

*Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*



**VACCINE PASSPORT, CERTIFICATE AND GREEN  
PASS, WITHIN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:  
BIOETHICAL ASPECTS**

**Abstract**

**30 April 2021**

The Opinion analyses the bioethical issues of the 'health certification for non-medical use related to Covid-19 ('Covid-19 Pass') which includes the certificate certifying vaccination, the presence of antibodies and a negative swab test. This is a measure which aims to relax restrictions on freedom and at the same time contain the contagion in order to resume social, economic, cultural, religious and worship activities.

The Committee, acknowledging that this measure is being applied at a European and predictably national level and recognizing its importance in terms of 'risk management', introduces several bioethical reflections to outline certain critical issues and advantages.

In terms of critical issues, it highlights the non-equivalence between the three certifications in terms of protection against infection and duration of protection, as well as transmissibility. It also underlines the emerging discrimination between those who have had the opportunity to be vaccinated and those who, despite wanting to, have not been able to do so, as well as the problems relating to the cost of the serological test and swab test. The Committee draws attention to possible heterogeneity in the application of certification, the psychological risk of a false sense of security, the organizational problems and the risk that it will constitute the basis for broader measures, such as the biological passport or other forms of tracking or surveillance of the health conditions of the population.

The advantages are identifiable in a dutiful reward for those committed to responsible solidarity who have accepted vaccination and the risks and in incentivising vaccination uptake among those who are 'hesitant'. Furthermore, the certificate allows many subjects greater freedom of movement, in strict compliance with measures aimed at protecting public health.

The Committee recognizes the importance of the 'Covid-19 Pass' as a tool to mitigate discrimination in the current situation, in particular for those who have not been able to be vaccinated compared to those who have. It recommends provision of serological tests and swab tests free of charge, a full and comprehensible information campaign, which highlights the opportunities and limitations of the 'Covid-19 Pass', and a state regulation which ensures its homogeneity and coordination. In addition, the Committee points out the temporary nature of the measure and the non-acceptability of forms of permanent surveillance. The certificate must be a manageable tool, in digital and paper form, with measures which guarantee its authenticity. The instructions for use must be based on up-to-date scientific data and the protection of *privacy* ensured for particular health-related data.