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Majority of Europeans Don't Trust Russia's Coronavirus Vaccines – Poll

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A woman receives a dose of the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine at a vaccination center in Zilina, Slovakia. **EPA / TASS**

A majority of Europeans do not trust Russian coronavirus vaccines, according to a study by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) cited by the RBC news website Thursday.

The results come as President Vladimir Putin orders officials to develop a "vaccine tourism" plan and as the European Union's medicines regulator continues its ongoing review of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine. Russia has sought EU approval of the vaccine as it struggles to convince its own population to get vaccinated amid widespread skepticism.

Only 7% of Europeans fully trust Russian-developed coronavirus vaccines, while 26% said they trust them to an extent.

Meanwhile, 30% of European respondents said they slightly distrust Russian vaccines and 25% said they don't trust them at all.

“When it comes to health, Europeans trust Western medicine more than any other, especially when it comes to vaccines,” RBC quoted ECFR experts as saying.

Related article: Putin Wants ‘Vaccine Tourism’ Plan by End-June

Trust levels varied by country, with about half of respondents in Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria saying they trust Russian vaccines versus just 12% in Poland who said the same.

Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine has been undergoing a rolling review with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) since March. The World Health Organization is also wrapping up its own review of Sputnik V and preparing a report with its recommendations.

EU members Hungary and Slovakia broke with the bloc by granting emergency use authorization to Sputnik V ahead of the EMA decision.

Some members however have voiced reluctance over Sputnik V, saying EU approval of the vaccine would give Russia a geopolitical win.

Kirill Dmitriev, the head of Russia’s sovereign wealth fund that funds and markets Sputnik V, has described the EMA’s approval process as “An absolutely working process … which, we hope, will not be politicized.”

The ECFR’s survey was conducted by the Datapraxis, YouGov, Dynata, AnalitiQs and Alpha pollsters among 17,200 people from 12 European Union member states from March-April 2021.

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