

The Cabinet of Ministers has extended the list of countries the COVID-19 certificates of which comply with entry requirements to Latvia

Published: 25.08.2021.

On 24 August 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers approved draft regulations, "Amendments to the Republic of Latvia Cabinet Regulation No. 360 of 9 June 2020, Epidemiological Safety Measures for the Containment of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection". Its purpose is to supplement the list of countries the COVID-19 vaccination and recovery certificates issued by which are to be considered acceptable for entry in Latvia.

Beginning on 1 September, travel to Latvia without additional restrictions is allowed for persons from the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Australia, the State of Israel, New Zealand and Canada who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 with a vaccine authorised with the European Medicines Agency or with an equivalent regulator or recognised by the World Health Organization, or persons recovered from COVID-19 and holding a document certifying that.

This certificate need not be in the form of an interoperable digital COVID-19 certificate as issued in the European Union Member States. Current regulations permit entry in Latvia with a non-interoperable certificate till 1 September only from the United Kingdom, while the amendments also provide for such entry from the UK after 1 September.

Until now, persons vaccinated in third countries with vaccines recognised by the European Medicines Agency and holding an appropriate certificate, but not in the form of an interoperable certificate, were subject to additional restrictions upon entry in Latvia. This situation seriously impeded ability to travel and caused incomprehension among Latvians residing abroad, especially in the countries with a large Latvian diaspora and a high vaccination coverage or low COVID-19 incidence.

The United States of America and Canada are Latvia's strategic partners. A national-level recognition of certificates issued by those countries is a major step towards sustaining and strengthening the link. For its part, an active political dialogue and economic cooperation are underway with the State of Israel, alongside close people-to-people relations.

It is important to promote favourable conditions for travel of the members of the diaspora in order to ensure their connection with Latvia under the pandemic-related crisis thereby also supporting economic recovery.

Under the European Union Regulation on a digital COVID certificate, it is possible for third countries to agree with the EU on mutual operability of their COVID certificates; for instance, such decisions have been made by Turkey and Ukraine. However, it is impossible to predict how long further talks and technical interoperability solutions will take.

<https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/cabinet-ministers-has-extended-list-countries-covid-19-certificates-which-comply-entry-requirements-latvia>