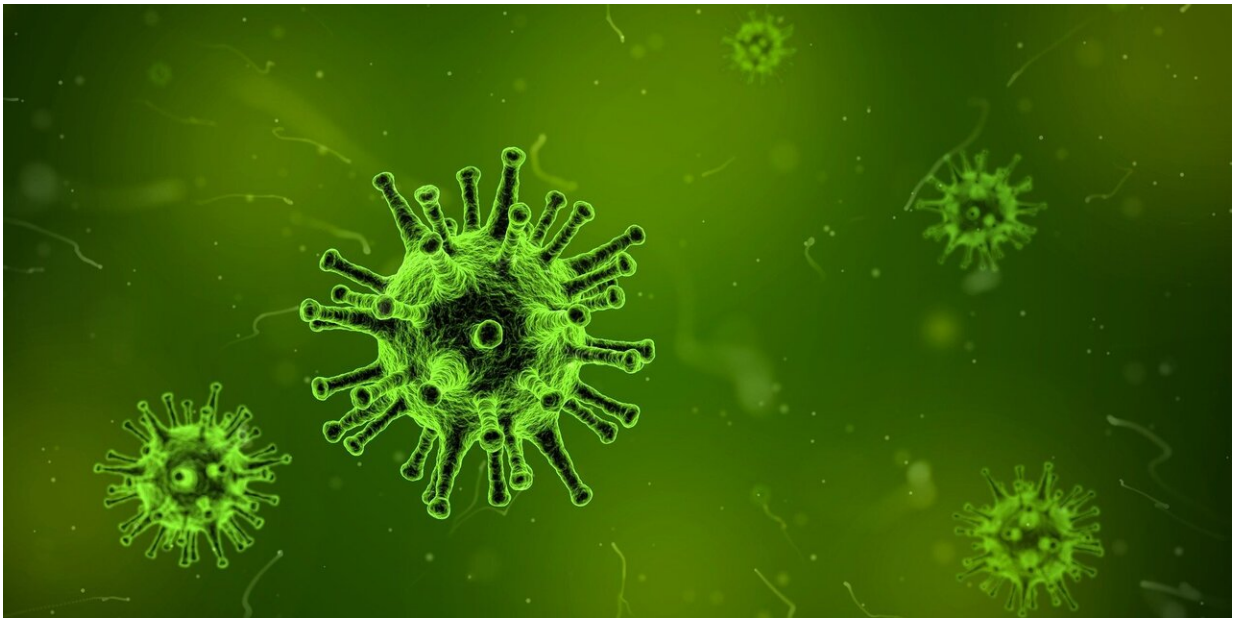


Hungary starts using Chinese vaccine in EU first: PM

February 24 2021



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Hungary on Wednesday became the first EU nation to start using China's Sinopharm vaccine against the coronavirus, Prime Minister Viktor Orban said.

"Today we begin to inoculate with the Chinese vaccines," Orban said in a Facebook video message.

Hungary—whose population is around 10 million—has ordered five million doses of the Chinese jab.

A planned 275,000 inoculations can be administered this week from the first batch of Sinopharm doses that arrived earlier this month, a [health official](#) said Tuesday.

Also this month Hungary began using Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, another EU first.

Budapest has often clashed with Brussels, especially on migration, and has repeatedly criticised what it says is the slow pace of vaccine approval and procurement by EU authorities.

On Wednesday, Hungary reported 102 new deaths from COVID-19, bringing the country's overall death toll to 14,552, while the number of infections and [coronavirus](#) patients in hospitals has begun rising sharply in February.

"A third wave of the virus is menacing Hungary," said Orban Wednesday, while urging citizens to get vaccinated.

Hungarians are among the least willing to get the shots in the EU, but the rate has been rising in recent months.

Orban, who has said that Sinopharm is his preferred choice of [vaccine](#), also said he hopes he can receive his jab "perhaps sometime next week".

In surveys the most popular vaccines were the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca vaccines, with the Russian and Chinese jabs least popular.

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