

Swedish Match says EU bribes totalled 60 million euros

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Tobacco producer Swedish Match claimed Friday it (c) 2012 AFP was offered the opportunity to pay 60 million euros (\$78 million) to thwart new EU tobacco legislation in a [scandal that has cost Europe's top health official his job](#).

"I can say that those are the amounts we are talking about, and I'd also like to stress that for us the amount of money does not matter," company spokesman Patrik Hildingsson told AFP.

Health and consumer commissioner John Dalli said he had been asked to resign on Tuesday after he was cited in a tobacco-linked influence peddling [fraud probe](#).

The European Commission announced his resignation on Tuesday "with immediate effect" following an investigation by OLAF, the EU's anti-fraud office, into a complaint by Swedish Match.

The Maltese commissioner has maintained his innocence, claiming he is the victim of a tobacco lobbying campaign to block tough new rules to make smoking less attractive.

In February, Dalli oversaw proposals that would tighten regulations on the use of flavouring in tobacco, which would have included non-[tobacco products](#) such as snus, or Swedish snuff.

Snus is a moist powder tobacco originating from dry snuff. Though its sale is illegal across the EU, it is manufactured and used in Sweden, which has an exemption, and Norway, which is not an EU member.

Hildingsson said the alleged 60 million euro bribe to a Maltese businessman with links to Dalli would have been paid in two installments, with 10 million euros due before [new legislation](#) was enacted and the remaining 50 million to be paid when the new rules were in place.

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