
SERBIA TO BRING IN RUSSIAN EXPERTS TO HELP IT FIGHT CORONAVIRUS

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Aleksandar Vasovic, Reuters

Belgrade

Serbia will bring in Russian doctors and experts to help it fight the coronavirus outbreak and undertake a major disinfection effort, President Aleksandar Vucic said on Thursday.

The arrival by plane on Friday of eight doctors and an unspecified number of other personnel will be the first aid sent by the Kremlin to the Balkan country since the beginning of the outbreak almost a month ago. Serbia sees Russia as its traditional Slavic and Orthodox Christian ally.

This demonstrates how much they (Russia) care for Serbia when times are difficult for themselves, Vucic told a news conference in Belgrade after speaking to Russian President Vladimir Putin by telephone.

Many hospitals in Serbia lacked basic safety gear at the start of the outbreak. The government has since bought equipment and aid has arrived from China and the European Union.

Vucic also said he also spoke by phone with French President Emmanuel Macron and asked him to help Serbia purchase substances to produce chloroquine, a drug which has been tried with some success to treat the coronavirus infection, from French manufacturer Sanofi.

Serbia, a candidate for EU membership, has reported 1,171 cases of coronavirus and 31 deaths. Its authorities introduced an array of measures to counter the disease, including a state of emergency, closing borders and a 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew.

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