



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Laurence Modrego

laurence@thegoodlobby.eu

+32 496 23 73 78

Digital Green Certificate trilogue agreement:

The summer holidays are not saved yet, it is now up to EU governments

Brussels, 21st May 2021 – Consumer organisations call upon EU negotiators to clarify the details of the deal approved on the Digital Green Certificate in trilogue negotiations yesterday. Some improvements have been made on affordability of tests and limiting Member States' ability to impose extra requirements. But Euroconsumers regrets the gratuity of tests hasn't been retained and warns against the lack of binding commitments.

A deal is better than no deal and shows the added-value of the EU

Euroconsumers congratulates EU negotiators for agreeing on a deal on the Digital Green Certificate proposal, soon to be renamed EU Digital COVID Certificate. The European Parliament has tirelessly fought for consumers' concerns to be considered in the deal. Although we will need to see the compromise in writing, first reports of yesterday's compromise show some improvements to turn the new Certificate into a tool to facilitate free movement during summer.

“It is a relief that EU negotiators have reached a deal on the COVID 19 Certificate despite huge differences of views between Parliament and national governments” said Marco Pierani, Director Public Affairs & Media Relations at Euroconsumers “This was a make-or-break moment for the EU. No deal would have been a missed opportunity to show the EU's added-value. On free movement, more Europe is needed. Not less!”

Member states need to ensure access to affordable PCR tests for all citizens

Euroconsumers regrets that, despite a clear push of the European Parliament, Member States would not budge on free of charge COVID 19 tests. Current prices of PCR tests make a family trip across Europe unaffordable and creates discrimination between citizens who got access to a free vaccine and those who haven't had that opportunity.

The commitment to affordability of tests remains vague at this stage. Euroconsumers welcomes the proposal to mobilise 100 million euros of EU funds to support the affordability of these tests. But what will this mean in practice taking into account how much PCR tests cost and that there are about 500 million Europeans? Will this scheme be expanded beyond

the “citizens most in need” (cross border workers, students, visiting family in need, etc)?

“We don’t need free movement on paper, we need free movement in practice. Member states clearly wanted to keep their autonomy on the cost of PCR tests. It’s now up to them to make it happen and guarantee access to affordable tests for all citizens. Luckily they have the support of EU funds to do so”, said Els Bruggeman, Head of Policy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers.”

No extra requirements on top of the Certificate: Member States, stick to it!

[Euroconsumers has consistently advocated](#) for avoiding a situation in which Member States would be free to add unilateral requirements on top of what the EU Certificate already plans. This would otherwise undermine the much needed effectiveness of the new Certificate. Euroconsumers therefore welcomes the fact that **EU negotiators agreed yesterday Member States “shall refrain” from adding such restrictions unless strictly necessary for public health reasons. This is a clear improvement. However, as this provision is not legally binding, Euroconsumers calls on Member States to stick to this engagement.**

Still unclear: fate of antigen tests as well as requirements for children

Other unclear points include:

- **Confusion on wording regarding antigen tests and rapid tests.** Listening to various negotiators speaking since yesterday night, it is unclear whether antigen tests would be allowed as a valid proof under the Certificate. These are typically cheaper than PCR tests and would therefore be important to secure true free movement.
- **What about children?** “Will children need a COVID 19 Certificate to travel? If so, from what age? **If parents have to pay for PCR tests to be able to take their children with them on a summer holiday, this will have a significant impact on the family budget” according to Els Bruggeman.**

In conclusion, in view of yesterday’s deal, and pending written confirmation of what’s been agreed, Euroconsumers calls upon Member States

- to ensure the gratuity of tests so as to avoid discriminating against the non vaccinated
- to effectively refrain from adding extra requirements on top of the EU COVID Certificate so as to avoid defeating its purpose

Both concerns [are shared by a majority of citizens](#) as our recent survey has shown.

Euroconsumers, along with its national member organisations will keep on watching closely in the coming month what governments plan to do in practice for citizens to regain their right to move freely within Europe.

##

About Euroconsumers:

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people, Euroconsumers is the world's leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer's rights. We work closely together with Consumers International to ensure consumers are safe, that markets are fair and benefit from honest relations with businesses and authorities. Our European member groups are also part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation. Together we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives.