
EU Commission: proposals for gradual lifting of free movement restrictions. Hope in vaccines and Digital Certificate

Gradually lifting free movement restrictions, especially for EU Digital Certificate holders; updating the common criteria for risk areas; introducing an “emergency brake” to tackle the spread of new variants; and introducing specific provisions on children to ensure unity of travelling families and a standard validity period for tests. These are the proposals for a coordinated approach to restrictions put forward by the EU Commission today in the wake of “a continuous downward trend in infection numbers” thanks to the success of vaccination campaigns, Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders explained. Hence the proposal “that Member States coordinate this gradual lifting of free movement restrictions” also by means of “our new common tool”: the Digital COVID Certificate. It was proposed that both vaccinated persons having received the last dose (and holding a vaccination certificate) and recovered persons having received a single dose should be exempted from travel-related testing or quarantine. Recovered persons, with the relevant certificate, should be exempted from travel-related testing or quarantine for 6 months after a positive PCR test. Also, a standard validity period is proposed for tests: 72 hours for PCR tests and 48 hours for rapid antigen tests. Colour-coded areas are maintained: no restrictions apply to travellers from green areas; travellers from orange areas may be required to undergo a pre-departure test; and travellers from red areas may be required to undergo quarantine, unless they have a pre-departure test (to the discretion of individual Member States). Travellers from dark red areas are advised to avoid non-essential travel. Requirement of testing and quarantine remain.

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