

EN

E-000422/2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(8.4.2026)

With regard to gain-of-function research, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answers to Parliamentary Questions E-002369/2025¹ and E-004131/2025², detailing the Commission's risk management measures, eligibility criteria, ethical considerations and security checks to support gain-of-function research on respiratory diseases. It is imperative that all research activities rigorously adhere to established scientific methods, demonstrate measurable scientific excellence, and operate within the bounds of the applicable legal frameworks, including strict compliance with norms, safety regulations, and security standards, particularly when research involves the handling or manipulation of pathogenic viruses.

Beyond ensuring compliance with relevant national, EU, and international legislation, research activities funded through Horizon Europe must also strictly follow the principles of research ethics and integrity³. Any research activity that presents disproportionate or unmitigated risks to human health, the environment, or society at large is deemed ineligible for funding. This ensures that Horizon Europe upholds the highest standards of responsibility, safety, and societal accountability.

With regard to the origin of the COVID-19, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answers to Parliamentary Questions E-003628/2025⁴, E-002534/2025⁵, E-001403/2025⁶ and E-001040/2025⁷, detailing when and from what source EU institutions became aware of a possible upcoming COVID-19 pandemic and the Commission's view of the origin of the SARS-CoV2 virus.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-002369-ASW_EN.html.

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-004131-ASW_EN.html.

³ As spelled out in Article 19 of the Horizon Europe Regulation: ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj>.

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003628-ASW_EN.html.

⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-002534-ASW_EN.html.

⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001403-ASW_EN.html.

⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001040-ASW_EN.html.