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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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Pesticide residues in food placed on the EU market, whether produced in the EU or imported, are subject to strict rules, including the setting of maximum residue levels (MRLs)¹, and are systematically monitored by the Member States' competent authorities. The results are summarised in annual reports by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). EFSA's latest report² shows a 98.2% compliance rate with MRLs based on 86,449 samples analysed across a wide range of products in the Member States. When non-compliances are detected, Member State authorities take measures that are proportionate to the risk for consumers. Non-compliant goods are either stopped at the border and not allowed on the EU market or withdrawn from it.

In addition to the current EU monitoring and enforcement framework, the Commission launched in January 2026 a Task Force on Import Controls³ to improve the harmonised implementation of import controls across the EU, including for pesticide residues, and to ensure that food placed on the EU market is safe.

The Food and Feed Simplification Package⁴ aims to stimulate innovation and accelerate market access for new biocontrol substances and plant protection products (PPPs) containing them while ensuring that farmers have access to essential PPPs for which alternatives are not available, especially when a serious danger to plant production is identified⁵. The Commission has also proposed that Member States can grant longer grace periods for distribution and use of existing stocks of PPPs when their authorisations must be withdrawn. During the negotiation of the proposed Package, the Commission and the Member States remain bound by the current legislative framework.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC, OJ L 70, 16.3.2005.

² <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2026.10054>.

³ Import controls of food and feed Q&As - Food Safety: https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/official-controls-and-enforcement/import-controls-food-and-feed-qas_en.

⁴ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/simplification-legislation_en.

⁵ For this purpose, the Commission has proposed amendment to Article 4(7) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.