

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002072/24
to the Commission
Mireia Borrás Pabón (PfE)
(15 October 2024)**

Subject: Unfair competition for plant protection products

On 19 September 2024, Parliament adopted two objections to the Commission's proposal to apply the same plant protection criteria to EU products and products imported from third countries. Under the current legislation, despite the fact that third-country products containing certain levels of these chemicals are to be allowed to enter the EU — following an impact study showing that they are not harmful — the chemicals continue to be banned for our farmers.

This is further proof that, far from protecting European farmers, the Commission is actually permitting unfair competition, thereby undermining the sovereignty and integrity of our producers.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission intend to continue to present proposals that impose limitations on our farmers and livestock breeders that put them at a disadvantage in relation to third countries?
2. Given that the European Parliament has rejected its proposal for a regulation on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, will the Commission put forward a new proposal that takes account of the views of the primary sector without promoting a political agenda based on climate fanaticism?

Submitted: 15.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(7 January 2025)**

The Commission's draft Regulations ⁽¹⁾ referred to by the Honourable Member aimed at better protecting EU consumers as they lower the vast majority of maximum residue levels (MRLs) in line with the EU rules on the setting of MRLs ⁽²⁾ and with the scientific advice from the European Food Safety Authority.

Decisions on the setting of MRLs are taken with the objectives of protecting consumers from residues in food and facilitating the functioning of the internal market and international trade. The same MRLs apply for domestic production and imports.

Decisions on active substances to be approved for use in Plant Protection Products (PPPs) in the EU are based on a comprehensive scientific assessment considering effects on human health and the environment, in accordance with the criteria set in the PPPs Regulation ⁽³⁾.

Accordingly, it is possible that a substance may not be approved in the EU (and hence may not be available to EU farmers) while MRLs may still be established for that substance that are safe for consumers, allowing for the import of food or feed products.

The directive on the sustainable use of pesticides ⁽⁴⁾ remains in force and the Commission will be looking at ways to further improve the implementation of the directive or assess new legislative initiatives, in dialogue with the Member States and other stakeholders, and based on the recommendation of the Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU Agriculture.

⁽¹⁾ Draft Commission Regulation amending Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for cyproconazole and spirodiclofen in or on certain products; and Draft Commission Regulation amending Annexes II, III and V to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for benomyl, carbendazim and thiophanate-methyl in or on certain products.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC OJ L 70, 16.3.2005, p. 1-16.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1-50.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71-86.