

Hungary state-run clinics to give free IVF treatment

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Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Thursday that fertility treatment at state-run clinics would be provided free of charge, a latest measure aimed at stemming demographic decline.

"The government has decided that from February 1 medications used in [fertility treatment](#) will be free of charge," Orban told a news conference in Budapest.

In-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment in the future "will no longer be market-based", he said.

Last month the government announced it was buying six private fertility clinics, four in the capital Budapest and two outside.

Orban said the clinics had been "acquired" not "nationalised" as they were bought rather than taken over.

He also described fertility clinics as being "of national strategic importance" and advised [private firms](#) against investing in it as "they will not get permits".

The move is the latest in a series of measures introduced by Budapest including [financial incentives](#) to encourage couples to have more children.

According to official data, fewer and fewer children are born in the 9.8

million population Central European country every year.

Hundreds of thousands of Hungarians have also emigrated in the last decade, mainly to western Europe.

The fertility drive is hoped to lead to 4,000 births by 2022, a minister said in December.

The hardline anti-immigration Orban has rejected migration as a solution to Europe's demographic woes, such as shrinking populations.

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