

EU COMMISSION TO PROPOSE 10-YEAR RE-APPROVAL OF GLYPHOSATE



Ignoring a Parliament vote asking for only a seven-year approval of the controversial herbicide glyphosate, the EU executive is also proposing to set aside restrictions for private use or use close to public gardens and playgrounds.

According to a [leaked proposal](#) seen by Euranet Plus, the European Commission plans to propose a 10-year renewal of the authorization of glyphosate, the most used herbicide in the world, also famous for being the active substance in the Monsanto herbicide Roundup.

The text was leaked in the wake of the resolution adopted last week in Strasbourg, in which EU lawmakers had asked the Commission to renew EU market approval for only seven years instead of 15, as proposed by the EU executive on February 24.

The Parliament had also asked to ban any “non-professional use” of herbicides containing glyphosate in private gardens as well as “close to public parks, public playgrounds and public gardens”.

“This leaked project from the Commission and the [EU] member states is a big joke when you know that this product is considered as probably carcinogenic by the

World Health Organization,” said Michèle Rivasi, a French Member of European Parliament (MEP) from the Green group.

“This draft regulation only asks to pay attention to the effect of glyphosate on non-target vertebrate species. Moreover, it continues to authorize glyphosate not only as herbicide, but also to accelerate harvesting by accelerating the ripening process,” Rivasi said.

This farming practice, known as “green burndown”, has been condemned by EU lawmakers in a resolution voted on April 13.

Ongoing negotiation with EU member states

The EU Commission has not confirmed the validity of the leaked draft, but the 10-year renewal fits the figures already mentioned by Health and Food Safety Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis after an environment council last month.

“There is currently a negotiation with member states,” explained Enrico Brivio, Andriukaitis’ spokesperson. “But at the end of the day, the decision must be based on a clear qualified majority of the member states.”

The final decision might be taken on May 18-19 during the next meeting of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF), an institution which gathers experts from the member states.

“If there is no clear majority, then the proposal will be not pushed forward,” said a source close to the matter. A first proposal for a 15-year renewal found no qualified majority on March 8.

Countries like France, Italy and the Netherlands were against a long renewal while Germany, which was involved in the process as a ‘rapporteur’ member state, abstained.



The leaked regulation, presented as a document which “does not necessarily represent the view of the European Commission”, offers an interesting view on the current state of play of the negotiations.

While the Netherlands and Luxembourg insisted on the possibility of reviewing glyphosate authorization “without delay”, once the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) closes its classification procedure of the chemical (a process which is supposed to last until 2017), Germany said that member states should take into account the fact that the use of glyphosate could affect certain animal species.

In a paper published in March 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, an agency which belongs to the World Health Organization (WHO), stated that “the herbicide glyphosate [...] was classified as probably carcinogenic to humans”.

In contrast, the European Food and Safety Agency (EFSA) stated in November last year that “glyphosate is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans”.

Since the late 1970s, the volume of “glyphosate-based herbicides” has increased approximately 100-fold.

A scientific report published last February stated that “major increases in its use resulted from widespread adoption of Roundup-ready crops that were genetically engineered to be tolerant to glyphosate”.

- **Author: Jean Michel Bos, Euranet Plus News Agency**
- Further image credit: (middle 1) MEP Pavel Poc at Strasbourg plenary session on the renewal of the approval of glyphosate on April 11, 2016 / European Union 2016 – Source: EP/PE | (middle 2) No GMO / Flickr / Liam Wilde / CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

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