

Good morning all,

Just adding this bit from this morning's Politico to the conversation, including a quote from Thomas:

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**DIGITAL GREEN PASS APPROVED:** Preparations for a legislative proposal on the “Digital Green Pass,” in effect a coronavirus vaccination certificate, are officially underway and due to be presented this month, announced Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Monday. According to a tweet from her account, the aim of the “pass” is to provide proof of vaccination, the COVID-19 test results of those yet to be vaccinated, and information on recovery from the virus. “It will respect data protection, security and privacy,” she added.

**Mixed reactions:** Some corners of Europe will have welcomed the decision — notably Austria, whose Chancellor Sebastian Kurz lobbied for a “green pass” to jumpstart travel in last week’s European Council meeting. Belgian Foreign Minister Sophie Wilmès, however, expressed her misgivings in a series of tweets. “Respect for the principle of non-discrimination [between those vaccinated and those not] is all the more fundamental as vaccination is not compulsory and access to the vaccine is not yet generalized,” Wilmès said. French President Emmanuel Macron and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte have also previously spoken out against vaccine passports.

**Warning signs:** European Digital Rights (EDRi) Vice President Thomas Lohninger called the proposal “unrealistic.”

“We have very high, unified privacy data protection standards in the EU, but no harmonisation at all in the area of electronic identity,” he said, adding that a system which would actually “ensure privacy” could take until 2023 to implement. “What I don’t understand is why for practical reasons we now debate a complicated digital ‘green pass’ on vaccinations when even our passports are seen as safe with a couple of holograms,” tweeted Austrian privacy campaigner Max Schrems. “Just put a fancy sticker on these IDs and get going, which will be fine 99% of times...”

**Italian data watchdog says no:** The Italian privacy regulator, known as Garante, said today it is writing a report to the national parliament to stop the rollout of vaccine passports without the proper legal basis. Garante said in a statement the passes shouldn’t be used to regulate access to services as long as a law doesn’t ensure their compliance with the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation.

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