# A million Europeans already have EU COVID certificate

June 8 2021



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More than one million Europeans have received the new EU COVID health certificate being rolled out to unlock travel within the bloc, the European Commission said on Tuesday.

EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders announced the figure to the European Parliament ahead of a vote to enshrine the document in law in time for the continent's all-important summer tourism season.

It is expected to be passed by a big majority after agreement between MEPs and the EU's 27 member states on details, with the vote result known early on Wednesday.

The [certificate](#)—showing the bearer's immunity to COVID-19 either through vaccination or previous infection, or their negative test status—is to be used for intra-EU travel from July 1, obviating the need for quarantine or further testing for travellers.

But the commission wants as many EU countries as possible to start earlier.

"The more certificates we can already issue, the easier the process will be during the summer—otherwise, we risk a [big bang](#) on the first of July, which we cannot afford," Reynders said.

## Nine countries

As of Tuesday, nine EU countries were already issuing the documents—including the sunny tourist destinations of Greece, Spain and Croatia, as well as the bloc's major source of tourists, Germany.

Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and Poland were the others.

"More than a million citizens have already received such certificates, and many more will follow in the next weeks and months," Reynders said.

The EU Digital COVID Certificate can be presented either in online

form, on a smartphone for example, or printed out on paper.

It features a QR code for verification, which border officials and venue staff can use to check against digital signatures stored securely in Luxembourg servers.

Only minimal data of the bearer are included on the certificates, to prevent identity skimming, and the EU legislation surrounding their use is due to expire after a year, so that they do not become a fixture with potential Big Brother uses in the future.

EU lawmakers and capitals also agreed that, when it comes to proof of vaccinations, only the jabs authorised by the European Medicines Agency—so far those from BioNTech/Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson—would be accepted in all EU countries.

But individual countries can also decide to accept, for their territory only, others, such as one produced by China, or Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

## Money and concessions

To prevent discrimination against the unvaccinated—particularly younger Europeans who have not yet been able to access jabs given in priority to the elderly—much emphasis has also been put on testing.

The parliament failed to make COVID tests for travel free of charge, but extracted money and concessions from the European Commission to make them more affordable.

Reynders said work was ongoing to also expand the use of the EU Digital COVID Certificate so that it is accepted beyond Europe.

Talks have been under way with the United States, for some sort of mutual recognition of vaccination status.

But have run up against the problem that there is no single federally backed certificated in the US, only a myriad of state and private vaccination cards almost impossible to authenticate abroad.