

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000878/25
to the Commission
Paolo Borchia (Pfe)
(27 February 2025)**

Subject: Request for information concerning the potential MLR review and withdrawal of pest control products designed to protect fruit plants from brown marmorated stink bugs

Because fruit crops in many Member States are coming under increased attack from brown marmorated stink bugs (*Halyomorpha halys*), controlling these pests is paramount to protecting crops and ensuring that the EU agricultural sector remains competitive. The products that are used to combat stink bug infestations are essential for protecting fruit crops, particularly in the areas hardest hit by these parasites.

However, pursuant to the EU's directives on food safety and the protection of human health and the environment, some of these pest control products could be subject to maximum residue limit (MLR) reviews, while others could be withdrawn altogether. While maximum residue limits are key to ensuring food safety, they might undermine the effectiveness of anti-stink bug treatments.

In the light of the above:

1. Is the Commission considering introducing new or alternative active substances or technologies that it thinks can safeguard production?
2. Has an assessment been carried out of the economic impact of the above directives on the European agricultural sector and, in particular, the fruit growers who need effective pest control products to combat stink bugs?

Submitted: 27.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(6 May 2025)**

The Commission is aware of the need for new active substances to be used in plant protection products (PPPs) to secure the long-term resilience of farming, nature and health protection.

Research and innovation actions funded under Horizon Europe support sustainable crop protection ⁽¹⁾ by exploring alternatives to chemical pesticides, advancing innovative pest control methods, and providing knowledge to farmers and advisors ⁽²⁾.

The Commission has already simplified the requirements for the approval of microorganisms as biological active substances and, as announced in the Vision for Agriculture and Food ⁽³⁾, intends to propose further measures that accelerate the access of biopesticides to the EU market.

The availability of PPPs to farmers also depends on Member States who, according to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ⁽⁴⁾ are responsible for authorising PPPs containing approved active substance on their market and can apply mutual recognition and extend authorisations to minor uses.

It is also possible for Member States in exceptional cases and for a limited period in time to grant emergency authorisations to address serious dangers to plant health that cannot be contained by other means.

Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 ⁽⁵⁾ on Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) on pesticides in or on food and feed has the main objective to protect consumers' health. MRLs are set at the levels that reflect the authorised uses of plant protection products, i.e. the Good Agricultural Practices.

MRLs must be safe for consumers. In case Member States grant emergency authorisations for products containing active substances for which no MRLs are set, the MRL Regulation provides for an option of setting temporary national MRLs under specific conditions.

⁽¹⁾ More information available at the AgriResearch factsheet on plant health: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/e8a5772e-9fca-4583-a81b-649729068f1e_en

⁽²⁾ See Horizon Europe AdvisoryNetPEST project: <https://advisorynetpest.eu/>

⁽³⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1107/oj/eng>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/396/oj/eng>