

EU aims for COVID certificate launch by end of June

April 13 2021



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The EU plans to get its COVID certificate scheme operational by the end of June to open up travel within the bloc in time for European summer vacations, a senior official said Tuesday.

"This proposal's aim is to facilitate getting back to free movement within

the European Union," EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders told the European Parliament.

Member states are negotiating final details of the so-called digital green [certificate](#) and the parliament is hastening a vote, expected to be held during its next plenary June 7-10.

"So, for end of June we want to be ready with the regulation," Reynders said.

He emphasised that "this is not a vaccination passport" as the certificate would encompass not only data on those who have had jabs but also those with negative PCR test results or those who have recovered from COVID.

"All citizens should be able to benefit from a digital green certificate when travelling... Possession of a vaccination certificate should not and cannot be a precondition to exercise free movement rights," he said.

He also said that use of the certificate would be time-limited, to expire once the World Health Organization declared an end to the pandemic, and its data would be minimal and protected to EU standards.

The document's initial focus will be for European citizens and residents to be able to move more freely within the EU—especially given border restrictions by several member states.

Later, the commission would like to see the "digital green certificate" become interoperable at an international level for travel in and out of the bloc, Reynders said, adding that its experts were in contact with the WHO and the International Civil Aviation Organization on that.

Use of the certificate would not be mandatory for EU countries, but

those that chose to adopt it would be compelled to accept the vaccines approved by the European Medicines Agency, currently from BioNTech-Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson.

Individual member states could accept other vaccines for entry, at their discretion, Reynders noted.

On a technical level, the commission's proposal avoids the need for a centralised database while ensuring certificates can be authenticated by border officials.

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Citation: EU aims for COVID certificate launch by end of June (2021, April 13) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-eu-aims-covid-certificate-june.html>

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