

## Hope in 2021

In his [New Year's address](#) on Jan. 1, PM Andrej Babiš said that 2020 was unbelievably sad, difficult and depressing. This year is starting out bleakly as well, he said, but he sees the first ray of hope, and it is the covid-19 vaccine. The rollout will be one of the biggest challenges of the year, he said, but it will allow us gradually to relax the unpleasant restrictions. It is the path back to a normal life, he said, but it will be a long path that takes a few weeks or a few months. He is confident that in a few months we will say to ourselves that we overcame this crisis, just as we overcame others in the past. Two days later he said on [TV Prima](#) that this year will be difficult, and that next year will be too, but that life should return to normal for us in 2023.

Pres. Miloš Zeman said in his [Christmas address on Dec. 26](#) that we should not succumb to the temptation to call for a [further easing of the restrictions](#) and that the light on the horizon is called inoculation. He appealed to fellow Czechs to get a shot, because it will help not only them, but mainly others. Next year at this time, he said, it will be a much more joyous occasion.

Senate Pres. Miloš Vystrčil of ODS said in his [New Year's speech](#) that the path to freedom and to greater safety is vaccination and that he is confident that most people will go down this path once it becomes possible to do so. We should not forget, he said, that stupidity and irresponsibility can kill people too.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in her [New Year's address on Dec. 31](#) that these days and weeks have been hard times for her country and that this is nothing to gloss over. She said that she sees hope in the faces of the first people who get vaccinated and that that there will be more of them with each new day.

French Pres. Emmanuel Macron said in his [Greetings to the French People](#) that our hope is in the vaccine that was

produced in a single year through human ingenuity. That was unthinkable only a few months ago, he said.

Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin said in his [New Year's address on Dec. 31](#) that the Russian vaccine will.... Actually, no he didn't. He didn't mention the word

journalist was talking about. When he got an explanation, he responded that international passes for making travel easier could probably be discussed but that it is common knowledge that vaccinated people can infect others. Vaccination, he said, is mainly about protecting the health

of the one who gets the shot. He is not revealing any secret by saying this, he said. It will also prevent the spread of the disease to some degree, he said, but the purpose of a vaccine is to protect one's own health.

Western politicians who fail to mention this are setting their people up for a big surprise later. Everyone will get excited about returning to a normal life, and then the epidemiologists will throw sand in the gears. Oops, we can't reopen the economy yet, because vaccinated people are getting

infected and are transmitting the disease. We'll have to wait for a nasal vaccine. Or, the UK mutation is starting to attack children, and we don't have a vaccine for them yet, so the lockdowns will remain.

The pattern is clear enough if one looks for it. Western politicians are building up great hope in the vaccine and are placing all their bets on it. They are intentionally playing down or concealing key information that could change everything. One result of this is that Western financial markets are ecstatic about the vaccination possibilities. They aren't taking into account the likelihood that the reopening schedule will be delayed because of the limitations of the covid shots.

From this perspective, it's even possible that all the talk of a covid pass for traveling or entry into events is a smokescreen. How will this be possible if vaccinated people can still infect others?

The covid vaccine certainly provides some hope for 2021, but perhaps even a greater dose of false hope.



vaccine or inoculation at all. Not a single time. He didn't even allude to the vaccine, although Russia was the first to announce one. The epidemic has not completely come to an end, he said, and the fight does not stop for a moment, but he mentioned only healthcare workers and other professionals involved as being the defense against the virus, not a vaccine.

A week earlier he had taken part in the [signing of a memorandum](#) with AstraZeneca on vaccine collaboration, and he used the occasion mainly to stress Russia's adherence to exactly what he said the World Health Organization has called for - joint action on developing vaccines. His office then announced this week that [he had spoken with Angela Merkel](#) about joint vaccine production.

Putin's most revealing comment on vaccines came [on Dec. 17 during his marathon press conference](#). When asked what he thinks about certificates for those who have been vaccinated, he said at first that he didn't understand what the