

? German Chancellor Angela Merkel rejects patent waiver for COVID-19 vaccines ?

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Berlin, May 7 (RHC)-- German Chancellor Angela Merkel says she opposes a push at the World Trade Organization to waive patent rights for COVID-19 vaccines. Since the WTO operates by consensus, Germany's opposition could derail efforts to transfer vaccine technology to factories in places like India and Brazil.

Over 100 nations, led by South Africa and India, say the move is desperately needed to increase the availability of vaccines in the Global South. They were given a boost this week when the Joe Biden administration said it would no longer oppose a waiver.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday joined the call to waive patent rights on COVID vaccines, while European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the 27-nation bloc was open to debate on the issue. She said: "The European Union is also ready to discuss any proposal that

addresses the crisis in an effective and pragmatic manner. And that's why we are ready to discuss how the U.S. proposal for waiver on intellectual property protection for COVID vaccines could help achieve that objective."

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