

# Dutch gov't staff discouraged from apps such as TikTok

March 21 2023, by Mike Corder

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The TikTok Inc. building is seen in Culver City, Calif., Friday, March 17, 2023. China is accusing the U.S. of spreading disinformation amid reports the Biden administration is calling for TikTok's Chinese owners to sell their stakes in the company. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

The Netherlands is moving to stop central government employees having

apps including popular video sharing service TikTok installed on their work phones, amid concerns over data security.

Countries including the [United States](#) and [Britain](#), as well as the [European Union](#) 's executive branch, have banned the use of TikTok on government staff phones over fears that its Chinese owner, ByteDance, could share [user data](#) with the authoritarian government in Beijing.

"For [civil servants](#) employed by the [national government](#), it is immediately discouraged to have apps from countries with an offensive cyber program against the Netherlands and/or Dutch interests installed and used on their mobile work devices," the government said in a statement Tuesday that did not identify TikTok by name. The [new policy](#) came after lawmakers asked whether it was possible to ban central government staff from using the app on work devices.

The advice follows an assessment by national intelligence agency AIVD that warned that apps from such countries—which include China, Russia, North Korea and Iran—"carry a heightened risk of espionage."

A law China implemented in 2017 requires companies to give the government any personal data relevant to the country's national security. There's no evidence that TikTok has turned over such data, but fears abound due to the vast amount of user data it collects.

Alexandra van Huffelen, the Dutch minister for digitalization, said in a statement that the new policy "goes beyond discouraging one application. We opt for a structural solution that central government officials can trust in their work in a digital world."

The government said it is planning to move quickly to set up all mobile devices given to central government staff "in such a way that only pre-permitted apps, software and/or functionalities can be installed and

used."

The decision comes two weeks after the Dutch government angered Beijing by announcing that it is planning on [imposing additional restrictions](#) on the export of machines that make advanced processor chips, joining a U.S. push that aims at limiting China's access to materials used to make such chips.

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Citation: Dutch gov't staff discouraged from apps such as TikTok (2023, March 21) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-03-dutch-govt-staff-discouraged-apps.html>

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