

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001753/25
to the Commission
Barbara Bonte (Pfe)
(30 April 2025)**

Subject: The secret German report on the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic

Investigative journalists recently revealed the existence of ‘Operation Saaremaa’, a secret German investigation from 2020 that reportedly demonstrates that COVID-19 originated in a Chinese laboratory and not in a market in Wuhan. The report on the investigation was not released and shared with US and German authorities until 2024. The CIA stated in January 2025 that a ‘lab leak’ is the most likely cause.

1. Is the Commission aware of this German report or similar reports from EU Member States?
2. Does the Commission agree with the intelligence services’ assessment and regard a laboratory leak as the most likely cause of the pandemic?
3. If the Commission does not agree with that assessment, on what scientific or factual basis does it maintain the theory that the virus originated in a market in Wuhan?

Submitted: 30.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(24 July 2025)**

The Commission has not been informed by any national or European authority about intelligence indicating that COVID-19 originated in a laboratory.

The Commission cannot take a position on the cited intelligence services’ assessment, as it has not been informed about it.

The Commission closely monitors scientific studies on the origin of SARS-CoV-2 and supports the research of the World Health Organisation (WHO) ⁽¹⁾.

The WHO’s Global Study on the origins of SARS-CoV-2 suggests three possible zoonotic pathways for the introduction of the virus and concludes that the introduction through a laboratory incident is extremely unlikely ⁽²⁾.

Furthermore, a 2023 scientific critical review concluded that the strongest evidence supports a zoonotic over a laboratory origin ⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-statement-who-led-covid-19-origins-study_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/origins-of-the-virus>, WHO-convened Global Study of Origins of SARS-CoV-2: China Part Joint WHO-China Study, page 9.

⁽³⁾ Alwine JC, Casadevall A, Enquist LW, Goodrum FD, Imperiale MJ. A Critical Analysis of the Evidence for the SARS-CoV-2 Origin Hypotheses. mBio. 2023 Apr 25;14(2):e0058323. doi: 10.1128/mbio.00583-23. Epub 2023 Mar 28. PMID: 36897098; PMCID: PMC10127682.