



PRESS RELEASE

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Pesticide
Action
Network
Europe

Not only Glyphosate.

DG SANTE allows (un)known carcinogenic residues in our food

A new analysis of the Pesticide Action Network reveals that European Commission's health service DG SANTE approves the use of pesticides with potential carcinogenic metabolites as a standard procedure (Table 1 in attached analysis, e.g. Carfentrazone, Mesotrione, Flazasulfuron, Metsulfuron). Commission allows industry to "confirm" (with the "confirmatory information" derogation) at a later stage (after approval), that the pesticide residues are not carcinogenic. The industry is not asked to carry out further experiments, even when the scientific evidence indicate a carcinogenic potential of the pesticide metabolites; "information" suffices. It also turns out that DG SANTE -in clear violation of the law- assumes that carcinogenic compounds have safe levels of exposure for humans. In July this year, a decision was taken for the renewal of the pesticide Maleic Hydrazine that contains a genotoxic impurity (Hydrazine) with a 1B-classification for carcinogenicity. Hydrazine could end up in our food, while the law provides that any contact with humans must be excluded. The carcinogenicity of Hydrazine and 11 other metabolites/impurities was ignored by DG SANTE for decades and EU citizens exposed in food and/or drinking water.

Out of the twelve pesticides examined, DG SANTE has provided restrictions only for two, Buprofezin and Diflubenzuron, both with metabolites of proven carcinogenic potential. Their use is now limited to non-edible crops but still pesticide operators, residents and the environment will be exposed. The pesticide Maleic Hydrazine, a 'plant growth regulator', that contains an impurity with an 1B-classification for carcinogenicity ("presumed carcinogenic for humans") will be renewed after a vote in the Standing Committee in July 2017. Pesticide Regulation 1107/2009 puts carcinogenic substances at a platform and mandates that contact of humans to classified carcinogens (1A and 1B) is excluded (there is no safe level of exposure). Food Authority EFSA provided the basis for this decision and assumed that there is a "safe level" for the 1B-carcinogen. For the other 9 pesticides with unknown carcinogenic potential, approval or renewal is granted. Turning the public into guinea pigs.

While cancer incidences are rising steadily, EU Commission doesn't take the issue of carcinogenic pesticide residues in food very serious, according to Hans Muilerman of the Pesticide Action Network. It is not only on Glyphosate that lacking safety information leads to market access, this is the standard situation for pesticides. Economic gains of a handful of multinationals seem to be more important for Commission than the health of 500 Million Europeans. Allowing class 1B substances on the market, and - standardly- violate EU rules and the precautionary principle by placing (and keeping) chemicals in the market of unknown carcinogenicity is not serving the public. A multi-year campaign by industry to allow carcinogens on the market resonated very much in EFSA and EFSA's expert panels and has helped creating this biased atmosphere.