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EU not to renew AstraZeneca, J&J Covid-19 vaccine contracts on expiry

A spokesman for the EU Commission said it was keeping all options open to be prepared for the next stages of the pandemic, for 2022 and beyond

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The [European Union](#) (EU) Commission has decided not to renew Covid-19 vaccine contracts next year with [AstraZeneca](#) and Johnson & Johnson (J&J), Italian daily La Stampa reported on Wednesday, citing a source from the Italian health ministry.

"The European Commission, in agreement with the leaders of many (EU) countries, has decided that the contracts with the [companies](#) that produce (viral vector) vaccines that are valid for the current year will not be renewed at their expiry," the newspaper reported.

It added that Brussels would rather focus on Covid-19 vaccines using messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, such as Pfizer's and Moderna's. A spokesman for the EU Commission said it was keeping all options open to be prepared for the next stages of the pandemic, for 2022 and beyond. "We cannot, however, comment on contractual issues," the spokesman added.

Later on Wednesday the President of the European Commission said the EU was in talks with Pfizer and BioNTech for a new contract for 1.8 billion doses, confirming a Reuters report from last week. "We need to focus on technologies that have proven their worth. mRNA vaccines are a clear case in point," she added.

Denmark drops Astra jab

Denmark has become the first country in the [European Union](#) to drop AstraZeneca's vaccine from its Covid-19 inoculation program, according to local media reports.

The country's health authorities are due to brief reporters at 2 pm in Copenhagen. State broadcaster DR was among media outlets to report the decision, without saying how it obtained the information.

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Africa accuses J&J of 'unreasonable demands'

South Africa is facing delays to vaccine supplies because of "unreasonable terms" being demanded by manufacturers including Johnson & Johnson in return for delivering millions of much-needed doses, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said.

EU speeds up J&J jab review

EU's drug regulator is accelerating its review of blood-clot reports with Johnson & Johnson's vaccine and said it expects to issue a recommendation next week. Member states should store doses as they await guidance and EMA will decide whether "regulatory action is necessary."

France says to administer J&J jab as planned

France will use Johnson & Johnson's vaccine as planned despite its suspension in the US, a government spokesman said on Wednesday, adding France had received a first shipment of 200,000 doses. After a slow start, authorities are aiming to speed up France's drive with the target of 30 million people having received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine by mid-June.

J&J vaccine pause shows govt puts safety first: Biden

US President Joe Biden said that the pause on Johnson and Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine showed that the government put safety first. Officials said the delay had much to do with educating physicians about the unique way the clots have to be treated as their desire to study the rare side effect.

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Digital Editor

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