

NGOs Challenge Glyphosate Re-approval in EU Court

While the European Commission is poised to formally re-approve the controversial herbicide in the coming days, Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe and 4 member organisations are set to challenge the re-approval of glyphosate in EU Court. These organisations are experts in pesticide evaluation and regulation and have significant experience in EU and national Courts.

Dr. Martin Dermine, executive director of PAN Europe states: “The re-approval directly contradicts the findings of numerous independent scientists who have researched the impacts of glyphosate. It defies the will of the vast majority of Europeans and ignores the urgent need and political commitment to reduce pesticide use. Most importantly, it contravenes EU pesticide laws, which prioritise health and biodiversity protection over economic interests. Our opposition is grounded in compelling legal and scientific evidence.”

The EU Commission is expected to decide on a 10-year re-approval of glyphosate shortly. (1) This follows a vote in an Appeal Committee of the European Council showing its inability to secure a qualified majority of Member States in favour of the renewal proposal. Notably, only countries representing 42 % of EU citizens supported the renewal. Major countries like France, Germany, and Italy abstained, along with Belgium, Bulgaria, Malta, and the Netherlands. Austria, Croatia, and Luxembourg voted against the re-approval.

Concerns Raised by Scientists

Criticism surrounds the EU's pesticide evaluation system. The law requires manufacturers to submit their own studies demonstrating the safety of the active substance, supplemented by peer-reviewed scientific literature. Yet, most peer-reviewed research is often dismissed as irrelevant or unreliable by manufacturers, a stance typically supported by EU authorities. This dismissal has raised alarms in the academic community about the disregard for independent, peer-reviewed research. Nearly 300 scientists from Belgium and the Netherlands, including over 100 university professors, have recently urged their governments to reject the glyphosate renewal. (2)

Dr Pauline Cervan, toxicologist at Générations Futures (France) comments: “At first glance, EFSA's evaluation appears thorough, encompassing numerous studies. However, of the 1,628 peer-reviewed glyphosate studies – many highlighting adverse health or environmental impacts – published over the past decade, only 30 (1.8%) were considered relevant and reliable for evaluation. These studies are overshadowed by industry research in the overall evidence assessment, with none serving as a key study in the European re-evaluation.”

Dr Peter Clausing, a toxicologist at PAN Germany, points out ECHA's neglect of its own guidances and guidelines when assessing glyphosate as a carcinogenic hazard: “Not only that ECHA let clear evidence of carcinogenic effects ‘disappear’ based on the violation of applicable guidelines and requirements. They also made statements opposite to the facts concerning the mechanism of how glyphosate can cause tumours. In addition, new compelling scientific findings, such as effects on the microbiome, were dismissed by EFSA with the excuse that internationally agreed guidelines for the risk assessment are lacking.”

Margriet Mantingh, President of PAN Netherlands said: “The failure to properly address significant health concerns could directly harm people. This makes the court case critically important. Numerous epidemiological studies indicate a potential link between glyphosate and various health

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issues, including cancer, stillbirths, deformities, autism spectrum disorders, and Parkinson's disease.”

Dr Angeliki Lysimachou, Head of Science and Policy at PAN Europe emphasises: “Glyphosate's widespread use can have devastating effects for the environment: it may harm aquatic and terrestrial species, threaten ecosystems and biodiversity, while its residues, along with its breakdown product AMPA, contaminate water sources across Europe. Yet, in a blatant disregard for the hundreds of recent scientific studies illustrating these environmental harms the EU authorities have, erroneously concluded that glyphosate is safe.”

Dr Helmut Burtscher-Schaden, Campaigner at GLOBAL 2000 (Austria) adds: "For decades, only manufacturers could challenge licensing decisions in court, often exploiting this right to contest decisions they found unfavourable. A legislative change in 2021, however, now empowers environmental NGOs and citizens to assert their environmental rights in the EU Court. This case presents an opportunity to prove that glyphosate's re-approval does not align with the EU Pesticide Regulation."

Dr Martin Dermine of PAN Europe concludes: “By re-approving glyphosate, the European Commission shows that it stands with the agro-industry. Science is clear on the dangers posed by this substance: the substance must be banned, as required by EU law. Recent rulings from the Court of Justice of the EU (3) confirm that priority must be given to human health and the environment, while the precautionary principle is at the basis of pesticide policies. The European Commission just did the opposite.”

- (1) [Announcement of the European Commission](#)
- (2) [Almost 300 scientists - 100+ profs - call on the government in Belgium and the Netherlands to vote no to glyphosate](#)
- (3) [Landmark EU Court ruling, January 2023](#)

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