



23RD EHEALTH NETWORK MEETING 30 MARCH 2023, ONLINE

COVER NOTE

7 EU DCC infrastructure next steps

1. Issue at stake

The EU Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC) facilitated the free movement of people in the EU during the pandemic. The system enabled the secure authentication of vaccination, test, and recovery certificates. It also allowed third countries to join the framework and recognised their COVID-19 certificates to comply with the same level of trustworthiness and interoperability as EU DCC. So far, 51 non-EU countries (and territories) have joined the EU DCC system, based on EU equivalence decisions. Regulation (EU) 2021/953 on EU DCC will expire on 1 July 2023, and the equivalence decisions with third countries will lapse. At the same time, as the pandemic is not over, it remains the risk that a variant of concern could emerge. If nothing is done the COVID-19 certificates would be unverifiable as of 1 July 2023.

2. Summary

The World Health Organization (WHO) is currently working on the establishment of a global digital health trust network, following its work started in 2022 together with G20 and OECD. The trust network is planned to support different COVID certificate issuance systems, including EU DCC. In a longer term, use cases such as the digitalization of the International Certificate of Vaccination/Prophylaxis (ICVP, also known as the yellow booklet) and International Patient Summary might be added.

The Commission has performed an analysis of different options regarding the future of EU DCC, and the uptake of the system by WHO has been seen as the most feasible option. In a survey performed in the eHealth Network in March 2023, many Member States indicated interest in connecting to the WHO Gateway, but also signalled uncertainty and need for further information on the process. The Commission is therefore working on a technical level with both WHO and with Member States to increase understanding of the possible uptake process. In line with the EU's Global Health Strategy COM is currently working on supporting the WHO to take-up the EU DCC system and ensure the transition to a global approach. The uptake of the system by the WHO is a long-term solution that would enable the availability of a COVID certificate system.

Main results of the survey performed in March 2023 in the eHealth Network (based on 24 answers, a few more answers are expected) indicate the following:

1. **Interest in issuance beyond 30 June 2023:** Some interest in the issuance of certificates for international travel beyond June 2023 (3+8 Yes or Probably yes), less so for continuity of care or domestic (national/EU) purposes (2+3). Legal basis for issuance is existing or upcoming in 8 MS for international travel and 6 for other purposes.

2. **Interest in verification beyond 30 June 2023:** Only limited interest in verification (2+2 Yes or Probably yes). Legal basis for verification is existing or upcoming in 5 MS.
3. **The possible interest in joining the WHO Gateway after the uptake:** Significant interest in the onboarding to the WHO Gateway (4+11 Yes or Probably yes, only 1+1 No or Probably no) but also uncertainty (7 not sure) signalling need for more information about the process. Interest in piloting: some MS ready (4) or considering to participate (3) in the pilot.

In the meeting, more detailed results of the survey will be presented, and an update regarding the WHO's digital health trust network will be provided.

3. Format of procedure in the meeting

For information