
European Science-Media Hub

EU Covid-19 certificate / March - June 2021



Analysis Overview:

Time range: 01/03/2021 - 21/06/2021
Sources: Twitter, Websites, Blogs
Number of developments: 221
Number of false claims: 5
Number of fact-checks: 5

Content Analysis - Main findings

Featured developments in the vaccine passport race

A timeline of events (March - June), summing up developments as they unfold in key regions of the world

March-April

Europe

- The EC proposed the adoption of a digital green certificate (due in June)
- The issue is met with skepticism by some EU member states, while others, especially from the Mediterranean region, express more eagerness in view of the touristic summer season
- EU Parliament gives the green light for Covid-19 certificate negotiations

World

- Countries like Great Britain, the US, Canada and Australia have not yet reached final decisions
- Others like Russia, China and Israel have already implemented some form of vaccine certification
- The airline sector is pressing for a fast adoption of a commonly approved solution, as the industry has suffered immensely from the pandemic and looks forward to the opening up of international travel
- The World Health Organization advised against the adoption of vaccination proof for travel

Content Analysis - Main findings

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May

Europe

- In May, several European countries reached bilateral agreements in order to resume travel with other countries, or issued their own forms of vaccine certification
- The UK resumed foreign travel with 12 countries on its green list
- The EU allowed vaccinated Britons and Americans to enter and later agreed to reopen its borders to fully vaccinated travelers
- On 25 May, EU leaders agreed to issue a **Digital Covid-19 Certificate** from July 1st. Member states have been urged to implement it rapidly
- The EU infrastructure will be ready on June 1st
- Several member states (namely Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland and Germany) passed the tests and declared readiness to be the first to adopt the EU Digital Covid-19 Certificate on June 1st

Content Analysis - Main findings

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May

World

- In the US, the Biden administration is weary of requiring a vaccination passport at a federal level.
- Australia's vaccination passport plan is deemed "premature". Discussions with International Air Transport Association (IATA) on a digital vaccine passport for travel
- Israel is about to issue certification to unvaccinated children with a negative PCR test. Will stop requiring "green pass" certificates on June 1st
- Canada requires vaccination passport for entry.
- Many countries (e.g. USA, Hong Kong) allow entry in stadiums, venues and bars using vaccine passport digital applications.
- Hawaii launches vaccine passport for inter-island travel
- Several US states (Wyoming, South Carolina, Michigan, Florida) ban vaccine passport.

Content Analysis - Main findings

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June

Europe

- On June 1st the EU Digital Covid-19 Certificate gateway went live, with seven member states already connected
- On June 7th, Lithuania and Spain established connection, followed by Belgium and Portugal
- 14 member states have been connected well ahead of schedule
- By June 8th, over 1 million EU citizens had issued the EU Digital Covid-19 Certificate
- In the UK, a vaccine passport will be used for entry in Wembley for the EURO 2020 football matches. The government is considering its use for large-scale events.
- June 14: the EU Digital Covid-19 Certificate is signed into EU law
- Denmark starts phasing out its own vaccine passport (Coronapas), as authorities believe the COVID-19 situation has improved significantly on a domestic level
- June 21: Italy connected to the platform and is now issuing the certificate as well

Content Analysis - Main findings

Featured developments in the vaccine passport race

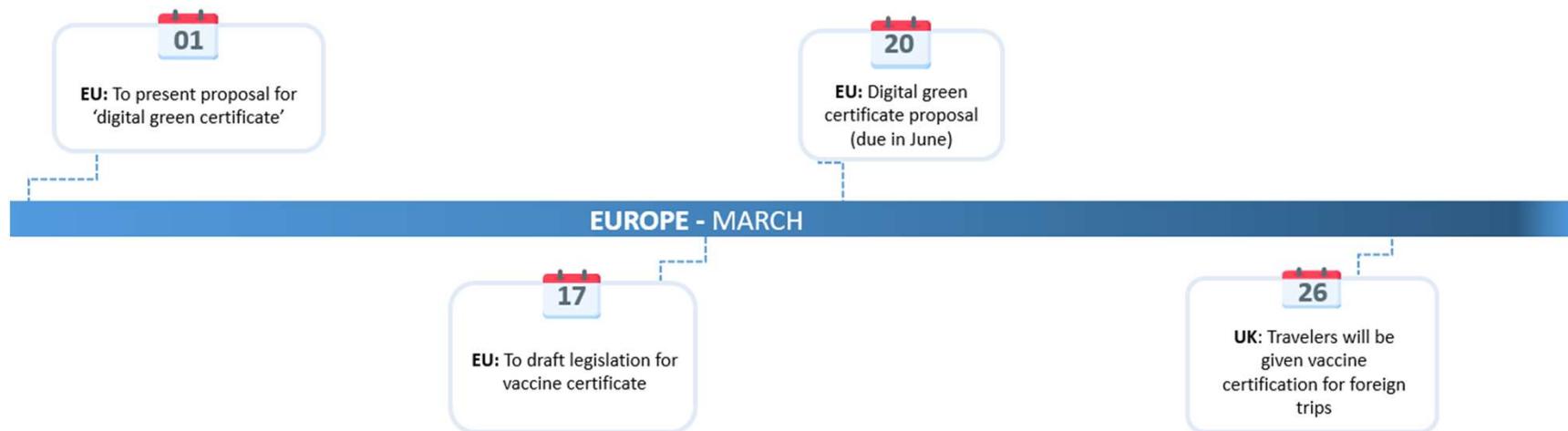
A timeline of events (March - June), summing up developments as they unfold in key regions of the world

