

EU's top diplomat hopes Sputnik V will be approved in bloc

February 5 2021



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The European Union's top diplomat expressed hopes Friday that the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Russia will soon be used across the 27-nation bloc.

During a visit to Moscow, EU [foreign affairs](#) chief Josep Borrell said the country's Sputnik V [vaccine](#) is "good news for the whole mankind."

The vaccine was approved by the Russian government in August and many [foreign governments](#) have expressed interest in buying doses.

Russian scientists said it appears safe and effective against COVID-19, according to early results of an advanced study published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*. Researchers said that based on a fall trial involving about 20,000 people in Russia, the vaccine is about 91% effective and appears to prevent inoculated individuals from becoming severely ill.

The EU has signed six contracts for more than 2 billion doses of various vaccines, but only three of them have been approved for use so far and the delivery of shots has been disturbed by production delays.

"Now I'm hoping that the European Medical Agency will be able to certify the efficiency of this vaccine in order to be used also in the European Union states," Borrell said. "It will be good news because we are facing a shortage of vaccines."

The EU's medical agency has not yet received a request for marketing authorization for the Sputnik V vaccine. It said this week that the developer has submitted a request for scientific advice to the agency and a meeting has been held "to discuss their development plan and their further engagement with the agency."

A key element EMA is looking at before approving marketing authorization of vaccines is the drugmakers' capacity to manufacture doses in the EU.

The EU commission has not announced plans for a collective purchase

of Sputnik doses, so far relying on the deals it sealed with other manufacturers. But member states can also decide to negotiate separate agreements outside the commission's umbrella as long as they don't compete with the advance purchase agreement negotiated by the EU's executive arm.

Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov said he had intensive contacts with European counterparts about vaccines and that German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed with President Vladimir Putin the opportunity to develop cooperation between Germany and Russia.

"I think cooperation in the field plays a positive role," he said.

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Citation: EU's top diplomat hopes Sputnik V will be approved in bloc (2021, February 5)
retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-02-eu-diplomat-sputnik-bloc.html>

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