

Dutch advance first Covid jabs to Wednesday, last in EU

4 January 2021



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The Netherlands has brought forward its first coronavirus jabs by two days to Wednesday, as pressure grows on the government in the last EU country to launch its vaccination campaign.

Frontline hospital staff across the country dealing with COVID-19 patients will be the first to get inoculated, along with a group of nursing home workers in the southern town of Veghel, the [health ministry](#) said.

"The start of the corona vaccination is brought forward by two days" from its originally scheduled date of January 8, the ministry said in a statement after meeting with [health authorities](#).

Criticism has been growing across the EU of the slow roll-out of coronavirus vaccinations since they began on December 27, with anger mounting in France in particular.

But even by those standards the Netherlands has been lagging behind, with the scheduled start almost two weeks after the first EU vaccinations and nearly a month behind Britain.

Dutch Health Minister Hugo de Jonge is due to [answer questions](#) in parliament on Tuesday over the reasons for the delay.

Officials have previously blamed logistical issues and the need for domestic authorisation.

The Netherlands has since mid-December been under its toughest lockdown since the pandemic began, with all schools and non-essential shops closed and people advised to stay at home.

It recorded 6,671 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, 757 fewer than the previous day.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte had previously promoted an "intelligent lockdown" that was much more lax than most of the Netherlands' European neighbours.

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APA citation: Dutch advance first Covid jabs to Wednesday, last in EU (2021, January 4) retrieved 20 August 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-dutch-advance-covid-jabs-wednesday.html>

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