, by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (OBS) to support the development and adoption of national, regional and local policies related to effective and flexible health workforce planning. Since their launch in late April 2026 and at the time of writing, each brief was downloaded over 400 times from the OBS's website.

Countries in WP5, WP6 and WP7 clusters acted as reference groups to discuss the scope of the policy briefs and the preliminary results. The policy briefs were also the backbone for two European level policy dialogues organized by WP4 (see task 4.1).

Visibility of EU funding was ensured all throughout the implementation of the communication and dissemination strategy and in all dissemination, materials targeting an external audience.

External workshops and conferences

Participation in external workshops and conferences organised by partner institutions and key stakeholders has provided a valuable opportunity for HEROES JA to disseminate project outputs, share methodological results, and engage with broader European and national health workforce communities. These activities have also contributed to strengthening the long-term visibility and sustainability of the Joint Action's outcomes, while supporting continued knowledge exchange beyond the project consortium.

HEROES JA has been actively involved in a range of international and national events focusing on health workforce planning, data-driven policy development, and capacity building. These engagements include contributions to competency-building trainings on health workforce modelling approaches, such as the Dutch Health Workforce Planning Model in Hungary, where methodological frameworks for evidence-based forecasting were presented.

In addition, HEROES JA has supported national-level capacity building initiatives, including multi-stakeholder trainings on health specialisation planning in Slovenia, involving ministries, professional chambers, academic institutions, and healthcare organisations. The project has also contributed to international knowledge-sharing workshops, such as the HEROES Workshop in Valletta, which focused on strengthening health workforce intelligence and long-term planning approaches through mutual learning among European partners.

More recently, HEROES JA has further extended its external engagement through participation in European-level policy and stakeholder events. These include contributions to the EU Health Policy Platform (HPP) webinar on digital skills of health workers, where links between digital upskilling and strategic workforce planning were presented, as well as participation in the Second HEROES EU Policy Dialogue in Brussels, which brought together policymakers and experts to discuss health workforce data systems, future planning approaches, and the development of a European Health Professionals' Registry.

5.2 Internal Dissemination Channels

Internal dissemination channels were focused exclusively on internal partners of the HEROES JA and their aim was to communicate the progress of the HEROES JA, deliverables, milestones, other outcomes and tasks` progress.

SharePoint

The main internal dissemination tool is the SharePoint space. SharePoint is a web-based platform created by the HEROES JA coordinator that serves as a central repository for all relevant HEROES JA documents in one place. It is designed with a clear and simple structure to ensure that all consortium partners can easily access the information they need. The portal also includes a calendar for tracking HEROES JA events and may serve as a space for internal discussions. Over the past three years, the entire consortium has worked collaboratively to develop and maintain this platform, making it a key and essential tool for internal communication and information sharing across the Joint Action.

Email communication

The most frequently used internal communication tool is day-to-day email communication between the coordinator and WP leaders, among WP leaders themselves, and towards all partners, including specific groups of partners as well as associated partners. Task leaders also play an important role in facilitating targeted communication within work packages. In addition, email is used for official communications, such as invitations to workshops, meeting notifications, and “save the date” announcements, ensuring timely and structured information flow across the consortium.

Face to face or online meetings

Internal communication is organised through a structured system of bi-weekly meetings at different levels. Each Work Package holds its own bi-weekly meetings, dedicated to discussing WP-specific tasks, progress, and operational issues in detail. These meetings ensure focused coordination within each work stream and enable continuous follow-up on deliverables and ongoing activities.

In parallel, bi-weekly Steering Committee meetings are held separately, involving the coordinator, all Work Package leaders, and task leaders. These steering committee meetings serve as the main coordination forum of the Joint Action, where key updates are shared, cross-cutting issues are discussed, and strategic and operational alignment across all work packages is ensured.

In addition, regular cluster meetings were organised within each of the three thematic clusters of participating countries. Held approximately every two to three weeks throughout the project, these meetings served as an important platform for knowledge exchange, peer learning, and coordination among cluster members. During the meetings, countries shared progress updates, presented ongoing activities and results, discussed common challenges, and exchanged experiences related to health workforce planning. Cluster leaders played a key role in facilitating these discussions and representing the interests and achievements of their respective clusters in the broader governance structure of the Joint Action. Beyond supporting coordination, the meetings fostered collaboration, mutual learning, and the transfer of good practices, ensuring coherence across activities and strengthening the overall implementation of HEROES JA.

6. Sustainability of the project through the dissemination tools

As the HEROES Joint Action reaches its conclusion, the focus of communication and dissemination shifts from implementation towards sustainability and long-term relevance. The experience gained throughout the project highlights that the true impact of dissemination lies not only in the visibility achieved during the project but in the continued use and application of its results in the years that follow.

A key element in ensuring this continuity is the preservation and maintenance of the HEROES JA project website (healthworkforce.eu), which will serve as the main platform for the long-term sustainability of project outcomes. As the central repository of project knowledge, it will continue to provide open access to deliverables, final reports, tools, policy briefs, and key insights developed within the Joint Action. By making these materials publicly available, the website will remain a valuable professional resource for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners involved in health workforce planning and policy development.

