

EU Greenlights Talks for Possible Sputnik Procurement After Dubbing Russia's Rollout "Propaganda"

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Reuters in a new report has admitted the "unthinkable" now looks very possible: despite Europe's fierce public criticism of Russia's coronavirus vaccine, [it found that](#) "Behind the scenes, the bloc is turning to Moscow's Sputnik V shot as it tries to get its stuttering efforts to vaccinate its 450 million people back on track, EU diplomatic and official sources told Reuters."

At least four EU states are now said to be seeking procurement via the bloc and Brussels has greenlighted formal talks with Sputnik V's developers at a moment anger and public pressure is mounting over a slow vaccine roll-out.

"Hungary and Slovakia have already bought the Russian shot, the Czech Republic is interested, and the EU official said Italy was considering using the country's biggest vaccine-producing bioreactor at a ReiThera plant near Rome to make Sputnik V," Reuters notes.

Somewhat absurdly, and as a reminder that actual science and public health more often takes a far backseat to political calculation and questions of 'perception', resistance to dealing with Russia in addition to the six Western vaccine makers the EU currently has agreements with has more to do with not allowing Moscow a "win".

This is precisely what's at issue, as *Reuters* [also admits](#):

If Sputnik V were to join the EU's vaccine arsenal, it would be a diplomatic triumph for Russia, whose trade with the bloc has been hamstrung for years by sanctions over its annexation of Crimea and its intervention in eastern Ukraine.

It would also risk dividing the bloc between those states dead set against giving Moscow any kind of win and those in favor of showing that Brussels can cooperate with the Kremlin.

As a prime example of this kind of fear-driven motivation fueling the controversy and

debate, just last week Charles Michel, who chairs summits of EU leaders, reiterated a [commonly echoed theme among diplomats and Western officials](#): “We should not let ourselves be misled by China and Russia, both regimes with less desirable values than ours, as they organize highly limited but widely publicised operations to supply vaccines to others,” he said.

Michel added, “Europe will not use vaccines for propaganda purposes.”

Thus the bloc’s mere willingness to even enter talks with Sputnik V developers shows Brussels is fast changing its tune amid vaccine roll-out delays, with the pragmatists on the issue appearing to now take the driver’s seat.

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