

Public Health

Member States presented interoperability guidelines for approved contact tracing apps in the EU

The EU Member States, with the support of the European Commission, adopted [interoperability guidelines for approved contact tracing mobile applications in the EU](#). This is the first follow-up action envisaged by the [Union toolbox for the use of mobile apps](#) to support contact tracing in response to the coronavirus pandemic presented on 16 April 2020.

Most Member States have launched or are planning to launch an approved mobile contact tracing app necessary for their national COVID-19 crisis management strategy. A key principle of the guidelines is that users should be able to rely on a single app wherever they are in the EU at a certain moment. The idea is to prevent the possibility for the identification of app users, whether infected, exposed or otherwise, unless the individuals in question have voluntarily provided that information or want to contact the health authority.

Whatever the approach taken with approved apps, all Member States and the Commission consider that interoperability between these apps and between backend systems is essential for these tools to enable the tracing of cross-border infection chains. Ultimately, this effort will support the gradual lifting of border controls within the EU and the restoration of the freedom of movement.

Contact tracing apps are voluntarily installed by citizens and are based on Bluetooth proximity technology that does not enable tracking of people's locations. These apps alert people who have been in proximity to an infected person for a certain duration, in order to self-isolate and to get tested. This way they help to interrupt the transmission chain. The longer the contact and the closer the infected person, the higher the risk of infection. App users' privacy and data will be safeguarded.

Next steps:

The guidelines will be complemented by interoperability specifications for cross-border transmission chains between approved apps. This will be supported by structured discussions between Member States through the eHealth Network. The work of Member States to develop and validate the apps will be supported by the New Generation Internet and m-health communities.

For more information:

- [Interoperability guidelines for approved contact tracing mobile applications in the EU](#)
- [Q&A - Coronavirus: a common approach for safe and efficient mobile tracing apps across the EU](#)
- [Infograph](#)

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