

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food and feed safety, innovation
Pesticides and Biocides

Brussels,
SANTE/E4/MW/df

Dear Petitioner,

Subject: Foodwatch petition: More than 100,000 signatures against the renewal of glyphosate

Commissioner Andriukaitis asked me to respond to your petition on his behalf.

I would like to first of all assure you that the renewal assessment for glyphosate was conducted in line with the rules laid down in the legislative framework for pesticides; Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009¹.

As part of the renewal evaluation of glyphosate, a comprehensive and transparent assessment of all available data and information was carried out by the Rapporteur Member State (RMS), Germany, and peer reviewed by all other EU Member States and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). A public consultation was carried out on the assessment by the RMS which provided a platform for citizens and other stakeholders to voice their concerns. Furthermore, during the peer review the RMS carried out an assessment of the monograph published by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)²; the European Commission requested EFSA to incorporate this review into the peer review process to ensure that all relevant information was available for its Conclusion³. The peer review process also included detailed expert discussion on the carcinogenic potential of glyphosate, and took epidemiological data into account.

The EU regulatory system for pesticides is extremely robust and ensures that substances undergo a rigorous scientific assessment before any decision is taken on whether they can be approved or not. Substances are only approved when it has been demonstrated that under realistic conditions of use there are no unacceptable effects on human or animal health, or the

¹ 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/EEC OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1–50

² <http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Monographs/vol112/mono112-09.pdf>


³ EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), 2015. Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment of the active substance glyphosate. EFSA Journal 2015;13(11):4302, 107 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2015.4302

environment. In the case of glyphosate, specific measures were taken to ensure that all evidence was considered by EFSA. EFSA has acted in line with its principles of excellence, independence and transparency set out in its founding legislation, Regulation (EC) No 178/2002⁴.

The Commission has carefully considered the findings presented in the EFSA Conclusion and has discussed these with Member States, taking into consideration the legal framework laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. The Commission services are now discussing with Member States whether it is appropriate to renew the approval of glyphosate and, if so, subject to which conditions and restrictions. A draft legal act laying down the conditions for a possible continued approval was presented to the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed at its meeting on 7-8th March; discussions have not yet been finalised and are ongoing.

I understand that there are concerns and fears from citizens about glyphosate and exposure to it from food and other sources; this is taken very seriously by the Commission. However, I would like to reassure you that the European Union has the most stringent regulatory system for pesticides in the world, ensuring the highest safety standards for human and animal health and the environment, underpinned by sound science.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Flüh
Head of Unit

⁴ Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1–24