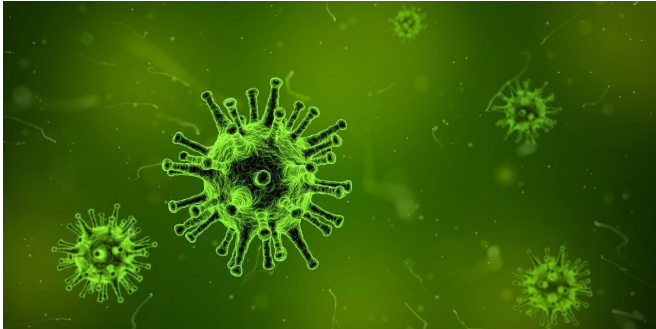


Hungary cools on Russian Covid jab, scolds EU on vaccines

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Hungary is unlikely to use Russia's coronavirus vaccine due to its limited production capacity, Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Sunday while criticizing the EU's vaccine acquisition approach.

Often at loggerheads with Brussels over democratic standards, Orban has sent experts to monitor [vaccine development](#) in Russia and China, and received samples of Moscow's controversial Sputnik V jab.

"We know that the Russian vaccine is good, but there is not enough of it and probably will not be, as there are production capacity limits," Orban said in an interview on Hungarian public radio.

In comparison with Sputnik V "the Chinese (vaccine) is more promising, it seems that it will be available sooner and in greater quantities," said Orban.

"Ideally, you will be able to choose whether you want to vaccinate yourself with either a vaccine from the west or a Chinese vaccine," he said.

In November Budapest boasted that Hungary was the first European country to receive test samples of the Russian vaccine.

Western and Russian experts have raised concerns over the fast-tracked drug, which has not yet been approved for marketing inside the bloc by the EU's European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Critics have also described Sputnik V as a tool to bolster Russia's geopolitical influence.

Orban said Sunday however that he is "not happy with the pace" of vaccine acquisition from the EU.

"There were manufacturers whose products were available sooner in Canada, the UK, and in Israel than for example in the EU," he said.

"But that is Brussels' job, they are dealing with it," he added.

"We are looking after the eastern relations contact network, as Brussels is not doing that.., that is why it is better to stand on two legs," he said.

Orban's latest jibe toward Brussels comes after Hungary sidestepped the EU's coordinated approach to vaccinations last week.

After receiving its first delivery of the Belgian-made Pfizer-BioNTech [coronavirus](#) jab December 26 it immediately started administering the [vaccine](#), sidestepping the EU's joint start that began a day later.

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