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## **VACCINES WORK: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE TO CONTRIBUTE TO PUBLIC HEALTH. UNDERSTANDING THE PRO-VACCINE STRATEGIES THROUGH THE ADVOCACY COALITION FRAMEWORK**

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### **Abstract**

As established by the Treaties, the EU has limited competences in health. The case of vaccination policy and its increasing significance in Europe, however, have provided the political momentum to ensure that the protection of public health stays high on the EU's agenda. Initial steps forward have been taken thanks to the publication of the 2018 Council of Ministers' Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases and the creation of the Coalition for Vaccination by the European Commission. The paper applies the theoretical features of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) proposed by Sabatier to identify the interests around vaccination and their set of beliefs. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, institutional documents, consultations and position papers, this research unveils an organised pro-vaccine coalition that saw its formalisation in the Commission's Coalition, and a disorganised and disunited anti-vaccine side, which fails to be conceptualised as an advocacy coalition *per se*. A set of three hypotheses seeks to uncover the pro-vaccine coalition's strategies both before the release of the Recommendation, through an analysis of targeted stakeholders' consultation responses, and at the national level in its intentions to follow up, where political and socio-economic factors contribute to the policy structure. The paper will illustrate the importance of having a shared approach of policy beliefs within a coalition, although it also acknowledges that some level of divergence exists within the same category of interest groups. Additionally, it is explained how the impact of external events can affect a coalition, but this viewpoint needs further adaption according to the specific context. The findings of the paper demonstrate the contribution provided by the ACF to a less common case study, therefore suggesting the opportunity for further research of strategies around vaccine-preventable programmes.