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EU Considers Launching Sputnik V Purchase Negotiations – Reuters

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Sputnik V is currently undergoing rolling review by the EU's medicines regulator, the European Medicines Agency (EMA). **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

European Union officials are considering launching negotiations to purchase Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, Reuters reported Monday, citing EU diplomatic and official sources.

The move would mark a major turnaround for Brussels, which has publicly dismissed Russia's global vaccine supply campaign as a propaganda effort while facing criticism for its own sluggish vaccine rollout. Faced with mounting cases and deaths, EU members Hungary and Slovakia have already purchased doses of Sputnik V in a break with the 27-member bloc.

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Requests from four EU members are required to start the purchase talks with Sputnik V's developers, Reuters reported, citing an unnamed EU official who negotiates with vaccine makers.

Italy is considering using the country's largest vaccine-producing bioreactor to manufacture Sputnik V, the EU official told Reuters.

Last week, Bloomberg reported that Swiss firm Adienne Pharma & Biotech SA has agreed to produce the Russian vaccine at its production facility in Milan, Italy.

Under its new Prime Minister Mario Draghi, Italy is now pushing fellow EU leaders to consider Sputnik V in an effort to vaccinate more people and expand the bloc's limited supplies, Reuters reported.

Russian news agencies reported that Rik Daems, president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), said Europe is considering obtaining Sputnik V supplies during his Monday meeting with State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin.

Sputnik V is currently undergoing rolling review by the EU's medicines regulator, the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

If the EMA authorizes Sputnik V, the bloc would likely be split between members in favor of cooperating with Russia and those against, an EU diplomat told Reuters.

On Saturday, Sweden's vaccines coordinator told Swedish media that the country could receive doses of Sputnik V as early as June if the EMA authorizes it.

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