

**Priority question for written answer P-003619/2025
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Nadine Morano (PPE)

Subject: Emergency action to prevent the spread of bluetongue

Bluetongue, transmitted by biting *Culicoides* midges, is a disease of African origin affecting cattle and sheep. In 2024, it was present in over 12 000 farms in France, leading to numerous deaths among sheep, abortions among cattle and a decline in output, thus driving up the prices of certain products, particularly lamb and butter. The French Government has had to spend upwards of EUR 100 million on vaccines and compensation.

Veterinary experts and virologists have identified containers of flowers imported from Africa and transiting mainly through the Netherlands, the hub for 70% of the world's flower trade, as the point of entry for the virus. The first outbreaks occurred near warehouses or airports in the Netherlands, in Schiphol and Maastricht, suggesting that infected midges were concealed in the flowers before spreading throughout Europe.

According to veterinarian and virologist Stéphan Zientara, containers should be inspected and sprayed with insecticide to combat the midges.

What emergency action does the Commission intend to take to ensure flower containers from Africa are inspected and sprayed to halt the spread of the virus by midges?

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