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Switzerland

# When health is reduced to an individual choice

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**After a gradual relaxation of health measures in parallel with a national vaccination campaign, the Federal Council brought the Covid Certificate into force on 13 September. This certificate, attesting to the vaccination status or a recent negative test, is now compulsory for access to leisure activities, but also for training and work if the employer considers it necessary.**

Voices are beginning to be raised against this certificate. A demonstration was held in Lausanne on 22 September. Starting with student groups, it brought together activists from more or less institutionalised extreme right-wing groups - in particular young people from the hard wing of the UDC -, anti-vax activists, but also individuals critical of certain bans. Note the absence of traditional student associations, trade unions or majority political parties, as these actors either did not take a position or welcomed the Covid Certificate. On 1 October in Geneva, a day of mobilisation was organised, this time on the initiative of actors from the alternative cultural milieu. They pointed out the pitfalls of generalised digital surveillance and defended a firm position against the extreme right.

In this context, it is necessary to avoid the sterile categorisation between those who are vaccinated, necessarily in favour of the Certificate, and those who are irresponsible, ill-informed or conspiratorial. In the perspective of a collective health policy based on solidarity, it is important that the left-wing movements make their positions heard, which have so far been terribly absent from the public debate.

According to the Federal Council, all that is needed for the pandemic to be defeated is for individuals to decide to be vaccinated. However, while vaccination remains the best short-term means of combating the pandemic, it is not accessible to everyone. This is particularly true for people whose access to health care is already poor or for whom economic constraints make it difficult to free up time to go to a centre. With the introduction of the Covid Certificate, these people suffer a double penalty by risking contracting a serious form of the disease and being excluded from places of leisure, socialisation and training.

In our view, it is not the responsibility of individuals but of the Confederation to implement an effective vaccination strategy, taking into account the specificities and needs of the different populations living in Switzerland. But also by reinforcing the means of the public hospital to face this crisis and those to come. Moreover, there is still no lifting of patents, while the countries of the global South have access to less than 2% of the vaccines produced. It is difficult to imagine stopping the spread of the virus if three quarters of the world is deprived of vaccine doses.

The Covid Certificate embodies a conception of health not as a collective good but as an individual and national capital. With such a rut, it will remain impossible to see an end to the health crisis for all.

*10 October 2021*

Source: [SolidaritéS](#).

PS:

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