June

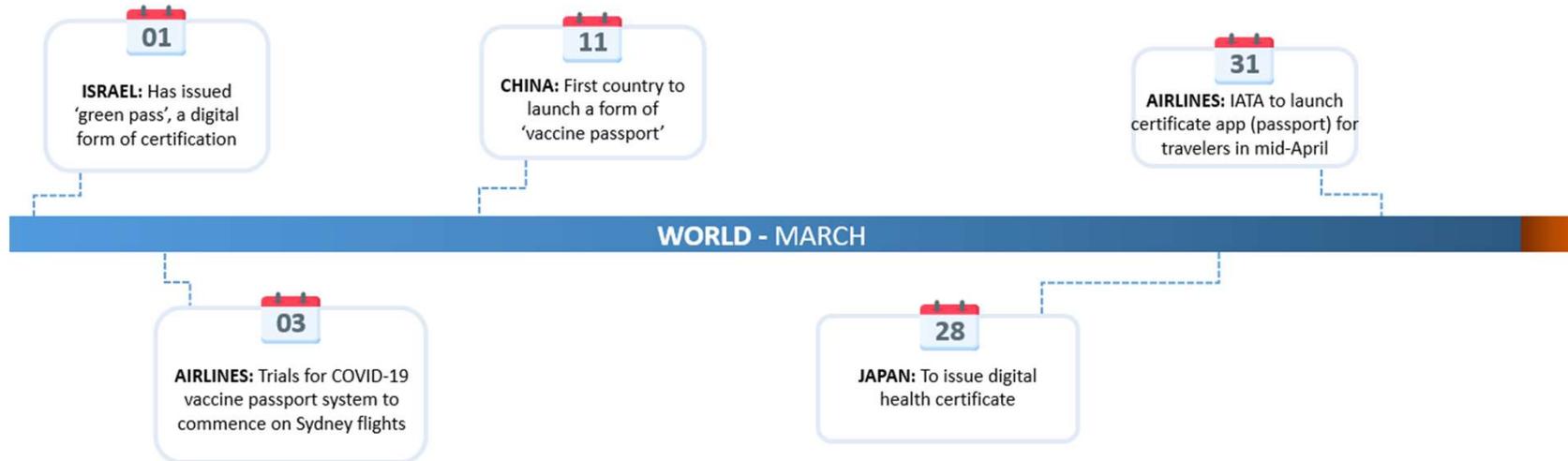
World

- Canada has yet to implement any form of vaccine passport but is looking into easing quarantine rules for vaccinated travelers.
- Australia's vaccine certificate programme will offer incentives to vaccinated citizens
- At the G7 Summit, health ministers agree on mutual recognition of vaccine passports
- Canada requires vaccination passport for entry.
- In the USA, Texas and Missouri are two more states which ban vaccine passports, while California is planning to introduce a vaccine-proof system, not to be called 'vaccine passport'.
- China will consider issuing a vaccine passport by the end of the year
- Japan considers issuing vaccine passports from July
- The international community is discussing the possibility of a COVID-19 vaccination certificate, similar to the [WHO's yellow card](#)

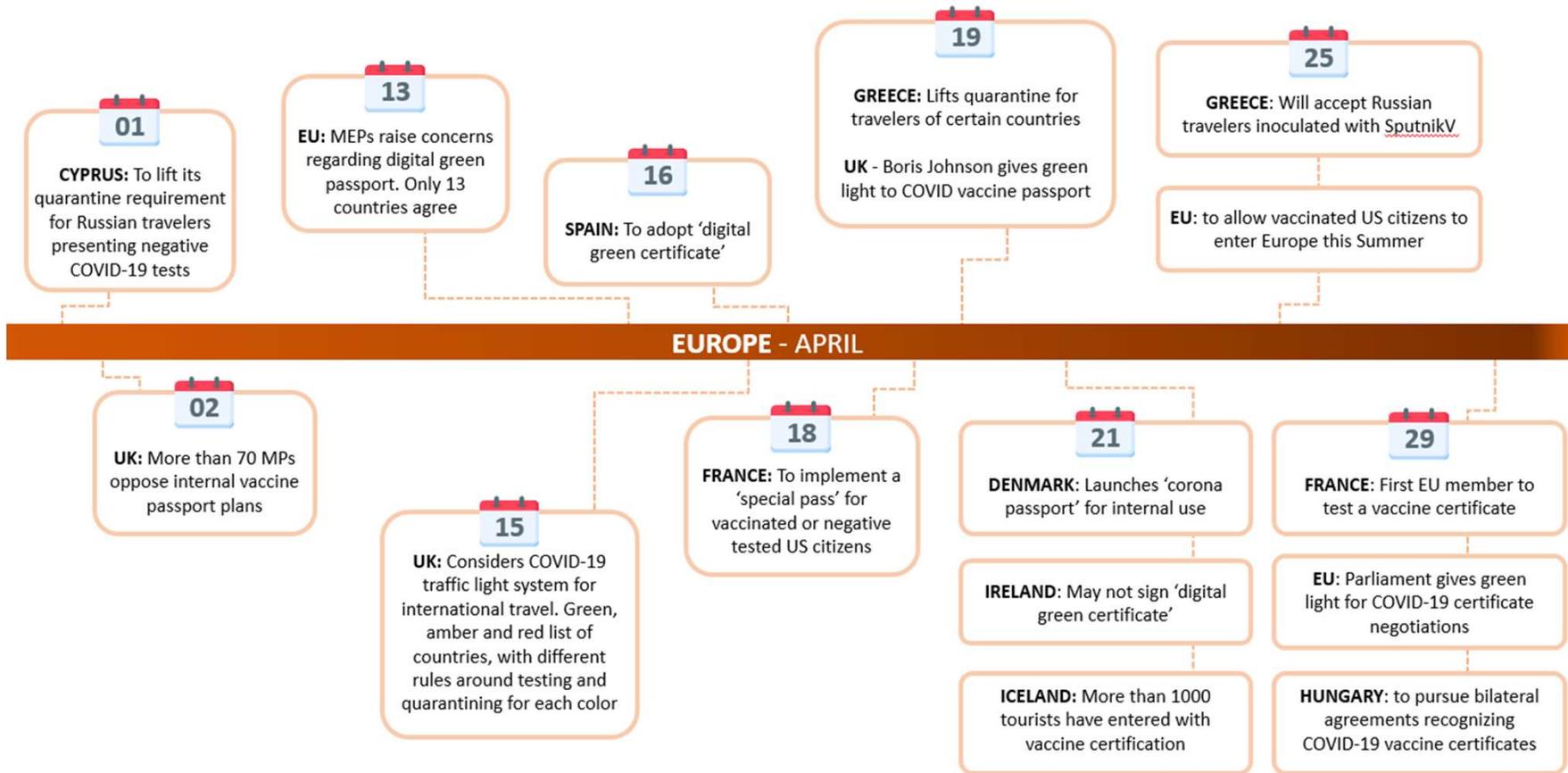
Timeline of developments: March / Europe



