

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003895/25
to the Commission
Barbara Bonte (P/E)
(3 October 2025)**

Subject: Relevance of biocides for farmers: response to the statement by DG SANTE

During the ENVI meeting on 22 September 2025, Mr Berend, Director for Food Safety, Sustainability and Innovation at DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), responded to the intervention by MEP Bonte. He stated that the link with agriculture in her question about biocides was not relevant and therefore did not address it. In his view, biocides are not relevant to agriculture. However, this approach is difficult to reconcile with both EU legislation and practice.

The Biocidal Products Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 regulates the use of biocides in the Union. The main farmers' representative in Flanders and East Belgium — the *Boerenbond* (Farmers' Union) — emphasises that biocides are indispensable in the sector, particularly in disinfectants for greenhouses, stables and buildings, but also in rodenticides, cleaning agents for milking equipment, hoof care products, udder disinfectants and insecticides.

Since 2024, a mandatory biocidal products register has been in place for farmers active in animal production, which requires such farmers to record every use they make of such products. At the same time, farmers face high costs and are hindered by limited choice, as generic biocides are often unavailable or arrive too late.

Could the Commission therefore explain the following:

1. On what basis did Mr Berend (DG SANTE) make his statement/reject the link with agriculture?
2. What measures are being taken to prevent data protection rules from hindering the authorisation of generic biocides and thereby driving up prices artificially?
3. What steps are being taken to reconcile commercial interests with affordable and safe biocides for farmers?

Submitted: 3.10.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(27 January 2026)**

During the Environment, Climate and Food Safety Committee meeting on 22 September 2025, the Commission representative understood that the Honourable Member's question referred to delays or non-availability to farmers of products used to protect plants, which are plant protection products and not biocidal products, and, therefore, replied that there was no link with the discussion about data protection for active substances in biocidal products.

The Commission agrees that the examples of biocidal products referred to by the Honourable Member in this question are important for farmers.

The Commission has recently adopted a proposal ⁽¹⁾ to modify Article 95(5) of Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 ⁽²⁾ concerning the expiry of data protection for existing active substances which are still under examination in the review programme, with the view to find a balance between the interests of review programme participants, on the one side, and the interests of alternative suppliers of active substance, applicants for product authorisation, and users of biocidal products, on the other side.

The proposal aims to maintain conditions for fair competition on the EU market, which will benefit producers and users of biocidal products, including farmers.

It proposes to modify the data protection duration for existing active substances still under examination in the review programme by extending it until 31 December 2030, but does not propose to modify the data protection duration submitted for product authorisation, which is limited to 10 years after the product is authorised ⁽³⁾.

The proposal contributes to preserving a balance between the commercial interests of the review programme participants and the need for affordable and safe biocidal products for farmers.

⁽¹⁾ Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation 528/2012 as regards the extension of certain data protection periods, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=COM:2025:1020:FIN>.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2012 concerning the making available on the market and use of biocidal products; OJ L 167, 27.6.2012, pp. 1-123. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/528/oj>.

⁽³⁾ As set out in Article 60 of Regulation (EU) No 528/2012.