

EU rejects AstraZeneca vaccine contract claims

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A senior EU official on Wednesday contested drug company AstraZeneca's explanation for a delay in vaccine deliveries and stressed Brussels is demanding it fulfil its contract.

The British-Swedish firm has a deal with the European Commission to supply 400 million doses of its [coronavirus](#) vaccine, which is expected to get EU approval on Friday.

But, due to what it said was a production shortfall in the firm's European [plants](#), the firm has warned that it will miss its target, while still meeting a separate contract it signed with the UK.

In an interview on Tuesday, CEO Pascale Soriot said the UK had signed its contract three months earlier than the EU and this had given the firm time to iron out "glitches" in British plants.

"As for Europe, we are three months behind in fixing those glitches. Would I like to do better? Of course," he said.

"One of the plants with the highest yield is in the UK because it started earlier," he said.

"Anyway, we didn't commit with the EU, by the way. It's not a commitment we have to Europe, it's a 'best effort': we said we are going to make our best effort."

But the European official contested that, and warned that Brussels would hold AstraZeneca to its contract.

"We contest many of the things in the interview, including the idea that the factories in the UK are reserved for UK deliveries. It's not true," the EU official said

"On the idea of 'best effort', in the contract we have redundancies. So if there is a problem in a plant in Belgium we have capacity in other plants in Europe and the UK."

The European Commission has not revealed the text of its [contract](#) with the firm, citing commercial confidentiality imposed by AstraZeneca, but it is expected to give a detailed response later Wednesday.

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