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Track and trace applications: ethical, cultural and educational challenges

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Olivier BECHT and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Various technologies, such as bank card systems, transport systems, and video surveillance, have long made it possible to collect and analyse information concerning the movements of individuals. The development of the mobile internet and mobile telephony nevertheless allows more and more precise possibilities of tracking all of our movements through cellular geolocation and numerous GPS and Bluetooth applications. In addition, the capability to store collected data continues to grow, and artificial intelligence boosts the capacity to analyse these data.

To a certain extent, the sudden proliferation of track and trace applications, the use of which is encouraged in order to fight the Covid-19 pandemic more effectively, does not raise new questions, but has highlighted the extent of the problems that tracking technologies cause. The questions go beyond the legal problems posed by the intrusiveness of these applications and by the increased risks of unlawful interference with the right to private life of individuals.

The search for legal solutions, in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (Convention 108+), must be part of a broader reflection on the ethical, cultural and educational challenges that these technological developments entail.

The Parliamentary Assembly must promote and guide this reflection and study the responses which it is necessary to provide on all these aspects too, and not only on the legal level, to avoid slipping into societies where surveillance over individuals would go well beyond what Orwell could have imagined.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group