



## Coronavirus: Commission proposes update to coordinated travel measures ahead of the summer

Brussels, 31 May 2021

Today, the European Commission has proposed an update to the [Council Recommendation](#) on the coordination of free movement restrictions in the EU, which were put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the epidemiological situation is improving and vaccination campaigns are speeding up all over the EU, the Commission is proposing that Member States gradually ease travel measures, including most importantly for the holders of the [EU Digital COVID Certificate](#). The Commission has also proposed to update the common criteria for risk areas and to introduce an 'emergency brake' mechanism, to address the prevalence of new variants of concern or interest. The proposal also includes specific provisions on children to ensure unity of travelling families and a standard validity period for tests.

Didier **Reynders**, Commissioner for Justice, said: *"The last weeks have brought a continuous downward trend in infection numbers, showing the success of the vaccination campaigns across the EU. In parallel, we are also encouraging affordable and widely available testing possibilities. In this context, Member States are now slowly lifting COVID-19 restrictions both domestically and regarding travel. Today, we are proposing that Member States coordinate this gradual lifting of free movement restrictions, taking into account our new common tool: the EU Digital COVID Certificate. We now expect Member States to make best use of this instrument and the recommendation to allow everyone to move freely and safely again."*

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety said: *"Freedom of movement is one of EU citizens' most cherished rights: we need coordinated and predictable approaches for our citizens that would offer clarity and avoid inconsistent requirements across Member States. We want to make sure that we can move towards the reopening of our societies in the weeks ahead safely and in a coordinated way. As vaccination is progressing with increasing speed, we can be confident that safe free movement without restrictions can gradually resume again. Whilst we are looking ahead with more optimism, we need to remain cautious and always put the protection of public health first."*

Key updates to the common approach to travel measures inside the EU, building on the [colour-coded map](#) published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC):

- **Fully vaccinated persons** holding vaccination certificates in line **with the EU Digital COVID Certificate should be exempted** from travel-related testing or quarantine 14 days after having received the last dose. This should also cover recovered persons having received a single dose of a 2-dose vaccine. Where Member States accept proof of vaccination in order to waive restrictions to free movement also in other situations, for example after the first dose in a 2-dose series, they should also accept, under the same conditions, vaccination certificates for a COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Recovered persons**, holding certificates in line **with the EU Digital COVID Certificate should be exempted** from travel-related testing or quarantine during the first 180 days after a positive PCR test.
- **Persons with a valid test certificate** in line with the **EU Digital COVID Certificate should be exempted** from possible quarantine requirements. The Commission proposes a **standard validity period for tests**: 72 hours for PCR tests and, where accepted by a Member State, 48 hours for rapid antigen tests.
- **'Emergency brake'**: Member States should re-introduce travel measures for vaccinated and recovered persons if the epidemiological situation deteriorates rapidly or where a high prevalence of variants of concern or interest has been reported.
- **Clarification and simplification of requirements**, where imposed by Member States based on their own decision-making processes:
  - Travellers from **green areas**: no restrictions
  - Travellers from **orange areas**: Member States could require a pre-departure test (rapid

antigen or PCR).

- Travellers from **red areas**: Member States could require travellers to undergo quarantine, unless they have a pre-departure test (rapid antigen or PCR).
- Travellers from **dark red areas**: non-essential travel should be strongly discouraged. Requirement of testing and quarantine remain.
- To ensure **family unity**, minors travelling with parents should be exempted from quarantine when the parents do not need to undergo quarantine, for example due to vaccination. Children under 6 should also be exempted from travel-related testing.
- The Commission proposes to adapt the **thresholds of the ECDC map** in view of the epidemiological situation and progress on vaccination. For the areas marked in orange the proposal is to increase the threshold of 14-day cumulative COVID-19 case notification rate from 50 to 75. Similarly, for the red areas the proposal is to adjust the threshold range from current 50-150 to the new 75-150.

In addition, the Commission calls for further efforts to ensure a **smooth rollout of the EU Digital COVID Certificate**. For this purpose, Member States should make use, to the maximum extent possible, of existing possibilities under national law to start issuing EU Digital COVID Certificates already before the entry into application of the underlying Regulation on 1 July. Where national law provides for the verification of COVID-19 certificates, holders of an EU Digital COVID Certificate could already make use of it when travelling.

The Commission will support this process by launching the central part of the EU Digital COVID Certificate, the EU gateway storing the public keys needed for the verification of an EU Digital COVID Certificate, on 1 June. Given that no personal data is exchanged via the **EU gateway**, Member States could already make use of its functionality.

Today's Commission proposal also ensures consistency with the rules on [non-essential travel to the EU](#), updated by the Council on 20 May 2021.

## Background

On 3 September 2020, the Commission made [a proposal for a Council Recommendation](#) to ensure that any measures taken by Member States that restrict free movement due to the coronavirus pandemic are coordinated and clearly communicated at the EU level.

On 13 October 2020, EU Member States committed to ensure more coordination and better information sharing by adopting the [Council Recommendation](#).

On 1 February 2021, the Council adopted a [first update](#) to the Council Recommendation, which introduced a new colour, 'dark red', for the mapping of risk areas and set out stricter measures applied to travellers from high-risk areas.

On 20 May 2021, the Parliament and the Council reached [provisional political agreement](#) to establish the EU Digital COVID Certificate to facilitate free movement inside the EU. The EU Digital COVID Certificate will also contribute to facilitating the gradual and coordinated lifting of free movement restrictions currently in place. The political agreement was confirmed by [Council's Permanent Representatives Committee](#) and the [Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#).

On 20 May 2021, the Council [amended](#) the recommendation on [non-essential travel to the EU](#), easing restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU, in particular for vaccinated third-country nationals. The Council also increased the threshold for new infections used to determine the list of non-EU countries from where non-essential travel should be permitted.

At their meeting on 24-25 May, the [European leaders called](#) for the revision by mid-June of the Council Recommendation on travel within the EU, with the view of facilitating free movement in the EU. Today's proposal follows-up on this request.

The latest information on coronavirus measures as well as travel restrictions provided to us by Member States are available on the [Re-open EU platform](#).

## More information

[Commission proposal to amend the Council Recommendation of 13 October 2020 on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

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