Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA

Federal Office of Public Health FOPH
Communication and Campaigns Division

FAQ: EU recognition and use of the COVID certificate in the EU area

Date: 9 July 2021

Since its introduction at the beginning of July 2021, the Swiss COVID certificate has been compatible with the EU's Digital Covid Certificate (DCC). Among other things it is designed to facilitate safe travel in the EU/EFTA area. The EU's regulation on the DCC entered into application on 1 July 2021. The EU officially recognised Switzerland's COVID certificate on 9 July.

1. **Following recognition by the EU, does Switzerland now have to arrange recognition bilaterally with the individual states?**

No. Recognition by the European Commission applies to the entire EU/EFTA area. You are absolutely recommended to find out about the current entry requirements for the country you are travelling to.

2. **Besides the certificate, are other forms of proof of vaccinations and tests no longer valid in EU/EFTA countries?**

To find out whether other countries still recognise other proofs of vaccination and tests, you are recommended to inform yourself about the current entry requirements for the country you are travelling to.

3. **In Switzerland you are deemed to be protected immediately after the second vaccination, and you receive a certificate. What happens when the Swiss certificate is checked in an EU/EFTA country where you are not considered to be completely protected until 14 days after the vaccination?**

In these countries the Swiss Covid certificate appears as not valid, or only valid 14 days after the second vaccination. The entry requirements of the country you are travelling always apply.

What does a person from abroad have to be able to show to obtain a Swiss certificate for someone who has recovered from COVID?

The prerequisite for a Swiss COVID certificate for people who have recovered from COVID is a positive PCR test. The authority to decide whether a PCR test documented abroad is credible and officially recognised lies with the cantons or the issuer of the certificate, as the case may be. If it is deemed to be credible, a COVID certificate will be issued.

4. **Does the DCC allow people travelling from the EU/EFTA area free access to events in Switzerland for which a Swiss COVID certificate is compulsory?**

DCCs issued in EU/EFTA countries are equivalent to COVID certificates issued in Switzerland. This also includes access to trade fairs, large-scale events, etc. Travellers who want to attend large-scale events in Switzerland and do not have a DCC must, on the basis of a PCR or rapid antigen test, have a COVID certificate for people who have been tested issued.

<u>TECHNICAL INTEROPERABILITY</u>

5.   How is the COVID certificate now "activated" for travel in the EU/EFTA area?

To enable certificates to be checked for authenticity in all EU states, each EU member state has deposited a digital key (public key) in the so-called EU Gateway. Activation for Switzerland involves depositing Switzerland's digital key and activating access so that all the keys of EU member states that have been deposited can be viewed from Switzerland. It is not necessary to modify the various mobile apps provided by EU states or Switzerland. The technical activation procedure is complete in just a few hours, and in recent months has already been run in a test environment and in an EU Gateway acceptance environment

6.   What is the EU Gateway and what is for?

The EU Gateway is the EU infrastructure that among other things enables the digital (public) keys of all states involved (which in future will also include Switzerland) to be exchanged for the purposes of the DCC. With the help of these keys it is possible to ascertain on a forgery-proof basis that a certificate was really issued in the specified country and that the contents were not subsequently manipulated.

7.   Why is it possible for the Swiss vaccination certificate (QR code) to be integrated in foreign apps?

The Swiss COVID certificate meets the technical specifications of the EU. It can therefore also be displayed in a German or Spanish app.

8.   Can apps from Austria and Denmark, for example, be used for travel?

Previously, Swiss COVID certificates checked in a German or Austrian checking app have come up as having an invalid signature. This is because the public keys required for validation were exchanged only after mutual recognition by the EU and Switzerland. Now that this has happened, it is also possible to carry the COVID certificate with you on an app from another EU member state. However, you should remember that with the apps, the validity of certificates will be checked on the basis of the specific rules applicable in that particular country.