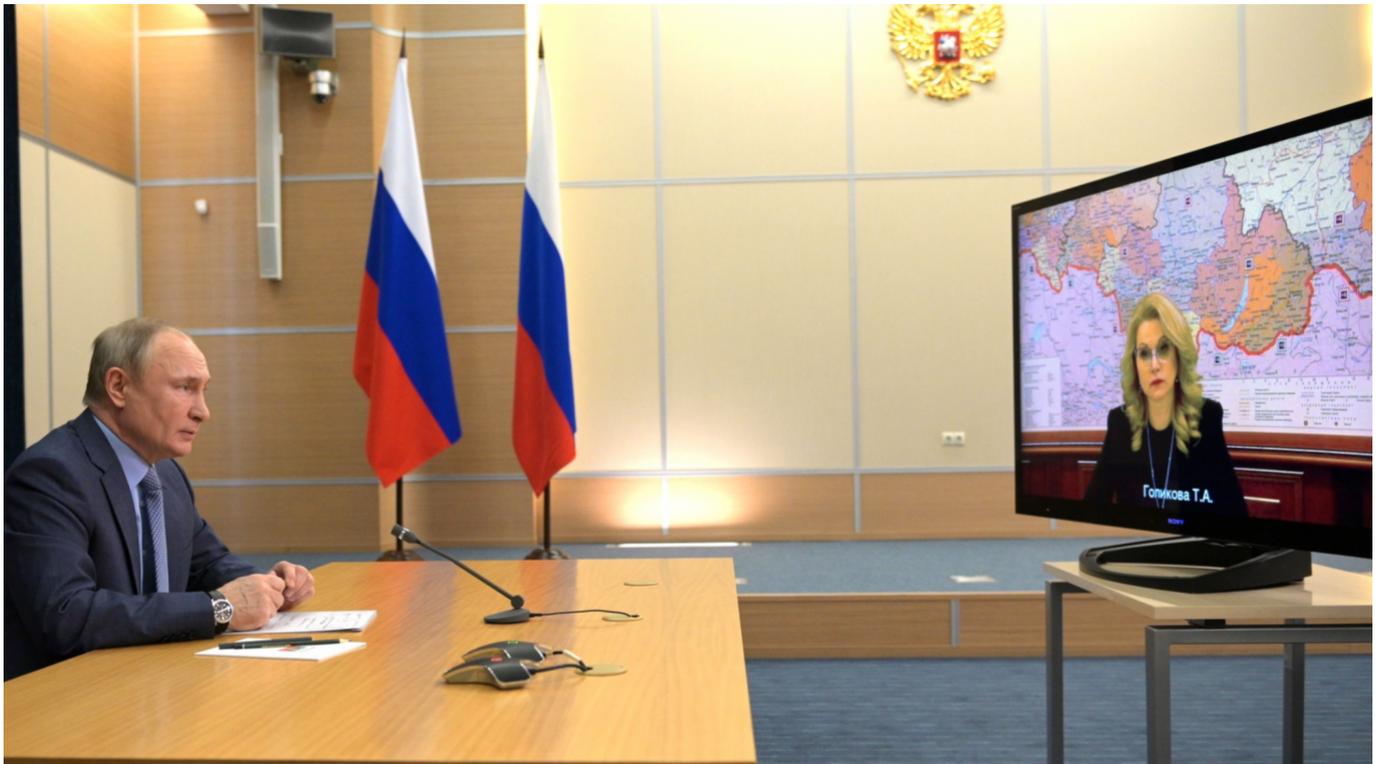


Putin Backs Russia Waiving Patents on Its Covid Jabs

By [AFP](#)

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Putin speaks with Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova during a televised meeting Thursday.

Kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday said he supported the idea of a waiver on patent protections for coronavirus vaccines as Russia registered its fourth virus jab called Sputnik Light.

A campaign to lift patent protections on Covid-19 vaccines picked up steam on Thursday, with French, German and EU leadership saying they were ready to discuss a proposal by U.S. President Joe Biden, before Putin added his support.

"We are hearing from Europe an idea that, in my opinion, deserves attention — namely, to remove patent protections from vaccines against Covid-19 altogether," Putin said during a televised meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova.

"Russia would of course support such an approach," Putin said, urging Golikova to work out the logistics.

"As I have said many times... We should not think about how to extract maximum profit, but about how to ensure people's safety."

Supporters of waivers for vaccines argue that poor countries are struggling to get inoculation drives underway while rich countries protect the intellectual property rights of pharmaceutical giants.

Russia has registered three coronavirus vaccines, and on Thursday approved a fourth — a single-dose version of its Sputnik V jab called Sputnik Light.

Related article: [Russia Registers One-Dose Sputnik Light Coronavirus Jab](#)

Moscow has actively pushed Sputnik V — named after the Soviet-era satellite — around the world, with more than 60 countries having approved it for use.

Russia registered the jab in August before results from large-scale clinical trials, but leading medical journal The Lancet has since said it is safe and more than 90% effective.

In addition to the Sputnik jabs, Russia has also registered two other homegrown vaccines, the EpiVacCorona and CoviVac.

'As simple and reliable as a Kalashnikov'

In his meeting with Golikova Thursday, Putin said that while Western countries had developed "innovative" vaccines, Russia's are the safest and most reliable.

"As simple and reliable as a Kalashnikov assault rifle," he said.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which helped finance the vaccine, said in a statement that Sputnik Light "demonstrated 79.4% efficacy" compared to 91.6% for the two-shot Sputnik V.

The state-run Gamaleya research institute, which developed Sputnik V, said Thursday that more than 20 million people globally have received their first dose of the shot.

Russia, however, has struggled to inoculate its own citizens since beginning its jab drive in early December.

Golikova on Thursday told Putin that 9.4 million Russians have been fully vaccinated, while 13.4 million have received their first dose in the country of 144 million people.

Polls show many Russians are skeptical of Covid-19 vaccines.

Last month Putin said he hoped 70% of Russia's adult population will be inoculated by autumn and appealed for all Russians to get a vaccine.

The country has been among the hardest hit by Covid-19 with over 112,000 deaths as of Thursday, according to a tally by health officials.

But authorities have been criticised for downplaying the severity of the pandemic by counting only fatalities where the coronavirus was found to be the primary cause of death after an autopsy.

Figures released by the Rosstat statistics agency last week showed that Russia had actually recorded some 250,000 virus-related deaths by the end of March.

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