

Serbia gets Chinese-made Sinopharm jabs

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Serbia became one of the first European countries to receive a Chinese-made COVID-19 vaccine on Saturday when one million doses of a jab produced by Sinopharm arrived at Belgrade airport.

President Aleksandar Vucic posted a picture of himself on Instagram, standing next to the plane carrying the vaccine.

"We are proud of our friendship with China," he was quoted as saying by Beta news agency, telling reporters that he hoped to be inoculated with the Sinopharm vaccine in six or seven days.

After Pfizer-BioNTech and Russia's Sputnik V, Sinopharm's is the third [coronavirus](#) vaccine to be used by the Balkan nation.

Once the Chinese vaccine gets a final approval by Serbia's medicines agency, vaccination could start on Sunday or Monday, health official Zoran Gojkovic said earlier.

The European Union-candidate country, which has also close economic and political ties with Moscow and Beijing, started vaccination with Pfizer-BioNTech jabs on December 24 and later imported Russian Sputnik V vaccines.

Sinopharm says its [vaccine](#) is 79 percent effective against the novel coronavirus, compared with rates of 95 percent and 94 percent respectively for the rival jabs made by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

Another Chinese-made jab, Sinovac's CoronaVac, was rolled out in Turkey on Thursday, after tests there showed it to be 91.25 percent effective.

But more robust trials in Brazil demonstrated an efficacy rate of around 50 percent.

So far, some 20,500 people—residents of retirement homes and health sector employees—have been vaccinated in Serbia, a country with a population of seven million, the national immunisation team said Friday.

Serbia has registered nearly 370,000 infections and more than 3,700 deaths from the novel coronavirus.

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