

EN
E-001883/2026
Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.8.2026)

Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residues levels (MRLs) of pesticides¹ ensures the safety of food and feed products, for both domestically and imported products, through a rigorous, science-based risk assessment process.

The Regulation allows setting MRLs for imported agricultural products that contain residues of active substances, but only if these MRLs are safe for EU consumers. This possibility contributes to food and feed security – in particular for commodities for which the EU is not self-sufficient – while ensuring that imported food meets the EU's high safety standards.

As regards the specific substances referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission has adopted a Regulation on 8 July 2026 to lower all MRLs for carbendazim, benomyl and thiophanate-methyl to the technical zero².

More generally, in the Vision for Agriculture and Food³, the Commission announced that it will establish a principle that the most hazardous pesticides banned in the EU for health and environmental reasons are not allowed back to the EU through imported products. To advance on this, the Commission has launched a study⁴ that will inform an impact assessment that will consider the impacts on the EU's competitive position and the international implications and, if appropriate, amendments to the applicable legal framework will be proposed.

The Commission has also proposed in the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Package⁵ to establish the possibility to lower MRLs to the technical zero for the most hazardous substances⁶ not approved in the EU on a case-by-case basis, if considered appropriate, in the light of the outcome of substance-specific assessments.

¹ OJ, L70, 16.3. 2005, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/396/oj>.

² OJ L, 2026/1546, 9.7.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/1546/oj>.

³ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/mex_25_2809/MEX_25_2809_EN.pdf.

⁵ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/simplification-legislation_en.

⁶ Substances having one or more of the following characteristics: Mutagen Cat. 1A or 1B; Carcinogen Cat. 1A or 1B; Toxic for reproduction Cat. 1A or 1B; Persistent organic pollutants (POP); Persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) substances; very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB) substances; as well as Endocrine disruptors for human health and/or for non- target organisms.