

# Pfizer defends high cost of COVID vaccine

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The head of Pfizer said Thursday the company's COVID vaccine, among the priciest on the market, is no more expensive than the cost of a meal and will not be sold to poor countries for a profit.

The head of the US-based company defended the cost of the jabs, which he said are saving lives and can help countries emerge from the pandemic.

"Vaccines are very expensive," Albert Bourla said in an interview with several media.

"They save human lives, they allow economies to reopen, but we sell them at the price of a meal," he said in the interview with Les Echos in France, Germany's Handelsblatt, Italy's Corriere Della Sera and El Mundo in Spain.

Developed jointly with Germany-based BioNTech, the Pfizer vaccine is, along with Moderna, the vaccine that has cost the European Union the most, according to data released several months ago by a member of the Belgian government.

And Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov warned earlier this week that Brussels was facing a huge price hike as it negotiates nearly two billion additional doses of the vaccine for the coming

years.

"Pfizer was 12 euros (\$14), then it became 15 euros. Contracts are now being signed... at a price of 19.50 euros," Borissov said on Sunday.

The [prices](#) are in sharp contrast to the vaccine produced by British-Swedish drugmaker AstraZeneca, which vowed not to make a profit on its product during the pandemic and sold it to the EU for less than two euros a unit.

Bourla did not confirm the price of the Pfizer vaccine but admitted that it was sold at a higher price to developed countries like those in the EU or the United States.

"In [middle-income countries](#), we sell it for half the price," he said.

"In poorer countries, including in Africa, we sell it at cost."

However, many observers doubted the Pfizer vaccine was being widely distributed in African countries because the product has to be stored in ultra-cold freezers of about minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit) or below.

Bourla said the company was working on a new formula that would allow the [vaccine](#) to be stored for four to six months at a normal temperature.

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