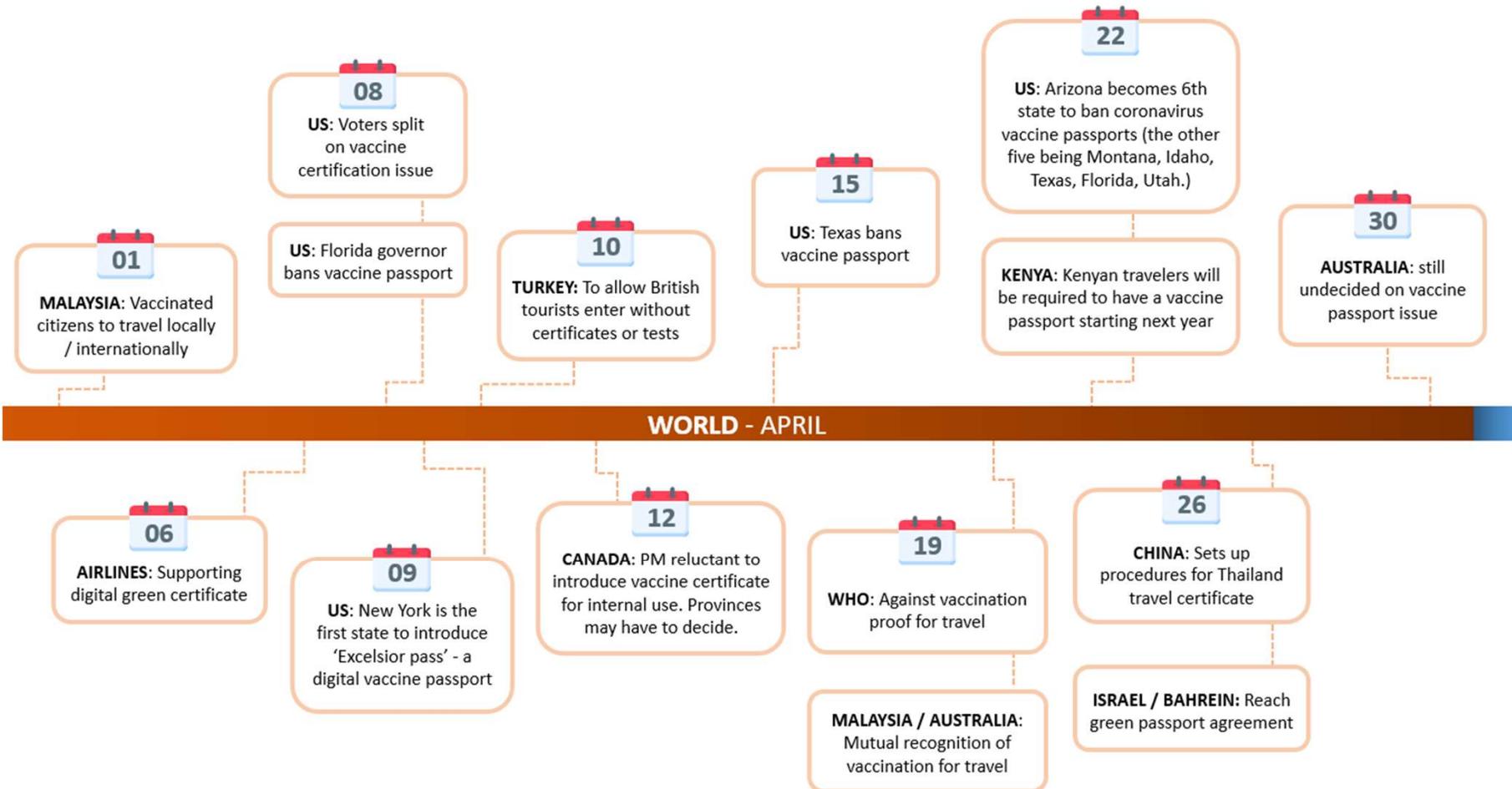
Timeline of developments: March / World



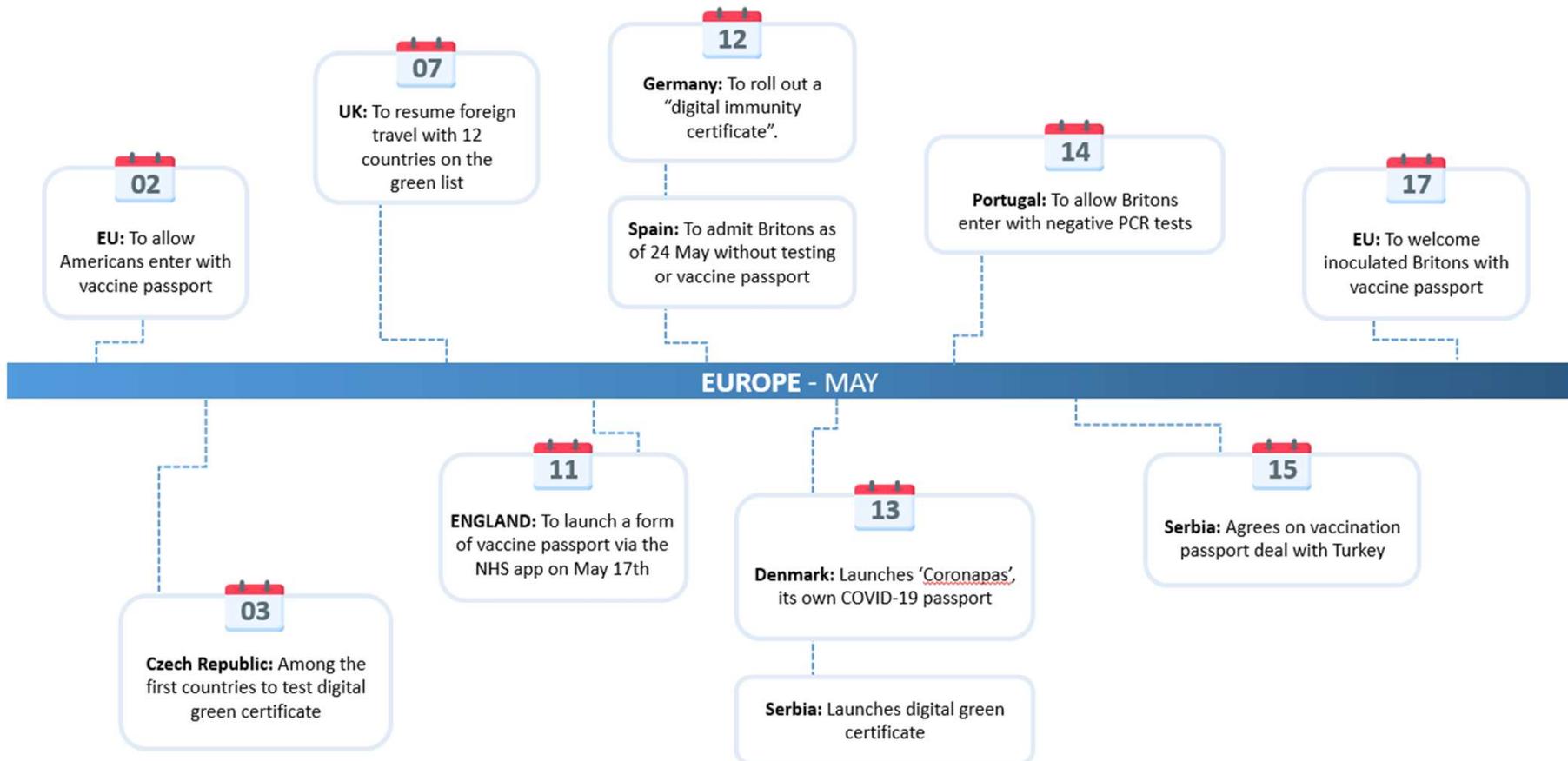
Timeline of developments: April / Europe



