

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001556/24
to the Commission
Virginie Joron (Pfe)
(27 August 2024)**

Subject: COVID: why was the Commission's 2024 call for tenders for the supply of 146 million vaccine doses open only to mRNA vaccines, despite the AstraZeneca vaccine being cheaper?

COVID 'vaccine' producers had until 6 May 2024 to participate in the call for tenders published on 16 January 2024 by the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) ⁽¹⁾, on behalf of the Commission and 18 Member States, including France, for the supply of an additional 146 million vaccine doses.

In 2023, AstraZeneca reportedly delivered 5 million doses to Member States ⁽²⁾, with Pfizer and Sanofi-GSK each delivering 14 million doses ⁽³⁾. According to the ECDC, most of the vaccines Pfizer supplied that year were 'old generation' doses.

Despite the AstraZeneca vaccine costing less, the Commission's new call for tenders covered only mRNA vaccines.

Given that:

- COVID vaccines have been identified as a possible cause of 12 000 deaths ⁽⁴⁾ in Europe;
 - Pfizer does not indicate how long the protection offered by its vaccine lasts ⁽⁵⁾;
 - The pandemic is over;
1. Which authority decided that, and quantified the extent to which, using a future Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna mRNA vaccine would be less risky than using other existing vaccines (AstraZeneca, Sanofi, etc.) or other techniques?
 2. Which document or study contains the scientific analysis of this comparison with other vaccines (Astra, Sanofi, Janssen, etc.)?
 3. Why did the Commission not take action to stop the deliveries of 'old' doses in 2023 if the difference was deemed to be crucial two weeks later, i.e. on 16 January 2024?

Submitted: 27.8.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission
(18 October 2024)**

On 16 January 2024, the Commission published a call for tender for the supply of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine under the Joint Procurement Agreement (JPA). 18 countries expressed interest to participate in the joint procurement to contribute to their preparedness and security of supply.

The Commission also launched a call for tender for protein-based COVID-19 vaccines under the JPA on 16 July 2024.

Both calls for tender specifically target COVID-19 vaccines tailored to the latest circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants. This is in line with European Regulatory ⁽¹⁾ and the World Health Organisation (WHO) ⁽²⁾ recommendations for updating COVID-19 vaccines strain composition.

The primary purpose of the two calls for tender was to bolster contracting authorities' preparedness and supply security, while guaranteeing access to adapted vaccines.

The calls did not apply a comparative criterion for safety or efficacy between adapted mRNA vaccines and other COVID-19 vaccines, with marketing authorisation in the EU, but both target two different vaccine technologies, based on the needs expressed by the parties to the JPA.

¹ <https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/document/document-old-versions.html?docId=162657>

² In 2024, AstraZeneca requested that its vaccine's marketing authorisation be withdrawn due to the drop in demand (https://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2024/05/08/astrazeneca-retire-de-la-vente-son-vaccin-contre-le-covid-19-pour-raisons-commerciales_6232168_3244.html).

³ <https://vaccinetracker.ecdc.europa.eu/public/extensions/COVID-19/vaccine-tracker.html#distribution-tab> (last updated on 5 October 2023).

⁴ <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory-overview/public-health-threats/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-19-medicines/safety-covid-19-vaccines>

⁵ <https://labeling.pfizer.com/ShowLabeling.aspx?id=16319>

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory-overview/public-health-threats/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-19-medicines/public-health-advice-covid-19-medicines#advice-on-covid-19-vaccines-13334>

⁽²⁾ [https://www.who.int/groups/technical-advisory-group-on-covid-19-vaccine-composition-\(tag-co-vac\)](https://www.who.int/groups/technical-advisory-group-on-covid-19-vaccine-composition-(tag-co-vac))

The COVID-19 vaccine contracts enabled Member States to have access to COVID-19 vaccines adapted to SARS-CoV-2 variants as they received a marketing authorisation within the EU.
