

# RUSSIAN FEDERATION/WEEKLY REPORT

## Health, Agriculture & SPS issues

### Health



The World Health Assembly voted on 26 May in favor of a resolution that condemned Russian attacks on the health-care system in Ukraine before rejecting a parallel proposal presented by Moscow that Kyiv's representative to the United Nations in Geneva had called a "subterfuge" that presented a "twisted alternative reality" of the conflict. Ukraine's successful resolution, which was backed by member states 88-to-12 with 53 abstentions, raises the possibility that Russia could be suspended from

the assembly if attacks on hospitals and clinics continue. A counterproposal put forward by Russia and Syria, which suggested that Kyiv bears the blame for some civilian deaths, was also rejected on Thursday, 15-to-66 with 70 abstentions. Ukrainian diplomats have accused Russia of copying the language that condemned an "ongoing health emergency in and around Ukraine" while stripping any language that said Russia was to blame. Russian diplomats speaking at the assembly accused Ukraine of trying to use a traditionally apolitical forum to settle scores. Vasily Nebenzya, permanent representative of Russia to the United Nations, told the assembly that it was unacceptable to use the WHO to "stigmatize one country."

**From 27 May, the mandatory wearing of masks in public places is abolished in St. Petersburg,** becoming just a recommendation. This follows from the amendments to the resolution on coronavirus restrictions signed by Governor Alexander Beglov. At the same time, Moscow authorities stop collecting unpaid fines for violating coronavirus restrictions. The city government also compensates residents, individual entrepreneurs and legal entities for the amounts of punishment already paid



**The countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will intensify measures to prevent the importation of monkeypox,** Russia's consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said. "The participants discussed the anti-epidemic measures that are being taken to prevent the importation and spread of the infectious disease on the territory

of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. It was stated that the countries have intensified sanitary-

*quarantine measures at the border,"* the agency said in a report published on its website after a session of the council of heads of authorized agencies in the sphere of sanitary-epidemiological wellbeing of the population of the EAEU countries.

**The Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine has demonstrated higher efficacy against the Omicron strain than two shots of the Pfizer vaccine,** the Gamaleya Institute said. Such data was received as a result of an independent comparative study conducted in the Lazzaro Spallanzani National Institute for Infectious Diseases in Italy by a joint group of scientists from the institute and the Gamaleya Institute. The results of the study were published in the leading peer-reviewed medical journal *Vaccines*.



**The Federal Medical Biological Agency (FMBA) has prepared six million doses of the Convacell coronavirus vaccine to be sent to the regions** after its price registration, which is expected in the coming days, FMBA head Veronika Skvortsova said. *"The vaccine is ready, we now have six million doses. On 28 March, this vaccine was sent to the Health Ministry and the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service for price registration, we are expecting registration shortly. And then everything will again depend on the Health Ministry, on which all procurement depends, not on us,"* Skvortsova said at a meeting of the Federation Council on Wednesday. The vaccine is effective, she said. Skvortsova also said foreign manufacturers are also interested in it.

**Drop in Russia's birth rates slows down.** Russia has managed to decelerate its falling birth rates in the past two years, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said. *"Over the past two years we have managed to slow down the decrease of the combined ratio of birth rates, i.e. the number of births per woman. We may yet have nothing to boast about, it is 1.51%, but still, we did slow down the pace of fall in first and second births,"* Golikova told the State Council presidium on Wednesday. The number of women of childbearing age has dropped by 4.5 million to 7.5 million now over past decade (between 2010 and 2021), she said. *"It was due to these objective circumstances that the number of our first and second births has decreased,"* Golikova said. She also said that third and subsequent births were up by 6.6%.



**Russian Health Ministry denies reports about shortages of reagents for laboratory tests.** Russia is not facing any shortage of reagents for medical laboratory tests, and medical organizations have not reported any such deficits, the Russian Health Ministry said in a statement on Monday. *"The Federal Service for Surveillance in Healthcare [Roszdravnadzor] conducts day-to-day monitoring of inventory shortages of medical goods on the basis of information provided by medical organizations in the constituent territories of the Russian Federation. Medical organizations have not provided any*

information about inventory shortages of medical goods for in vitro diagnostics," the ministry said. The Russian Industry and Trade Ministry, in turn, declared that producers and suppliers of medical equipment, reagents and medical consumables intended for laboratory testing did encounter problems with deliveries to Russia, but the majority of them have already managed to build logistics chains.

## Agriculture, Food & SPS issues

Despite an anticipated record wheat harvest in Russia this year, **Russian regulators are trying to further tightly control grain exports, this time at the Eurasian Economic Union level.**

Fearing re-exports of its grain, Russia wants all EAEU members to impose quotas and duties on grain exports, and also might extend restrictions on shipments to the EAEU that currently expire on June 30. Kazakhstan, which is interested in developing exports, is opposed.

