

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-005016/25
to the Commission
Daniel Buda (PPE)
(18 December 2025)**

Subject: Fresh outbreak of swine fever

The Spanish authorities are investigating an outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) in Catalonia after genetic testing pointed to a strain similar to one being used in laboratory research. The origins of this strain of the virus are unclear, and the possibility of it having escaped from a research facility cannot be excluded. Although the disease does not affect humans, it constitutes a major risk for the pig-farming sector and European agricultural trade ⁽¹⁾.

1. Has the Commission launched an investigation to ascertain whether the suspicions of this strain of the ASF virus having escaped from a research laboratory are justified?
2. What measures does the Commission have in mind to strengthen biosecurity and control standards at research facilities in the European Union and to protect EU farmers and the European livestock sector, thereby heading off major risks to the EU's internal market and food security?

Submitted: 18.12.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(9 March 2026)**

1. The Commission is closely monitoring the evolution of the African swine fever (ASF) situation in Spain. The Commission organised two missions of the EU Veterinary Emergency Team ⁽¹⁾ experts in December 2025 to advise the Spanish authorities on-the-spot on emergency measures and to support the investigations of the competent authorities on the origin of the virus ⁽²⁾. In this respect, further investigations are ongoing, performed by the ASF-National Reference Laboratory with the support of the ASF European Union Reference Laboratory ⁽³⁾.
2. Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ⁽⁴⁾ ('Animal Health Law') sets basic rules for the application of biosecurity, biosafety and biocontainment measures to prevent the release of animal disease pathogens outside those facilities. In addition, according to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 ⁽⁵⁾, the competent authority must organise audits of the official laboratories they previously designated. The Commission performs controls, including audits, in Member States to verify the implementation of those provisions.

To protect establishment keeping pigs, Annex III to Commission Implementing Regulation (CE) 2023/594 ⁽⁶⁾ provides reinforced biosecurity measures to be implemented in those establishments.

¹ <https://agrointel.ro/343778/ancheta-focarul-de-pesta-porcina-din-spania-ar-fi-fost-provocat-de-un-virus-scapat-din-laborator>

⁽¹⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/veterinary-emergency-team_en.

⁽²⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/754658bf-ec0b-48e7-b9b1-2233de84f122_en?filename=reg-com_ahw_20251215_pres-08.pdf;
https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1c5b6b6b-1fb4-4191-9296-ca1355b16ed1_en?filename=reg-com_ahw_20251215_pres-27.pdf.

⁽³⁾ <https://asf-referencelab.info/eurl-for-asf/>.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, pp. 1 -208, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, pp. 1-142, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj>.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 79, 17.3.2023, pp. 65-150, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2023/594/oj.