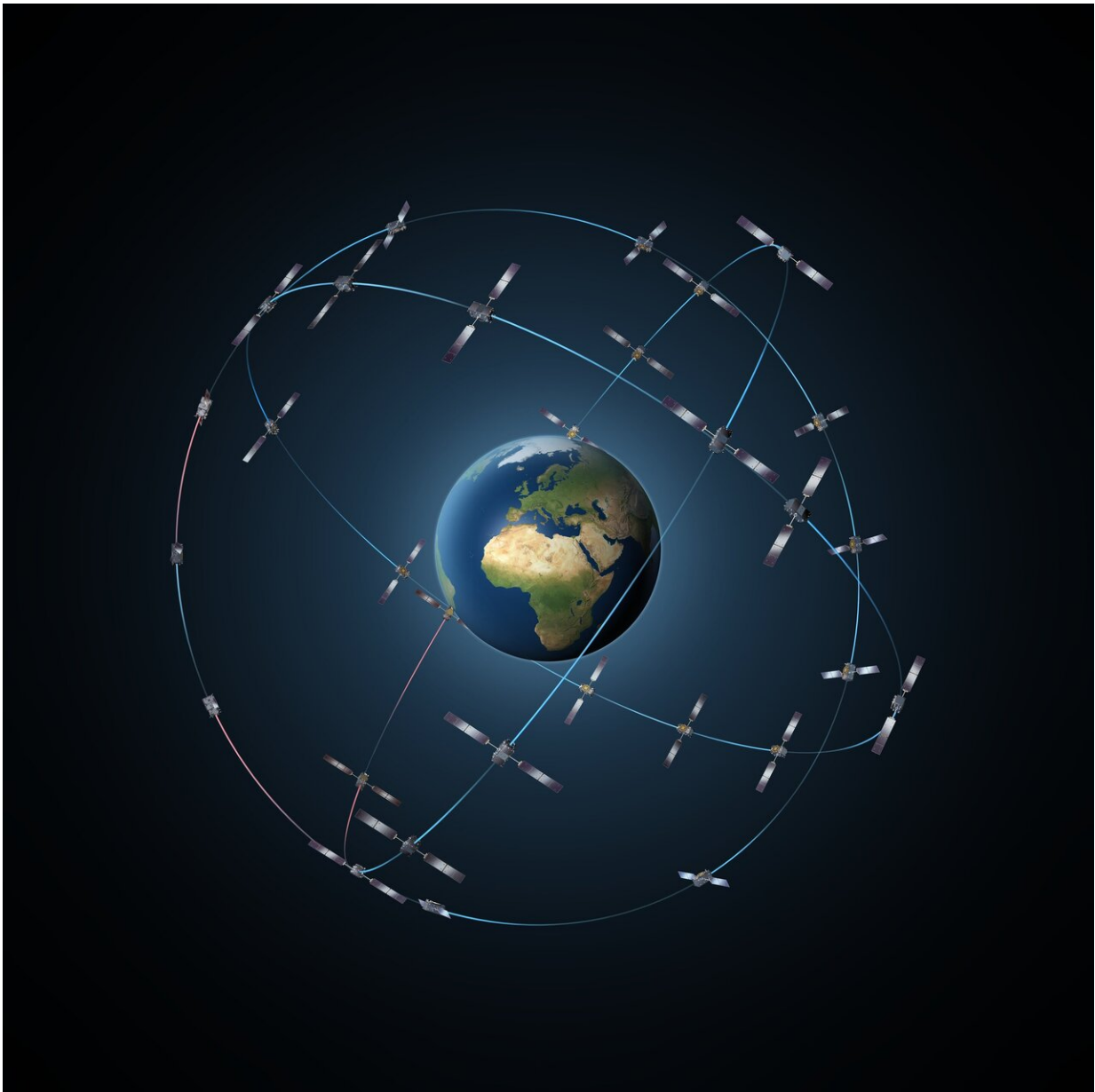# Galileo positioning aiding COVID-19 reaction

April 29 2020

The complete Galileo constellation will consist of 24 satellites along three orbital planes, plus two spare satellites per orbit. The result will be Europe's largest-ever fleet, providing worldwide navigation coverage. Credit: ESA-P. Carril

As European governments plan their phased recoveries from the lockdown states triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the positioning delivered through satellite navigation is becoming more important than ever before. Location is a key requirement when attempting to monitor and map the spread of a disease and satnav is one of the main tools supporting this.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus earlier this year, many apps have been developed that use satnav-based location data to monitor the global spread of the virus and to map outbreaks of the COVID-19 disease. Satnav based apps are also proving their usefulness by helping people to implement social distancing in queues and other public spaces.

Romanian company RISE has developed an app called CovTrack, which monitors people in your vicinity made identifiable via Bluetooth connections to your mobile phone and stores the identification data of these devices.

By pressing a button you can access the database in which the unique identifiers of the mobile phones are registered (without having access to any personal data of these mobile phone users), to verify whether the persons with whom you came in contact have subsequently been confirmed with COVID-19. If you have identified a potential contact, you can refer to the relevant authorities whether that contact requires your inclusion among the monitored persons, or even testing for COVID-19.

CovTrack, developed on a pro-bono basis, is a spin-off from the existing AGORA project for festival management, supported through ESA's Navigation Innovation and Support Programme (NAVISP), focused on future navigation technologies.

ESA's partner agency the GSA, European Global Navigation Satellite System Agency, working with the assistance of the European Commission, has put together a repository of such apps, available [here](#).

This list, based on apps that are already working and available in app stores, includes practical apps that facilitate the daily lives of citizens, such as by helping them to manage queues in supermarkets, pharmacies and [public spaces](#) or by facilitating the logistics of goods, which has become more complicated in the current situation.

Europe's Galileo, currently embedded in over 1.3 billion smartphones and devices worldwide, is helping to increase satnav accuracy and availability, especially in urban areas. Is your own smartphone or device making use of Galileo, the most accurate satnav system? You can check [here](#).

The GSA is also developing its own Galileo-enabled application, Galileo for Green Lane, to monitor and ease the circulation of goods between EU Member States while identifying potential congestion at Green Lane border crossings, and thus [ensuring that EU citizens can access the needed supplies of critical goods](#).

Provided by European Space Agency