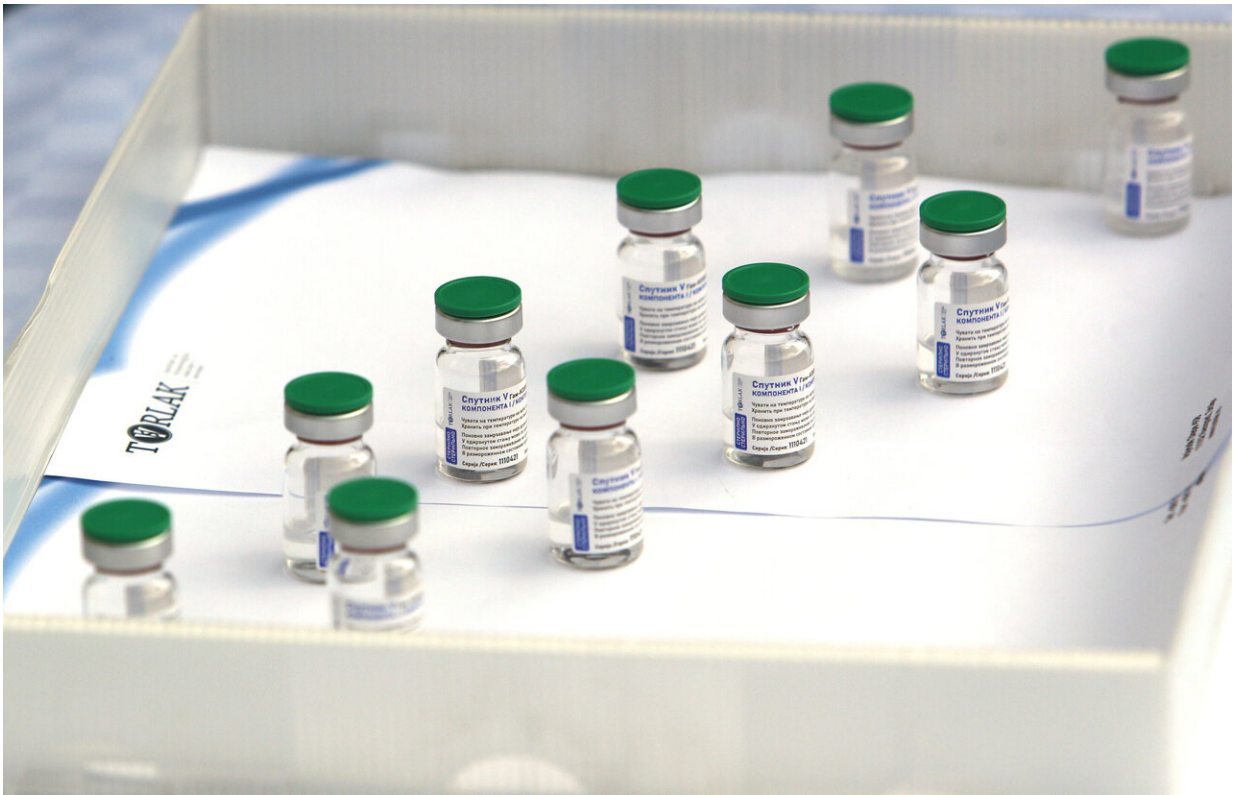


# WHO: Europe has surpassed 1 million COVID-19 deaths

April 15 2021



Vials of the Sputnik V vaccine placed on a table prior to the visit of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Serbia has announced it will begin packing and later producing Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, which would make it the first European state outside Russia and Belarus to begin manufacturing the jab. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

A top official from the World Health Organization says Europe has surpassed 1 million deaths from COVID-19 and the situation remains "serious," with about 1.6 million new cases reported each week in the region.

The comments by Dr. Hans Kluge on Thursday aimed to emphasize that Europe must keep up its guard with social distancing and speed up vaccinations as virus variants drive new infections to record levels in some nations.

Overall, a tally by Johns Hopkins University shows nearly 3 million deaths have been linked to COVID-19 worldwide—with the Americas hardest hit, followed by Europe. The United States, Brazil and Mexico have reported the highest number of deaths, collectively at more than 1.1 million.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to Greece, Kluge did point to "early signs that transmission may be slowing across several countries" in WHO's 53-country European region, which stretches into Central Asia—and cited "declining incidence" among the oldest people.

He said the proportion of COVID-19 deaths among people over 80, who have been prioritized for vaccines, had dropped to nearly 30%—the lowest level in the pandemic.

Britain in particular has seen new infections and COVID-19 deaths drop dramatically since January, due to a successful vaccination program and a prolonged national lockdown that is only being reversed in stages.



A Torlak Institute's employee arranges vials of the Sputnik V vaccine prior to the visit of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Serbia has announced it will begin packing and later producing Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, which would make it the first European state outside Russia and Belarus to begin manufacturing the jab. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic holds a vial of the Sputnik V in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Serbia has announced it will begin packing and later producing Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, which would make it the first European state outside Russia and Belarus to begin manufacturing the jab. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)





A Torlak Institute's employee waits for the visit of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Serbia has announced it will begin packing and later producing Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, which would make it the first European state outside Russia and Belarus to begin manufacturing the jab. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic poses with a vial of the Sputnik V in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Serbia has announced it will begin packing and later producing Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, which would make it the first European state outside Russia and Belarus to begin manufacturing the jab. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)



A member of the medical staff prepares a dose of the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine, also known as CoronaVac, during a mass vaccination program at Skanderbeg Square in Tirana, Albania, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Albania has made virus slabs to almost 300,000 people, starting with the medical personnel, eldest people and schoolteachers to achieve a mass inoculation campaign ahead of the summer tourism season. (AP Photo)





A woman receives the first dose of the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine during a mass vaccination program at Skanderbeg Square in Tirana, Albania, Thursday, April 15, 2021. Albania has made virus slabs to almost 300,000 people, starting with the medical personnel, eldest people and schoolteachers to achieve a mass inoculation campaign ahead of the summer tourism season. (AP Photo)

Addressing recent concerns about vaccines, Kluge also said the risk of people suffering [blood clots](#) is far higher for people with COVID-19 than for people who receive AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine.

"Let there be no doubt about it, the AstraZeneca vaccine is effective in reducing COVID-19 hospitalization and preventing deaths," he said, adding that WHO recommends its use for all eligible adults.



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