

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003474/25  
to the Commission  
Sergio Berlato (ECR)  
(8 September 2025)**

*Subject:* Strategy for the future of the bark beetle

At various times in the past, in various EU countries, the bark beetle has reached the epidemic phase, causing massive damage to forests and their natural role in protection, production and the landscape. In order to eradicate the insect, Member State authorities have adopted preventive monitoring measures over the years involving wildlife rangers, bloodhounds, drones, traps baited with synthetic pheromones and immediate clearance of infested wood. Forests cover 43.5% of the EU's surface area and the wood they produce can account for 20% of the revenue of EU manufacturers (397 000 companies <sup>(1)</sup>).

In order to better understand the future plans to protect forests and eradicate pests such as the bark beetle, I would ask the following:

1. What steps are being taken to curb the spread of the bark beetle that is destroying Italian and European woodlands?
2. How will the Commission specifically encourage Member States and regions to share their monitoring plans, digital tools and best practices in plant protection management?
3. Is it possible to strengthen the EU Forest Strategy mechanisms, promoting specific areas of research on forest restoration in order to protect and restore native species?

Submitted: 8.9.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission  
(3 November 2025)**

Bark beetles are a large group, many of which are native to the EU. Non-European *Scolytinae* beetles are considered Union quarantine pests <sup>(1)</sup> and Member States are obliged to carry out surveys for their presence and take all necessary eradication measures if detected <sup>(2)</sup>.

The Commission facilitates sharing of best practices with regular committee meetings and working groups. Emergency measures can also be taken at Union level. EU co-funding can be provided to Member States in case of outbreaks or for general surveillance.

For native pests, there is no legal basis for Union measures, but other funds are available. For example, intervention SRD12 of the Italian Common Agricultural Policy Strategic plan 2023-27 provides for EU co-funding of investments in prevention of forest damage.

Measure 8 of the regional rural development programmes 2014-2022 supported such investments in forest areas. Some Italian regions <sup>(3)</sup> affected by the native bark beetle have used the funds for implementing initiatives helping contain infestations.

Several EU funded projects <sup>(4)</sup> supported sustainable forest management, resilience against threats like bark beetle, as well as tools for early detection. Under Horizon Europe <sup>(5)</sup>, a European co-funded partnership <sup>(6)</sup> is proposed to address pest outbreaks and support forest resilience, protection and restoration.

Protecting, restoring and enlarging EU's forests is a key pillar of EU Forest Strategy. Deliverables like voluntary guidelines on closer to nature forest management support forest owners in preventing bark beetle outbreaks by promoting mixed and heterogenous forests.

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<sup>1</sup> 2018 figure.

<sup>(1)</sup> Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 of 28 November 2019 establishing uniform conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and the Council, as regards protective measures against pests of plants, and repealing Commission Regulation (EC) No 690/2008 and amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019, OJ L 319, 10.12.2019, p. 1-279.

<sup>(2)</sup> Article 17 and Article 22 of Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament of the Council of 26 October 2016 on protective measures against pests of plants, amending Regulations (EU) No 228/2013, (EU) No 652/2014 and (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directives 69/464/EEC, 74/647/EEC, 93/85/EEC, 98/57/EC, 2000/29/EC, 2006/91/EC and 2007/33/EC, OJ L 317, 23.11.2016, p. 4-104.

<sup>(3)</sup> Such as Veneto and Emilia-Romagna.

<sup>(4)</sup> HOMED: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/771271>; B4EST: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773383>; RESONATE: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101081420>; FORSAID: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101134200>.

<sup>(5)</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en).

<sup>(6)</sup> 'Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future' [https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON\\_HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBO-15](https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBO-15).

The Nature Restoration Regulation plays also a key role in strengthening forest resilience and restoring areas degraded by disasters such as bark beetle outbreaks.

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