

VON DER LEYEN SUED OVER PFIZER CONTRACTS

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The Commission chief could see her immunity

stripped as she is being sued for €50,000 in moral damages for “undermining the collective faith” in the Belgian state.

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European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was [sued](#) before a Belgian court by a local lobbyist seeking to remove the president’s immunity due to her role in securing COVID-19 vaccine contracts, negotiated partly via classified text messages with Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla.

To recap: the [scandal](#) around the chief commissioner’s shadowy vaccine procurement method has been ongoing since early 2022 when it was revealed that she negotiated the details of the giant, €1.8 billion pharmaceutical deal via text messages with the Pfizer CEO, alongside texts to [her husband](#), family friend, and business associate about the matter—all which she later claimed to have accidentally deleted. The European Commission has been refusing to release the texts ever since, even after the European Ombudsman has repeatedly [called](#) for them to do so.

Her actions prompted dozens of MEPs to [demand](#) von der Leyen’s resignation, [calling](#) the “purchase of 4.5 billion vaccine doses for 450 million EU citizens ... the biggest corruption scandal in human history.” And while the European Public Prosecutors’ Office (EPPO) launched an [investigation](#) into the matter in October, it only counts as an administrative case against the Commission itself, and not von der Leyen personally—which has now changed.

Apart from “usurpation of functions and title,” “destruction of public documents,” and high-level corruption, the recent lawsuit at the national level was filed by Belgian lobbyist

Frédéric Baldan on the grounds that the alleged offenses have potentially undermined Belgium's public finances and public trust, defined in the complaint as "collective faith in the state as an institutional power to work for the common good."

As explained in a recent [interview](#) by Baldan's lawyer, Diane Protat, the primary goal of the complaint is to strip the Commission chief from her immunity for the time of the investigation. Since the court must carry on with the case regardless of who is being accused, the judge might have to ask for a waiver of von der Leyen's diplomatic immunity to move forward.

Once in court, Baldan sees three possibilities. If von der Leyen were to continue with the deleted messages narrative, that would amount to confessing to destroying administrative documents; and if she simply refuses to disclose them, that would violate Belgian constitutional law. And if—as a third option—von der Leyen were to deny disclosure because the texts are private, then there would be grounds for establishing an intimate relationship between her and Bourla, amounting to a "serious conflict of interest in contract negotiations," Baldan said.

Furthermore, Baldan's complaint also points out Pfizer's apparent special treatment within the EU's COVID-19 vaccine procurement program. As the Belgian [Sciensano Public Health Institute](#)'s data shows, out of the 40.4 million vaccine shots Belgium received, 27.9 million (nearly 70%) were produced by Pfizer.

Baldan sues for €50,000 in moral damages, which he decided to pursue last year after attending a conference organized by MEPs [Virginie Joron](#) and [Christine Anderson](#), focusing in particular on the COVID-19 vaccine's side effects.