

IATA's Walsh comments on EU vaccine travel decision

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has expressed encouragement that the EU will grant unrestricted access to vaccinated travelers from the US, as stated by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission (EC).

“This is a step in the right direction. It gives hope to people for so many reasons ... To be fully prepared, it is imperative that the EC works with the industry so that airlines can plan within the public health benchmarks and timelines that will enable unconditional travel for those vaccinated, not just from the US but from all countries using vaccines that are approved by the European Medicines Association. Equally critical will be clear, simple and secure digital processes for vaccination certificates,” stated Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General.

He added: “The IATA Travel Pass can help industry and governments manage and verify vaccination status, as it does with testing certificates. But we are still awaiting the development of globally recognized standards for digital vaccine certificates. As a first step, it is vital that the EU accelerates adoption of the European Green Certificate. President von der Leyen’s comments should add urgency to this work.”

While IATA welcomes President von der Leyen’s comments, the association believes that a negative rapid antigen test should also be accepted by EU governments for those not able to have the vaccine.

“The freedom to travel must not be restricted to only those who have access to vaccinations., said Walsh. “Vaccines are not the only way to safely re-open borders. Government risk-models should also include COVID-19 testing.”