

EN

E-002915/2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.10.2026)

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/945 included Lyme neuroborreliosis (LNB)¹, rather than Lyme borreliosis as a whole, as one of the communicable diseases and related special health issues to be covered by the EU epidemiological surveillance network and established a specific case definition². The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) data referred to in the question therefore concerns reported cases meeting this case definition and should not be interpreted as a count of all diagnosed Lyme borreliosis cases in the EU.

The case definition was developed following ECDC scientific advice and consultation with Member State experts³. In particular, the diagnosis of LNB – which is the most severe manifestation of Lyme borreliosis – requires assessment of neurological symptoms and pleocytosis cerebrospinal fluid and/or intrathecal *Borrelia*-specific antibodies⁴; blood testing alone does not establish LNB according to the referenced clinical criteria.

The Commission supports Member States in strengthening laboratory diagnosis of Lyme borreliosis through the EU Reference Laboratory for Public Health on High-Risk, Emerging and Zoonotic Bacterial Pathogens (EURL-PH-HEZB)⁵, which covers Lyme borreliosis. The EURL-PH-HEZB provides reference diagnostics and test protocols, reference materials, external quality assessments, scientific advice, technical assistance and training. In 2026, the EURL-PH-HEZB is providing training on Lyme borreliosis laboratory diagnosis and in 2027 will organise an external quality assessment for national reference laboratories. These activities aim to strengthen knowledge and laboratory capacity on diagnostic procedures used for Lyme borreliosis.

¹ A neurological manifestation of Lyme borreliosis.

² Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/945 of 22 June 2018 on the communicable diseases and related special health issues to be covered by epidemiological surveillance as well as relevant case definitions (OJ L 170, 6.7.2018, p. 1, ELI: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2018/945.

³ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/ecdc-comment-european-commission-updates-communicable-disease-surveillance-list-lyme>.

⁴ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-1331.2009.02862.x>.

⁵ RKI - EU Reference Laboratory for Public Health on "High-risk, emerging and zoonotic bacterial pathogens" <https://www.rki.de/EN/Institute/International-activities/eu-reference-laboratory/EURL-PH-HEZB/eurl-public-health-high-risk-bacterial-pathogens-node.html>.