

Serbia to offer cash to those who get COVID vaccine

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Serbia is offering its citizens cash as an incentive to get vaccinated for Covid

Serbia's president said on Wednesday his country would pay each citizen who gets a COVID jab before the end of May, in what could be the world's first cash-for-jabs scheme.

The Balkans country bought millions of doses—from Western firms as well as China and Russia—and briefly became a regional [vaccine](#) hub when it offered foreigners the chance to be inoculated.

However, after fully vaccinating some 1.3 million of its seven million people, the drive has started to stall.

"All those... who received the vaccine by May 31 will get 3,000 dinars (25 euros, \$30)," President Aleksandar Vucic told local media, adding that he expected three million to be vaccinated by the end of the month.

Vucic said the country wanted to "reward people who showed responsibility".

But he added that public employees who did not receive a vaccine would not get paid leave if they contracted the virus.

Serbia is hoping to further boost its rollout on Thursday by offering vaccines in shopping centres and rewarding volunteers with vouchers.

"I have not encountered in medical literature anyone being paid for COVID-19 vaccinations," Serbian epidemiologist Zoran Radovanovic told AFP.

"So we may be the first not only in Europe, but also the world."

However, he warned that stimulating vaccination drives with money could be a double-edged sword.

"It will push some of those who live in [extreme poverty](#) to get vaccinated, but it will produce resistance with some of the others," said Radovanovic.

"The logic is this: if the state is paying me to do something it is telling me is for my own good, then something is fishy."

Some companies have offered employees incentives to get the COVID jab, and [poorer countries](#) in Asia and Africa are known to have offered rewards to those getting vaccinated in other campaigns—but not since the pandemic took hold.

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