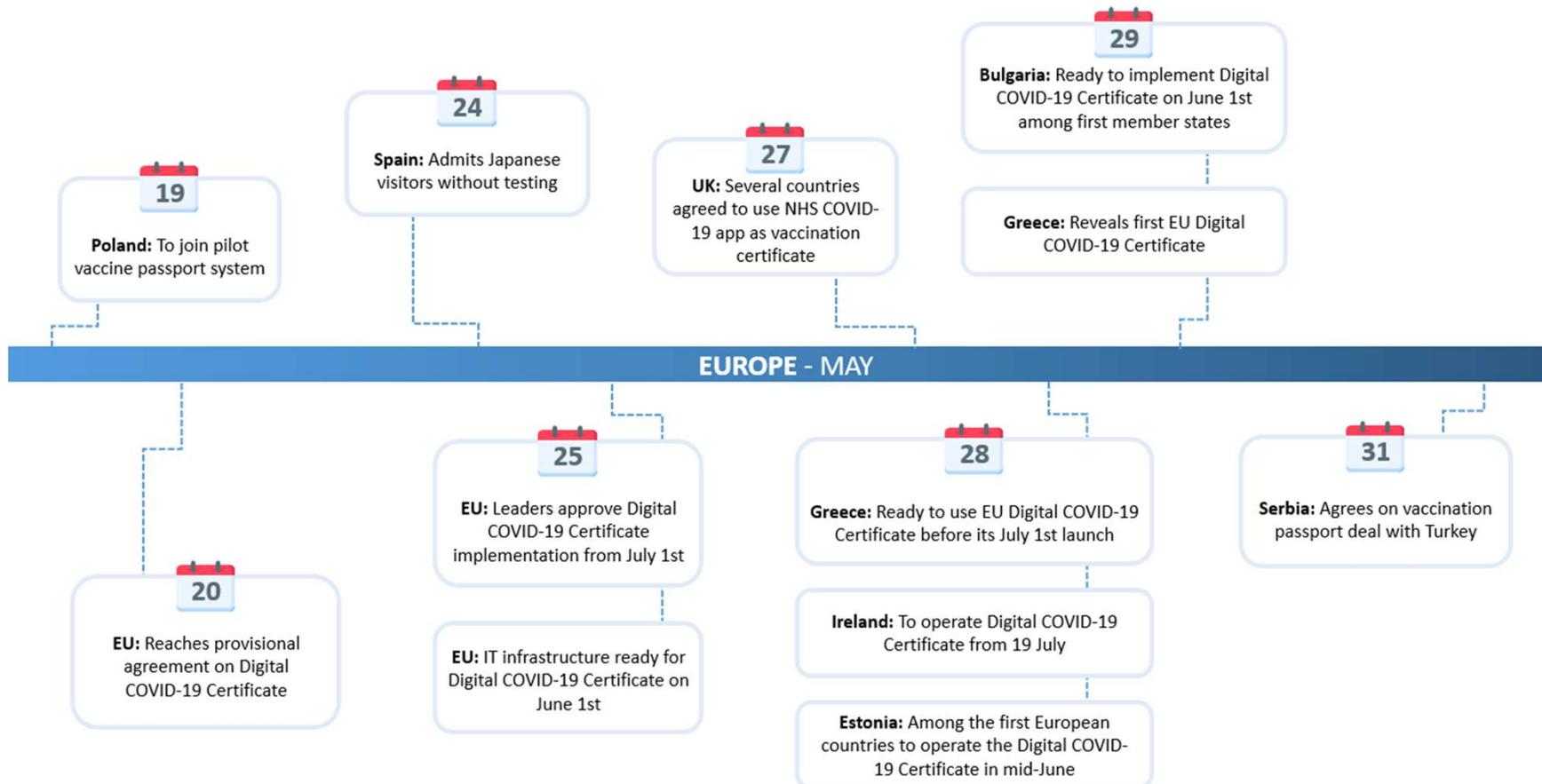
Timeline of developments: April / World



