

Citu: Procedure for purchasing vaccines, the same at EU level; Voiculescu signed for 9,000,000 doses

Prime Minister Florin Citu said on Wednesday that the procedure for purchasing vaccines is similar in the European Union and that former Health Minister Vlad Voiculescu signed for the purchase of 28,290,000 doses, of which 9,000,000 CureVac doses.

The clarifications come after, on Tuesday, the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) announced that it has registered a criminal case in which investigations are being carried out regarding the way of purchasing the doses of anti-COVID-19 vaccines. Vlad Voiculescu welcomed the DNA investigation, adding that at a Government meeting in March he argued that there were already a large number of doses ordered, compared to all immunization scenarios.

"This procedure is for the whole EU, as well. We did not do this procedure and I tell you that it is good that it was done like this, because, otherwise, Romania - look at the countries that were not and did not have this negotiation procedure, with the involvement of the European Commission. There were countries that did not get the vaccine, there are countries that pay more for this vaccine, and we would have expected other countries to have the vaccine. So Romania, like all other countries, has received and is receiving vaccine doses by 2023. (...) Now, for example, we are administering the third dose - no one knew that the third dose would be given. These are things to be discussed but it is bizarre to listen to such discussions when it comes to the health of Romanians," he said.

Citu added that the Minister of Health is the one who signs the vaccine orders from Romania and mentioned that Vlad Voiculescu should have said if no more doses were needed.

"The Minister of Health, if he had a problem at a certain time with a certain number of doses, would have said something. (...) Mr. Vlad Voiculescu signed for 28,290,000 doses, Nelu Tataru - for 33 million, I signed for four million doses and Mrs. Mihaila, two months ago, signed for 21,000 doses, so if there were too many, she could say that there was no need. Mr. Vlad Voiculescu has signed for nine million CureVac doses, a vaccine that has never been approved, but the order is signed by Mr. Vlad Voiculescu," the prime minister added.

He noted that at present, of all the contracts negotiated, the European Commission has ensured member states' access to 4.4 billion doses of vaccine by 2023, "ten times more than the EU's population". At the same time, Romania, based on the negotiations made by the European Commission and the agreements signed with the vaccine producers, can access approximately 4.3% of the number of doses authorized at EU level.

"The European Commission's strategy has been to negotiate on behalf of the states - pay attention: on behalf of the member states - with several vaccine companies and to partly pre-finance contracts through emergency support funds. So the European Commission has negotiated on behalf of the states. The vaccine was contracted when the authorization, efficacy and production capacity were still uncertain. You know very well that contracts were signed but we did not know which of the vaccines will be used and when. Access was needed to as many doses as possible and in the shortest possible time, which is why the European Commission and the member states have undertaken to contract a higher number of doses than necessary for the population of the community bloc," Citu said.