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EU Has 'No Need' for Russia's Coronavirus Vaccine, Official Says

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EU internal markets commissioner Thierry Breton's remarks drew immediate accusations of bias from Sputnik V's developers. **Pedro Pardo / AFP**

The European Union has no need for Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine which is currently under review for EU authorization, an executive in charge of the bloc's vaccination rollout said Sunday.

Internal markets commissioner Thierry Breton, who last week called Sputnik V "a good vaccine," argued that the EU is capable of achieving continent-wide immunity through its own production capacities.

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"We have absolutely no need of Sputnik V," Breton told French television, according to Reuters.

Breton's remarks drew immediate accusations of bias from the shot's developers "just because it is Russian."

"His comments pressure Sputnik V not to go through the [EU medicines regulator] EMA approval process because @ThierryBreton believes all is great with EU vaccinations," said Sputnik V's Twitter account.

"Are Europeans happy with Breton's vaccination approach?" it asked, hinting at criticism over the EU's tepid vaccination drive amid rising Covid-19 cases across the continent.

The EMA, or the European Medicines Agency, began a "rolling review" of Sputnik V earlier in March to analyze existing data on its safety and effectiveness before deciding whether Russia could apply for EU authorization.

A peer-reviewed study published last month assessed Sputnik V's effectiveness at 91.6%. More than 50 countries, including EU members Hungary and Slovakia, have approved Sputnik V so far.

A number of EU leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, have signalled in recent days that they would order Sputnik V doses even if the EMA did not authorize it.

"If such [a] European order did not come about," Merkel was quoted as saying Friday, then we must go the German way."

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