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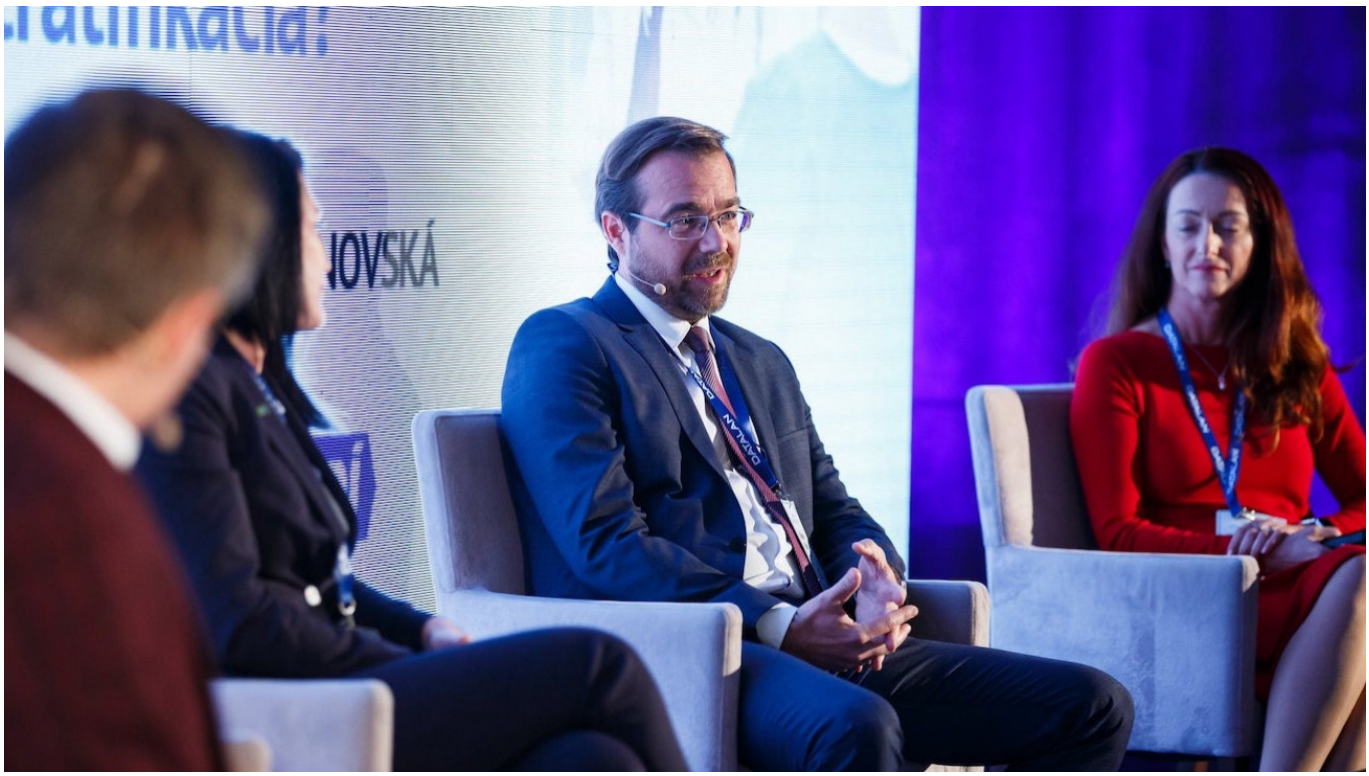
Slovakia Health Minister Resigns Over Sputnik V Dispute

March 12, 2021



Slovak Health Minister Marek Krajčí **Marek Krajčí / Facebook**

Slovakia's health minister has announced his resignation after coming under pressure from the country's four-party ruling coalition for ordering Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, Reuters reported Thursday.

Slovakia became the second EU country after Hungary to purchase Sputnik V for national use, bypassing EU authorization of the jab. Prime Minister Igor Matovic ignited backlash from two coalition parties when he ordered shipments of the vaccine in late February without the coalition's approval, with his critics saying he should have waited for EU authorization.

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"Two coalition parties made my resignation a condition for them to stay in the coalition. In such a situation, I think there was no point arguing... I am not glued to my seat (at the ministry)," Reuters quoted Health Minister Marek Krajci as saying at a televised briefing.

Matovic said the health minister had to resign because "those who put obstacles in his way made him their target," Reuters reported.

Matovic found himself at the center of another scandal after he made an offhand joke this month about paying for Sputnik V shipments with Ukrainian territory.

Countries like Slovakia and Hungary have sought out Sputnik V as the EU grapples with limited supplies for its vaccination campaign.

Slovakia, which has one of the world's worst Covid-19 death rates per capita, has already received about 200,000 doses of the Russian-made vaccine, which is currently undergoing rolling review with the European Medicines Agency.

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