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CONTACT TRACING PROJECT TEAM

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ICAO EUR/NAT RO-CAPSCA EUR

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- Back-to-back with the **11th CAPSCA EUR - MID Jointed Meeting** (25-26 April 2024, Cologne), **ECDC** organized a workshop on identifying lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic (24 April 2024, Cologne)
- During this event, public health and aviation experts working in major airport hubs in selected EU/EEA countries along with IO experts exchanged operational experiences, good practices and reflected on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on public health aspects.
- ECDC experts applied a dedicated methodology (IAR) to extract the most important outcomes of the workshop.
- Contact tracing processes and practices during COVID -19 was ranked as first- and reported in the CAPSCA 11 meeting the next day.



CAPSCA 11 –RECOMMENDATION 7

The meeting advised that contact-tracing issues should be further explored. For that purpose, a dedicated joint WHO EURO, EASA, ECDC, ICAO EUR/NAT and MID Project Team should be established.

CAPSCA EUR is mandated to proceed with the establishment of the Project Team and report the outcome during the next CAPSCA EUR MID 12.



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Establishment of the PT

CAPSCA EUR in coordination with ECDC established a Project Team with the following ToR:

Project Title	European Contact Tracing Project Team (ECT PT)
Parent Group	CAPSCA EUR
Project Period	Sep 2024 to July 2025
Project Objective	Review contact tracing procedures (CTP) and the role of airlines and public health authorities in the European area and suggest the way forward
Project Outcomes	Report during the plenary CAPSCA EUR/MID 12 meeting (2025)
Membership	As nominated by CAPSCA EUR/MID, EASA, ECDC, WHO Euro
Coordination Requirements	A series of virtual and/or in-person meetings, coordination may also be required with subject matter experts outside the PT.
Project High Level Tasks	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the existing CTPs and the role of airlines and public health authorities in the European area2. Identify bottle necks and inefficiencies related to the recent pandemic (problem statement)3. Suggest way forward in operational and administrative/legal level
Project Lead	CAPSCA EUR
Project Secretariat Support	CAPSCA EUR



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1st Meeting

The kick off meeting was decided to be a physical one –organized back to back to the CAPSCA EUR Workshop 24 for the Regional CAPSCA focal persons (Paris, 14-15 November 2024)

.From the discussions of the meeting the below items were identified:

- Contact tracing is a multifaceted issue, including operational, admin and legal aspects
- Legal issues (existing framework at global and regional level) should be further explored
- Operational global guidance from WHO is almost completed and expected to be published by the end of 2024
- A joint / coordinated position and subsequent actions by the relevant regional organizations should be considered.

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The next 3 meetings were in virtual mode /teleconferences during February, March, and April of 2025.

From the discussions during the meetings the following were noted:

- WHO published the contact tracing guidelines (December 2024) providing a global framework. Standard Terminology and recommendations included in the WHO guidelines were instrumental for the work of the PT.
- ECDC developed a share point where all relevant material of interest are uploaded to facilitate the experts work.
- Legal background studies were identified and included in the share point. These issues although strongly related to CT during PHE are beyond the area of expertise of the PT.
- As first action, a joint draft letter addressing the contact tracing challenges and recommendations should be developed, agreed and disseminated to ministerial level (both PH and Aviation sectors)-raise awareness at relevant fora/decision makers
- Due to personnel changes, ECDC as member of the PT was agreed to lead/coordinate the ongoing work for the remaining period (business continuity)



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STUDY MATERIAL

Definition of Contact tracing: the systematic process of identifying, assessing, managing, and supporting contacts of infectious individuals

WHO Guideline on Contact Tracing (Dec.2024)



Feasibility study on digital technology for cross-border contact tracing-Legal aspects (EU)

There are two key international legal instruments (WHO and EU legislation) that provide the legal basis for international cross-border CT in EU and non-EU countries:

