

**Question for oral answer O-000004/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 136

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on behalf of the The Left Group

Subject: Commission suppression of messages exchanged between its President and the CEO of Pfizer during negotiations over the ordering of 1.8 billion vaccine doses

To date, the Commission President has refused to provide access to messages she exchanged with the CEO of Pfizer over negotiations which led to the conclusion of a contract for 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine at a cost of EUR 35 billion. That contract endorsed an increase in the price per dose of more than a quarter, from EUR 15.5 to EUR 19.5, which significantly increased Pfizer's margins to the detriment of European interests.

The Commission says that it has not archived the content of these messages and does not keep any 'instant messages' on the basis that they are ephemeral and not intended to contain important information about the Commission's activities. However, the negotiation of such a contract is vitally important in terms of the use of public money and health policy.

The opaque nature of the negotiations conducted by the Commission and the refusal to archive and disclose these instant messages may constitute a violation of citizens' fundamental right to access information. Indeed, the European Ombudsman concluded that there was a breach of EU law in this case. The Commission is accountable to the European Parliament. Its President should therefore appear before Parliament to answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission President acknowledge having acted in an opaque manner, in breach of the fundamental right of citizens to be informed about action taken by public institutions?
2. What was the content of the discussions between the President and Pfizer officials, and how does she explain the increase in the price of the vaccine to the benefit of the manufacturer and the detriment of European interests?
3. What commitments does the Commission intend to undertake so as to revise the rules on access to documents, in force for more than 20 years, as well as its own policy in this area, in order to ensure an acceptable level of transparency and accountability of the European institutions?

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Lapses: 8.5.2022