Vaccines Europe's statement on the European Commission's proposal for a Digital Green Certificate

May 2021

On 17 March 2021, the European Commission (EC) presented a proposal to create a Digital Green Certificate[1] to facilitate safe free movement of citizens within the EU during the Covid-19 pandemic, and ultimately to provide a boost to the EU economy.

Vaccines Europe recognizes the Commission's efforts in advancing the Digital Green Certificate and supports the Commission's proposal that the Digital Green Certificate should be fair to all citizens and evidence-based. We believe that, should the Certificate be agreed by the EU Institutions, there is an opportunity to look at it in the context of the proposal from the EU for an EU vaccination card[2]. Thus, the investment made to create the Digital Green Certificate could be used to transition to a system to track broader vaccination status in the EU in the longer term.

1) Digital Green Certificate as a fair and evidence-based tool

The decision to introduce a mechanism to track COVID-19 status to facilitate travel is, of course, the decision of the EU and its Member States. Vaccines Europe supports the harmonized approach proposed for the Digital Green Certificate. To build confidence in consumers, privacy and security of the data collected and exchanged is obviously paramount, and attention should be given to ensuring it is inclusive.

Importantly, Vaccines Europe wants to ensure participants in clinical trials who received COVID-19 vaccines approved by regulatory agencies are able to be considered as fully vaccinated under the Digital Green Certificate. And of course, interoperability with national systems will be critical for its success.

2) Digital Green Certificate as a sustainable and long-term tool

The Council Recommendation of 7 December 2018 on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases[2] introduced a proposal for a common vaccination card for EU

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[1] Proposal for a 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.

[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H1228(01)&from=GA, Accessed on 9 February 2021.

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1

citizens. The establishment of the Digital Green Certificate could build on this important work already undertaken by the EU institutions[3].

The Digital Green Certificate could be a first step towards the implementation of an e-vaccination card covering all available vaccines and an interoperable, Pan-European system of existing or newly created national Immunization Information Systems (IIS). This would support control of infectious diseases and could help to improve the implementation of national vaccination programmes by identifying gaps in vaccine uptake in the population, facilitating communication to at-risk groups, and ultimately empowering citizens and improving public health. Additionally, such systems could also support national and EU preparedness towards future pandemics.

To achieve this longer-term goal, the EU vaccination card could be included in the forthcoming European Health Data Space legislative proposal due by the end of 2021 as a key public health priority.

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[3] The Joint Action on Vaccination, the Roadmap for the implementation of actions from this Council recommendation, and the outcomes of the project on the provision of options and recommendations for an EU citizens' vaccination card.

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2