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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission is closely monitoring studies on the origins of COVID-19 and, based on existing scientific assessments, it believes there is no need for a Commission independent assessment. Current evidence does not definitively support one theory over another, nor question a zoonotic origin.

The World Health Organisation (WHO)'s 2021 Global Study on the origins of SARS-CoV-2 suggested three possible zoonotic pathways for the introduction of the virus and concluded that the introduction through a laboratory incident was extremely unlikely¹. Furthermore, a scientific review indicated that the strongest evidence supports a zoonotic origin², finding no support for virus manipulation through reverse genetics, as such modifications typically show detectable signs in genomic sequence³.

While the presence of a furin cleavage site in SARS-CoV-2 raises questions, similar sites are found in other viruses like influenza⁴, and it remains uncertain whether this site was acquired naturally through mutation or recombination in an intermediate host, or artificially. It is well recognised that coronaviruses are prone to mutations and recombination.

The latest WHO report dated 27 June 2025⁵, concludes that the zoonotic origin remains the best supported hypothesis, and that the laboratory theory cannot be ruled out nor can be proven as the Republic of China has not provided further evidence.

Understanding the origins of SARS-CoV-2 remains incomplete with the evidence currently available, and the WHO urges governments, researchers, and scientists to share information and data from investigations of the earliest human cases. The Commission continues to follow closely the WHO efforts to determine the origin of the virus.

¹ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/origins-of-the-virus>.

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36897098/>.

³ <https://microbenotes.com/gene-cloning-requirements-principle-steps-applications/>.

⁴ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8625184/>, and other coronaviruses like MERS-CoV <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11575293/>.

⁵ <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/independent-assessment-of-the-origins-of-sars-cov-2-from-the-scientific-advisory-group-for-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens>).