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Slovakia Ends Vaccination With Russia's Sputnik V Amid Slow Uptake

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EPA / TASS

Slovakia on Tuesday announced it will halt the use of the Russian-made Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine due to low demand among its population.

"Today [*Tuesday*] is the last day when citizens of Slovakia who wanted to vaccinate can get the second dose of the Sputnik vaccine," the state-run TASS news agency quoted the European Union member's health ministry as saying.

In total, only 18,500 Slovak citizens are said to have received both doses of the Russian vaccine. Slovakia had sold most of its Sputnik V doses back to Russia this summer, citing low demand.

Related article: Slovakia Health Minister Resigns Over Sputnik V Dispute

Slovakia first received 200,000 doses of Sputnik V in March of this year despite the vaccine

not yet being authorized by the EU. Its purchase of the vaccine pushed the small central European country into a political crisis that ended in the resignation of Prime Minister Igor Matovič after his coalition partners accused him of acquiring the vaccine without their approval.

Sputnik V's EU approval has been beset by repeated delays since the bloc launched a rolling review of the vaccine this spring. Last month, Reuters reported that the EU's review of Sputnik V could be delayed until after the summer over data shortcomings and the vaccine maker's perceived lack of experience with overseas regulators.

Hungary is currently the only EU country to have bought and used considerable quantities of Sputnik V.

A recent Russian independent real-world study of the jab's effectiveness in combating severe infections showed that the vaccine was 81% effective at preventing hospitalization among people who had contracted a symptomatic infection of the more-contagious Delta variant.

Peer-reviewed research published in The Lancet in February placed its effectiveness at preventing Covid-19 infection at 91.6%.

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