



## Joint Statement on the adoption of recommendations on the validity period of European Digital Covid Certificates

Brussels, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022

On behalf of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), and its European partner organizations, we welcome the efforts of the European Union and its Member States to provide clear recommendations on a coordinated approach to facilitate safe and free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic. We particularly commend the newly adopted person-based approach and the delegated regulation to set a common 270-day validity for vaccination certificates. However, we remain concerned about the decision of many Member States to enact differing rules for the validity period of these certificates, therefore further confusing travelers.

As the European Commission's delegated act on the binding validity period of the EU Digital Covid Certificate (DCC) of 270 days becomes applicable on February 1<sup>st</sup>, GBTA and the signed organizations call on the European Commission and the Member States to abide by this common period to avoid a patchwork of measures that will hinder the principle of freedom of movement within the Union. Our appeal echoes the Commission's [announcement](#) stating that "Member States are not able to provide for a shorter nor for a longer acceptance period".

These common standards on the validity of the DCC are a direct result of the [political guidance](#) given by the Member States at the European Council in December 2021, where they called for greater coordination and noted the European Commission's intention to propose a timeframe for the validity of certificates. We therefore ask Member States to honor this decision and to show unity behind the approved acceptance period of vaccination certificates.

Ensuring the harmonization of measures such as the validity period of the DCC across the Member States will be crucial to the recovery of the European and global travel industry as well as to the economy as a whole. Providing clarity and certainty through harmonized rules will reduce the unpredictability caused by travel restrictions, which is essential for businesses to conduct their operations, thereby reducing the impact of restrictions on the economy. It is also essential to the efforts to reduce confusion among business travelers who appear anxious and discouraged from traveling to and within the EU due to the unpredictable rules.

The successive lockdowns we experienced in Europe and around the world in 2020 dealt a blow to the global business travel industry, which suffered a 52% decline in business travel and €662 billion in lost business travel spend; a situation from which our industry is still struggling to recover. Given the success of the DCC in Europe and its ability to allow key segments of the business travel value chain to reopen, GBTA and the joined organizations will continue to support the full harmonization of measures and international uptake of interoperable vaccination certificates.

The newly adopted person-based approach in the updated Council Recommendation of 25 January, which allows travelers in possession of a valid DCC to travel freely within the EU without additional restrictions, is a good step toward a recovery spurred by increased coordination. To further facilitate the return to safe travel, GBTA and its European partners call for the person-based approach to be strengthened by removing the regional traffic light system to focus on each individual's vaccination status instead. The rapid implementation of these measures would bring certainty for millions of passengers as well as the global business travel industry, which in 2019 was worth €1.257 trillion.

To conclude, the return of smooth, smart, and sustainable travel is the only way forward to return to normal and support the business travel industry which has been considerably affected by the pandemic. GBTA and the signed organizations applaud the EU's efforts to coordinate, regularly update, and improve the visibility of the ever-changing travel restrictions. To add further certainty to the pandemic response, we call on the European Commission and the EU Member states to ensure a rapid implementation of the harmonized validity period of the EU Digital Covid Certificates in the EU.

Yours sincerely,

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Global Business Travel Association Italy (GBTA Italy)

Austrian Business Travel Association (ABTA)

Danish Business Travel Association (DBTA)

Finnish Business Travel Association (FBTA)

Asociación Ibérica de Gestores Viajes de Negocio (IBTA)

Institute for Travel Management (ITM)

Nederlandse Associatie voor Travel Management (NATM)

Norwegian Business Travel Association (NBTA)

Swedish Business Travel Association (SBTA)

Verband Deutsches Reisemanagement (VDR)