

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001736/25
to the Commission
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(30 April 2025)

Subject: Illegal trafficking of pesticides

In June 2024, Europol, supported by Italian, Romanian, Spanish and Portuguese authorities, conducted two major operations to combat the trafficking of illegal pesticides in the EU. The first investigation focused on a company importing counterfeit pesticides from China, while the second investigation targeted a Spanish company illegally importing Portuguese pesticides banned in Spain under the cover of fake denomination of the products.

The EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment report entitled ‘The changing DNA of serious and organised crime’ underlines the growing concerns over the trade in counterfeit and illicit pesticides produced in and imported from Asia to the EU, but also highlights EU-based production networks with advanced equipment operating within the EU.

What actions does the Commission intend to take to combat the illegal trafficking of pesticides, mitigate the negative impact on the environment and ensure the protection of European consumers?

Submitted: 30.4.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(14 July 2025)

The EU Agri-Food Fraud Network (FFN) ⁽¹⁾ works with law enforcement through the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), guided by the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment Report.

EMPACT connects Member States, EU bodies, and international partners to combat serious organised crime. For illegal pesticides, the FFN co-leads with Europol the Operational Action Plan ‘Environmental Crime’ and supports Europol’s Operation SILVER AXE, targeting intellectual property rights protected non-compliant products.

Participants share related information via the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), for secure exchange. The FFN contributes by data sharing, statistical analysis, and trend evaluation.

The Commission audits Member States to assess controls on marketing and use of plant protection products, including detecting fraud.

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) actively detects dangerous goods, as pesticides, and works closely with customs authorities to support cross-border investigations. OLAF has coordinated a joint customs operation on dangerous substances, including pesticides, in the context of the Asia-Europe Meeting ⁽²⁾.

Moreover, OLAF provided support and specialised intelligence for operations leading to the interception of a significant consignments of illegal pesticides in Bulgaria and Romania ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission works with partner countries at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development fighting illegal trade in pesticides and remains committed mitigating negative impacts of illegal pesticides on environment, thus ensuring the protection of European consumers.

⁽¹⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/agri-food-fraud/eu-food-fraud-network_en.

⁽²⁾ https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/media-corner/news/operation-noxia-olaf-leads-operation-against-dangerous-substances-2023-10-16_en.

⁽³⁾ https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/media-corner/news/11-tonnes-pesticides-seized-thanks-olaf-and-bulgarian-authorities-2023-03-31_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/media-corner/news/romanian-authorities-seize-1000-litres-counterfeit-pesticides-valued-over-eu600-000-thanks-olafs-2024-10-03_en.