

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001932/26
to the Commission
Daniel Buda (PPE)
(11 May 2026)

Subject: Ensuring a genuine transition period prior to the withdrawal of essential active substances

The withdrawal of active substances used in agriculture is often portrayed as part of a necessary process of adapting to meet environmental and public health objectives. However, in many cases, farmers are seeing the essential tools they use to protect their crops being removed before any viable, affordable and effective alternatives are widely available. This approach is creating real production difficulties and has exposed farms to significant economic risk.

A credible transition cannot be built around premature bans followed by belated solutions. At a time when farmers are being required to produce more sustainably, the Union must ensure they have the necessary technical means to do this in practice, not just theoretically. Without a solid adaptation period, the competitiveness of European agriculture will be affected, with the burden of that adaptation falling disproportionately on producers.

Can the Commission state whether it will introduce a binding principle making the withdrawal of essential active substances conditional on there being viable alternatives whose worth has been proven in practice and which farmers in all Member States can afford?

Submitted: 11.5.2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(9 July 2026)

In the Vision for Agriculture and Food ⁽¹⁾, in response to farmers' concerns about their ability to ensure production and food security, the Commission announced that it will carefully consider any further ban of pesticides if alternatives are not yet available ⁽²⁾.

In that regard, as part of the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Package ⁽³⁾ adopted in December 2025, the Commission has proposed to modify Article 4(7) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ⁽⁴⁾ to clarify its applicability to allow active substances that do not fulfil certain approval criteria to be approved for a period of five years when they are needed to control a serious danger to plant health or plant production, when no equally effective and affordable alternatives are available (chemical or non-chemical).

The derogation will not be available for active substances with the most severe hazards for health and the environment and approval of active substances under the derogation must be subject to risk mitigation measures to ensure that exposure of humans and the environment is minimised.

The Commission's proposal also includes the possibility for Member States to grant longer grace periods for the distribution and use of plant protection products (PPPs) containing active substances the approval of which could not be renewed (of up to three years). This would give farmers additional time to find alternative solutions and additional time for Member States to authorise alternative PPPs.

⁽¹⁾ COM/2025/75 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0075>.

⁽²⁾ Unless the pesticide in question represents a threat to human health or to the environment that agriculture relies upon for its viability.

⁽³⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/simplification-legislation_en.

⁽⁴⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1107/oj>.