

EN

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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.8.2025)

The Commission's 2022 Drone Strategy 2.0¹ sets out a vision for the further development of the European drone market to unlock the potential of new, innovative aerial services, and to support drone research and production in Europe. It recognises that drones will contribute to leverage European research, innovation, and entrepreneurship to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal and Digital Europe.

Article 9 of the Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD)² allows Member States to issue derogations under specific conditions to allow aerial spraying of plant protection products (PPPs), including by drones. Many Member States already issue such derogations to allow aerial spraying by drones.

The Commission is considering a legislative proposal to amend Article 9 of the SUD with a view to eliminating the requirement that farmers must submit individual applications for aerial spraying of PPPs once relevant conditions are met. This could include aerial spraying by drones.

The February 2025 Commission Communication on a Vision for Agriculture and Food³ states that precision farming and data-based solutions can increase profitability through the optimisation of inputs.

Various Horizon Europe projects have been addressing this topic. Notably, ICAERUS⁴, SPADE⁵, and the recently concluded CHAMELEON⁶ project have tested the use of unmanned aerial vehicles solutions, including drones, for spraying and other uses in agriculture with combined investment of over EUR 17 million.

The Commission believes that further reflections with all stakeholders are needed on the topic and this work is ongoing.

¹ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/air/aviation-safety/unmanned-aircraft-drones_en.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/128/oj/eng>.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0075>.

⁴ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060643>.

⁵ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060778>.

⁶ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060529>.