

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004218/25
to the Commission
Gerald Hauser (Pfe)
(27 October 2025)**

Subject: Lack of transparency in the ‘Blue Orchid’ exercise

On the basis of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, EU citizen Frédéric Baldan requested access to all of the Commission’s administrative documents relating to the ‘Blue Orchid’ exercise that was carried out on 8 February 2019, including emails, reports, lists of participants, presentations, recommendations, notes and further documentation. The Commission identified three relevant documents in its assessment. Nevertheless, the request was denied, as according to Article 4 of the above-mentioned regulation, exceptions apply when it comes to the protection of public interest and public security. Therefore, the exact content of the documents still remains under wraps. The incident calls into question the EU institutions’ transparency in dealing with internal security- and health-related exercises.

1. Why are the Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) withholding the documents on the grounds of protecting public security?
2. Why is the Commission not being transparent or reporting openly and honestly on all exercises?
3. How contentious were the findings, given that as yet it there is ‘no published information on this internal exercise’ (E-003130/2025 (ASW) (‘))?

Submitted: 27.10.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(16 December 2025)**

Regulation 1049/2001 ⁽¹⁾ applies to requests for access to documents received by the Commission. Although the disclosure of documents is the principle, certain public and private interests must be protected through specific exceptions.

According to Article 4(1)(a), first indent of the aforementioned Regulation, the Commission must refuse access to a document if its disclosure would undermine the protection of the public interest concerning public security.

Reports from simulation exercises pertain to general emergency responses that have or could have direct impacts on public health. Disclosing these documents would reveal details that could be exploited to jeopardise the public security of the Union.

The Commission has reported to the Honourable Member of the European Parliament in its answer of 23 September 2025 to E-003130/2025 ⁽²⁾, as well as in its answer of 30 June 2025 to E-001040/2025 ⁽³⁾, about the background, scope, scenario, key elements and the nature of specific lessons and conclusions from the exercise.

Findings from simulation exercises are an important tool to assess and, where appropriate, update preparedness plans and working procedures.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003130-ASW_EN.html

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2001/1049/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003130-ASW_EN.html.

⁽³⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001040-ASW_EN.html.