EU digital COVID certificate: how it works

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The EU digital COVID certificate made travel easier in Europe during the pandemic by providing a proof of vaccination, negative test or recovery from COVID-19 that is recognised by all 27 EU member states.

On this page:

| What is the EU digital COVID certificate?

| When is the EU digital COVID certificate active?

| How does the EU digital COVID certificate make travelling within the EU easier?

| How do I obtain my EU digital COVID certificate?

| What are the travel measures for holders of the EU digital COVID certificate?

| What data does the certificate include?

| How does it work if I want to travel from outside the EU?

WHO takes up the EU system of digital COVID-19 certification

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced it will take up the EU system of digital COVID-19 certification to establish a global system that helps protect citizens across the world from on-going and future health threats, including pandemics.

On 27 June 2023, the Council has adopted a recommendation to ensure the smooth transition of COVID-19 certification system to a **WHO global digital health certification network**.

The recommendation encourages member states to join, follow and participate in the

further development of the WHO global digital health certification network. Until member states are connected to it, and during the period until the end of 2023, they are encouraged to remain connected to the EU Gateway (the EU's existing digital infrastructure for the verification of certificates).

The WHO global digital health certification network will integrate the technology developed in EU digital COVID certificates.

What is the EU digital COVID certificate?

All EU citizens who

- have been **vaccinated**
- have **tested negative**
- **recovered** from COVID-19

are able to prove it with a digital certificate called the **EU digital COVID certificate**.

The certificate is issued for **free** by their national authorities and recognised by **all EU 27 member states** as well as in a number of non-EU countries.

The acceptance period of the EU digital COVID certificate is **9 months (270 days)**, starting from the date of administration of the last vaccine dose.

The certificate is available in a national language and English. It consists of a QR code displayed on a device (like a smartphone or a tablet) or printed, and a digital signature, verified via EU Gateway (the EU's existing digital infrastructure for the verification of certificates).

When is the EU digital COVID certificate active?

The certificate was **active from 1 July 2021 until 30 June 2023.**

How does the EU digital COVID certificate make travelling within the EU easier?

The certificate makes it easier for you to travel safely through the EU by showing that you have been vaccinated, had a negative test result or recovered from COVID-19.

The EU digital COVID certificate has a **speedy verification process** and helps preventing the use of fake certificates across the EU.

The certificate alone **is not a travel document**. It isn't enough to travel, you still need your passport or another form of identification.

You also don't need to have the certificate to travel but having it should make travelling easier. If you hold a EU digital COVID certificate you should in principle be exempted from testing or quarantine.

How do I obtain my EU digital COVID certificate?

There are three ways to obtain an EU digital COVID certificate:

- **vaccination**
- **recovered from a SARS-CoV-2 infection**
- **tested negative for COVID-19**

Note: Tests recognised under the certificate include Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) tests, such as RT-PCR tests, and rapid antigen tests (RAT). Travellers should always check the applicable rules, i.e. which test is accepted to waive free movement restrictions, at the points of transit and destination. Antibody testing is not recognised, though this may change after the system is launched.

EU citizens who were vaccinated in a non-EU country can request the EU digital COVID certificate from the member state of their nationality or residence. For further information, please address your member state of nationality or residence.

What are the travel measures for holders of the EU digital COVID certificate?

Infographic - A common approach to COVID-19 travel measures in the EU (until 13 December 2022)

See full infographic

Travellers in possession of a valid EU digital COVID certificate should **not be subject to additional restrictions to free movement**.

A valid EU digital COVID certificate includes:

- **a vaccination certificate** for a vaccine approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), where at least 14 and no more than 270 days have passed since the last dose of the primary vaccination series or if the person has received a booster dose
- **a certificate of recovery** indicating that no more than 180 days have passed since the date of the first positive test result
- **a negative test** result obtained no more than 72 hours before travelling or a negative rapid antigen test obtained no more than 24 hours before travelling

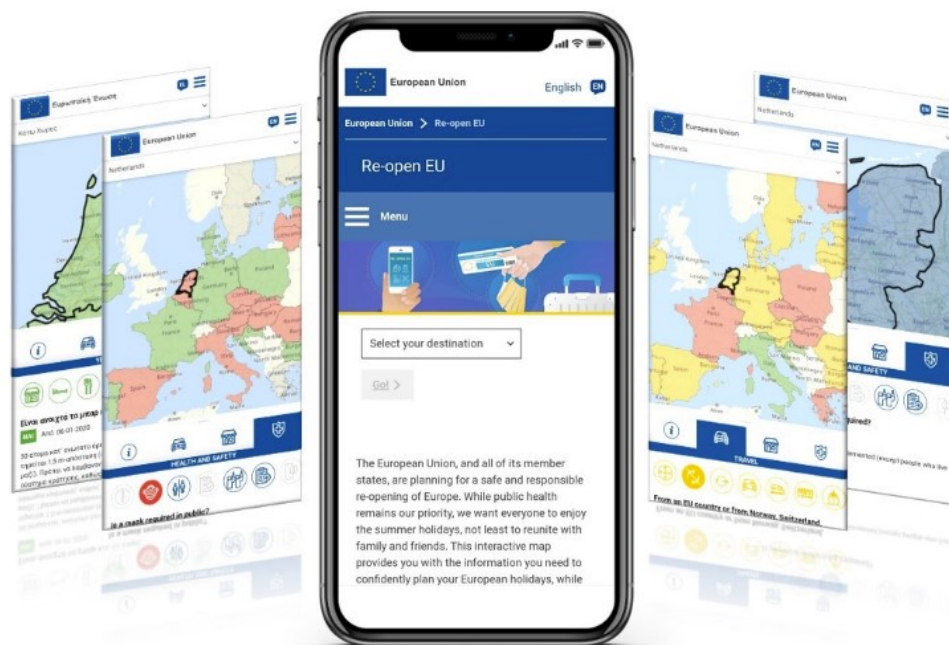Member states could also accept vaccination certificates for WHO-approved vaccines.

What data does the certificate include? Is the data safe?

The information contained on the EU digital COVID certificate is limited to:

- your name
- your date of birth
- date of issuance
- vaccine/test/recovery information
- a unique identifier

This data remains on the certificate and is not stored or retained when the certificate gets verified through the QR code or with human checks.

All other health data remains with the national authority that issued an EU digital COVID certificate.

Re-open EU is available as an app and a mobile-friendly website

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Make your travel plan on Re-open EU

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Re-open EU is an app and a website for all essential information on borders, available means of transport, travel restrictions, public health and safety measures such as on physical distancing or wearing of face masks, as well as other practical information for travellers.

All information is available in the 24 official EU languages.

How does it work if I want to travel from outside the EU?

According to the Council recommendation on non-essential travel into the EU (last updated on 13 December 2022), **no restrictions should be imposed for people travelling from non-EU countries to the EU**. However, the recommendation keeps some safeguards in case of a deteriorating epidemiological situation or appearance of a new variant of concern.