



Coronavirus: EU interoperability gateway goes live, first contact tracing and warning apps linked to the system

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To exploit the full potential of contact tracing and warning apps to break the chain of coronavirus infections across borders and save lives, the Commission, at the invitation by EU Member States, has set up an EU-wide system to ensure interoperability – a so-called 'gateway'. After a successful [pilot phase](#), the system goes live today with the first wave of national apps now linked through this service: Germany's Corona-Warn-App, Ireland's COVID tracker, and Italy's immuni. Together, these apps have been downloaded by around 30 million people, which corresponds to two-thirds of all app downloads in the EU.

Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for Single Market, said: *"Many Member States have launched voluntary contact tracing and warning apps, and the Commission has supported them in make these apps safely interact with each other. Free movement is an integral part of the Single Market – the gateway is facilitating this while helping save lives."*

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, added: *"Coronavirus tracing and warning apps can effectively complement other measures like increased testing and manual contact tracing. With cases on the rise again, they can play an important role to help us break the transmission chains. When working across borders these apps are even more powerful tools. Our gateway system going live today is an important step in our work, and I would call on citizens to make use of such apps, to help protecting each other."*

Jens **Spahn**, Germany's Federal Minister of Health, said: *"Everywhere in Europe, infections are on the rise again. Right now, national warning apps are making a real difference. Because every infection chain that, thanks to an app, is broken more quickly helps to contain the pandemic. With the new gateway service, we are connecting apps across Europe. Like this, contacts can also be warned during or following a trip abroad."*

In the fight against coronavirus, most Member States have decided to launch a contact tracing and warning app. In total, 20 apps which are based on decentralised systems can be interoperable through the gateway service. They can be linked to the gateway after following a protocol that foresees several tests and checks, and an update has to be issued for each app. The second group of apps will be linked next week. Then, Czechia's eRouška, Denmark's smitte stop, Latvia's Apturi COVID and Spain's Radar Covid are expected to join, while further apps will be linked to the system in November. The overview of participating Member States is available on a dedicated [webpage](#).

The gateway ensures that apps work seamlessly cross-borders. Thus, users will only need to install one app and when they travel to another participating European country they will still benefit from contact tracing and receiving alerts, be it in their home country or abroad. The gateway server keeps the amount of data exchanged to a minimum. It will efficiently receive and pass on arbitrary

identifiers between national apps. No other information than arbitrary keys, generated by the apps, will be handled by the gateway: the information is pseudonymised, encrypted, kept to the minimum, and only stored as long as necessary to trace back infections. It does not allow the identification of individual persons, nor to track location or movement of devices.

The setup of the gateway follows the agreement by Member States on [technical specifications](#) to ensure a safe exchange of information between the backend servers of national contact tracing and warning apps based on a decentralised architecture. The system was developed and set up in less than two months by T-Systems and SAP, and will be operated from the Commission's data centre in Luxembourg.

Background

Contact tracing apps, if fully compliant with EU rules and well-coordinated, can play a key role in all phases of crisis management. They can complement existing manual contact tracing and help interrupt the transmission chain of the virus. Thereby, they can contribute to saving lives.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, Member States, backed by the Commission, have been assessing the effectiveness, security, privacy, and data protection aspects of digital solutions to address the crisis. They have developed an [EU toolbox](#) for contact tracing and warning apps, which was accompanied by [guidance on data protection](#). This was part of a common coordinated approach to support the gradual lifting of confinement measures, as [set out in a Commission Recommendation](#). To ensure tracing and warning apps work cross-border, Member States, with the support of the Commission agreed on [interoperability guidelines](#) in May, on a [set of technical specifications](#) in June, and the Commission adopted an [Implementing Decision](#) to provide a legal basis for the gateway service. In September, the system was tested in a [pilot phase](#).

For more information

[Coronavirus: EU interoperability gateway for contact tracing and warning apps – Questions and Answers](#)

[Dedicated webpage on the EU interoperability gateway service](#)

[Video clip](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[Infographic](#)

[eHealth Network documents](#)

[Guidance to ensure full data protection standards of apps fighting the pandemic](#)

[ECDC guidance on mobile applications in support of contact tracing for COVID-19](#)

[Commission Recommendation on a common Union toolbox for the use of technology and data to combat and exit from the COVID-19 crisis](#)

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Press contacts:

[Johannes BAHRKE](#) (+32 2 295 86 15)

[Charles MANOURY](#) (+32 2 291 33 91)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

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