

Digital Surveillance of Citizens: An International Comparison

| | Specific Legislation for Pandemics | Procedures for Collecting Information and Protecting Privacy | Surveillance Tools |
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|  Taiwan | Extensive legislation to handle emergency situations due to pandemics | Conducting epidemiological investigations, including collecting data on a patient's medical history, is permitted under the law. Processing the data is permitted, as long as procedures to protect the data are put into place beforehand | The database includes information from immigration and health departments. All quarantined individuals are put under surveillance based on data collected from the cellular companies |
|  South Korea | Extensive legislation to handle emergency situations due to pandemics | Surveillance methods are dictated by a presidential order in accordance with the relevant contagious disease. The patient's or the quarantined individual's personal information must be kept confidential | Contact tracing by cross-referencing the patient's personal information from cellular companies, credit-card companies, video surveillance of public places, and information from immigration department and airlines. Publication of the patient's movements without personal identification. SMS messages are sent to whoever has come in contact with the patient. Surveillance of whoever must be quarantined through two telephone calls a day or an app voluntarily downloaded to his or her phone |
|  European Union | The GDPR sets the guidelines for collecting and using personal and sensitive data during a time of emergency due to pandemics or threats to the public's security | Data controller must process personal information in accordance with the GDPR | |
|  Germany | Extensive legislation to handle emergency situations due to pandemics | The law allows checking mail and written messages sent to a quarantined individual as long as the information is used only in accordance with the purpose of the law | Quarantine orders are verified only on the basis of aggregate and ammonized location data provided to the government by cellular companies |
|  Italy | Emergency warrant allows for special legal measures to collect and share data during the emergency period | Data collection is permitted, but must proceed according to the GDPR rules. At the end of the emergency all the data must be deleted | Surveillance of quarantined patients, or those violating the shutdown rules is done by reports from concerned citizens, through police patrols, or on the basis of aggregate and ammonized location data provided to the government by the cellular companies. |
|  Singapore | Expansive legislation exists to handle emergency situations due to pandemics | The law awards the head of the health services extensive authorities to carry out surveillances to, maintain the public's health, including epidemiological investigations | The epidemiological investigation is carried out by the police, by interrogating the patient and checking public transportation records, location records from various apps and primarily- from video surveillance of public places or from location data collected by a specific mobile app downloaded voluntary by the citizens |
|  China | | | Invasive surveillance through the use of an app designated for this purpose, that must be downloaded and then collects information on location and health data updated by the user, video surveillance of public places and technologies for face recognition. Government workers are located in central places and scan the users' data from the app and send them to the authorities. |