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DRAFT REPORT

on ensuring the faster registration and uptake of biological control agents
(2025/2086(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

(Joint committee procedure – Rule 59 of the Rules of Procedure)

Rapporteurs: Alexander Bernhuber, Anna Strolenberg

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on ensuring the faster registration and uptake of biological control agents (2025/2086 (INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 114 and 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC¹ ('Regulation 1107/2009'),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development under Rule 59 of the Rules of Procedure (CJ14/10/02783),
 - having regard to the Commission proposal of 22 June 2022 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 (COM(2022)0305),
 - having regard to its draft resolution laying down a legal definition and categorisation of biological control substances in the sustainable use of plant protection products,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'A Farm to Fork Strategy – for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system' (COM(2020)0381) and the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – Bringing nature back into our lives' (COM(2020)0380),
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development under Rule 59 of the Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A10-0000/2025),
- A. whereas a plant protection product (PPP) is a product containing a substance that prevents, destroys or controls a harmful organism ('pest'); whereas biological control is a method of controlling pests using other organisms or parts of them, often in combination with physical techniques, to disrupt pest reproductive cycles or limit crop susceptibility to pests;

¹ OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1107/oj>.

- B. whereas the authorisation of biological control products also falls under Regulation 1107/2009, used for the authorisation of PPPs, yet they do not have the same risk profile as ‘traditional’ PPPs;
- C. whereas there is currently no harmonised legal definition of biological control;
- D. whereas biological control agents can be active substances, products and agents that exert a pesticidal action and that contain one, or more than one, biological control agent;
- E. whereas biological control can occur via: (a) living microorganisms (such as fungi, bacteria and viruses, or non-viable microorganisms), (b) semiochemicals (pheromones), (c) extracts from natural sources, in particular plants and algae, and substances produced by microorganisms, (d) substances identical to those produced by biological organisms or that are constituents of biological organisms (such as functionally identical peptides and proteins), and (e) inorganic substances as occurring in nature, with the exception of heavy metals and their salts;
- F. whereas biological control agents are frequently combined to form blends of semiochemicals, plant extracts or microbial consortia which enhance effectiveness, target multiple pests or diseases and improve environmental adaptability, and are often incorporated into other production techniques, e.g. integrated pest management (IPM);
- G. whereas biological control allows farmers to reduce their use of ‘traditional’ PPPs and the associated risks by providing safe and effective alternatives, thereby reducing impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, food chains and public health;
- H. whereas the availability of alternatives incentivises the adoption of low pesticide-input pest management practices;
- I. whereas there is often a lack of expertise, experience and resources required to process biological control applications, and this is a significant obstacle to their market introduction, as guidelines and data requirements do not match the specific characteristics of biological control agents, leading to excessive burdens, costs, lengthy approval procedures and legal deadlines not being met;
- J. whereas legal certainty, consistency and prioritisation are essential for fostering trust and supporting market uptake of biological control products;

Changes to the current legal framework

1. Calls on the Commission to provide a clear legal definition of biological control agents and a framework for the accelerated authorisation of biological control products in order to enhance legal certainty, foster investment in sustainable alternatives and prevent market fragmentation; notes that regulatory certainty will also facilitate innovation among small and medium-sized enterprises and stimulate the development of a competitive EU biological control sector;
2. Notes that EU biological control authorisation procedures must be compatible with the system of mutual recognition of Member State authorisations, in line with Article 40 of Regulation 1107/2009;

3. Considers that the Member States should expedite application processes by extending the authorisation of already authorised PPPs containing solely biological control products to minor uses;

A simple accelerated authorisation process

4. Recommends streamlining and accelerating the authorisation procedures for biological control products, including through the establishment of fast-track procedures, while ensuring a high level of protection for human health and the environment;
5. Calls on the Commission to amend Regulation 1107/2009 to allow the Member States to accelerate the assessment of applications for biological control products, and to accelerate their approval, in order to move towards plant protection processes that uses less harmful active substances;
6. Calls for the Commission's accompanying impact assessment to evaluate current approval procedures, and consider the differences between 'traditional' PPPs, on the one hand, and biological control products, on the other, in terms of data requirements, mutual recognition and the possibility of extending biological control product authorisation to additional crops; calls for the obligatory establishment of a priority lane for approving biological control agents, within the approval procedures for active substances under Regulation 1107/2009, while also assessing and updating approval procedures in accordance with scientific and technical developments;
7. Calls on the Member States to provide technical support to applicants during the application preparation process, to create simple procedures and to designate dedicated helpdesks; notes the importance of updated guidance documents specific to biological control products in enhancing consistency across the Member States;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to assess the functioning of the relevant national competent authorities, and for the Member States' National Action Plans (NAPs), under Directive 2009/128/EC², to include planned and adopted measures to improve the authorisation procedures for biological control and other low-risk products;
9. Recognises the high substitution potential of biological control approaches in reducing the dependency on 'traditional' PPPs; stresses that biological control agents offer targeted action with minimal off-target or residual effects, making them compatible with IPM and organic farming practices; insists that broader uptake can thus significantly contribute to achieving EU environmental and health objectives;

Financial support

10. Calls on the Commission to assess the needs for additional funding for training and employing additional staff within the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Commission, in order to prevent undue delays in the authorisation process of biological

² Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides (OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/128/oj>).

control products;

11. Calls on the Member States to ensure sufficient budget is ring-fenced for the relevant national competent authorities, in order to prevent delays in biological control authorisation procedures; insists that the Member States guarantee that the relevant national competent authorities have sufficient budget, staff and expertise to carry out assessments in a timely and effective manner; calls on the Commission to propose measures to ensure sufficient resources at Commission, EFSA and Member State level to accelerate authorisation procedures;
12. Urges increased investment in public and private research and the development of biological control technologies;

Access to knowledge

13. Notes that the use of biological control products requires different approaches, knowledge bases and skill sets, particularly regarding the care of beneficial species that act to protect crops; notes that this is already incorporated into IPM and other production systems; calls for biological control options to be offered as part of suitably resourced, independent advisory systems that should be accessible to all producers;
14. Calls for more knowledge exchange and capacity-building regarding both biological control approval processes and best practices in implementing IPM;
15. Calls for details on advisory system funding, as well as training and capacities in biological control and IPM, to be included in the Member States' NAPs; calls for the NAPs to include farmers' access to crop- and pest-specific guidance that includes biological control options, their possible integration into IPM programmes and compatibility with other PPPs, where available and appropriate;
16. Calls for the Commission, as part of the reviews of NAPs assessing action to reduce the use and risk of PPPs, to evaluate the EU's and the Member States' progress on approval of biological control products and low-risk products, looking at the associated administrative capacities, staffing levels and dedicated budgets, the sale of biological control products, the availability, affordability and efficacy of biological control, and especially the implementation of priority lanes for biological control product authorisation, and to propose legislative improvements if these aims have not been reached;

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17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEURS HAVE RECEIVED INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteurs declare that they received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the draft report, prior to the adoption thereof in committee:

Entity and/or person
1 International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA)
2 COPA-COGECA
3 IFOAM – Organics International
4 Biocontrol Coalition

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteurs.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteurs declare that they have submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do>), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.