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Germany Offers Russia Support in Sputnik Vaccine Development – Merkel

By AFP

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Russian authorities said Wednesday they have applied for registration of Sputnik V in the European Union. **Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency**

Germany has offered Russia support in Moscow's development of its Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday.

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"Beyond all the political differences that are currently large, we can nevertheless work together in a pandemic, in a humanitarian area," Merkel told journalists.

On Moscow's application to the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the German leader said

she has "offered that our Paul Ehrlich Institute ... support Russia on it."

The Paul Ehrlich Institute is Germany's medicine regulatory body.

"And if this vaccine is approved by the EMA, then we can talk about joint production or also about usage," Merkel said.

Russia in August registered Sputnik V — named after the Soviet-era satellite — months ahead of Western competitors but before the start of large-scale clinical trials, which left some experts wary.

Its developers have since said that the jab is more than 90 percent effective and Russia launched its mass vaccination campaign using the shot this week.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund which helped develop the vaccine, says Sputnik has already been registered in a number of countries including Belarus, Venezuela, Bolivia and Algeria.

Argentina began administering second doses of Sputnik V this week, having begun its immunization campaign in late December.

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