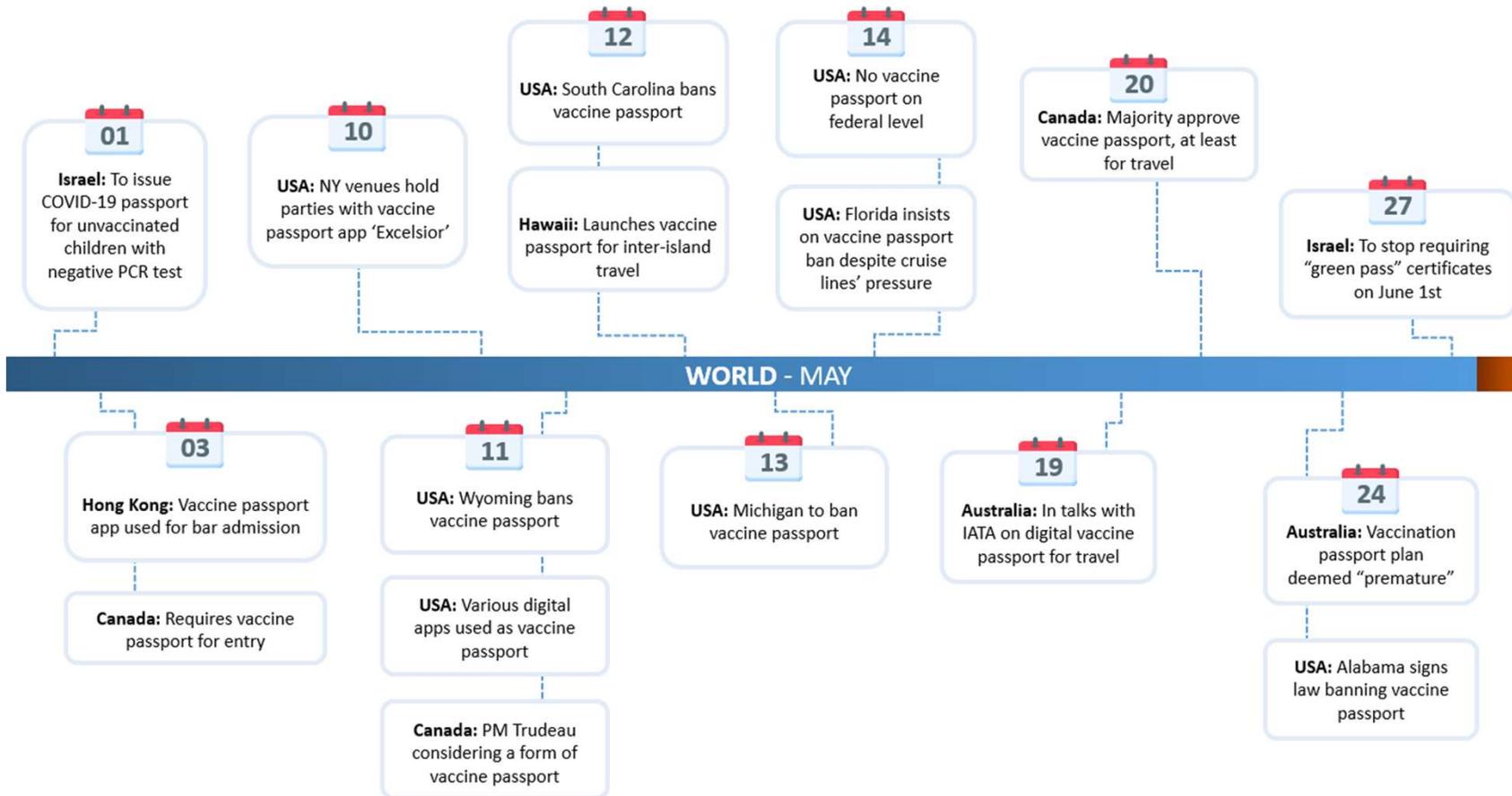
Timeline of developments: May / Europe -1



