

German chemicals giant Bayer says to produce Curevac vaccine

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Chemicals giant Bayer announced Monday it will produce from 2022 a coronavirus vaccine that fellow German pharmaceuticals company CureVac is developing.

"I am happy to tell you that we have the necessary capacities to produce CureVac's mRNA-based vaccine," Bayer's head of pharmaceuticals Stefan Oelrich told reporters.

He added that the [company](#) aimed to produce 160 million doses in the first 12 months.

The announcement came hours before German political leaders and vaccine makers were to meet amid ongoing frustration over the EU's sluggish inoculation campaign.

"Our discussions with the government have made it clear that vaccine availability must be increased," said Oelrich, on a call alongside German health minister Jens Spahn.

While Bayer had no experience producing vaccines, the company did offer "strong know-how in the development of biotech products", he added.

CureVac's mRNA vaccine is yet to receive the [green light](#) from regulators, but health minister Spahn said Monday it was "on its way to approval in the coming weeks".

CureVac began the final Phase III trials of its vaccine candidate in mid-December, involving more than 35,000 volunteers in Europe and Latin America.

CureVac CEO Franz-Werner Haas said his company would also produce several hundred million doses of its own vaccine by the end of 2021.

The German government in June took a 23-percent stake in the company for 300 million euros (\$369 million). It also provided a 252 million euro grant for coronavirus research.

CureVac made international headlines in March when rumours surfaced that then US president Donald Trump wanted exclusive US access to its coronavirus [vaccine](#), a claim both sides denied.

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