



THE PRIME MINISTER

Athens, 24 November 2021

Dear President

*Dear Ursula,*

Many European countries are currently experiencing a resurgence of SARS-CoV-2 infections despite hitherto successful vaccination campaigns. This may be due to the greater infectiousness of the delta (B.1.617.2) variant of SARS-CoV-2, and to waning immunity of vaccines administered months earlier.

Although I acknowledge that there is currently a variance between member states in their third dose vaccination programs, I believe that time should not be wasted in order to protect the most vulnerable of our citizens, especially since the third dose has shown to be effective (>90%) at preventing severe COVID-19 related outcomes including death, but also protect against symptomatic infection and keep our citizens healthy and out of hospitals.

In the face of the current resurgence, many countries have introduced third dose vaccination programs either for all adults, like my country, or just for older adults as well as persons at high risk. Independently of this variance, however, scientific evidence suggests and we all agree that the third dose is strongly recommended for people of older age.

To this end, I am writing to propose that the third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine be considered as a condition of safe travel within the European Union for European citizens over 60 years old. This should be reflected in the European digital certificate, which proved to be a collective success that further enabled our safe return to travel from country to country. More specifically, it should be reflected in the delegated act concerning the validity period of the European digital certificate which the Commission is planning to adopt and in the Council Recommendations 1475/20 and 912/20 concerning travel in the EU.

***H.E. Ms. Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission***

Such a policy initiative will help our health systems to cope more efficiently with a heavy winter wave of hospitalisations but also to sustain control over the virus and pandemic without moving to new horizontal restrictions that would put in jeopardy the recovery of our economies and the freedom of movement.

In conclusion, I believe that mandating the third dose as part of the certification of vaccination for citizens over 60 would be an important step in our fight against the pandemic and I kindly ask you to consider and discuss this proposal with other member states.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the initials 'K.M.' followed by a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right and then curves downwards.

Kyriakos Mitsotakis