

The EU roadmap to the digital vaccination card

[May 9, 2020 | Following protests, German Health Minister Jens Spahn has withdrawn his unusually forward-looking plans to introduce a digital immunity card. What he did not say neither when presenting his plans nor when he withdrew: the electronic vaccination card is a project at EU level that will be pursued further.](#)

Like other European health ministers, Spahn has blatantly failed at the beginning of this epidemic and, by doing nothing, violated all the government's self-imposed guidelines, as documented in a Protest note from the medical association IG Med e. V. to the Minister of the Chancellor's Office. In doing so, he has made the extremely expensive lockdown longer and more drastic than necessary.

It is all the more striking how much foresight he had in creating the legal prerequisites for an electronic immunity card even before a vaccination against the virus is foreseeable. Given his usual pace of work, one might suspect that something already planned under the heading of corona should simply be accelerated.

Probably this suspicion would be correct. After all, the digitalization of our health data and treatment - in disregard of all the dangers that this entails for us - is not just one of this minister's main areas of work. The electronic vaccination card is also an EU project for which there is a [detailed roadmap](#).

If Spahn has stopped his plans for the time being after protests, the emphasis is not on stopped, but clearly on "for the time being". "The question of whether an additional immunity card would make sense in the case of Corona should be weighed up and debated calmly by us as a society", the minister tweeted on Monday evening. He therefore asked the German Ethics Council for an opinion. "We do not want to anticipate this ongoing debate and we are not regulating anything by law for the time being", said Spahn.

For reasons other than Corona and not "for the time being", however, the digital immunity card is to be introduced; this was already decided before Corona. The EU roadmap provides for the introduction of the European harmonized digital vaccination card.

What could go wrong?

The Federal Commissioner for Data Protection, Ulrich Kelber, pointed out in his statement on Spahn's plans that immunity documentation could lead to "misuse". He expressed concern "that this information could lead to discrimination against the persons concerned, for example, if they were unable to prove immunity". It would be truly disastrous if a distinction between immune and non-immune persons were to become the "dangerous road to a trap of discrimination and dissociation", as the Hamburg-based data protection expert Johannes Caspar put it. In an open society this would be unacceptable.

The fact that this is considered acceptable by the authorities, has been demonstrated by the measles compulsory vaccination. Not that I would have anything against measles vaccination. I am vaccinated, my children are also vaccinated. But we have to be clear about the intensity of intervention created by compulsory vaccination. The law prohibits children from going to kindergarten if they are not vaccinated and threatens parents with a EUR 2,500 fine if their children are not vaccinated when they start school. What does the state do with the few parents who consider the vaccination dangerous and refuse? Do they have to keep paying 2,500 Euros until they go bankrupt or the children are vaccinated? Are the parents threatened with withdrawal of custody?

Perhaps that would be acceptable if there were a threat to public health. As such, the issue of preparing for compulsory vaccination against measles was presented. We have been warned in social and other media about

a large number of irresponsible vaccination bums who are to blame for measles becoming a real problem again. With the result and the reasoning according to broadcaster WDR:

Starting next year, children must be vaccinated against measles - and everyone who works in kindergartens, schools, hospitals and other public community facilities. This was decided by the Bundestag to curb the rising number of measles cases. In 2018, in Europe alone, more people were infected with measles than in ten years.

Aha, the drastic law was necessary to curb the increasing number of measles cases. Sounds reasonable. Let's look at the figures from the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). According to them, the number of measles cases in Germany was 514 in 2019, the fourth lowest figure in the last 19 years. In 2018, the number had been little higher, but also comparatively low. That is six cases per million inhabitants, most of them among children, where the course of the disease is generally much easier than among adults. The number of cases was therefore declining and low. The fear campaign was based on misinformation.

Or maybe not. After all, the quoted article refers to measles cases in Europe. Because it was difficult to argue with the German figures - and they were therefore not mentioned - the fleetingly reading public was deceived with a vague reference to European numbers. Sounds dramatic, this "alone in Europe", but what does it mean? With regard to measles in Europe, I found the following information from the WHO (referring to the first half of 2019): "According to this information, the increase in measles cases has been particularly strong in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Russia." These countries accounted for 78 percent of all measles cases in the first half of the year." It is doubtful whether measles cases in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Kazakhstan justify a general compulsory vaccination in Germany.

The road to the digital EU immunity card

The first and probably most important point on the EU Commission's roadmap is the vaccination card for all EU citizens, "which is compatible with electronic immunity information systems and is recognized for cross-border use". The feasibility of this is to be investigated by 2021, and the EU Commission is expected to present a concrete proposal in 2022. This will be supplemented by EU guidelines for the development of comprehensive electronic vaccination information systems. According to the Commission's [handbook](#), these systems are to record for all citizens who received which vaccination and when.

From these central or networked databases, doctors and patients should be able to find out the individual vaccination requirements at any time, and the health authorities should also receive comprehensive and reliable data on the vaccination status of the population and subgroups. They should then be able to link this data with other electronic health data, for example, to propagate the health benefits of vaccination and to determine the disadvantages.

There is more at stake here than vaccination, Another entry in the roadmap makes it clear that that vaccination is only a convenient start to the general digitization of healthcare. The entry refers to a Commission report that propagates the digital transformation of healthcare in the "Digital Single Market", which is intended to "empower" citizens. Too bad, that the majority of citizens do not want this. But business takes precedence over the will of the citizens in the Single Market.

In September, as part of its roadmap, the Commission held a [Global Vaccination Summit](#), with three roundtables that highlighted the balanced, self-critical illumination of the issue. They were entitled "In Vaccines We Trust", "The Magic of Science" and "Vaccines Protecting Everyone, Everywhere".

Money and more

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The first, strongly US-dominated roundtable included Jason Hirsch. He is responsible for Facebook's "multi-faceted approach to fighting misinformation about vaccines." I'm sure he has a lot of work to do if "vaccines help everyone everywhere" is the norm for what's right. At the latter roundtable, the pharmaceutical industry and the Gates Foundation and the vaccination alliances and WHO that are their grantees were allowed to praise each other.

Conclusion

Because vaccinations are very important and helpful from a health policy point of view and depend on the trust of the population, the advantages have to be emphasized and disadvantages and accidents have to be swept under the carpet. Criticism and mistrust must be combated, and if necessary guided media campaigns full of half-truths and legal vaccination requirements must be used to help the effort. We are supposed to trust the coalitions of group-funded WHO, pharmaceutical companies and group-funded foundations that they will do the right thing without regard to their profit-motive, even without an open public debate about the advantages and disadvantages and costs of individual vaccinations.

We are also supposed to believe that the almost manically pursued digitalization of health care has nothing to do with the interests of Microsoft and the closely associated Gates Foundation, which is pulling the strings almost everywhere as a financier in the international health and vaccination sector.

If we don't, we are notorious anti-vaccination activists and conspiracy theorists, which Facebook, Google and fact checkers like CORRECTIV will take care of.

Marco Köhler has translated this blogpost with support from www.DeepL.com. Thank you Marco and DeepL.