

Joint Statement - July 2021

EBAA & MBAA calling on the Maltese government to meet its commitments on the EU-wide system to facilitate free and safe travel within the EU

After 18 months of pandemic, business aviation operators, terminals (FBOs) and all partners and stakeholders of the business aviation value chain have implemented safety measures at every stage of the journey to ensure the health and wellbeing of passengers, workers and citizens in general. Our industry cooperated with EASA to define an effective and efficient EASA-ECDC COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol that all our stakeholders apply.

Freedom of movement is a core principle for European citizens and served as a basis for the political agreement between the European Parliament and the Member States on the Regulation governing the EU Digital COVID Certificate (Regulation (EU) 2021/953 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2021). Following the agreement, Member States shall refrain from imposing additional travel restrictions on the holders of an EU Digital COVID Certificate, unless they are necessary and proportionate to safeguard public health. The agreement has been formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council and the regulation entered into force on the 1st of July 2021.

Less than two weeks after the EU Digital COVID Certificate Regulation entered into use, the Maltese government issued the legislation LN301 of 2021 published on the 13th of July 2021, previously amended, on the requirement of the Covid Vaccine Certificate as a precondition of the exercise of the right of movement, with particular reference to the passengers traveling to and from Malta, when negative PCR tests are considered as valid by all the other Member States under the EU common framework for an EU certificate that establishes a common approach to issuing, verifying and accepting certificates to facilitate free movement within the European Union.

The initial plan of the Maltese government to close its borders to non-vaccinated citizens was abandoned and the government announced on the 13th of July 2021 that instead, arrivals would face an undisclosed period of quarantine. The compulsory self-isolation period for those arriving from countries certified as "red" is already 14 days which can be considered as a *de facto* unnecessary and disproportionate travel ban.

The European Business Aviation Association and the Malta Business Aviation Association have strong concerns about the negative impacts this new legislation has on the business aviation sector, the aviation sector at large, the Maltese economy, and the reputation of Malta as reliable partner amongst its European partners. This regulation is already having a negative impact on business aviation's daily operations and will eventually result in a significant loss of jobs and revenues for Malta.

We urge the Maltese government to reconsider its disproportionate and unnecessary decision and comply with European guidelines and rules that were designed and agreed on by all European Member States so Europeans can benefit from a clear, understandable and standardized framework to restore free movement after a year and a half of uncertainty.

The MBAA is available to urgently meet the Maltese Authorities involved, providing them its support and expertise in aviation transport, in the joint effort to find alternative solutions safeguarding the health and the rights of Maltese and European citizens.

About EBAA

The European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) is the leading organisation for operators of business aircraft in Europe. Our mission is to enable responsible, sustainable growth for business aviation, enhance connectivity and create opportunities. EBAA works to improve safety standards and share knowledge, to further positive regulation and to ease all aspects of closely tailored, flexible, point to point air transportation for individuals, governments, businesses, and local communities in the most time-efficient way possible. Founded in 1977 and based in Brussels, EBAA represents +700 members companies, corporate operators, commercial operators, manufacturers, airports, fixed-based operators, and more, with a total fleet of +1,000 aircraft.

About MBAA

The Malta Business Aviation Association (MBAA) is the leading organisation for business aircraft operators and companies of the business aviation value chain in Malta. Our 28 Members enable businesses and professionals to have more efficient and productive business travel.

The organisation founded in 2009 aims to promote excellence and professionalism amongst its Members to enable them to deliver best-in-class safety and operational efficiency, whilst representing their interests at all levels in Malta and consequently Europe. The MBAA will strive to ensure recognition of business aviation as a vital part of the aviation infrastructure and the Maltese economy.

Let's work together

We look forward to supporting Maltese authorities to draft inclusive policies taking into account the specificities of the Business aviation operations.

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| MBAA | Filippo Maria Arcaleni | board@mbaa.org.mt | +356 99563244 |
| EBAA | David Grivet | dgrivet@ebaa.org , | +32 2 318 28 11 |

For more information, please visit MBAA.org and EBAA.org