

**Question for written answer E-003056/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Text message case: will the Commission give von der Leyen a phone?

On 14 July 2022, the EU Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly found that the European Commission's refusal to release text messages exchanged between its President Ursula von der Leyen and Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla about purchasing billions of COVID-19 vaccine doses amounted to maladministration¹. Going from a rate of EUR 15 to EUR 19.50 per dose, von der Leyen agreed to spend tens of billions of euros during those negotiations. In 2021, Pfizer thus announced that its revenues had gone up USD 40 billion since 2020².

Following *The New York Times*' revelation in April 2021³ and on the basis of her own investigation, the Ombudsman recommended putting in place a technological solution to allow messages exchanged by text or by any other new form of communication in a professional context to be easily recorded. During her hearing at Parliament on 7 September 2022, she mentioned the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), which provides staff members with work phones that allow all messages to be recorded so they are available if required for an investigation.

1. Will the Commission provide its President with a work phone forthwith to ensure all professional communication is recorded?
2. What sanctions does it envisage for senior staff or cabinet members who do not use their work phones?

¹ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/press-release/en/158303>

² https://www.pfizer.com/sites/default/files/investors/financial_reports/annual_reports/2021/performance/

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/28/world/europe/european-union-pfizer-von-der-leyen-coronavirus-vaccine.html>