

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003063/25
to the Commission
Lena Düpont (PPE), David McAllister (PPE), Jens Gieseke (PPE)
(23 July 2025)**

Subject: Ban of thiacloprid

Tea from India is an important commercial good and also a cultural good that has connected India as a producer country and Europe as a consumer region for almost 200 years. The Assam region in particular produces an important variety of black tea that is indispensable for East Frisian tea. East Frisia has been a tea-drinking region for around 300 years, and since 2016, East Frisian tea culture has been recognised by Unesco as an example of intangible cultural heritage. The traditional East Frisian tea plays a fundamental role in this regard.

The recent ban on imports of thiacloprid and the abolition of import tolerances pose an existential threat to the tea trade, particularly for Assam tea. Suppliers have already announced that delivery will be difficult in 2026 and impossible by 2027 at the latest. This would also make it impossible to produce East Frisian tea, as the tea from Assam cannot be replaced with other varieties from other regions.

1. Is the Commission aware of the economic consequences for the European tea sector?
2. Does the Commission support the restriction of choice for consumers?
3. When the Commission decided to ban thiacloprid, did it consciously accept this threat to cultural heritage?

Submitted: 23.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(17 October 2025)**

Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 ⁽¹⁾ establishes maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides across the EU, thereby ensuring food safety and a high level of consumer protection.

This regulation ensures that all food products comply with consistent, health-based safety standards, making it easier for consumers to trust the food they purchase.

The approval of thiacloprid in the EU was not renewed ⁽²⁾ due to the contamination of groundwater with potential carcinogenic metabolites as toxic for reproduction Category cB.

The Commission proposed an initial draft regulation to maintain, among others, an import tolerance for thiacloprid MRLs in tea ⁽³⁾, that was rejected by the European Parliament ⁽⁴⁾.

This proposal was based on a risk assessment conducted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) prior to the EU's adoption of the latest criteria on endocrine disruptors.

Following this rejection and due to concerns about the potential endocrine effects of thiacloprid, the Commission prepared a new regulation provisionally lowering all the MRLs for thiacloprid until EFSA completes a further assessment ⁽⁵⁾.

In this process, the Commission was informed by stakeholders about the potential impact of the envisaged measures on Indian tea imports, especially given the heavy reliance on thiacloprid to manage mosquito bugs.

Alternative plant protection solutions were discussed, and the Commission discussed the matter with Member States before the finalisation of the regulation. As a result, a transition period was provided for products already on the market before the regulation became applicable.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/396/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/23 of 13 January 2020 concerning the non-renewal of the approval of the active substance thiacloprid, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and amending the annex to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011 (OJ L 8, 14.1.2020, p. 8, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2020/23/oj).

⁽³⁾ G/SPS/N/EU/651.

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0016_EN.html.

⁽⁵⁾ Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/2711 regarding the maximum residue levels for thiacloprid in certain products.