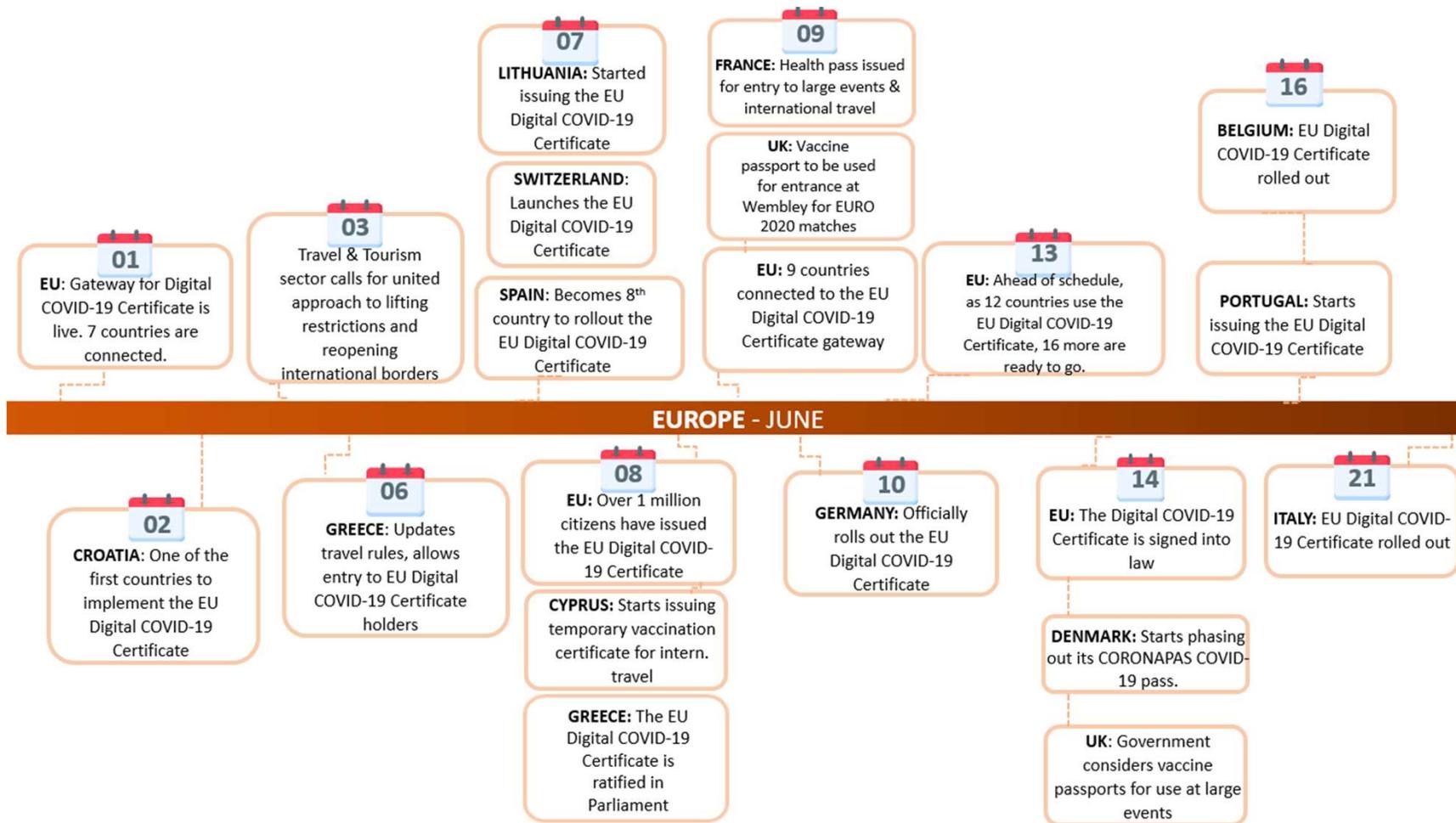
Timeline of developments: May / Europe -2



