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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council
Subject: **Any other business**
Update on the ePLF project
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Commission on the above-mentioned subject for consideration under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 3 June 2021.

Passenger Locator Forms

- Information from the Commission

While reopening the European Union for travel, contact tracing is and will remain a central element in the fight against COVID-19 in the near future. Passenger Locator Forms (PLFs) play a key role to ensure effective contact tracing, especially in connection with the emergence of new variants. An efficient PLF system can facilitate a safe resumption of travel activity in the EU, together with other European initiatives such as the Digital Green Certificate and contact tracing apps.

Today, 19 Member States have national PLF systems, but there is no suitable mechanism for the timely exchange of data on infected passengers across Member States. That is why, at the end of last year, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) together with the European Commission set up a PLF exchange platform, which has been successfully tested on a pilot basis with Spain, Italy and Slovakia.

A Commission implementing decision to enable a legally viable and secure exchange of personal data for the purpose of contact tracing of cross-border passengers, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), is expected to enter into force on 1 June. The European Centre for Disease Prevention (ECDC) will operate the exchange platform and serve as the data processor, taking over from EASA. With the Implementing Act in force, Member States will be able to use the PLF exchange platform for the exchange of passenger data, replacing the need for cumbersome bilateral agreements with each other.

The PLF exchange platform will enable the rapid exchange between Member States of certain data related to a passenger that has been tested positive to the Covid-19 in order to ensure effective cross-border contact tracing in all transport modes. The swift transfer of relevant information will avoid delays in data sharing and will close loopholes in contact tracing, especially regarding transit passengers who only share one leg of their journey with an infected person. While Member States maintain their national PLF systems, the PLF exchange platform will connect them to each other without storing of any personal data, which will remain in national repositories.

The PLF exchange platform is ready to be used in time for the summer traveling season (i.e. 21 June). Joining this initiative is voluntary. Yet, all Member States are strongly encouraged to join the PLF exchange platform as soon as possible as its value depends on, and grows with Member States' participation.

Two options are available to join the platform. Member States that do not have a (compliant) national PLF system can adopt the EU digital Passenger Locator Form (dPLF) solution developed by the EU Healthy Gateways, which is fully compatible with the PLF exchange platform. Member States that have a national PLF system can join directly. Discussions are currently ongoing with several interested Member States that are interested in joining the PLF exchange platform and the Commission stands ready to accompany them in this process. For any questions, Member States are invited to contact the Commission via EC-EPLF-PROJECT@ec.europa.eu.
