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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.10.2025)

Infection with bluetongue virus (BTV) is a vector-borne disease that has been present in the EU for decades.

Regular introduction into and spread within the Union of different BTV serotypes has occurred due to the natural dispersion of the vectors from infected areas during that time. Possibly due to climate change, the abundance, persistence, and expansion of vectors is higher and occurs during longer periods, favouring a more efficient transmission of infection with BTV. BTV spread through insect vectors present in the packages of consignment goods such as flowers or in the means of transport cannot be excluded either.

Due to the widespread presence of the disease, the favourable ecological conditions for the vectors in the EU, and the very many potential sources of BTV and introduction and spread routes, there are no suitable proportionate and effective emergency actions, in particular in flower consignments that Commission envisages to adopt.

On the other hand, there is already a robust legal EU framework provided for by Regulation (EU) 2016/429¹ and subsequent delegated and implementing Commission acts to deal with animal diseases, including BTV². They are based on latest science and risk assessments by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), on expert opinions solicited during the creation of those acts, and conforming to the international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health.

¹ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>.

² https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/surveillance-eradication-programmes-and-disease-free-status/bluetongue_en.