



*IDEA anti COVID-19 # 11*

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# Collecting personal data for smart COVID-19 tracing: How to motivate people and not scare them off

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## **Brief summary**

- South Korea and Singapore, unlike many other countries, have recorded a slow increase in the number of cases of COVID-19 infection and a relatively low number of fatalities. Both these countries have not only carried out large numbers of tests, but have also used the information gained through them to trace the spread of the infection as quickly as possible, with the help of individual interviews, medical records, mobile phone data, credit card transaction data and CCTV recordings. Those who had come into contact with the chain of infection were then placed into strict quarantine. This substantially limited the spread of the infection and enabled softer restrictive measures to be taken across the remainder of the population, with a lesser impact on the economy. This strategy would now be possible in the Czech Republic, too. It would, however, require specific rules to be adopted, the principles of which

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are explained in this study. Each country only has one chance to implement them properly.

- Residents should be offered incentives to motivate them to cooperate by providing true and complete information, but these should not simultaneously provide undesirable motivations. Efforts to force people to provide detailed personalized data for the purpose of contact tracing and tracking the spread of the infection can, in fact, lead people to hide symptoms of illness or to hide the fact that they have recently been in contact with someone. It is thus necessary to find a compromise between the direct effectiveness of an imposed order and its negative side effects.
- Collecting data for the purposes of tracking the spread of an infection poses a greater problem in Europe than in East Asian countries, because in Europe there is less of a tradition of the local community enforcing the law for itself and there is greater mistrust of the state. Strong data protection is therefore crucial for the tracking strategy to succeed at all. Even a relatively low level of unwillingness among residents to cooperate in providing data, let alone a broader culture of non-cooperation and “cunning avoidance”, would mean the tracking system did not function sufficiently well.
- Data collected from residents for the purpose of tracking the spread of infection should be stored separate from other personal data in the state’s possession, beyond the reach of enforcement officials, tax investigators, the justice system or researchers, with the exception of those working directly on fighting the infection. The periods during which data are to be collected and retained should be clearly limited.
- Poorly established incentives for people to reveal personal information for the purposes of tracking the infection open the door to further contagion and result in huge economic damage, harm to people’s health and the loss of human lives.