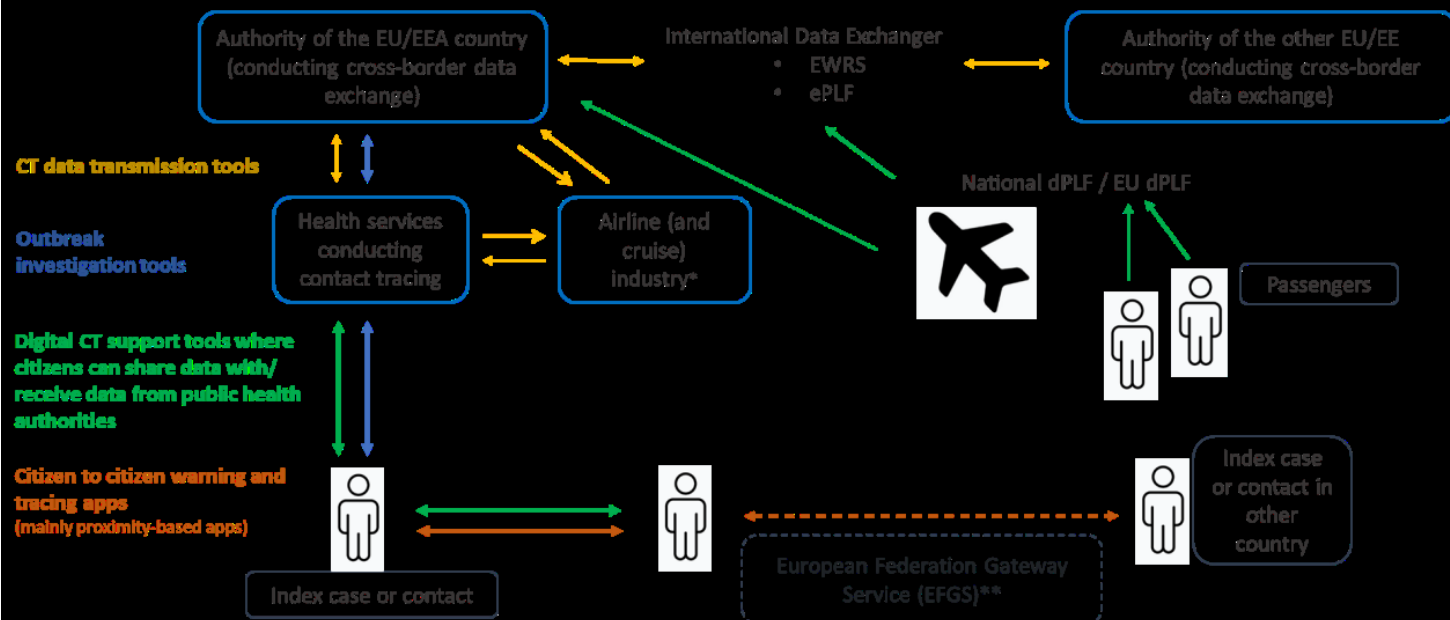
- o WHO International Health Regulations (IHR)(19): WHO MS are required to prevent, protect, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of certain diseases..
- o Decision No 1082/2013/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on serious crossborder threats to health(17, 18): Decision No 1082/2013/EU established the EWRS through which MS authorities are obliged to notify alerts in relation to serious cross-border threat to health to a centralised platform.



Decision No 1082/2013/EU has been repealed and replaced by **Regulation (EU) 2022/2371**⁽¹⁶⁾ on serious cross-border threats to health. This came into effect on 26th December 2022. Adding to the framework of the Decision, the Regulation will do the following: (1) Develop an EU health crisis and pandemic plan to complement national plans, the Commission will establish a preparedness and response plan; (2) Enhance risk assessments for health threats; (3) Increase power to enforce a coordinated response at EU-level; (4) Improve the mechanism for the recognition of and response to public health emergencies and (5) Strengthen surveillance systems.

In addition, there are national laws and national emergency laws that are applicable in the case of public health threats to establish the main characteristics of legal frameworks essential for pandemic preparedness. Data protection and data sharing arrangements across EU/EEA countries form a crosscutting element of the legal framework. The requirement for lawful data processing, which is essential for CT, is a core part of the General Data Protection Regulation **No 2016/679 (GDPR)**

Digital technology used in contact tracing during COVID-19





- The Council of ICAO, during its 233rd Session in November 2024, decided to add the item “International air carriage and data protection laws” to the General Work Programme of the Legal Committee. The Council also invited the Legal Committee to establish a group to study the topic. To advance the work in this area prior to the 40th Session of the Legal Committee in 2026, a Secretariat Group is established to initiate the study.
- On March 2025, ICAO State Letter – ‘Establishment of Study Group on interactions between international air carriage and data protection laws (IND/25/02)', dated 25/03/2025 was released.
- Objective: The Secretariat Group will initiate the study of the interaction between international carriage by air and data protection laws with a view to proposing ways to facilitate understanding and awareness among Member States and advancing the work in this area, taking into consideration that the matter goes beyond the air transport sector and that the establishment of data protection laws and policies remains within the responsibilities of States.



- Raise awareness for regional decision makers concerning CT matters during PHE-agree the final draft of the **joint letter** and agree the dissemination process (e.g. joint logos)
- Contribute to the work of the **ICAO Study Group (SG)** through the Secretariat. Ensure that data protection in relation to PH matters are included in the work of the SG and contribute with the relevant expertise.
- In this regard **extend** the CT PT until the next CAPSCA EUR 13 meeting.



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