To support the long-term availability of project outputs, arrangements have been put in place to maintain the HEROES JA website beyond the formal end of the Joint Action. The website will continue to serve as the primary access point for project deliverables, tools, policy briefs, and key resources, ensuring that stakeholders can continue to access and use the knowledge generated by HEROES. Responsibility for maintaining the platform and preserving its content has been identified within the consortium, providing a clear basis for the sustainability of dissemination outputs.

Maintaining stakeholder engagement also remains essential. The sustainability of HEROES JA relies not only on communication channels but also on the professional networks established throughout the project. Through the Community of Practice, Stakeholder Forums, policy dialogues, and collaboration with European and international organisations, HEROES has created connections that extend beyond the project lifetime. These networks provide a foundation for continued knowledge exchange, peer learning, and collaboration in health workforce planning across Europe.

Beyond raising awareness and maintaining stakeholder engagement, the communication and dissemination activities of HEROES JA also contributed to the exploitation of project results. Ensuring that project deliverables, policy outputs, tools, training materials and other key resources remain openly accessible through the project website and established stakeholder networks creates opportunities for their continued uptake, adaptation and reuse beyond the lifetime of the Joint Action. This is particularly relevant for outputs such as the Health Workforce Planning Toolkit, policy briefs, policy dialogue outcomes and Community of Practice materials, which can continue to support policymakers, public authorities and health workforce planning experts in future national, regional and European initiatives. In this way, dissemination serves not only to communicate project achievements but also to facilitate their long-term integration into policy and practice.

The HEROES sustainability work builds on and updates the Health Workforce Planning Toolkit developed by Semmelweis University in 2016. Originally created within JA EUHWF (EU Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting), the Toolkit supports countries in assessing and improving their health workforce planning data, processes, and capacities. It has remained relevant over time, was further used in SEPEN (Support for the Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting Expert Network) for tailored Member State support, and has been taken up beyond Europe.

The HEROES Toolkit on Health Workforce Planning is an important component of the project's sustainability and communication efforts. It helps make accumulated knowledge, practical tools, and lessons learned accessible to health workforce planning experts and stakeholders. Its continued hosting by Semmelweis University supports durability and long-term accessibility. The update carried out under HEROES reflects the Toolkit's lasting value across JA EUHWF, SEPEN, and HEROES, while ensuring it remains relevant and useful for today's health workforce planning community.

Unlike many project outputs that remain static after project completion, the HEROES Toolkit is designed as a living resource. Its continued hosting and maintenance by Semmelweis University create an opportunity for future updates, integration of new knowledge, and ongoing use by countries seeking to strengthen their health workforce planning capacities. In this respect, the Toolkit represents one of the most tangible sustainability outcomes of the Joint Action.

The project has also underscored the importance of integrating diverse and dynamic communication tools to enhance accessibility and engagement. The use of multimedia content, such as videos, interviews, and visual materials, has proven effective in translating complex results into more accessible and engaging formats. Building on this experience, future initiatives can continue to benefit from innovative approaches to digital communication, ensuring that project outcomes remain visible and accessible to a broad audience.

The sustainability of HEROES JA therefore extends beyond the preservation of communication channels and project outputs. Through the continued availability of knowledge resources, the maintenance of professional networks, and the long-term accessibility of the Health Workforce Planning Toolkit, HEROES has established foundations that can continue to support evidence-informed health workforce planning and policy development across Europe well beyond the lifetime of the Joint Action.

7. Conclusions

This Final Dissemination Report reflects the progress achieved under Work Package 2 (WP2) of the HEROES Joint Action (HEROES JA). Throughout the implementation period, WP2 successfully delivered the communication and dissemination activities foreseen in the Communication and Dissemination Strategy and established a coherent framework for promoting project activities, outputs, and results.

Key achievements include the development and maintenance of the HEROES JA website, the continuous management of social media channels, the publication of newsletters, the organisation of Communities of Practice and stakeholder events, and active engagement through the EU Health Policy Platform. Together, these activities have contributed to increasing the visibility of the Joint Action and creating opportunities for stakeholder engagement at European, national, and regional levels. The steady growth observed across communication channels, including website traffic, social media engagement, and newsletter subscriptions, indicates sustained interest in the project and its outputs.

The website has become the central repository for project information and deliverables, supporting transparency and accessibility throughout the project. In parallel, stakeholder events, Communities of Practice, and policy dialogues have facilitated the exchange of experiences between participating countries and supported discussions on common challenges related to health workforce planning and forecasting.

HEROES JA has built upon the work and experience of previous European initiatives in the field of health workforce planning. This continuity has enabled the further development of existing approaches while promoting cooperation and mutual learning among participating countries. Through its activities, the Joint Action has supported the sharing of knowledge, good practices, and methodologies, contributing to a more coordinated approach to health workforce planning across Europe.

The communication and dissemination activities implemented under WP2 have supported not only the visibility of project results but also their accessibility and potential use by policymakers, public authorities, experts, and other stakeholders. By facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and creating channels for stakeholder engagement, WP2 has contributed to strengthening the conditions for the uptake and sustainability of HEROES JA outcomes beyond the lifetime of the project.

Overall, the experience gained during the implementation of WP2 demonstrates the importance of structured communication and stakeholder engagement in supporting the objectives of large-scale European collaborative projects. The tools, networks, and communication channels established during HEROES JA provide a foundation for the continued dissemination and use of project results and may support future European cooperation in the field of health workforce planning.

D2.5.Final Dissemination Report



Co-funded by
the European Union

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