



European Prosecutors Investigating EU Vaccine Deal after Chat between Von der Leyen and Pfizer's CEO. And Gates' NGO Lobbying

Description

EU: The **European Public Prosecutor's Office** (EPPO) said it has opened investigation into the EU's procurement of COVID-19 vaccines. The announcement follows recent attention on alleged text exchanges between **Pfizer** CEO **Albert Bourla** and **European Commission** President **Ursula von der Leyen** in the lead-up to a procurement contract for up to 1.8 billion doses of the **Pfizer/BioNTech** vaccine **Comirnaty**.

The EPPO didn't specify who or which specific deal is under investigation but said it comes after "extremely high public interest."

"This exceptional confirmation comes in light of the extremely high public interest. No other details will be made public at this stage," the institution's statement reads.

The European Commission has so far concluded contracts for up to 4.2 billion doses of vaccines against COVID-19, according to data on the Commission's website. By September 7, 2022, 1.7 billion doses have been delivered. More than half of the 4.2 billion doses bought or reserved by the EU are supplied by the American-German joint venture Pfizer-BioNTech.

This happened after the journalistic investigation on Gates' NGO lobbying to EU and US politicians and officials.

Number of doses for which contracts were signed:

- BioNTech and Pfizer – 2.4 billion doses
- Moderna – 460 million doses
- AstraZeneca – 400 million doses
- Johnson & Johnson – 400 million doses
- Novavax – 200 million doses
- Valneva – 1.2 million doses
- Sanofi-GSK – 300 milioane doze

- HIPRA Human Health – 250 million doses

Key provisions of the contracts, especially prices, are confidential, an aspect that has been criticized by members of the European Parliament and NGOs.

Following an article published by the New York Times in April 2021 in which it was written that the head of the Commission had exchanged text messages with Albert Bourla in the context of negotiations regarding a contract for the purchase of vaccines, a journalist asked the Commission for access to those messages and other documents related to these discussions.

The EU executive, which was mandated to negotiate the purchase of vaccines on behalf of the member states, agreed to send him three documents (an email, a letter and a press release), but none of the SMS.

The EC argued that it did not keep the SMS, because there is no such obligation, as they are not subject to the transparency rules dating from 2001 of the European institutions.

Early this year, the European ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, reproached the European Commission for refusing to give information to the press about the exchange of text messages between the chief executive of the EU, Ursula von der Leyen, and the chief executive of the Pfizer company, Albert Bourla, on the subject of the purchase of vaccines against COVID-19.

Another scandal broke out in Italy because the funds of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) deriving from Next Generation EU funding ended up in a research project on mRNA vaccines of the University of Padua in which Pfizer, Astrazeneca, Biontech also participate alongside Orgenesis, the American pharmaceutical company in which Heiko Von der Leyen, husband of the President of the EU Commission Ursula, is medical director.

On the cover image EU Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen embraces Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla

by Fabio Giuseppe Carlo Carisio

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