

# Putin calls for mutual approval of COVID vaccines

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Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called for mutual recognition of vaccines against the coronavirus to help curtail the pandemic, as concern grows around the world about the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

Speaking at a Russian investment forum by video link, Putin said that countries can "effectively battle" the coronavirus only by coordinating their actions.

"I mean the mutual recognition of vaccines and vaccination certificates, the availability of vaccines for all regions of the planet (and) joint work on new drugs against the coronavirus," the Russian leader told the conference.

"In the coming weeks, it will become clear how serious the consequences of the new strain are. But it is very clear that we need to be prepared for any change in the virus."

Russia in August 2020 was the first country to register a coronavirus [vaccine](#), Sputnik V, which has been approved for use in dozens of countries.

The jab, however, has not yet been approved by the World Health Organization or the European Medicines Agency.

Experts had voiced concerns over a fast-track process after Russian authorities registered Sputnik V ahead of large-scale clinical trials, but it was since declared safe and over 90 percent effective in an article in leading medical journal *The Lancet*.

Russia has not approved any foreign-made vaccines for use in the country.

Concerns are building that existing vaccines will not be able to fend off the highly mutated Omicron variant and US pharmaceutical company Moderna has said it will develop a booster shot.

On Thursday, the Russian Direct Investment Fund, which supported

Sputnik V's development by the state-run Gamaleya Center, said that the centre had also already begun developing an Omicron booster.

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