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Destinations

European Union Reaches Deal on Health Passes for Travelers by June

Philip Blenkinsop, Reuters- May 21, 2021 2:55 am



fter more than two months,
negotiators in European

SKIFT TAKE

A countries have agreed on a system of health passes for many international travelers. If it gets running by June, it'll be just in time for a desperate travel sector.

– Sean O'Neill

The European Union reached a deal on Thursday on Covid-19 certificates designed to open up tourism across the 27-nation bloc this summer, the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) said.

European Parliament lawmakers and current EU president Portugal representing the bloc's 27 members sealed the agreement after a fourth round of negotiations on Thursday afternoon.

The certificate will take the form of a QR code on a smartphone or paper, letting authorities determine the status of a visitor based on records in their home EU country. The certificate would show if a person had received a vaccine, had a recent negative test or had immunity based on recovery.

Lawmakers had wanted countries to commit to free testing for the certificate and said that no EU country should set additional quarantine requirements.

Germany and Sweden were among those resisting, EU officials said, though EU countries, in general, are reluctant to give up their final say on border controls.

In the end, EU countries agreed to refrain from imposing additional restrictions, such as testing or quarantines, unless considered necessary on public health grounds, the EPP said in a statement.

The European Commission, which also participated in the negotiations, committed to make 100 million euros (\$122.2 million) of its emergency support money available to help make tests affordable, with a further 100 million euros if required.

The agreement between the institutions should allow the European Parliament to pass a law in the week from June 7 and for more than a dozen EU countries, including France and Spain, to test the system before a launch

towards the end of June.

The certificate scheme is separate from plans to open up the European Union to vaccinated non-EU visitors.

(Reporting by Philip Blenkinsop; Additional reporting by Sabine Siebold; Editing by Andrew Cawthorne and Barbara Lewis)

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