



Coronavirus: Commission adopts Recommendation to support exit strategies through mobile data and apps

Brussels, 8 April 2020

Today, the Commission recommends steps and measures to develop a common EU approach for the use of mobile applications and mobile data in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Digital tools can play an important role in the gradual lifting of containment measure, when the time will be ripe for that, if they are compliant with EU rules and well coordinated. The [Recommendation](#) sets out a process towards the adoption with the Member States of a toolbox, focusing on two dimensions:

- a pan-European coordinated approach for the use of mobile applications for empowering citizens to take effective and more targeted social distancing measures and for warning, preventing and contact tracing; and
- a common approach for modelling and predicting the evolution of the virus through anonymised and aggregated mobile location data.

The Recommendation sets out key principles for the use of these apps and data as regards data security and the respect of EU fundamental rights such as privacy and data protection.

Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton** said: *"Digital technologies, mobile applications and mobility data have enormous potential to help understand how the virus spreads and to respond effectively. With this Recommendation, we put in motion a European coordinated approach for the use of such apps and data, without compromising on our EU privacy and data protection rules, and avoiding the fragmentation of the internal market. Europe is stronger when it acts united."*

Commissioner for Justice, Didier **Reynders**, added: *"We all must work together now to get through this unprecedented crisis. The Commission is supporting the Member States in their efforts to fight the virus and we will continue to do so when it comes to an exit strategy and to recovery. In all this, we will continue to ensure full respect of Europeans' fundamental rights. Europe's data protection rules are the strongest in the world and they are fit also for this crisis, providing for exceptions and flexibility. We work closely with data protection authorities and will come forward with guidance on the privacy implications soon."*

A common coordinated approach for the use of tracing apps

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Commission has strongly supported Member States in their efforts to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus. Commission services have been looking into the effectiveness of apps solutions to address the crisis as well as their impact on data protection. Centrepiece of today's Recommendation is the proposal for a joint toolbox towards a common coordinated approach for the use of smartphone apps that fully respect EU data protection standards. It will consist of:

- **specifications** to ensure the **effectiveness of mobile information**, warning and tracing applications from a medical and technical point of view;
- measures to **avoid proliferation of incompatible applications**, support requirements for interoperability and promotion of common solutions;
- **governance mechanisms to be applied by public health authorities** and in cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Control;
- the **identification of good practices and mechanisms** for exchange of information on the functioning of the applications; and
- **sharing data with relevant epidemiological public bodies**, including aggregated data to ECDC.

To support Member States, the Commission will provide guidance including on data protection and privacy implications. The Commission is in close contact with the European Data Protection Board for an overview of the processing of personal data at national level in the context of the coronavirus crisis.

A common approach for predicting and modelling the spread

The toolbox will also focus on developing a common approach for modelling and predicting the

evolution of the virus through **anonymous and aggregated mobile location data**. The aim is to analyse mobility patterns including the impact of confinement measures on the intensity of contacts, and hence the risks of contamination. This will be an important and proportionate input for tools modelling the spread of the virus, and provide insights for the development of strategies for opening up societies again.

The Commission already started the [discussion with mobile phone operators](#) on 23 March 2020 with the aim to cover all Member States. The data will be fully anonymised and transmitted to the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for processing and modelling. It will not be shared with third parties and only be stored as long as the crisis is ongoing.

Next steps

Member States, together with the Commission, shall develop a toolbox towards a pan-European approach for mobile applications in association with the European Data Protection Board by 15 April 2020. To support Member States, the Commission will provide guidance including on data protection and privacy implications. Member States should report on the actions they have taken by 31 May 2020, and make the measures accessible to other Member States and the Commission for peer review. The Commission will assess the progress made and publish periodic reports starting in June 2020 and throughout the crisis, recommending action and/or the phasing out of measures that are no longer necessary.

For more information

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

[Commission Coronavirus response page](#)

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