

TikTok plans 2 more European data centers amid privacy fears

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A visitor passes the TikTok exhibition stands at the Gamescom computer gaming fair in Cologne, Germany, Aug. 25, 2022. The European Union's digital policy chief warned TikTok's boss Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023 that the social media app will have to fall in line with tough new rules for online platforms set to take effect later this year. EU Commissioner Thierry Breton held a video call with Shou Zi Chew, the CEO of TikTok, the popular Chinese-owned video sharing app that's coming under increasing scrutiny from Western authorities over fears about data privacy, cybersecurity and misinformation. Credit: AP Photo/Martin Meissner, File

TikTok said Friday that it's planning two more European data centers, as the popular Chinese-owned video sharing app seeks to allay [growing concerns about data privacy for its users](#) in the West.

TikTok has been under fire from European and American authorities over concerns that it could scoop up masses of user data and send it to China.

The company's general manager for European operations, Rich Waterworth, said in a blog post that it is "at an [advanced stage](#) of finalizing a plan" with a third-party provider for a second data center in Ireland. It announced its first center there last year.

TikTok also is in talks to set up a third European data center, without specifying a location.

"Regarding local data storage, in line with the growth of our community, we're looking to expand our European data storage capacity," Waterworth said.

Data for European TikTok users will be migrated to the new centers starting this year, Waterworth said.

TikTok is wildly popular with [young people](#), but its Chinese ownership has raised fears that Beijing could use it to collect data on Western users or push pro-China narratives and misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020.

A top [European Union official warned CEO Shou Zi Chew](#) last month that the company would have to comply with the 27-nation bloc's sweeping new digital rules.

The Digital Services Act mandates that [online platforms](#) and [tech companies](#) with 45 million or more users take extra steps aimed at cleaning up illegal content and disinformation or face potentially billions in fines.

TikTok reported Friday that it had 125 million monthly active users in the EU, putting it over the threshold for [extra scrutiny under the new rules](#) set to take effect later this year.

Including non-EU countries such as Britain and Switzerland, TikTok has 150 million users.

Google, Twitter, Apple and Facebook and Instagram will also face the stricter EU scrutiny, according to monthly user numbers they released in time for a Friday deadline.

Facebook has 255 million monthly active users, while Instagram has 250 million users, parent company Meta said. Twitter said it has 100.9 million users, including both registered users and those who didn't sign in.

Apple said its iOS App Store had more than 45 million users but didn't give a specific number. Google said its Search service has 332 million signed-in users, while YouTube has 401.7 million signed-in [users](#).

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