



DIGITAL GREEN CERTIFICATE

Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a framework for the issuance, verification and acceptance of interoperable certificates on vaccination, testing and recovery to facilitate free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic

I. BACKGROUND

On 17 March 2021, the European Commission proposed a [regulation establishing a common framework for a Digital Green Certificate](#) (the Certificate). The European Commission [also proposed a regulation](#) to ensure that the Certificate can also be granted to non-EU nationals who reside in Member States or Schengen Associated States and to visitors who have the right to travel to other Member States.

The Certificate will be proof that a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19, received a negative test result or recovered from COVID-19. It will be available, free of charge, in digital and paper format. These legislative proposals came in response to the problems experienced when moving throughout the EU which have been caused by the absence of standardised formats and also in reaction to reports of fraudulent or forged paper documents.

The European Parliament and the Council are expected to adopt the proposals in summer 2021. In the meantime, Member States and the European Commission are already working on the administrative and technical aspects, including interoperability, which will allow the deployment of this ambitious project.

II. IRU OBSERVATIONS

Although the Digital Green Certificate will not be a pre-condition to the free movement of people and it is meant not to discriminate, it is unclear how Member States will implement it. The proposals assume benefits due to the standardised and digitalised format of the Certificate but it remains unknown if in practice this will significantly facilitate the conditions for the transport sector, for example, in the case of drivers regularly crossing borders and groups of tourists transported by coach.

For example, regarding the value of vaccination, the World Health Organisation is currently assessing if vaccinated people can transmit the virus. The outcome will finally establish the value of vaccination in a travel context. In the meantime, Member States may choose to lift all travel restrictions if travellers have been vaccinated or keep the testing requirements and quarantine in place, despite vaccination.

A question important for the future of coach tourism concerns the treatment of a group of vaccinated and non-vaccinated tourists. As it currently stands, it will be up to Member States to consider and decide. IRU and members can further evaluate whether we would like to request the European Commission to issue recommendations on this matter. The same is valid for the situation of a group of vaccinated tourists if one or several are tested positive and develop mild symptoms.

III. INFORMATION REGARDING THE CERTIFICATE

The Certificate will include a QR code to ensure security and authenticity of the Certificate. The European Commission will build a gateway to ensure all Certificates can be verified across the EU, and support Member States in the technical implementation of the Certificates. Member States remain responsible to decide which public health restrictions can be waived for travellers but will have to apply such waivers in the

same way to travellers holding a Digital Green Certificate (See Annex 1 – The Digital Green Certificate in Practice).

Key elements of the European Commission’s legislative proposals:

1. Accessible and secure certificates for all EU citizens

- **The Digital Green Certificate will cover three types of certificates** –vaccination certificates, test certificates (NAAT/RT-PCR test or a rapid antigen test), and certificates for persons who have recovered from COVID-19.
- **The Certificates will be issued in a digital form or on paper.** Both will have a QR code that contains necessary key information as well as a digital signature to make sure the certificate is authentic.
- **The European Commission will build a gateway** and support Member States to develop software that authorities can use to verify all Certificate signatures across the EU. No personal data of the Certificate holders passes through the gateway, or is retained by the verifying Member State.
- **The Certificates will be available free of charge** and in the official language or languages of the issuing Member State and English.

2. Non-discrimination

- **All people – vaccinated and non-vaccinated – should benefit from a Digital Green Certificate** when travelling in the EU. To prevent discrimination against individuals who are not vaccinated, the European Commission proposes to create not only an interoperable vaccination certificate, but also COVID-19 test certificates and certificates for persons who have recovered from COVID-19.
- **Same right for travellers with the Digital Green Certificate** – where Member States accept proof of vaccination to waive certain public health restrictions such as testing or quarantine, they would be required to accept, under the same conditions, vaccination certificates issued under the Digital Green Certificate system. This obligation would be limited to vaccines that have received EU-wide marketing authorisation, but Member States can decide to accept other vaccines in addition.
- **Notification of other measures** – if a Member State continues to require holders of a Certificate to quarantine or test, it must notify the European Commission and all other Member States and explain the reasons for such measures.

3. Only essential information and secure personal data

- **The Certificates will include a limited set of information** such as name, date of birth, date of issuance, relevant information about vaccine/test/recovery and a unique identifier of the Certificate. This data can be checked only to confirm and verify the authenticity and validity of certificates.

4. Third-country nationals

- This proposal aims to facilitate the travel of **third-country nationals within the EU** by establishing a common framework for the issuance of interoperable certificates on COVID-19 vaccination, testing and recovery.
- This should allow third-country nationals legally staying in a Member State and who are entitled to travel to the other Member States **to demonstrate that they fulfil public health requirements imposed**, in compliance with Union law, **by the Member State of destination**.
- Third countries should be encouraged to recognise the Certificate when **waiving restrictions on non-essential travel**. In particular, this could include interoperability between technological systems established at global level. The proposal also aims to ensure that restrictions to the freedom to travel currently in place to limit the spread of COVID-19 can be lifted in a coordinated manner as more scientific evidence becomes available.
- This proposal establishes neither **an obligation nor a right to vaccination**. Vaccination strategies are a national competence of the Member States

The Digital Green Certificate will be valid in all EU Member States and open for Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway as well as Switzerland. The Digital Green Certificate should be issued to EU citizens and their family members, regardless of their nationality. It should also be issued to non-EU nationals who reside in the EU and to visitors who have the right to travel to other Member States.

The Digital Green Certificate system is a temporary measure. It will be suspended once the World Health Organization (WHO) declares the end of the COVID-19 international health emergency.

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THE DIGITAL GREEN CERTIFICATE IN PRACTICE

