

Italy misses vaccine targets due to supply problems

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Italy's coronavirus vaccines plan is missing its targets as the country has received almost 30 percent fewer doses than expected, government data showed Thursday.

The government had said in a document published March 13 that it

counted on procuring 15.7 million vaccine doses by the end of the first quarter of 2021.

But only 11.25 million [vaccine doses](#) arrived, a gap of around 28 percent, a government website indicated.

Most of the shortfall was due to AstraZeneca, which supplied Italy with 2.75 million doses rather than the expected 5.35 million. Moderna supplies were also behind schedule.

The Italian government set a goal of administering at least 300,000 doses per day before the end of March, but this has proved equally unattainable.

On March 31, around 251,000 people got a jab, but the seven-day average for daily inoculations is 233,749, according to business daily *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

Italy is one of the countries worst-hit by the [coronavirus](#), with the official death toll approaching 110,000.

Beating the pandemic, and reversing the recession it has triggered, is priority number one for Prime Minister Mario Draghi, who took office in February.

But several regional politicians warned that they are close to halting inoculations due to severe supply shortages.

Alessio D'Amato, health commissioner for Lazio, the region including Rome, said he was missing 122,000 AstraZeneca doses.

"If [they] do not arrive in the next 24 hours, we will unfortunately be forced to suspend vaccinations," D'Amato said on Thursday.

Health Minister Roberto Speranza and the [government](#)'s coronavirus commissioner, General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, insisted there was no such risk.

Figliuolo said 500,000 Moderna doses were being distributed nationwide on Thursday, and 1.3 million AstraZeneca jabs were expected to arrive by Friday.

Italy has so far fully vaccinated just under 3.2 million people, little more than 5 percent of the total population of 60 million.

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