

EN

E-004611/2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(2.2.2026)

1. The Commission designated an EU reference laboratory (EURL) for public health in the field of high risk, emerging and zoonotic bacterial pathogens¹, including Lyme borreliosis, which started its activities in January 2025² and is financially supported by the EU4Health Programme. The EURL has been tasked with supporting national reference laboratories by providing reference diagnostics and test protocols, reference materials, external quality assessments, scientific advice, technical assistance and training. These activities will support Member States in implementing accurate diagnostic methods for Lyme borreliosis.

Treatment of the infection varies across Member States. The organisation and delivery of health services and medical care is a national competence³.

2. The EU has contributed to advancing research on Lyme disease through the Horizon research and innovation framework programmes, as well as the POCTEFA cross-border cooperation programme⁴. Funded projects focused on improving diagnostic accuracy and addressing limitations of testing methods for Lyme disease, contributing to the development of more effective diagnostic tools, as well as on increasing the understanding of the risk of diseases such as Lyme disease. These projects represent an estimated investment of approximately EUR 16.5 million. In addition, the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026 includes an opportunity for research proposals on vector-borne diseases such as Lyme disease⁵.

Direct grants from the EU4Health Programme were allocated to Member States to carry out surveillance in animals and the environment for cross-border pathogens, with a budget of EUR 20 million and for implementation in 2024-2026⁶.

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/892/oj. As per Article 15 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2371/oj>.

² [https://www.rki.de/EN/News/Newsroom/News/Archive/2025-01-20-reference-laboratory.html#:~:text=The%20EURL%2DPH%2DHEZB%20covers,Q%20fever\)%2C%20Rickettsia%20spp.](https://www.rki.de/EN/News/Newsroom/News/Archive/2025-01-20-reference-laboratory.html#:~:text=The%20EURL%2DPH%2DHEZB%20covers,Q%20fever)%2C%20Rickettsia%20spp.)

³ Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

⁴ <https://interreg.eu/programmes/spain-france-andorra-poctefa/>.

⁵ 'HORIZON-HLTH-2026-01-ENVHLTH-01: Towards a better understanding and anticipation of the impacts of climate change on health'.

⁶ CP-g-22-04.01 Direct grants to Member States' authorities: setting up a coordinated surveillance system under the One Health approach for cross-border pathogens that threaten the Union. 2022 Work programme: https://ec.europa.eu/assets/sante/health/funding/wp2022_en.pdf.