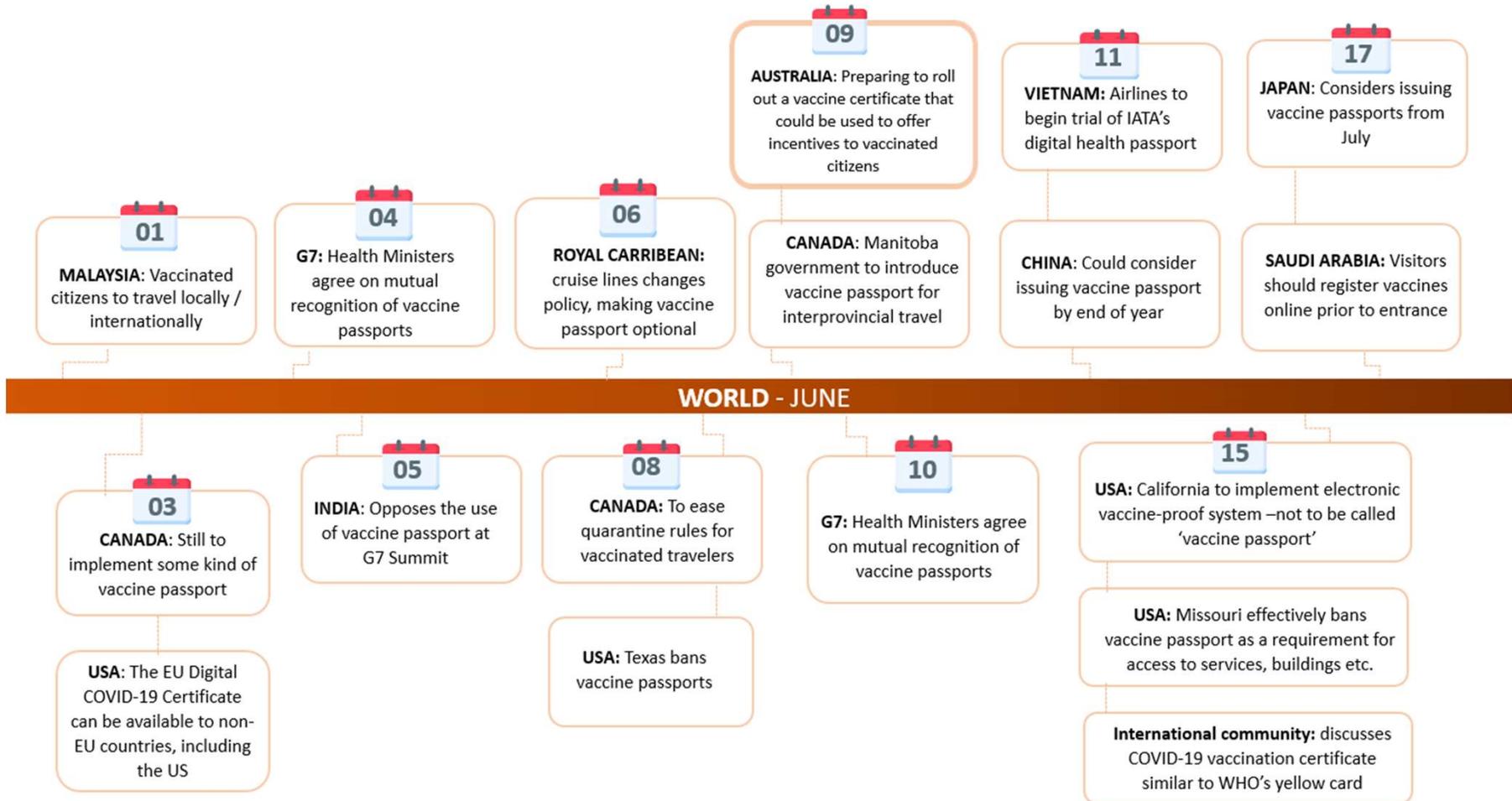
Timeline of developments: May / World



Timeline of developments: June / Europe



Timeline of developments: June / World



3. Content Analysis – March 2021

Most viral posts (negative) on Twitter

The debate on the adoption of some form of vaccination certificate for travel and –possibly- everyday use, started in the public sphere and this was reflected on social media as well.

- Despite the fact that an **Ipsos survey** for the World Economic Forum found **strong support** for vaccine passports (3/4 of people worldwide think it should be mandatory for travel and more than half say it should also apply to shops, restaurants or offices), the sentiment online seemed to be **predominantly negative**
- Viral tweets that we have selected as representative, strongly oppose the notion of a certificate as **illiberal and authoritarian**, against the **citizen's rights**, designed to impose **social control**
- People rejected what they perceive as **medical tyranny**
- **Conservatives** in the USA attribute this idea to the **Left**
- Others saw it as a **dystopian** measure which resembles the Orwellian world of **1984** or go as far as to claim that it resembles the **holocaust**
- The end of the pandemic should let the people **get their freedoms back** instead of giving them away

3. Content Analysis – March 2021

Most viral posts (positive) on Twitter

To **counter** those claims, others who felt that the adoption of a vaccination certificate would be a **welcome measure** allowing people to go on with their lives, to travel and work freely with minimal fuss and to socialize without limitations, presented different arguments, as follows:

