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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.7.2025)

The Commission is aware that cut flowers may contain residues of pesticides, whether these flowers are produced domestically or imported. The use of pesticides for the production of flowers in the EU falls within the scope of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 on the placing on the market of plant protection products¹. Potential exposure of workers to pesticides is always assessed prior to their authorisation on the basis of worst-case scenarios to ensure a high level of protection of human health.

As stated in the Vision on agriculture and food², considering EU's concerns about environmental protections and moral values in response to societal demands, the Commission will pursue, in line with international rules, a stronger alignment of production standards applied to imported products, including on pesticides.

There is no EU legislation regulating the levels of residues of pesticides in cut flowers as Regulation (EC) 396/2005 setting maximum residue levels (MRLs) of pesticides³ applies only to food and feed intended for human or animal consumption.

Since 2017, the Commission has held discussions with Member States on residues on cut flowers on several occasions in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed⁴.

As the control of the levels of residues of pesticides in imported cut-flowers is not currently covered by any EU legislations, Member States have the possibility to introduce specific national provision to protect the workers in this sector as it is already the case in one Member State.

¹ 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. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1107/oj>.

² COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A Vision for Agriculture and Food Shaping together an attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations, COM/2025/75 final.

³ 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. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/396/oj>.

⁴ Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed in March 2017, May 2017, July 2017, October 2017, October 2020, March 2022 and May 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/standing_committees/sc_phytopharmaceuticals_en.