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EU Commission President Juncker's Science Advisors system recruited experts to help evaluating pesticide authorisation that were part of anti-regulation pressure groups.

Pesticide Action Network's research shows that several experts recruited by EU Commission President Juncker's Science Advice Mechanism (SAM) were part of pressure groups that oppose regulation. One pressure group led by Mr. Dietrich¹ has been very vocal in the past, while other experts are linked to industry-funded lobby group ILSI (International Life Sciences Institute). The work for the pressure groups was either not included in the 'Declarations of interest' (DoI) of the experts, or misleadingly put under the wrong chapter. The Declarations of interests of the experts were not publicly available at the time of publishing the SAM-report (June 2018) and one even signed August 2018. For the June 2018 SAM-report „EU authorisation processes of Plant Protection products”², SAM relied on experts from SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) that published its own „evidence report”³ for SAM and a 'sounding group' (see page 5 of the SAM report). The SAPEA-report reflects several topics that have been on the wish-list of the pressure groups, such as substituting experimental animal testing by (cheap) mechanistic data, hide adverse effects in studies behind 'historical controls', emphasize exposure assessment in humans and safe levels, opposing the EU hazard approach.

The previous EU Science Advisor, Prof. Glover, invited members of two opposing pressure groups to her office to find a compromise on the diverging views. The current Science Advisors on the contrary selected experts from one of the pressure groups. Two of the experts invited were even banned or restricted from the panels of Food Authority EFSA in the past. Pesticide Action Network requested clarifications and documents from the office of the responsible Commissioner (Mr. Moedas) and received only general answers and no documents at all. Today a formal complaint was send off to Commissioner Moedas (letter attached) on the independence of experts. PAN Europe asks Commissioner Moedas to remove the experts with missing or misleading DoI, put in place an effective system to control DoI's and review the SAPEA 'evidence-report' and the subsequent SAM-report on the authorisation of pesticides.

SAPEA is a project carried out by 5 European academy networks⁴ and works with SAM. SAPEA is funded by the EU (Horizon 2020, 6 Million Euro's). SAM was asked by Commission (Commissioner Andriukaitis) for input for the REFIT-programme⁵ with the Glyphosate-controversy as one of the reasons for the request (scientific Divergences). SAM advised Juncker to involve them in case of diverging views and overrule the work of EFSA.

Hans Muilerman of the Pesticide Action Network states that experts advising the EU on pesticide regulation should be 100% independent and certainly not selected from pressure groups that oppose regulation.

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¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256764234_Open_letter_Draft_regulation_on_endocrine-active_chemicals

² <https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/index.cfm?pg=pesticides>

³ <https://www.sapea.info/plantprotectionproducts/>

⁴ <https://www.allea.org/asap-academies-sciences-advice-to-policy/>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/refit_en