- Getting **vaccinated to travel** is nothing new. On the contrary, several countries require **inoculation** to allow visitors to enter. They cite examples like the need to get a jab against **smallpox** to travel after World War II
- To those who put forward their **constitutional rights**, others respond that nobody's constitutional right allows them to spread a **deadly virus**
- The fact that so many people are **dead from the pandemic** should mean a lot more to those who oppose measures designed to bring back some **normality** into our lives
- Others suggest these people should agree to pay **more taxes** to cover for additional costs due to increased medical and hospital expenses
- Finally, the **holocaust analogy** is unacceptable; it is seen as an insult to the victims of the Nazi atrocities

3. Content Analysis – April 2021

Most viral posts (negative) on Twitter

The adoption of some form of **vaccination certificate** was met with considerable **criticism** online, particularly the possibility for its **domestic use**, seen by many as a major infringement of **citizens' rights**.

- A vaccine passport would create a **two-tier citizenship** system
- The true goal is **complete control**. This is the road to **totalitarianism**; people should resist, protecting their “bodily autonomy”
- Domestic vaccine passport is a profound **loss of human rights**, medical privacy and free movement
- Such a certificate, requiring testing and quarantine for the unvaccinated, is in **breach** of [Council of Europe's Resolution 2361](#)
- Vaccine passports, just like mask mandates, **discriminate against unvaccinated** people
- The new freedoms associated with the introduction of a vaccine passport resemble too much the old freedoms
- The vaccine passport will usher in a **Chinese-style digitalised social credit system**. With this, all freedoms will be gone
- Since the **vaccinated can contract and transmit** COVID-19, a vaccine passport makes no sense

3. Content Analysis – April 2021

Most viral posts (positive) on Twitter

People in favor of a **vaccine passport** maintained that a form of vaccination certification is actually not new and some even wonder why there is so much fuss about it:

- A vaccination passport is like a **regular** one, which no one has ever complained about
- Some would **gladly use a passport** of this form and urge others to do the same
- People have been using vaccination certificates for numerous **international trips** for over 30 years
- Vaccine certification is required to enroll **children in kindergarten**. These **immunisation records** are similar to vaccine passports
- The **Jewish analogy** is unacceptable: Jews wearing a yellow star were murdered, whereas those showing a vaccine passport will not be murdered
- Never compare things that prevent death to the **Holocaust**

Content Analysis - Fact-checkers' debunked claims

Some false claims debunked by fact checkers during **March and April** include the following:



- In a [post](#) circulating since February, COVID-19 is an abbreviated form of "Certificate of identification of vaccination with artificial intelligence." According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "In COVID-19, "CO" stands for "corona," "VI" for "virus," and "D" for disease." The 19 is the year it was discovered, 2019.
- Despite claims on Facebook, there has been no suggestion that **certificates will be mandatory** across all settings in the **UK**, although plans are under discussion.
- The claim that the **Biden administration** is working to launch a **COVID-19 passport** that "*Americans must have to engage in commerce*" is inaccurate, as the administration leaves the implementation of digital vaccine certificates to the private sector. It has not proposed requiring vaccination against COVID-19, nor has it advocated for a nationwide vaccine passport.
- Contrary to several claims that the **WHO requires a vaccine passport for international travel**, the World Health Organization has advised not to require COVID-19 vaccination for travel.

3. Content Analysis – May/June 2021

Most viral posts (negative) on Twitter

- Governments are taking mask mandates off as a means to **enforce the use of vaccine passports**
- Vaccine passports should be “**made illegal**”. Others claim they should be **banned**.
- Their use for **domestic venue** use is an **authoritarian** idea, creating **discrimination** and a **two-tier** society
- Allowing **mass events** for the vaccinated is a way to enforce vaccine passports.
- UK’s vaccine passport trial at **Wembley** for EURO 2020 matches is **discriminatory** and perhaps **unlawful**.
- Vaccine passports are just “**obedience documents**”.
- Vaccine certification is **costly**, **counterproductive** and **wrong**.
- What is the point for vaccine passports if the vaccinated can still be **infected**?
- The **US constitution** has no requirement for vaccine passports. Instead, it is a document that allows free movement.
- The so-called “**mad conspiracy theorists**” correctly predicted the use of **domestic vaccine passports** among other things.

3. Content Analysis – May/June 2021

Most viral posts (positive) on Twitter

- **Israel** is a good example. Having vaccinated the majority of its citizens, it is now in a position to **ease restrictions** and do away with vaccine passports.
- The EU Digital Covid-19 certificate will allow **EU citizens** to go on **holidays** anywhere in the EU.
- Fully vaccinated citizens should be allowed to go anywhere and a vaccine passport means they will not have to stay in **quarantine** whilst traveling abroad.
- People who once migrated to **Canada** were required to provide a **kind of vaccine passport** (“proof of vaccination”.) This was “minimally intrusive and very effective.”
- The **banning of vaccine passports in Florida** may be a good political move for its Governor but could have tragic consequences for **cruise ship passengers** and their staff.

Content Curation – Data/Sources



Time range of selected content: 1 March – 21 June



Out of the initial bulk, 231 results have been singled out



Sources: Twitter, Websites



Main keywords: Digital COVID certificate, vaccine passport, vaccination passport, vaccination card, digital health passport, travel certificate, health passport, green certificate