

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002067/26
to the Commission
Gerald Hauser (P/E)
(19 May 2026)**

Subject: Hantavirus situation

Just as they did with COVID-19, the mainstream media and vaccination advocates have been stoking fears about the hantavirus for several days now. The virus has, however, been known for decades and infects several thousand people in Europe every year without making many waves thus far. Most infections are asymptomatic or harmless, although in rare cases the disease can prove deadly. In a February 2021 report to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Pfizer listed hantavirus infections as a possible side effect of the COVID-19 vaccine. As early as 2021, the international vaccine alliance GAVI warned that the ‘next pandemic’ could be caused by the hantavirus. Moderna has been working on an mRNA vaccine for several years now. On 8 May 2026, Austria enacted legislation stipulating that the authorities must be notified of any infections or suspected cases of hantavirus. Recently, military doctors were even parachuted on to an island in the Atlantic. However, the WHO Director-General travelled to Tenerife in person and, surprisingly enough, declared there to be no major danger. The WHO has stated that human-to-human transmission is, I quote, ‘uncommon’.

1. Are we, in the Commission’s view, now facing a medical emergency or not?
2. Does the Commission intend to take measures or introduce restrictions in respect of hantavirus infections?
3. Does the Commission intend to authorise an mRNA hantavirus vaccine via a fast-track procedure, as it did for COVID-19?

Submitted: 19.5.2026

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

The Commission is closely monitoring developments related to the hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship and there is close coordination between the Member States in the Health Security Committee (HSC) ⁽¹⁾.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) ⁽²⁾ assessed the risk as ‘very low’ and this is reflected in an opinion of the HSC of 12 May 2026 ⁽³⁾. Hence, there is at this stage no indication that Europe may face a public health emergency that might lead to further measures ⁽⁴⁾.

The development of vaccines for this zoonotic virus is still at an early stage. As regards the potential authorisation of a vaccine against hantavirus, including an mRNA vaccine, the Commission is committed to ensuring that, if an application for marketing authorisation is submitted to the European Medicines Agency (EMA), any such vaccine is subject to rigorous assessment of its safety, efficacy and quality before any decision on authorisation is taken. The EMA recently published information regarding the hantavirus outbreak ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/crisis-management_en#health-security-committee.

⁽²⁾ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control Threat assessment brief: Hantavirus-associated cluster of illness on a cruise ship, May 2026: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/threat-assessment-brief-hantavirus-associated-cluster-illness-cruise-ship-ecdc>.

⁽³⁾ Health Security Committee Opinion on the management of and response to the Andes Hantavirus Outbreak, 12 May 2026: https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/opinion-health-security-committee-management-and-response-andes-hantavirus-outbreak_en.

⁽⁴⁾ Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2372 of 24 October 2022 on a framework of measures for ensuring the supply of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures in the event of a public health emergency at Union level — <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2372/oj/eng>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/news/ema-actively-monitoring-cruise-ship-hantavirus-outbreak>.