



## **19<sup>TH</sup> eHEALTH NETWORK 3 JUNE 2021, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

### **COVER NOTE**

## **2.2 Contact tracing apps and the European Federation Gateway Service (EFGS)**

### **1. Issue at stake**

Contact tracing and warning applications (apps) have been rolled out across the EU to complement manual tracing and subsequently help reduce the spread of the COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the eHealth Network and the Commission have been working to ensure the cross-border interoperability of such applications. The European Federation Gateway Service (EFGS) connects the backends of 17 national contact tracing and warning apps, and additional Member States are working to connect to the system.

### **2. Summary**

Since COVID-19 does not stop at borders, the Commission and Member States have worked during the past year on the successful rollout of interoperable contact tracing and warning apps, as a complementary tool to manual contact tracing.

In April 2020, Member States in the eHealth Network, supported by the Commission, adopted an EU toolbox on contact tracing apps in the EU's fight against COVID-19. This toolbox set out the foundations of a common pan-European approach to contact tracing and warning apps. The eHealth Network adopted the interoperability guidelines in May 2020, detailing the interoperability needs at different stages of the digital contact tracing flow.

Building on this work, the eHealth Network adopted in June 2020 the interoperability specifications, which set out the architecture for a European Federation Gateway Service (EFGS). The modalities for processing personal data in the EFGS were adopted in July 2020 with the amendment of the Implementing Decision on the eHealth Network. The development and deployment of the EFGS was completed by the end of September 2020. The EFGS is in operation since October 2020 and connects 17 national contact tracing and warning apps<sup>1</sup>. This means that citizens traveling across the countries that have joined the EFGS only need to install one app.

There are currently three additional Member States (PT, LT and EE) working to join the EFGS in the short term. One additional Member State (EL) has shown interest to join the EFGS upon the rollout of their app. Two other Member States (FR and HU) have deployed apps that are not interoperable with the EFGS.

---

<sup>1</sup> DE, IT, IE, LV, HR, DK, ES, NL, PL, BE, FI, AT, NO, SI, CY, CZ and MT.

The eHealth Network monitors, on a regular basis, the traffic of keys through the EFGS, which has also been made available through the EU's Open Data Portal. The technical working group continues to discuss the further development and enhancement of the national apps to ensure their relevance and uptake.

The rollout of these apps and of the EFGS has been achieved in a record time, and is an excellent example of European cooperation in the area of digital health. However, it is important to analyse the effectiveness of these apps in the fight against COVID-19, and to draw the lessons learned to ensure better preparedness for future health crises.

### **3. Format of procedure in the meeting**

For information.

The Member States will be invited to provide their input, to share lessons learned and to identify possible follow-up actions from the eHealth Network that may lead to a better preparedness for future crises.