

EN

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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.4.2026)

Directive 2009/128/EC¹ provides an overall prohibition of aerial spraying. However, Member States may grant derogations for special situations and under defined conditions.

Considering that application of plant protection products (PPP) by drones can reduce the risks on human health (e.g. operators) and the environment, the Commission prepared a proposal to amend Directive 2009/128/EC through the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Package² adopted on 15 December 2025. It proposes to allow Member States to grant a general derogation from the prohibition on aerial spraying for certain types of drones identified by the Commission in a delegated act as applying PPP under equivalent or lower level of risks.

The Commission will adopt a delegated act listing the types of drones that could be used for aerial spraying.

The proposed specific rules would complement the requirements set in Regulations (EU) 2019/945³ and 2019/947⁴, including on the competence of pilots, the operational limitations, and technical and operational parameters.

EU-funded projects have tested the potential of unmanned aerial vehicles solutions, including drones, for pesticide spraying and other uses in agriculture, with combined investment of over EUR 17 million.

Through their Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans, Member States may support a wide range of investments. Investments in precision farming can contribute to the competitiveness and profitability of farms by reduced production costs and improved environmental performance by reduced inputs (e.g., water, energy, fertilizer or PPPs), leading to greater environmental benefits.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02009L0128-20190726>.

² https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f08402e6-de66-4082-bf8d-ec3aff7787bb_en?filename=horiz_omnibus_dir_com-2025-1021-1part1.pdf.

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2019/945/oj/eng.

⁴ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/947/oj/eng.