As previously reported, Russia has imposed a ban on the supply of five types of grain and granulated sugar to "neighbours". It includes such types of grain as corn, meslin, rye, wheat and barley. The Russian side is ready for a dialogue on the settlement of the situation with blocked ships with grain located in Ukraine, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andriy Rudenko said on Wednesday. Rudenko also stated this week that Moscow calls for the abolition of restrictive measures imposed against Russian exports, this would contribute to the resumption of grain



supplies to world markets. **Moscow calls on African countries to demand West lift Russia sanctions.** Russia will continue honoring in good faith its obligations to deliver food and fertilisers and calls on African countries to demand the West should lift anti-Russian sanctions in this sphere, Russian Foreign

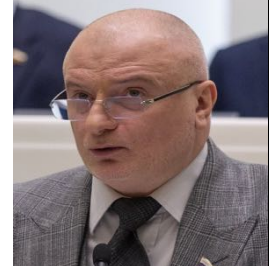
Minister Sergei Lavrov said. "Concurrently, we call on our friends, the African Union, to urge the West to lift the illegal sanctions undermining the transport and logistics infrastructure necessary for global trade," he said. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres should take a "more principled position" on the issue, he said. "We know that African countries are some of the most vulnerable in terms of food security. Part of the continent is critically dependent on the import of agricultural products from the Russian Federation," Lavrov said.



**Ukraine calls the largest grain traders to unite without Russia.** The Ministry of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine reported that Kiev is discussing with the largest grain-producing countries the idea of creating an OPEC grain to protect their interests in the world market. The idea was previously proposed by the Russian authorities to solve logistical problems in supplies in the Black Sea basin, but due to the condemnation by the largest

countries of the world of the Russian Federation's military operation in Ukraine, obviously, now the "Grain OPEC" will be used rather to increase pressure on Russia and displace it from key markets.

**Andrei Klishas calls Russia's import substitution programme a complete failure.** *"The import substitution programme has completely failed. There is nothing but bravura reports of industry agencies. Our people can see this in consumer goods and in many other areas,"* said the senator, Head of the Federation Council Committee on Constitutional Law and State Building.



**Starbucks announced its withdrawal from Russia.** In early March, the chain suspended coffeehouse operations and product shipments. Starbucks will now close its 130 coffeeshops, but

will continue to pay employees' salaries for six months and help their transition to new jobs.

**The new name of McDonald's in Russia will be 'Mc'.** Two Latin letters will be used as the signboard - Mc. The parent company took part in the development of the project branding. The menu at the restaurants conceptually will not change: the names of dishes may be as close to the classic menu of McDonald's. The American company has a return option - in a few years it may buy back its assets. The company announced the conclusion of a deal with franchisee partner Alexander Govor. Under the terms of the agreement, Govor acquires the entire restaurant portfolio of the chain, which will operate under a new brand. For all employees, jobs are retained for at least two years.



**Sales of imported beer in Russia for last month decreased by 30%. The share of foreign beer brands is falling sharply.** The geopolitical crisis and difficulties with logistics have led to a sharp drop in the share and rate of sales of imported beer in Russia. Small and medium-sized producers in Russia of specialty beers are the main beneficiaries of the situation.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade intends to revive wholesale and retail markets in Russia, where everyone can sell their products - farmers and ordinary citizens, including summer residents. This follows from the recommendations describing a similar format of trade that the agency sent to the regions.



Wholesale and retail markets began to disappear in the nineties under the pressure of retail chains. Now they account for only 4% of the country's trade turnover. But in the current situation, such a format may be in demand again. As Viktor Yevtukhov, Deputy head of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said, this approach will help stabilize prices by increasing competition in the food market. In addition, the measure will support the labour market by creating new jobs.



**Agriculture Minister Patrushev could return to Gazprom board.** Russian Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev has been added to list of candidates for election to the Gazprom board of directors at the Russian gas giant's AGM. Patrushev had already served on the Gazprom board from 2016 to 2021 both while head of RusAg Bank and after becoming minister. A list of 11 candidates for 11 seats on the board had

already been approved. They are Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, Energy Minister Nikolai Shulginov, Gazprom chief Alexei Miller, head of Gazprombank Andrei Akimov, Special Representative of the Russian President Viktor Zubkov, Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov, Deputy Gazprom chairman Vitaly Markelov, First Deputy General Director of Gazprom Export Mikhail Sereda, Gubkin Russian State University Rector Viktor Martynov, rector of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration Vladimir Mau and Gerhard Schroeder, former Chancellor of Germany and chairman of the Nord Stream AG shareholders' committee, *"Today, many people are concerned about whether there will be a safe supply to Europe and Germany. If Schroeder is on Gazprom's board of directors, in terms of oversight, a man of integrity and one who acts primarily in the interests of his country - they will have someone who can influence the decisions made and get information,"* President Putin said on 15 February about Schroeder's nomination. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has urged Schroeder to resign from all posts at Russian state companies. He has already announced he was resigning from the Rosneft board.

