Resolution on EU transparency in the development, purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines

2021/2678(RSP) - 21/10/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 458 votes to 149, with 86 abstentions, a resolution on EU transparency in the development, purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

Increased transparency

The resolution underlined that the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is a trust test for all Member States and EU institutions that will inform the response to possible future public health emergencies. Full transparency regarding all details of research into and the development, purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is the fundamental prerequisite for enhancing citizens' trust in vaccines and the way in which institutions have spent huge amounts of public funds.

The Commission and the Member States are obliged to work as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizens when negotiating the COVID-19 vaccine contracts with pharmaceutical companies. However, the Commission refuses to disclose the names of the experts or even the seven Member States represented in the joint negotiation team.

Accountability

Given that democratic accountability is a prerequisite if the EU's vaccine strategy is to play an efficient and credible role in global vaccination efforts, Members stressed that the Commission must adequately and efficiently inform Parliament of all aspects of the budgetary implications of research, development, negotiations, distribution and roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in the EU, so that Parliament can fully exercise its duty to scrutinise the implementation of the EU budget.

Parliament expressed its deepest regret on the lack of transparency from the Commission, the Member States and pharmaceutical companies in the development, purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, especially in context of continuous breaches of contracts signed. It emphasised the limitations it has been subjected in its role as co-legislator owing to the opacity of the vaccine strategy adopted by the Commission, which has prevented it from being able to exercise effective control over the vaccine purchase and distribution process, nullifying its ability to scrutinise the correct application of the Union budget.

The Commission is called on to:

- **improve its communication** with the public regarding the EU strategy for COVID-19 vaccines;

- present a **legislative proposal on future joint vaccine procurement** with clear provisions on transparency and competence distribution among the actors of the EU institutional framework and the Member States and on future treatments against COVID-19 and orphan treatments within the framework of the pharmaceutical strategy for Europe;

- review the terms of **price confidentiality** agreements to address the current fragmentation of the European internal market;

- **disclose the members of the teams** involved in negotiating advance purchase agreements and purchase agreements with pharmaceutical companies for the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines;

- ensure **full transparency** by publishing non-redacted versions of the advance purchase agreements and purchase agreements;

- reveal the **prices per dose for each manufacturer's vaccine**;

- provide Parliament with detailed information on **how EU payments were used** by the contracted companies;

- publish and assess the EU's global strategy to ensure the fast and equitable distribution of vaccines worldwide, including its involvement in the COVAX initiative, C-TAP and the cross-border supply of materials needed for vaccine production.